

Whiddon



The  
Neighbourhood




Issue 5 | 2024






## Welcome back to The Neighbourhood!

We invite you to embark on a journey through the heart of our year. In these carefully curated stories, vibrant images, and shared moments, you will witness the essence of Whiddon's commitment to enriching lives and fostering meaningful connections.

**The Neighbourhood** is our annual publication that serves as a testament to the collective spirit that defines our community. As we reflect on the milestones, achievements, and cherished memories of the past year, we want to thank each member of the Whiddon family – residents, clients, families, staff, and partners – for another wonderful year.

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## From the CEO

I recently heard a great piece of advice from one of our many centenarians at Whiddon. Doug, from our Maclean Home, humorously remarked on how people often attribute his 100 years to “good luck.” With a twinkle in his eye, he corrected, “It’s not good luck, Chris, it’s good management!” His words, profound and wise, talk to the experience of so many of our inspirational residents at Whiddon.

We are also home to Australia’s oldest man, Ken Weeks, who celebrated his 110th birthday with us in Grafton. Ken’s secret to long life? “Lead a healthy life,” he emphasised, “ride your bike, take walks, read a lot. Work hard, and above all, cherish family.” Ken also swears by a diet rich in baked beans, a staple on his dinner table for over three decades!

We are surrounded by remarkable individuals like Doug and Ken across our homes and services. While our primary role is to provide the best possible care for each of our unique residents, we also gain immeasurable wisdom, perspective and enrichment from each of them.

Looking ahead, the opportunities for Whiddon are plentiful. We plan to enhance care services through improved funding, and substantial investments in technology, systems and building renovations. Increased levels of funding are now available to support our team, with more expected in the new year. Moreover, we are investing significantly in an employee wellbeing support initiative set to launch in 2024.

Building on last year’s successful initiatives, like Exercise 4 Life, Men’s Sheds, and Grandbuddies (our intergenerational program), we are developing even more innovative programs focused on making a positive impact.

I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has been part of the Whiddon journey and acknowledge our people for their unwavering dedication.

This year, two letters particularly touched me, highlighting the profound impact of our work and the exceptional dedication of our team. The first was an excerpt from a local newspaper, where a family openly expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the additional years they were blessed to have with their dad. The letter read, Whiddon had “given dad his life back, giving us an extra four years with him we would not have had if not for these amazing people”.

The second letter, received firsthand, shared the moving story of a mother’s transformation after joining us at Whiddon. It highlighted her journey, stating: “In 6 short months, mum crafted like a machine, danced like a star, sang, laughed, and played. Even won prizes for her floral creation in this year’s show.”

These uplifting stories reinforce our commitment to nurturing, not just longevity, but a vibrant, fulfilling life for each individual we care for—a testament to the profound impact of compassion and dedication within the Whiddon family.

**Chris Mamarelis**  
CEO



## Chairperson's Message



# From the Chairperson

I want to reflect on the year that has passed. This year has been characterised by hope and renewal.

Just a few months ago, we reached a great milestone. For the first time in 3 years, since the start of the pandemic, our employees removed their masks!

It is wonderful for our residents and clients to enjoy the smiling faces of our employees and visitors once again. Even though it is something we will need to learn to live with, this certainly feels like the turning point for us in moving on from the pandemic.

We have had many achievements as Whiddon has embarked on an ambitious range of projects to ensure we are future-fit, including:

- The launch of our major Technology Strategy, which will see our ways of working transformed through new systems and collaboration tools.
- Our new Electronic Medications Management System where we're already seeing considerable benefits for our residents, employees, and pharmacy partners.
- The use of smart sensor technology to predict and prevent falls and improve other health outcomes.
- Our new Design 4 Care Program, is a collaborative research project with Sydney & Curtin Universities, aimed at improving employee wellbeing in the workplace.

In the spirit of fresh starts, we have revised and re-launched our Strategic Plan, setting our path forward, with a strong focus on Our Care, Our People and Our Business. There are so many exciting initiatives we have to look forward to as part of this new strategy and the year ahead.

The Government has made a firm commitment to our sector, in terms of improving our overall sustainability, and we have started to see the initial signs of positive change flow through, in our new funding model and fairer remuneration for our hard-working care employees.

As a Board, we welcomed our new Directors, Tim Birch, and Raj Verma, who have been fantastic additions to our team. Sadly, we also farewelled Gerald Naughton, who had been with us as since 2017 as a Director, and who is very dearly missed by us all. I would also like to recognise the contribution of Joanna Bushby and Carol Limmer who stepped down from the Board – on behalf of the Board, I want to thank you for your service.

I'm really looking forward to the next 12 months and seeing the wonderful work the teams at Whiddon do. I hope you enjoy reading this edition of **The Neighbourhood**.

**Len Kearns**  
Whiddon Board Chairperson



## Celebrating our people



We truly believe that here at Whiddon, we are a family, and we try to take care of one another as often as possible. By showing support to our team, we believe that this in turn will translate to our staff providing the best level of care with smiles on their faces – no matter the role they're in.

