



Summer 2014–15

Out of the Blue

Season's Greetings!



Message from the CEO & MD



Carol Allen
CEO



David Eccles
Managing Director



Carol and David opening Ashby's new wing at a special event with residents and staff in October 2014

Reflecting on 2014 – message from Carol Allen

This year has been my ninth year as CEO of Blue Cross and it has been a fabulous journey but, after much thought, I have decided that it is time for me to retire and hand over my operational responsibilities to David Eccles. I will continue on the BlueCross Board and play an active role in our strategic direction and looking after your interests.

When I reflect on the last nine years and 2014, (it has again been a busy year) we have set and achieved our goals, and there are some that stand out for me as true highlights.

This year our slogan was Innovate for Excellence, and it has guided us as we developed new programs and initiatives to improve our services and strive for excellence. Many have been implemented with our vision of 'enriching lives' in mind.

The STARLife project is one innovation I'm very proud of and I thank Bridget Howes for her drive in making my vision a reality. This program is designed to provide best practice in dementia care and improve the quality of life for people living with dementia, and will be rolled out across all residential care services in 2015.

We introduced a number of other new initiatives including our Broughtonlea courtyard art sanctuary, the Better Practice Award-winning Tools For Life program at Monterey and the Springfield walking program.

Our commitment to providing quality and person-centred care has been recognised by the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency with 100 percent successful reaccreditation and glowing reviews received across the board from residents and assessors alike. We are thrilled with the feedback and letters we receive about how happy our residents are living at BlueCross. This is why we do what we do!

I recently found the 'Commitment Jar' we started in 2007. I committed to sharing my passion for making a difference to the lives of the people we care for and to build on our staff culture.

I leave BlueCross with a great sense of achievement and satisfaction and some sadness. I am excited about the future and new opportunities for BlueCross as well as for myself.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure working to enrich the lives of our residents and clients. I wish you all the very best for 2015, and beyond.

Carol Allen

Looking to 2015 – message from David Eccles

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Carol for her contribution to BlueCross and wish her all the best for her 'new way of life' in retirement.

Carol has been instrumental in growing the BlueCross brand and providing consistent and professional support to me in her role as CEO. Her passion for the provision of aged care that makes a difference is unquestionable. Carol's legacy will be the way we continue to enrich lives.

We are committed to investing in the aged care sector, with innovation, education, life engagement, truly integrated services and the provision of the highest quality care and services, all driving our vision for the future.

I look forward to sharing this next chapter of the BlueCross story with you over the coming year.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year – we hope you have fun and enjoy a safe and merry time celebrating the festive season.

David Eccles



Our STARRiders pedal to conquer cancer

'We are rolling closer and closer to the end of cancer.'
– Bridget Howes

In October, seven BlueCross staff members each cycled 200 km in the Ride to Conquer Cancer to raise an incredible \$25,000 for cancer research at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.

Representing various business units and residences, Bridget Howes, Craig Bardrick, Katrina Bolmat, Christine Brodrick, Sharon Hehir, Penny Hobson and Keirston Whelan together formed the STARRiders team.

Team member Bridget said, 'We are on a mission. We decided to team up for this two-day cycling journey through Victoria to raise money for the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.'

'We're here because we know that cancer is too big a disease to ignore. Our clients, residents and many staff will be touched by cancer but, by riding in this event, we are doing something about it. We are rolling closer and closer to the end of cancer.'

'It's an awesome triumph in a physical sense and emotionally as well.'

'We did training rides and helped each other to fundraise and generate awareness for critical cancer research at Peter Mac, the only public hospital in Australia solely dedicated to cancer.'

'It was such a supportive team to be a part of and we had a great weekend of hard riding – plus lots of food, laughs and friendly competition.'

'I think every STARFish Principle was met as we had loads of fun, definitely chose our attitude going up the hills, we were there for one another, and it made our day to achieve what we set out to do.'

Many thanks to everyone who donated to the BlueCross STARRiders and supported us along the way.



BlueCross celebrates another Oscar Hospitality National Award

On Friday 31 October at the Oscar Hospitality Aged Care Hospitality Awards, BlueCross was announced as a joint winner of the National Catering Innovation of the Year Award for their Purple Allergen Kits.

Developed by BlueCross in conjunction with Fildes Food Safety, the Purple Allergen Kits help eliminate the possibility of cross-contamination for residents with specific food allergies. The kits form an integral part of the meal preparation process in all BlueCross residences with on-site catering.

'BlueCross has always seen itself as a leader in best practice initiatives in aged care, so we're very passionate about looking for innovative and creative ways to do things,' said Verity Leith, BlueCross Residential General Manager. 'It's not necessarily about setting the world on fire; it's about doing something small that makes a huge difference to the lives of the residents.'

BlueCross was also in contention for three other Oscar National Hospitality Awards after winning several state awards in the week leading up to the national event:

- Upali Senanayake from BlueCross Silverwood won state Laundry Assistant of the Year
- Kylie Stephens of BlueCross Chelsea Manor won state Chef Manager of the Year
- BlueCross Chelsea Manor won state Facility Catering Service of the Year.

This is the third consecutive year BlueCross have been successful in these awards.



Spotlight on *Care at Home*

Can you believe it's almost 2015? New Years is often thought of as a time for reflection, renewed hope, and to focus on new goals and opportunities.

