

Spring 2017

# Out of the Blue



**BlueCross**  
community & residential services

## Message from the Chief Executive



Alan Lilly,  
Chief Executive



Residents Brian and Ivy enjoying the Autumdale Elvis themed extravaganza party

Welcome to the spring edition of Out of the Blue. I hope that your spring has got off to a great start and as always, I look forward to sharing this introduction with you. By now, you will be well aware that a merger is underway between BlueCross and Sapphire Care. I am confident that these two well recognised and respected brands in our community are going to make for an even better Residential Care and HomeCare experience for our residents, clients, their families and our staff and we're on track for this to take effect from 1 November 2017. The key changes of course are occurring at the Central Office level where we are redesigning our structure and administrative functions to support our frontline residential care and home service delivery. We are not expecting any significant impact on our frontline care and services.

We have also had a very busy winter period impacted by both flu and gastro outbreaks and this is a major challenge for our residents, their families and those caring for them. We have never experienced as many outbreaks at a single point in time previously and you may be aware through media reports, this is definitely one of the worst flu seasons in the past 15 years. Whilst we have very high vaccination rates amongst our residents and we monitor this, we have learned this year that we

will need the same vigilance in the future around monitoring staff vaccination rates. We offer our staff free vaccinations and provide an on-site service but staff movements make this more challenging to monitor. Our Executive Committee discussed this recently and we will have a more targeted focus in 2018. In this edition of Out of the Blue, we also have some tips and advice as to how you can help us. Let us know if you would like any more information and make sure that you have discussed vaccinations with your doctor too.

I am delighted to say that we have successfully run our first staff survey using our new on-line technology and we are just in the process of finalising the same process for residents and carers as we know that real-time or close to real-time feedback is the best way to monitor how we're doing over the course of time. In the meantime, we are using the new Australian Aged Care Quality Agency's independent assessment used as part of the triennial accreditation process and based on the first five residence surveys this year, we are currently achieving an overall score of 92%. Whilst that's great news, I am always interested in what makes up the remaining 8% and what can we do to make our service and care even better. If ever you have concerns, please always ask to speak to our Residence Manager or Care Advisor

in HomeCare because we know they are best placed to listen and resolve issues quickly. However, if ever you have any remaining concerns which have not been addressed, please write to us at [office@bluecross.com.au](mailto:office@bluecross.com.au) and we will be sure to pass this on for follow-up.

Finally, I mentioned last time that we have been making some great improvements in staffing to reduce our reliance on external agency staff. I am delighted to say we have more than halved our vacancy rates with our Target Zero program implemented in June this year.

We have also introduced our own BlueCross Bank to provide flexibility for our staff and we are now using less agency staff too. Whilst this has been challenged during the recent flu season, during the past six months, we have reduced agency used by 51% compared with the same time last year and with considerably more residents in our care. This is a great outcome for improving continuity of care. Well, that's about it from me. I am excited by the challenges ahead and look forward to seeing many of you during the upcoming BlueCross Christmas Party season. Until then, take care and kind regards.

*Alan Lilly*

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# The BlueCross Extravaganza

Every year our residences host a special event to celebrate positive ageing and having fun – no matter what age you are!

The BlueCross Extravaganza is a special celebration held annually at each residence. This unique party was inspired by Victorian Seniors Week. During this colourful event, residents, family, friends, staff, volunteers and the wider community come together in celebration of making the most out of life, at any age. All BlueCross residences host their own unique Extravaganza, staff and residents embrace the opportunity to get creative and have fun with choosing and preparing their own theme.

## BlueCross Autumdale

True to 50's rock and roll Autumdale's Elvis theme was very authentic, there were quite a few pink ladies wearing neck scarfs, circle skirts and a fair few Elvises in the building! Our favourite resident 'Elvis', Rama rocked the Elvis hairstyle, sunnies, silver microphone and a rhinestone collared jacket. Everyone danced and sang along to classics like Jailhouse Rock, Blue Suede Shoes and Love Me Tender.

## BlueCross Baradine

Great Gatsby dressers, pearls, glamour and gangsters! The residents, family, friends, Billanook college students and staff at Baradine had a roaring good time at their Great Gatsby themed Extravaganza party. As they walked down the red carpet, they stopped to take photos and enjoy their glamorous moment in the spotlight, with many saying they felt like stars at the Oscars! There was plenty of laughter, dancing, good food and wonderful company.

## BlueCross Scotchmans Creek

At their carnival themed Extravaganza there were many balloons, colourful clowns and ring masters. The Scotchmans Creek community enjoyed many fun activities including, face painting, fortune telling, tattoo booth, a ring toss game, balloon twisting, ping pong toss, jelly bean guess, fresh buttery popcorn, cupcakes and a delicious carnival inspired lunch.

## BlueCross Willowmeade

Hundreds of enormous colourful ice flakes and lots of snow covered the residence at Willowmeade for their Winter wonderland theme. The room was so beautifully decorated that residents were in awe of the transformation! Leading up to the event, residents, staff and the students from Broadford High School worked together to create all the props. Everyone danced along to live music as they shared a wonderful lunch and a Bombe Alaska (ice-cream cake) for dessert.