### Load up the trolleys!

In April 2023, we launched our Trolley Toppers program. Trolley Toppers is an initiative to support our entire team, providing them with two bags worth of shopping provisions.

It's just a small token to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our team and to offer some practical assistance.

### The Festival of Lights

Whiddon is extremely proud to have such a diverse workplace where we can celebrate various special occasions that are significant across different cultures of our employees.

Across our care homes, our teams celebrated Dashain & Diwali. The spirit of Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights, symbolising the triumph of light over darkness, and Dashain is a time for family reunions, gift-giving, blessings, and prayers.

The teams celebrated with a wonderful array of traditional cuisine, and amazing traditional dress, while even being treated to some incredible national dances.



### Celebrating our Everyday Heroes

Our Everyday Heroes campaign was back for another year. Residents, families, and employees are encouraged to nominate an Everyday Hero – someone who has gone above and beyond. It may be difficult in the moment to show gratitude, however, this provides an opportunity to give thanks for all the assistance our employees provide.

Here at Whiddon, we always work towards showing our appreciation and support for those who work with us. It is of the utmost importance that our employees understand that everything they do is valued.



### Another year of Aged Care Employee Day

Aged Care Employee Day, celebrated on the 7th of August, is a day to celebrate the amazing employees across our residential care homes, Community Care services and Support Services. It's a day to thank the amazing employees that make a wonderful difference in Australia.

Did you know Whiddon created this day in 2018?

# Innovation & Research



Over the last 12 months, we have engaged with some amazing universities and organisations to work on ground-breaking and innovative research, trials, and projects. From technology to strategies that aim to benefit our residents, clients and employees, we're excited to share these updates.

## Introducing cutting-edge technology

We're excited to announce the commencement of a groundbreaking clinical trial at Whiddon. We're partnering with Arrotex Diagnostics to introduce 'DnaNudge Technology', a cutting-edge solution designed for rapid testing and diagnosis of respiratory, wound, and urinary tract infections.

This trial, set to span for six months from November to April 2024, involves selected residents at Whiddon's Moree, Grafton and Easton Park homes. Here's what makes it truly remarkable:

- **Leading-edge Technology:** The DnaNudge Technology is very new to Australia, and we're pioneering its use to enhance infection management.
- **Faster Diagnosis, Faster Recovery:** By speeding up the testing and diagnosis process, we aim to accelerate treatment, enabling our patients to recover and return to normal life more swiftly.

The trial is straightforward but revolutionary. Participants provide two samples; one is sent to the pathology lab as usual, while the other undergoes on-site testing with the DnaNudge Technology.

We're eager to evaluate its impact and potential to transform infection management.

During the Pandemic, we worked on a very similar trial that allowed instant PCR test results to be provided to our team members when residents showed flu-like symptoms. Whiddon was the first aged care provider to introduce this to their care home and were proud to see others follow shortly afterwards. We expect to see a similar trend occur here too.

We're proud to be embarking on this journey of innovation and better healthcare.

## Improving our employee's wellbeing

Whiddon's People & Culture team and Research & Positive Ageing Teams continue to work with Sydney and Curtin University research teams on this highly innovative project.



Following the Whiddon-wide employee survey that measured employee wellbeing levels against the SMART platform, we are now working with several Care Homes and Community Care services across Whiddon on workplace-related interventions to address some of the issues employees have highlighted through the research program.

These are being evaluated to see if they can be implemented across Whiddon to improve general employee wellbeing in the workplace.

### Chat, Stories and Tea

Chat, Stories and Tea is a healthy ageing program run exclusively by Whiddon for people with memory challenges, dementia or short-term memory loss.

We rolled this program out to care homes who were not running the program to ensure residents with dementia or short-term memory loss had the opportunity to participate in this Cognitive Stimulation Therapy.

The sessions are run in small groups, with up to eight residents meeting each week to engage in conversation and interaction around a range of themes and topics, often using multi-sensory stimulus. Group participants are encouraged to engage and share stories in a supportive, fun and failure-free environment, which is important for people with dementia

At Whiddon Casino, residents have created a group - The Grasshoppers - who have participated in Chat, Stories and Tea.



In one of the sessions, The Grasshoppers went back in time and were shown photos of old Casino. It was wonderful to see residents recognise familiar landmarks and share stories about that period of time.

They also found an old book which had one of our 'Grasshopper' members inside pictured as the first student nurses to start at Casino Hospital!

One of the benefits of the program showed residents who are slightly shy would quickly come out of their shell and talk more within the group. They formed friendships during this time which is so important.

Chat, Stories and Tea is an important inclusion in our wellbeing programs. We're proud to see our teams adapt this into their own care homes and observe the interactions between residents during the sessions.





# True Colours Reports

Our True Colours series are consumer-facing reports, developed to provide you with clear and honest information about Whiddon’s performance. Our goal is to exceed the transparent reporting requirements outlined in the Royal Commission Recommendations.

