

Out of the *Blue*

Autumn 2011



Message from the CEO

Carol Allen



It was my great pleasure at the end of last year to accept a position on the Board of Aged & Community Care Victoria.

This provides an opportunity to work collaboratively with other aged care organisations in ensuring that the aged care sector continues to have meaningful dialogue with government bodies, politician's and each other.

Blue Cross recognises that Australia's rapidly ageing population requires careful planning of aged care services to respond to future needs. An article in *The Age* (25 February 2011) again reminds us that Australia will be short nearly 300,000 aged care places by 2050 without significant changes to policy, according to a study by analysts Access Economics. At BlueCross we take these issues seriously and are constantly exploring new development opportunities and best practice in the quality of care and lifestyle of residents in aged care facilities and those requiring help to remain at home.

Being part of ACCV provides a stronger voice to advocate on behalf of the thousands of elderly Australians and families we support and to sustain the vital services that we all provide to the community, now and in the future.

Looking for a rewarding opportunity to help make someone's day?



Go to page 2 and see how you can become involved in our Volunteer program.

Productivity Commission Report: Caring for Older Australians

On 21 January 2011, the Productivity Commission delivered a draft report on its comprehensive review of aged care in Australia: *Caring for Older Australians*. Grant Thornton Australia Ltd has since evaluated the findings and has produced a response which can be found at <http://www.grantthornton.com.au>

Here is snapshot of what Grant Thornton Australia had to say:

- The findings in relation to the current state of the sector were relatively predictable and the Commission has made good use of over 500 public submissions to the review as well as their own industry examinations.
- Importantly, the Commission has recognised that the sector

requires a complete overhaul, rather than simply fine tuning, if Australia is to have a sustainable aged care system in the future.

- Grant Thornton estimates that more than \$21 billion of investment will be required in residential aged care infrastructure over the coming decade. This includes the re-development of dated facilities as well as sector expansion to accommodate an ageing population.
- The report put forward a number of innovative strategies that were not widely anticipated, including a Government managed Equity Release scheme which would enable consumers to make accommodation payments and care co-payments without having to sell their homes.

Productivity Commission Report continued on page 4.

Never a dull moment with an exciting few months ahead!

There is never a dull moment at BlueCross as we continue to provide the best care and comfort to all of our clients. Keep your eyes out for a few of our special events coming up over the next few months, including our annual 97th and Over Birthday Party in April, and later in the year to celebrate the United Nations International Day of the Older Person there will a Big Band Extravaganza to look forward to!

So as we start heading into the cooler months let's all keep our minds active and bodies healthy as we aim to make someone's day, everyday.



Volunteers Corner

BlueCross has a significant number of volunteers making an incredible difference in the lives of our residents, and as a result in 2011 we are committed to expanding our volunteer base across all residences.

To facilitate this expansion Mandy Fullerton has been appointed as the Volunteer and Events Manager.

The difference that the volunteers can make can be seen at BlueCross Springfield in Box Hill. Many people who visit note that there is so much activity and laughter, as well as people coming and going. This is due to the fact that on any given day of the week you will find at least one of

the 40 volunteers there supporting our residents in various ways; this could be by singing karaoke in the lounge, having a one to one conversation, delivering shopping items for the kiosk, not to forget the team that cooks up a BBQ and our faithful bus drivers. Their wonderful support enhances the busy Leisure and Lifestyle program at BlueCross Springfield, and as a result our volunteers are highly respected and valued by the staff, families and residents.

It is not only the residents who gain so much from the volunteers, the volunteers themselves often comment on the sense of satisfaction that comes from helping others and giving back to the community, as well as the opportunity to learn new skills and meet likeminded people .

"I find every time I come rewarding – the residents and staff are so friendly and I feel very welcome. It is so interesting having a chat with the residents"

"I enjoy seeing the residents enjoy themselves during craft session – their pleasure and involvement is my reward."

"When I come and visit and see the person I am visiting and to see their face light up that is a reward which I don't expect. I also learn through these visits more about the person and their family."

If you would like to become involved contact Mandy Fullerton our Volunteer and Events Manager on 0458 090 969.



Matilda the Robot at the Boulevard

Not your average Robot!

In January this year Matilda the emotionally intelligent robot for aged care visited The Boulevard residence in Mill Park as part of a research project undertaken by La Trobe University.

We had two film crews, one even from France, gathering video and photographic footage of Matilda

calling bingo, conducting a quiz and interacting with various residents, which was quite an experience to watch. We soon discovered that Matilda isn't your average robot! She has the ability to display emotions such as happiness and sadness and she even blushes and dances. Matilda was a real hit with the residents and we are hoping that she will return to play some more bingo soon.