A resident being serenaded by Elvis at Autumdale



BlueCross Autumdale, Cheltenham



BlueCross Baradine, Mooroolbark



BlueCross Scotchmans Creek, Mount Waverley



BlueCross Willowmeade, Kilmore

# BlueCross and Sapphire Care merge



In July, we announced that two wonderful organizations and leading aged care providers, BlueCross and Sapphire Care were merging. Collectively, Sapphire Care and BlueCross have been providing high quality community and residential care services for almost forty years and throughout this time, they have built trusted brands and respected reputations within the communities which they serve. BlueCross and Sapphire Care currently own and operate thirty-five existing residential services across metropolitan Melbourne, Phillip Island and Kilmore. With more than 2630 residential care beds, a pipeline

of more than 500 new beds to become active in the next two years and a HomeCare service delivering care to more than 1000 community clients, the company is committed to being a leading provider in the sector. "I am delighted to be leading this great company which is very focused on providing high quality care and service, with the highest standard of accommodation to meet the changing needs of our communities," said BlueCross Chief Executive Alan Lilly. The merger of BlueCross and Sapphire Care will provide consistent quality care to older Victorians now and into the future.



# BlueCross HomeCare

## Supporting your choices

95 year old Daphne Chard has lived in her family home for over 60 years. When it became harder for her to live independently at home, she decided to try BlueCross' DVA (Department of Veteran Affairs) services to support her choice to stay in her home.

Daphne lives with her son Roy, who is her primary carer. Registered nurse, Jacqui Simao who has known Roy and Daphne for over five years describes them as "such a lovely family, they enjoy spending time with each other and making the most of each day together".

BlueCross nurses and carers regularly visit Daphne to assist with maintaining her physical wellbeing. This is one of the key reasons why Daphne is able to continue to live at home. Using BlueCross services has also helped support the whole family. When Daphne has her personal care session, her son Roy enjoys playing golf with his friends. "It's a wonderful way to ensure that carers are looked after too. It's just

so important that carers take much needed breaks" said Jacqui.

Described as having a wonderful sense of humour and always having a smile to share, Daphne is one of the many HomeCare clients that choose BlueCross for nursing and personal care.

The federal government funds HomeCare services and packages that assist people to remain at home. Recent reforms to HomeCare packages



give the client greater control over how their funding is spent. For those who are considering HomeCare, there are a range of services available some of which include:

- assistance with dressing or showering
- help with domestic tasks
- shopping
- meal preparation
- medication monitoring
- transport to your appointments or community events
- social activities.

Our job is to help clients get the most out of their HomeCare package and support their independence and choice.

For further details and bookings, please contact our HomeCare team on **1300 133 414**

## Three simple ways to stop the spread of infection

Flu and gastro are infections that can greatly impact the health and wellbeing of older people, due to their levels of immunity and any pre-existing medical conditions. When an outbreak occurs, we implement strict infection control protocols, which include measures over and above what authorities require. This is done to minimise the spread of infection, protect the health and safety of residents and staff and resolve outbreaks quickly. BlueCross engages the services of extra staff to assist with the additional care needs of our residents and to ensure the residence is sanitised and clean during and after the outbreak.

**Below are some simple ways that you can help stop the spread of infection:**



### Vaccination

Getting yourself vaccinated against flu every year is a very effective way to prevent the spread of flu. This is one of the best ways to protect your loved one and the wider community from this virus.



### Hygiene

Please follow all precautions that are put in place including handwashing on entry and prior to leaving. Please cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and wash hands afterwards. If you do visit during an outbreak, please speak with reception who will provide you with protective clothing (if this is required).



### When not to visit?

If you've been unwell with a fever, sore throat or have any symptoms associated with flu or gastro, please do not visit.

Don't visit if you have been caring for young children with symptoms of gastro - it is highly contagious and our elderly residents are very susceptible.



# At our residences

## Friendship has no age limit

BlueCross Darnlee, Toorak

The community at BlueCross Darnlee were recently visited by their friends, the grade one students from Geelong Grammar Primary School. The children and residents enjoyed activities like origami, colouring-in and reading stories. It was a fun afternoon filled with lots of conversation and laughter.

The grade one students had a special gift for the residents, a basket full of fresh imperial mandarins that were grown in their school garden and a handmade card with a thank you note. The youngsters have created so much joy, that the school and leisure and lifestyle staff have planned ongoing regular visits. Some very special friendships have already formed, with a student and his mother having bonded with resident Beverly over their shared love of the Collingwood Football Club. They now regularly catch up for coffee and love spending time together.

"We are looking forward to more days like this, sharing wonderful memories that we can all look back on with a smile. With initiatives like this we hope to break down age barriers and create experiences where older and younger people can enjoy each others company and learn from one another" said Divya Babu, Leisure and Lifestyle Coordinator.



## International dance day

BlueCross Ashby, Templestowe Lower

In celebration of cultural diversity, the staff and residents at BlueCross Ashby dressed up and enjoyed music, food and dance from cultures around the world. A group of Greek and Chinese dancers performed beautiful traditional dances, with a few residents and staff joining in! After they enjoyed a delicious lunch, staff paraded around the residence in a conga line, weaving up and down the corridors and in and out of bedrooms ensuring everyone got to be a part of this special day.



**CARE  
OPINION** AUSTRALIA  
BE HEARD.

Care Opinion is an independent website where people can share their care experiences.

These stories are then shared with the Chief Executive of BlueCross who responds directly to them. All feedback is then passed onto staff, which is an opportunity for us to see the things we do well and the things we can improve.

If you have a story you'd like to share please visit [www.careopinion.org.au](http://www.careopinion.org.au)

## SPOTTED!

### Footballers on the loose at Ivanhoe

BlueCross Ivanhoe

Sportsbet recently filmed a TV commercial at BlueCross Ivanhoe. It was a lot of fun for residents who got to meet some of their favourite AFL and Rugby legends.



For all BlueCross enquiries call **1300 133 414**

or go to [www.bluecross.com.au](http://www.bluecross.com.au)

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