These reports bring to light our levels of compliance with regulatory standards, workforce data, financial information and customer feedback, along with a host of additional focus areas.

Our four True Colours Reports are released annually and include our Annual Performance Report, Governance Report, Our People and Consumer Outcomes. Below is a snapshot of our performance for 2023.

Scan the QR code to read the full reports!



## Residential Care

Each year, Whiddon engages with our Residents and Families to better understand their experience with us and levels of satisfaction. This report draws on information from our 2022/2023 Customer Satisfaction Survey, in addition to other customer engagement methods. We believe in providing honest and open information for our residents and families, using insights to improve quality of life and make a real difference for residents.



**837**  
Clients per month (average)



**14**  
Hours of Care per client each month (average)



**766**  
Packages (HCP, CHSP & NDIS)

### Wellbeing

**100%**

clients agree Whiddon is improving their quality of life

### Standards

**100%**

compliance with Aged Care Quality & NDIS Standards

### Connection

**53%**

clients would like more help to stay connected with friends and family

### Satisfaction

**86%**

clients are satisfied with Whiddon’s services



**289**  
CHSP



**19**  
NDIS packages



**458**  
Home Care packages



## Community Care

Community Care satisfaction levels were very high this year around staff relationships, and Whiddon's ability to support quality of life and independence. This year for the first time we asked about Whiddon's support of clients' social connection with family, friends, and the community. The results were relatively low and have given us an important area of focus going forward.

 **1563** residents across **23 homes**

  
**91%**  
of our Homes are rated 3 stars or higher on My Aged Care website

  
**95%**  
of our homes on average had 24/7 Registered Nurse coverage\*

**Kind & Caring Employees**  **98%** say our employees are kind and caring & treat them with respect

### Relationships

**92%**  **96%**  
value their relationships with our employees  
agree our employees know them well and are responsive to their needs

### Consistent carers


 **72%** felt the same familiar employees cared for them each day.  
**We are working to address the current workforce challenges**

## Our People

This below provides valuable insights about the Whiddon team.

**2363** Residential Aged Care employees 

**199** Community Care employees 

 **Mental health and burn-out were flagged as concerns for our employees**

**Loyal**  
**70%**  
retained employees & 40% with us for 5+ years

**Supported**  
**92%**  
of our employees feel supported at work

**Rewarded**  
**15%** Modern Award increase passed-on to direct care employees. Recognition payments for indirect care employees.

### Learning opportunities

  
Dementia Framework

  
Leadership Development

  
Therapy Assistants

  
Palliative Care



## Exploring our creative sides

Creative Ageing is an essential part of our approach to care at Whiddon because of the strong connections between the arts and good health, and the lifelong benefits that creative therapies and programs offer.

Our Creative Ageing programs include a wide range of activities and therapies. Some are aimed at everyone's enjoyment including gardening programs, arts and crafts, singing and choirs, cooking clubs, games, music and animal therapy.

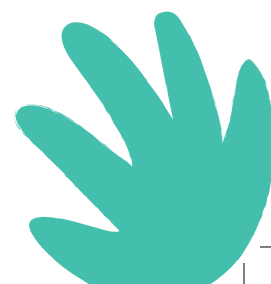
Here's a snapshot of the creativity that has flown through our care homes in 2023.

### Narrabri wins best blooms at Annual Spring Rose and Flower Show

The Annual Spring Rose and Flower Show at the Narrabri Show Society is a highlight of the year for our residents - and for good reason! Every year, our residents show their best blooms and this year was no different. With almost 30 entries, there were amazing displays that were submitted into the aged care section of the show.

### Celebrating Arts in Residential Week at Whiddon Largs

Our friend and Elder Engagement Specialist, Maurie Voisey-Barlin visited Whiddon Largs to conduct one of his amazing creative sessions with our residents. The University of Newcastle team were there to capture Maurie's great work and shine a light on this life-changing work.







### **Kyogle WIN at the Kyogle Show**

Residents worked hard to create the amazing giant vase with flowers piece as part of the art class that was established to promote creativity and arts within our care home.

### **Knitting for a great cause at Whiddon Redhead**

Our very talented knitting group from Whiddon Redhead's John Read House raised much needed funds selling their beautiful creations and have chosen Allira House as their selected charity to support. Allira House help provide emergency accommodation to women and children in need.

### **Celebrating a year on the tools**

We were thrilled to celebrate the 1st anniversary of our Men's Shed at Whiddon Easton Park. The positive impact this has had on our male residents has been wonderful to see. With so many of our male residents qualified in a trade that they practice prior to retiring, they now have a space to tinker and use their hands while doing something they love!



“ Creative Ageing is an essential part of our approach to care at Whiddon. ”

### **Cooking up a storm in Narrabri**

We understand how important food can be for all, including our residents living in our care homes. Every fortnight, Chef Lester from Whiddon Narrabri Jessie Hunt meets with our residents to discuss all things food and dining related, including new menus being introduced. Chef Lester also enjoys putting on a cooking activity that residents can participate in.



