



RSL CARE SA CHAIR'S REPORT 2020

Loretta Byers

It is my pleasure to present the 105th Annual Report for RSL Care SA covering the financial year 2019 – 2020, and what a year it has been!

The year has been dominated by the impact of COVID-19, not only on regions but for the nation and indeed the entire global community. For us as a provider of aged care services the threat posed from COVID-19 has been a very real and ever-present companion for most of 2020 and despite this pressure, or perhaps because of it, our resolve as an organisation has only strengthened. Our mission and objects as a respected not-for-profit organisation have served us well through these challenging times, and we are steadfast in our resolve to provide care and accommodation services to the elderly and vulnerable members of the ex-service community.



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It would be remiss of me to focus solely on explaining our response to COVID-19, although this has been a very significant body of work and a very positive achievement for us in terms of keeping all our residents safe during this time, in reality this is what you should expect from us as a minimum given our position as a respected provider. Apart from COVID-19, we have also needed to remain focussed on all other things that ensure our organisation is governed well, is strategically focussed, and that we continue to grow and deliver on our mission. So, let me put COVID-19 aside for now (you can read more about our response on page 20), and explain a few other things that have also kept us busy.

Our organisation continues to perform well financially and socially, and this year we have returned a responsible surplus of \$1.7M that will enable us to continue to pursue our altruistic endeavours, as well as grow and further develop our service offerings. We are also changing our facilities and our workforce in deliberate ways that not only respond to the needs of our current residents, but that will position us well to meet the future needs of those residents that we are yet to meet.

To my fellow Directors a huge thank you for your time and dedication to RSL Care SA. The agility of the Board makes the organisation successful and admired by many. Our Board subcommittee structure has operated very successfully, and I personally thank the Chairs of those committees, Geoff Tattersall Audit Finance and Governance, Stephen Knight Property and Strategy, Elizabeth Clare Care and Compliance, myself Retirement Living Committee. Also, the members of these committees dedicate hours of additional work to support the organisation and provide advice to the management team.

In November of 2019 I had the pleasure of attending RSL Care SA's Staff Appreciation Evening, which is an event I look forward to every year as it provides me with an opportunity to thank all of our wonderful staff in person on behalf of the Board.



Over the past five years we have handed out 101 awards commemorating five years of service, 40 for 10 years' service, 18 for 15 years' service, and 4 for periods of service that extend beyond 20 years. This level of commitment from our staff is nothing short of inspirational, and I thank them all for their many years of exemplary work. This recognition is particularly relevant as I write this report because we are currently celebrating the International Year of the Nurse, which was celebrated on the 12th of May 2020, being the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. In this very important year and at this particularly challenging time in our country, I acknowledge our care staff for all they do.

ANZAC Day was certainly a little different this year, with the State's COVID-19 restrictions impacting on our usual commemorative events that in past years have been very much community focussed. However, despite the challenges of the pandemic we were not going to be defeated, and we were determined to maintain our unbroken record of having held a Dawn Service at Myrtle Bank every Anzac Day since 1917. So, our 103rd ANZAC Day Dawn Service saw us holding a driveway vigil for the members of the local community who lined Ferguson Avenue, and our bugler played the Last Post on the roof top of our Coral Sea apartments. Following this, a private ceremony was held in the home, where a veteran representative from each of the three services (Navy, Army and Air Force) laid wreaths on behalf



of all staff and residents. It was a modest but very moving ceremony.

Our organisation has for many years been well known and well respected as a trusted provider of residential care services for the aged, but increasingly we are assuming a greater responsibility for supporting younger veterans who find themselves on the homeless spectrum here in South Australia. While it saddens me that there remains such a need in South Australia, I am pleased to report that through our homeless veteran program, Andrew Russell Veteran Living (ARVL), we have now provided over 12,500 nights of emergency accommodation to homeless veterans who have been in desperate need of help. This is a remarkable achievement for a program that is only in its fourth year, and I commend Ryan Ollwitz for his magnificent work in this area throughout the year. Ryan discharged from the Army mid-2019 and joined the RSL Care SA team as Program Manager for ARVL, and he has done a sterling job in progressing this important area of mission for RSL Care SA.

As part of our work through ARVL RSL Care SA continues to be at the forefront of discussions concerning issues of veteran homelessness on the national stage, and in September 2019 we were pleased to host a workshop on this issue that brought together a variety of homeless service providers along with Open Arms, DVA, and the Community Housing Industry

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seen in the manner in which we are planning to provide this significant residential care service in a rural area of genuine need. Many aged care operators are struggling to provide care services in regional settings, and RSL Care SA is pleased that we can provide this support to veterans and the broader community.

It would be neglectful of me not to mention Nathan

Association (CHIA). This workshop was held at the War Veterans Home in Myrtle Bank, and the impressive list of attendees explored a broad variety of complex issues associated with veteran homelessness. The workshop generated a variety of useful outcomes and follow up actions, and perhaps most importantly it connected an extremely capable and committed network of people who are all eager to improve the situation of veteran homelessness nationally. The fact that RSL Care SA has been supporting homeless veterans since 1915 is not lost on me, and we will continue to serve our veteran community in this manner for as long as the need remains. With an eye on the future however, it is our hope that we can all see this need greatly reduced as we collectively generate better outcomes for our emerging veteran groups.

Speaking of the future, the Board of RSL Care SA is pleased to report that we are quickly progressing through the goals of our ten-year plan (now in its fourth year), and the strategic direction we set back in 2016 will ultimately see us deliver a brand new 72-bed residential aged care facility in Murray Bridge by April 2023. The CEO will explain more about this project in his report, however for now I'd like to highlight the importance that our Board places on our capacity to deliver on our mission-based activities, and the evidence of this can be

Klinge and his leadership team for their efforts in the past year which have been exceptional, the challenges that they have been presented with have been extraordinary and well beyond the normal operating environment that would be expected by employees. On behalf of all Directors, we sincerely thank you all.

As I leave you now, I would like to inform you that this will be my final report as Chair, and as a Director of RSL Care SA, because after 12 years on the Board I am stepping down to allow the next generation of leaders to take up the mantle. While I will remain very connected to RSL Care SA through invited roles on Board sub committees and the like, I would like to take this opportunity to use my final words to acknowledge and thank all of the staff, volunteers, family members and residents who have walked our halls during my time as a Director of RSL Care SA. It has been a genuine privilege to be involved with you all, and I am very proud of everything that collectively we have achieved. I wish you all the very best as we head into the Christmas period, and I will be watching with interest and excitement to see what FY20/21 and the future brings for RSL Care SA.

Loretta Byers
Chair
RSL Care SA



Florence Nightingale, c. 1860

To celebrate the invaluable contribution of Nurses and Midwives to global health care and to advance nurses' vital role in transforming health care around the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife – Nursing the World to Health.

2020 is also the year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. Florence Nightingale established the principles of modern nursing and hospital sanitation.

In acknowledging the incredible contribution that nurses have made to Australia's military forces and to our own organisation, RSL Care SA is very pleased to dedicate this Annual Report in recognition of their service.



Nurses Marching, 7th Australian General Hospital, Sister Isabel Erskine Plante, World War II, circa 1942