

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

On 11 December 2017 we held the AGM for RSL LifeCare. The Annual Report has now been sent to the printers and copies will be available in January.

Over the last year there has been considerable change in the membership of the Board. I welcome the significant expertise we have on the Board as it has provided us with new energy as we navigate challenging times. In addition to myself, your Board for the coming year will be James Brown, Kris Hume, Nathan Jacobsen; and we are delighted to welcome two new directors - Bruce Bailey and Samantha Challinor who recently joined the Board.

This year the senior leadership team has been enhanced with the establishment of a number of Executive General Manager roles. I welcome those who were appointed to those roles and we are pleased to see them already contributing to the organisation.

The organisation continues to grow across NSW and ACT. The ongoing growth pipeline will enhance the reach of our services and access to quality facilities, services and care provided by RSL LifeCare. The number of veterans and their families, and older people who are supported, increases each time RSL LifeCare increases its footprint. We remain committed to our charitable purposes and proudly support people from all walks of life to live with us. Over 40% of the people living in our nursing homes are financially disadvantaged and we reserve 20% of our homes for concessional purposes. Over 100 younger veterans have been helped through the Homes for Heroes program.

In the history of RSL LifeCare we are currently in extraordinary times. Over the past 16 years the organisation has gone through an extraordinary phase of recovery and stabilisation of its financial position, to then grow considerably with 22 acquisitions in a 7-year period.

RSL LifeCare is in a strong financial position to deal with future challenges. However, the Inquiry under the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (NSW) conducted by the Hon. P A Bergin SC, and the ACNC investigation have exposed a need for a significant reset of the organisation's governance and business systems. This has involved a significant amount of work by the Board, management and staff over the past months, and I wish to recognise the immense efforts that have gone into that work. To give an indication of that effort, at the Board level, where there would normally be 5 to 6 Board meetings in the year, in this last 12 months there were 8 Board meetings up to 24 August, and since then there have been a further 9 Board meetings, totalling 17 for the year. In addition, an Inquiries Sub-Committee (ISC) was formed to deal in an expedient manner with actions in regard to the inquiries and investigations. Since the establishment of the ISC at the end of August, the committee has considered and passed 99 resolutions. All the Board meetings, the work of the ISC and indeed the other committees has been a tremendous effort and they have all been in the best interests of the organisation. I thank Directors, Management and staff for that effort. It is placing us in a stronger position to run an organisation that looks after over 7500 people across NSW and the ACT.

Going forward, the Board wishes to place an increased focus on the care and support for veterans and we are exploring a range of ways to increase support for younger veterans and their families, as well as our more traditional support for older people. We will continue to operate all our high quality services, and deliver on our planned growth in places where veterans and older people may not otherwise have the choice of services designed for their needs.

To address some of the challenges exposed by the Inquiries, and improve the support we give staff and clients, we are also investing in our information systems and people. The Board is enormously proud of the quality of care that staff in the organisation deliver, and over the coming years we want to make that work a little easier, so they have more time to spend with the people we are here to serve.

At the same time as we worked with various government bodies conducting Inquiries, we did not lose focus on the services we deliver. It is a credit to the staff that despite those pressures we kept an unblemished quality accreditation record. Some other highlights of the past year included the opening of our new nursing home, John Edmondson VC Gardens at Austral, and the extension to Peter Sinclair Gardens in Hawks Nest. Right across our services the Rhythm of Life Festival was a fun time for our people to come together and celebrate, as well as have some friendly competition.

I am sure that during December we will see many people continuing to *Enjoy Life*. There will continue to be considerable work being done by the Board and management during the next few months. However, this is also the time many people have some leave and the chance to recharge their batteries.

I hope that you have a wonderful holiday season with your loved ones, and thank you for your trust and ongoing support for RSL Lifecare.


ANDREW CONDON
Chairman