# Living long and rich lives

We never tire of celebrating these truly special occasions with our residents or listening to their stories, after all how many centenarians do you get to meet and speak to in an ordinary life?



## Baked beans are key to living a long and happy life

A remarkable highlight in 2023 was celebrating the 110th birthday of Mr Ken Weeks, Australia's Oldest Man and Whiddon Grafton resident in October! Ken celebrated his birthday surrounded by fellow residents and extended family who travelled in from all across Australia.

Unique cans of baked beans produced by the Heinz team was a nice touch. Ken has eaten baked beans every day of his adult life! It was an amazing effort from our Grafton team to put together such a special event.



## This is 101!

Our beautiful Narrabri Robert Young resident, Elaine celebrated her 101st Birthday, surrounded by friends, family and special visitors. There were plenty of celebrations to mark this incredible milestone, including visits and performances from students who attend Narrabri West, and the local preschools.

We asked Elaine what her secret is to reaching 101. She says daily walks with her son Doug - even staff sometimes find it difficult to keep up with her.

## Kathleen turns 102 years young

A heartfelt congratulations to Kathleen who turned 102 in July. We celebrated the amazing Kathleen, turning 102 years young at our Easton Park home surrounded by friends, family and the team!

Kathleen was even able to provide our CEO Chris Mamarelis with a bit of education on the flowers, their colour and what they represent to her. Chris proclaimed, "You are never too old to learn, especially from a 102-year-old!" It is a privilege to call Kathleen a Whiddon resident and the team look forward to celebrating her 103rd birthday next year!



# Celebrating our people's milestones

We're fortunate to have so many long-serving employees, dedicating their careers to caring for our wonderful residents and clients at Whiddon.

We've celebrated some wonderful employee milestones over the last 12 months, and we wanted to introduce you to a few of these amazing people who have celebrated 20 years or more of service at Whiddon.

## 48 years

We said goodbye to our longest serving employee, Rhonda who retired after 48 years of service! A huge accomplishment. We thank you so much for your service, Rhonda.



## 35 years

**Sandra Osborne**  
Director Care Services  
at Whiddon Grafton

**Mary Mensink**  
Assistant in Nursing  
at Whiddon Grafton

## 30 years

**Jeanette Ball**  
Enrolled Nurse  
at Whiddon Casino

**Louise Auld**  
Care Services Employee  
at Whiddon Mudgee

## 25 years

**Nasim Khan**  
Care Services Employee  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Anne Page**  
Care Services Employee  
at Whiddon Mudgee

## 20 years

A special mention to the following employees who have celebrated 20 years of service at Whiddon

**Catherine Johnston**  
Care Services Employee  
at Whiddon Narrabri

**Sobhna Dayal**  
Assistant in Nursing  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Veronica Sene**  
Assistant in Nursing  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Coleen Schrader**  
Care Services Employee  
at Whiddon Grafton

**Colleen O'Neill**  
Enrolled Nurse  
at Whiddon Moree

**Ann Connolly**  
Administration Clerk  
at Whiddon Redhead

**Maria Zavaleta**  
Assistant in Nursing  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Lina Ali**  
Assistant in Nursing  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Tracey Mackay**  
Care Services Employee  
at Whiddon Moree

**Margaret Glanville**  
Care Services Employee  
at Whiddon Belmont

**Kerry Ann Holze**  
Quality Coordinator  
at Whiddon Redhead

**Kenneth Capnerhurst**  
Care Services Employee  
at Whiddon Belmont

**Tsegreida Keflegiris**  
Assistant Nursing  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Sarika Devi**  
Assistant in Nursing  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Akberet Russom**  
Assistant in Nursing  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Patricia Vidler**  
Assistant in Nursing  
at Whiddon Casino

**Canecia Betcher**  
Care Services Employee  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Catherine Enriquez**  
Assistant in Nursing  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Isabelita O'Gorman**  
Assistant in Nursing  
at Whiddon Easton Park

**Sandra Honeybrook**  
Administration Clerk  
at Whiddon Maclean

**Leonie Frost**  
Enrolled Nurse  
at Whiddon Mudgee

## 2023 Board of Directors Awards



# And the winners

of our 2023 Board of Directors Awards are...

In November, we held the Annual Whiddon Board of Directors Awards Dinner (BOD), recognising nominees and winners for 2023!

The BOD awards honour the individuals and teams who truly live and breathe Whiddon's values. The Awards are the culmination of nominations through our Everyday Heroes Awards program over the course of the year. The nominations are submitted throughout the year by colleagues, and is a true testament to the hard working employees we have here at Whiddon.



We are so proud to once again acknowledge and celebrate our Nominees and Winners for 2023.