Matilda the Robot

Tarralla's Birthday Celebration



Tarralla's fifth birthday was celebrated with our hostel, independent living village residents, staff and families in early January with a High Tea and an afternoon of light classical music.

Staff and residents were encouraged to dress up in frocks and pearls. We were fortunate to have two very talented up and coming classical musicians Jess and Melissa who entranced us all with their expertise on harp and cello.



The current residents enjoyed hearing the stories of Tarralla's beginning from the original staff and village residents and browsing through a scrap book of cuttings from that time.

We all then enjoyed a delicious array of tiny cakes, sandwiches and savouries, scones jam and cream and topped off of course with the chocolate birthday cake. It was a lovely afternoon that was thoroughly enjoyed by all, a fitting celebration of a milestone in Tarralla's history.



Peter, our Village resident poet had written a poem for the occasion:

Tarralla

Welcome today to the old and the new

As we celebrate our birthday with the BlueCross crew

A pleasant place to while away the hours
With ongoing functions, be it
sunshine or showers

Many of the retirement Village have
joined us in the fun

Today is a special day, afternoon tea
after a five year run

A special welcome for those who
have not made the move

You are missing an opportunity, the
transition is quite smooth

For those who have not checked us
out, it is a shame

For Hostel living with bedside staff is
the name of the game.

Darnlee Open Day

Basking in the afternoon sunlight, our grand old lady Darnlee was looking very proud. Her high ceilings seemed higher, her garden seemed greener and there was an air of confidence flowing through her spacious rooms.

We were blessed with fine weather, good music, Melbourne's best cup cakes and a full book of personal tours. No doubt our guests enjoyed Darnlee's grand yet homely environment and the opportunity to talk with our placement consultants

who answered all questions about Darnlee and the aged care process.

A big thanks to everyone from BlueCross whose enthusiasm and hard work made it such a successful day. Most importantly, thank you to all the Darnlee residents for their contribution on this sunny afternoon.

If for any reason you missed our Open Day but have an enquiry or would like a tour of Darnlee, please contact our admissions enquiries on 1300 133 414.

what a day!



BlueCross receives award from **Compassionate Friends Victoria Inc.**



Blue Cross Ashby was nominated by Marge Johnson, Administration Support Officer, who suffered a sudden and tragic loss in her family in March last year. Blue Cross was recognised alongside 16 other organisations in Victoria who also received an award this year.

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) are a support group who provide help to people who are bereaved as well as information and education about the grief experience, so as to help those in the community to become more understanding of the impact of grief on the individual.

TCF believes that employers who have shown extra care and compassion to employees – going above and beyond the normal policies of most companies in helping employees who have suffered the death of a loved one deserve to be recognised.

Blue Cross does not do these things for recognition, but to support our most valuable asset, the wonderful people who work with us and support our clients.

TCF hopes that the awards will encourage other employers to review their current bereavement practices.



The award was accepted by (L-R) Lisa Coombes, Blue Cross Northern Regional Manager, Marge Johnson and Raelene Pearce, who was acting manager at Ashby during the time Marge was on extended leave.

The TCF Awards recognise the following employer qualities:

- Employer who has personally supported an employee through their bereavement.
- Employer who has arranged for additional time off, beyond the familiar three days bereavement leave.
- Those who have provided support services and/or time off work to obtain counselling.
- Caring attitude and ability to empathise demonstrated by the employer's entire workforce.
- Those who have showed flexibility in work assignments during the stress associated with the death of a loved one.
- Other aspects of compassion that the bereaved will remember forever.

Productivity Commission Report: *Caring for Older Australians*

- The report also calls for the creation of a new agency to assume many of the regulatory roles currently undertaken by the Department of Health and Ageing. Called the Australian Aged Care Regulation Commission (AACRC), it would

also take on responsibility for complaints handling and the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency would become a statutory authority within the AACRC.

- An Australian Seniors Gateway Agency would be introduced to

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provide information, assessment, care co-ordination and carer referral services.

The Commission has invited responses to the draft report by 21 March 2011 on which BlueCross will certainly take the opportunity to make comment.

For more information call
Residential Enquiries **1300 133 414**
or Community Care Enquiries **1300 786 857**
or visit www.bluecross.com.au



ANGLESEA	CHELSEA	EAST MALVERN	IVANHOE	LOWER TEMPLESTOWE	MULGRAVE	TEMPLESTOWE
AVONDALE HEIGHTS	CHELTENHAM	GLENROY	KEW	MILL PARK	SUNSHINE	TOORAK
BOX HILL	CROYDON	HEIDELBERG	KILMORE	MOOROOLBARK	SURREY HILLS	