### A BIG congratulations to the winners:

- **Community Care:** Kayla Salsman
- **Easton Park:** Rosa Romano
- **Far West:** Kylie Guest
- **Northern RAC:** Sue-Ellen Dhu
- **Southern RAC:** Kelly Smith
- **Support Services:** Muriel Dalmasso
- **Service of the Year for Residential Aged Care:** Laurieton
- **Service of the Year for Community Care:** Grafton

A big thank you to all of our many nominees and finalists for 2023! You should be proud of your achievements. We're dedicated to recognising the extraordinary team members who go above and beyond every day to improve the lives of individuals we care for and the communities we proudly serve.



# Future Fit – Whiddon’s Technology Strategy



We’re thrilled to share that we’re almost halfway through our ambitious 3-year technology transformation at Whiddon.

Our commitment to a Future Fit environment is not just a technical evolution but a captivating journey that promises to enhance the experience for our residents, clients and Whiddon team.

Future Fit enables us to evolve and provide flexible technologies and systems which support our products and services for today, tomorrow, and beyond. As a cyber-mature organisation, we’re proud to continue investing in these technological transformations and deliver safe, secure, and modernised platforms. Here is a snapshot of some of the exciting projects that we are working on:

**Australian-first BEST CARE Sensor Trial:** We have partnered with an Australian Technology Innovator, Talius, the CSIRO, and with the support from Aged Care Research & Industry Innovation Australia on an exciting Australian-first innovation to deliver lived environments that are enabled with technology to reduce the occurrence of falls. This project uses connected smart sensor technologies to create an individualised platform that can predict and prevent falls and improve other health outcomes. The innovative technology and research program have commenced, and we’re excited to be leading the industry with these partners.

**Using Artificial Intelligence for Pain Management:** PainChek© is a cutting-edge pain management solution that uses AI technology to automatically assess the pain of a resident, even when they are unable to tell their care team. With this technology we have greater insights into pain that residents and clients may be experiencing; with our care and interventions suited to the individual needs of each resident. PainChek© has been rolled out to all Whiddon Care Homes.

**Improved Medication Management:** We rolled out our new Electronic Medication Management System, BestMED. BestMED links together Aged Care providers (like Whiddon), Doctors and pharmacies to ensure each of our residents are prescribed the right medication, in the correct dose, and are supplied at the right time. We are seeing some amazing benefits since rolling this system out, with prescription management simplified and GP’s and Pharmacies highly engaged and supportive of this great platform.

**Enhancing our Community Care systems:** We’re excited to be enhancing Whiddon Connect, our customer mobile app, for our community care clients. We launched Whiddon Connect across our residential care homes in 2021 and will be creating a similar system for our home care clients. This will provide clients with new functionality to review their services, enquire for additional services/bookings and communicate with their coordinators and care team in an efficient manner.

**Enhancing our service offering:** We’re upgrading our finance systems, introducing care systems, and bolstering property management systems to support our teams with enabling technologies that are Future Fit! In addition, we will be upgrading our wireless internet across all our Care Homes in 2024 and continuing our internet services offering.

These projects will deliver enhanced resilience, robustness, integration, and enablement to streamline how we work and provide care – which is part of our continued commitment to deliver Technological Transformation that makes a real difference to the lives of people we care for.

# Whiddon's Strategic Plan

2023–2026

## Pathway to Purpose

Our purpose at Whiddon is “**To enrich people’s lives and make a real difference**”

We will achieve our purpose through these five key pathways:



## Strategic Directions

Our Strategic Plan is our blueprint for the next 3 years with a renewed focus on our Purpose, and the voice of those that matter: our residents, clients and our people.

It has our Purpose at its core and focuses on three clear Strategic Directions:

- ✓ **Our Care:** High quality & consistent services, underpinned by Relationship Based Care & Innovation
- ✓ **Our People:** An empowering & energetic workforce with a supportive culture
- ✓ **Our Business:** Ensuring the sustainability and relevance of our services into the future

Our renewed purpose and direction will not only allow us to navigate through the next 3 years, it will mean we can thrive as an organisation and positively impact the lives of even more people in the communities of which we are a part.



# Creating Meaningful Moments at Whiddon



## Creating beautiful intergenerational friendships

Our Community Care Seniors Group in Tamworth recently went for an outing to Dungowan Public School. Our Intergenerational programs are a smashing success across our group! They provide a valuable connection between generations, fostering mutual understanding and growth.

## Laurie loves exploring his new home

Laurie and his wife, Shirley, recently relocated to Laurieton to be closer to family. Laurie was keen to discover and explore his new home and local area, so we've been organising monthly outings with his carer, Kristie, as part of his Home Care Package. Recently, they had a trip to Harrington and then onto to the Crowdy Bay Lighthouse. It looked like a beautiful day!

## Celebrating 60 years of wedded bliss

A HUGE congratulations to our Northern Sydney Community Care clients, Barbara and Arch on celebrating 60 years of wedded bliss. Their daughter, Elizabeth, organised for them to receive cards of congratulations from the King, the Prime Minister, and the Governor General and plan to celebrate this milestone with their extended family. Congratulations Barbara & Arch!

## A trip to the local art gallery

When our Community Care Coordinator in Tweed Heads, Debbie, conducted her initial appointment with new home care client, Audrey, she showed her beautiful artwork that brings her much joy. She was even chosen out of 80 artists to hang her painting in Parliament House. We organised one of our care workers to take her to Margaret Olley Art Gallery. She said that it was the best day she had since moving up here.



## Relationship Based Care

“ Never underestimate the empowering effect of human connection...”

Drishti Bablani ”

**RBC**

Relationship  
Based Care

# Building connections and fostering care

At Whiddon, we believe that caregiving is built on the foundation of meaningful relationships.

These connections serve as bridges of trust and understanding between our teams and those we care for. By cultivating strong bonds with clients, residents, and families, we establish a rapport that goes beyond routine care.

In 2016, Whiddon launched its MyLife Model of care, a framework that outlines 7 health and wellbeing outcomes. The way that our team deliver these outcomes is through building trusting relationships to ensure we meet each person's specific and individual needs. Our Relationship Based Care (RBC) methodology is something that we instil across all areas, from Community Care, Residential Care, Retirement Living and our Support Services Team.

Caring for someone is not just about meeting their physical needs, but also about meeting their social and emotional wellbeing. When our team provide trusting and professional relationships they engender a sense of belonging, comfort, and reassurance, which are essential elements in connecting with our clients and residents. The deep connections formed also translate into heightened job satisfaction and higher levels of commitment.

Now that COVID has settled, we are redirecting our focus once again on RBC, ensuring it is a part of every interaction our team have with our clients and residents. Whiddon are investing further in RBC, to embed relationship building throughout all our services and will have dedicated RBC Coordinators in every home. The RBC Coordinator will cover a few key areas.

These include:

- ensuring each resident has a staff Buddy to help with relationships and connection,
- training new team members as they orientate to Whiddon, so they understand how to build trusting connections that empower our residents,
- checking in with our residents regularly and implementing a monthly meeting, to hear what their thoughts are on how we deliver RBC,
- and making sure we find ways to develop meaningful moments with each of our residents to enhance their quality of life and bring a smile to their day.

Here at Whiddon we truly believe that anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you – and RBC makes this happen for our teams and our clients.

This will be an exciting move forward over the next 12 – 18 months and we are excited to share this journey with you.





# Extra, extra

– read all about it!



Over the last 12 months, we've been involved in various media activities and stories that have been published either in the local newspaper, in a national forum or on television. Here's a snippet of our year in the media. Did you catch any of it?

## Age Well Together addressing the mental health implications of loneliness in older men

We launched our Age Well Together campaign during International Men's Health Week encouraging ageing blokes to pick up the drill, swing their golf club and sizzle a snag on the barbie together.

Read more about this campaign here:



**I think the activities here are important, because it's not good to see the guys sitting in their rooms all day watching TV. It gets them out and about — chatting to people.**

Easton Park Men's Shed volunteer, Bill Dickinson.

## Our CEO's Secret to successful leadership in aged care

**We want to positively impact the lives of our residents, clients and the people who are providing that care. That's where our focus is now and where it will continue to be.**

Chris Mamarelis, CEO of Whiddon

Our CEO, Chris Mamarelis was recently featured in CPA Australia's INTHEBLACK publication. As a commercially trained accountant, Chris shares his experience as CEO leading Whiddon through many initiatives, projects and moments. One highlight being helping a man to tie his shoelaces.



Read more about this story here

## Introducing best-practices in dementia care for our employees

We introduced our Dementia Microlearning Program to coincide with Dementia Action Week in September. The aim of the microlearning project is to build a research-led, on-the-ground game plan for addressing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia.

**I'm really excited that Whiddon is introducing this tool at our sites because we found here at Laurieton that sitting with your staff and talking to them is valuable. This program is going to answer a lot of their questions and help them with delivering their relationship-based care.**

Dale Feeney, Whiddon Laurieton Deputy Care Services

Read more about this initiative here:



# Upgrades at our Care Homes

## Whiddon Narrabri – Jessie Hunt

Whiddon Narrabri - Jessie Hunt is a 45-bed Home which is made up of triple and double rooms, with a small number of single bedded rooms and shared common areas

### Project Snapshot

#### Project Cost: \$4.1million

The care home was in need of transformation to suit the needs of the residents and wider Narrabri community. To combat this we:

- Converted 7 rooms to replace triples with doubles and upgraded associated shared ensuites.
- Converted double rooms with common area showering and toileting to double companion rooms with a shared ensuite
- Added new skylights to improve natural lighting through common areas
- Converted existing commercial kitchen into a new Home Style Resident Interactive Kitchen
- Added a fit for purpose hair salon





## Whiddon Wingham

Whiddon Wingham comprises of 82 beds, made up of quad, double and single bed rooms. The site has 2 main areas of accommodation - one being single ensuite rooms over 3 floors, known as Primrose Wing, and the other being a mixture of quad, double and single rooms known as Wingham and Ashmore Wings.

### Project Snapshot

#### Project Cost: \$5.9million

There were upgrades required to better suit the residents living and employees working at the care home. To achieve this we:

- Converted 5 quad rooms into double rooms, and 2 single rooms into double rooms
- Installed and fit out the new double rooms
- Installed backup diesel power generator
- Created a new dedicated activities/ sunroom space



## Whiddon Bourke

Whiddon Bourke consists of 12 Aged Care beds and has a combined lounge, dining and commercial kitchen space.

### Project Snapshot

#### Project Cost: \$795k

The common area environment presented as tired and in need of some uplift. To overcome these challenges we;

- Upgraded rooms to support a diverse range of care needs, including High Care
- Installed new ensuite heat lamps
- Upgraded our night staff accommodation room
- Added window furnishings throughout resident rooms





# The Sky is the Limit with Stan!

Hi, I'm Stan and I'm so excited to share my story in this magazine.

I first moved into Whiddon's Independent Living Units at Redhead with my wife, Valerie, in 2020. We were drawn to the beautiful water views and being close to the sea was important to us. The units provided us with the support that we needed, and meeting other residents here was wonderful.

Being co-located to the Residential Aged Care facility was also very handy. Valerie was admitted for respite at John Read House and this made it very convenient for me to visit as much as possible.

When Valerie passed away in 2022, I thought it would be a good idea to look into receiving some extra assistance at home. I've been receiving Whiddon's home care services since 2022 and have loved meeting and connecting with my care workers, coordinators and the Whiddon team.

One of my favourite things to do is tend to my flower beds and veggie gardens. My gardens face Keppel House and it's always so lovely hearing residents living at the Residential Care Home comment on how much they love seeing my gardens blossoming at different times of the year.

I also took part in Whiddon's Falls Prevention trial program. This was such a great program to be part of, especially when I saw results in my overall mobility and balance. My care worker, Rhonda visits every week, and we do the recommended exercises together using the iPad that is provided.

At 89 years young, my three grandsons and I decided to go skydiving together! It was such a marvellous experience. I was able to cross this off my bucket list alongside three important people in my life. We're planning to do it again for my 90th! (although my granddaughter has decided to sit this one out).

Living in the Independent Living Units and having the support at home has really allowed me to do the things I love the most. I'm always out and about doing the things I love and my entire outlook on life has changed. I enjoy telling people that you're never too old to do the things you love!

It's been an absolute pleasure being part of the Whiddon Family and am looking forward to spending many more years in my home.

**Thank you for reading my story. I wish you all a happy and safe 2024.**





# Navigating the Fair Work Wave

 **15%**  
wage  
increase  
eligible Aged Care workers

In February 2023, the Fair Work Commission (FWC) announced a landmark 15% wage increase for eligible Aged Care workers, impacting classifications such as Registered Nurses, Enrolled Nurses, Assistants in Nursing, Home Care employees, Recreational Activities and Lifestyle Officers, and certain kitchen staff. This decision aims to enhance the financial wellbeing of those who play a crucial role in caring for our loved ones.

The increase was set to be implemented from the first full pay period on or after 30 June 2023. As an organisation, we have been proactively addressing the wage increase, calculating draft pay rates, and planning to pass on the 15% increase to cover rates of pay, leave balances, superannuation, and employee on-costs.

While we are ecstatic that the decision to apply the increase has finally been made for our employees in direct care, it still leaves us with around a quarter of our people left behind and the impact it's having is damaging, unnecessary and unacceptable. The increased wages do not apply to the non-care employees.

Throughout 2023, we have been advocating on behalf of our employees and urging the FWC to expedite the Work Value Case decision for a comprehensive and equitable resolution, while also recognising the impact that all employees have

on our residents, clients, and communities. Our CEO, Chris also attended the Fair Work Hearing in December to make representations for the need to increase support staff and further increases for care staff.

Whiddon remains committed to transparent communication and fair compensation, advocating for all team members to ensure a thriving and supportive work environment. We've been talking to media, our peak body – ACCPA and doing what we can to get Fair Work to listen and make a decision about non-care employees.

We have also continued reviewing our various Enterprise Agreement rates to ensure we maintain our competitive pay rates within the market.

As this landscape continues to unfold, we will always share milestones and updates with our employees, residents, and families.

# Celebrating Women in Leadership

At Whiddon, we take immense pride in fostering a workplace culture that thrives on diversity and inclusivity. One shining example of this commitment is the strong presence of women in leadership positions within our organisation. From our Board of Directors to our Executive Team, the influence and expertise of these remarkable women contribute significantly to shaping the direction of Whiddon.

Our Board is graced by visionary women who bring a wealth of experience and diverse perspectives to the table. Their strategic guidance and unwavering commitment to our mission play a pivotal role in driving Whiddon's success. We believe in the power of representation, and with women at the helm, our decision-making processes are enriched by a variety of viewpoints that ultimately benefit our residents, employees, and stakeholders.



Deborah Lambourne



Dr. Simone Scovell



Alyson Jarrett

Deputy Chief Executive Officer



Rebecca Adams

Chief Financial Officer



Karn Nelson

Executive General Manager, Research & Positive Ageing



Jacky Hopwood

Executive General Manager People & Culture



Sharon Fletcher

General Manager Quality, Care & Compliance



Stacy Wake

General Manager Compliance & Corporate Risk



Melissa Frederick

General Manager People & Culture



Michelle Ring

General Manager Marketing & Communications

Our Executive Team also stands as a testament to the capabilities and leadership prowess of women within our ranks. Their dedication to excellence, innovation, and compassionate care sets the tone for the entire organisation. We recognise that leadership is not solely about titles but about the positive impact one can make, and our female leaders embody this ethos wholeheartedly.

Together, we continue our journey towards creating a workplace that values and uplifts every voice, ensuring that Whiddon remains a place where everyone can thrive.



# Supporting our employee's growth and development

Whiddon is proud to offer its Scholarship Program to employees, providing opportunities to grow and continue their development within their chosen fields. From nursing and care staff to support services and leadership, these opportunities would not be possible without the support from our Sponsors.

“ I am so thankful to Whiddon for providing me with an opportunity to follow my dreams and become a professional chef.  
**Cherrie Wilson** ”

## Congratulations to our 2023 Scholarship Program Winners

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Katherine Ocon</b> , Kelso            | <b>Anjila Raju</b> , Glenfield          | <b>Nidhin Mohan</b> , Grafton                 |
| <b>Kelly-Ann McMillan</b> , Redhead      | <b>Mariana Aguilar</b> , Easton Park    | <b>Ganesh Dahal</b> , Easton Park             |
| <b>Ganesh Dahal</b> , Easton Park        | <b>Seema Acharya</b> , Easton Park      | <b>Nickola Starrenburg</b> , Support Services |
| <b>Kayla Salsman</b> , Tamworth          | <b>Avishek Ghosh</b> , Support Services | <b>Jonti Libeau</b> , Easton Park             |
| <b>Jemma Phillips</b> , Support Services | <b>Lorinda George</b> , Casino          | <b>Ashley Stevens</b> , Support Services      |

With thanks to our sponsors:





# A message from our Deputy CEO

## Advancing health, driving innovation & strengthening governance

Our purpose at Whiddon is to enrich people's lives and make a real difference. We have built our model of care around meaningful relationships and continual innovation to create positive impact for our residents and clients.

Over the past 12 months, Whiddon has forged important partnerships with more than thirteen organisations, including Universities and health care innovators, to commence exciting research projects and trials – at the leading edge of aged care. These partnerships will see us change the way we work in the areas of falls prevention, pain management, dementia support, pathology, employee wellbeing, palliative care, and medication management.

Importantly, we have also re-launched our Relationship Based Care (RBC) program at Whiddon. RBC supports more tailored care for our residents and clients, and is based on personal connection, meaningful activities, and continuity of care. All employees at Whiddon, in every single role, are receiving training and support to ensure that RBC underpins everything we do at Whiddon and, most importantly, the way we provide care.

This year, we have also seen a variety of government-led changes to provider responsibilities to help strengthen governance practices. Whiddon has worked proactively to meet and exceed these responsibilities.

Whiddon has now created our Quality Care and Consumer Advisory Bodies, to provide our consumers with a strong voice and the opportunity to give us feedback on the quality of our care and services.

We are continuing to focus our efforts on achieving the new Mandated Care minutes, with an average of 201 care minutes across our homes and the majority of our Homes exceeding, or within 10% of achieving, the Care Minute targets.

Additionally, 95% of our Homes are meeting the 24x7 Registered Nurse requirements (with two of our Homes exempt from this requirement due to small size).

While we will continue to make every effort to meet the Care Minute and 24x7 Registered Nurse requirements, these do present ongoing challenges for providers like Whiddon. Particularly in regional areas, where staffing is an ongoing concern. As a sector, we need to work together to explore new strategies to bring more people to the aged care workforce into permanent and ongoing roles.

Aged Care is such an enriching and rewarding career, and we are lucky to have an amazingly committed and passionate workforce at Whiddon.

With the dark days of the pandemic now behind us, it is so uplifting to look ahead to 2024 and all of the opportunities we have to truly make a difference in the lives of our residents, clients, loved ones and our employees.

**Alyson Jarrett**  
Deputy CEO





# Purpose with passion



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today**

# Help enrich older people's lives

With a proud award-winning history, we rely on the generous support of our donors to continue innovating in the wellbeing space and improving quality of life for older Australians. There are many ways in which you can support our work and help enrich the lives of current and future generations.

No matter how large or small your gift is, your donation will truly make a difference and help us fulfil our purpose to enrich lives and make a real difference.

### What our donations are used for:



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If you'd like to make a donation, please contact your Care Manager, call **1300 738 388** or visit [www.whiddon.com.au/donate/](http://www.whiddon.com.au/donate/)

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**Whiddon**  
Award-winning care