As Christmas approaches and 2014 comes to an end, we reflect on the year that has passed. Significant changes came into effect from the 1st of July with the implementation of the government's Living Longer Living Better reforms. One key focus of the reforms is about enabling people to remain in their home longer with the support of home care services.

Part of this focus was about creating sustainability, consistency and fairness in the system nationally. One such change effective from 1 July 2014, was to introduce new fee arrangements for Home Care Packages to provide a consistent approach to the way that older Australians contribute to the cost of the care. This arrangement ensures that people with similar income pay similar fees – regardless of where they live nationally – with safeguards in place for those with limited ability to pay.

Our 2014 mantra of Innovate for Excellence was also embraced by Care at Home. So we began to investigate what we could do to provide further support or new models of care to

help people stay in their own homes longer, in keeping with the spirit of the reforms.

Some initiatives we're looking at as we move into 2015 include:

- working with retirement villages to offer support and services to the residents that the village is unable to provide itself, thus enabling people to stay safely in the village community longer
- developing a day respite service model for people who live at home with carers or family who are unable to care for them during the day, such as carers who are working either full or part-time, or temporarily unavailable such as when on holiday
- introducing a live-in care service model which would provide one-on-one care on a long term or short term (respite care) basis as an alternative to residential care.

We are also introducing new systems to provide operational support, which will improve our ability to be responsive and manage clients.

To share your thoughts on what we could do to support you to remain in your home and stay engaged with the community, contact us on **1300 786 857** today.

Your home, your choice, our care

We know that many people want to maintain living independently at home, so BlueCross Care at Home provides support to individuals and families to help them achieve this.

Your *home*

A BlueCross carer comes into your home and provides the specialised care required.

Your *choice*

We work closely with our clients and their families to match people with a suitably qualified carer and tailor an individual program that is responsive to specific physical, medical, cultural and social needs.

Our *care*

Whether care is needed for one hour a week or 24 hours a day, BlueCross Care at Home can support you.

For more information on Care at Home services, please contact us on 1300 786 857.

Caitlin wins Victorian Apprentice of the Year

On Friday 26 September, BlueCross Willowmeade apprentice, Caitlin Maher was announced as the winner of the Victorian School-based Apprentice Award at the 60th annual Victorian Training Awards.

As the winner of the Victorian state award, Caitlin went on to be a finalist for the national level Australian School-based Apprentice of the Year Awards.

Currently completing a Certificate III in Aged Care, Caitlin has her sights set on ultimately completing a Bachelor of Nursing.

Caitlin completed her Year 12 studies at Assumption College this year, during which time she also embarked on a school-based apprenticeship in

aged care to get a head start in the industry.

She works part-time providing care and support to the residents at BlueCross Willowmeade, gaining invaluable communication skills and training in making a difference to people's lives.

'In Year 10, I started the Certificate III in Allied Health and got my First-Aid Certificate. I also spent one day a fortnight at the Seymour Hospital, which gave me valuable hands-on experience,' Caitlin said.

'I enjoyed it so much that I spoke to my careers counsellor and she gave me the contact details for BlueCross Willowmeade. I went for an interview and was hired as a trainee.'



Caitlin receiving her award at the ceremony

Caitlin is one of only four students from across the state successfully nominated for the school-based apprentice award. As the winner, Caitlin was awarded a cash prize, which she intends to put towards her university fees.

At the residences...

Delta Therapy Dogs at Scotchmans Creek

Delta Society Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation that promotes the human-animal bond by bringing their therapy dogs into aged care residences, such as BlueCross.

Pet therapy is popular in aged care, as animals can often elicit responses from residents that people can't.



Jessica with her dog Buddy

'Pet therapy remarkably improves our quality of life and leaves a lasting paw print on our hearts.' – Delta Society Aus.

Delta reports that dog teams have encouraged residents to extend their hand post-stroke or surgery, to walk, to talk, to smile, to laugh, to remember, to forget, and to reminisce about their own animals.

BlueCross Scotchmans Creek is excited to be participating in the Delta Therapy Dogs program. They have a fortnightly visit from a friendly Rhodesian Ridgeback, Buddy and his owner Jessica. Buddy's visits are going well with a lot of positive responses from the residents.

Hansworth residents participate in poppy project

As part of the 2015 Anzac Day Commemoration, a tribute of handmade poppies will be planted in Federation Square, Melbourne. The 5000 Poppies project began as a community tribute, which invited people from across the country to hand craft poppies to create a field as a mark of respect and remembrance for our Australian servicemen and women.

With 60,000 poppies already contributed, the project has become a huge success and is now aiming to 'plant' a field of 100,000 poppies and to tour the project nationally.

BlueCross Hansworth resident Allison Carlson heard of the project and invited fellow residents to join her in crafting some poppies to contribute. Together, with the help of staff, they have already made more than 100 poppies, which made a stunning display for Remembrance Day at the residence.

Their participation and the display on Remembrance Day has ignited interest from even more residents, who are now keen to participate.

With no limit to the number of poppies that can be submitted, we will continue to craft poppies and see how many we can make by next March as Hansworth's total contribution.



Residents with their poppy displays

Willowmeade's scarecrow out standing in its field

Each year, scarecrows line the streets of Kilmore for the local Mechanic's Institute scarecrow trail and competition for Halloween. When BlueCross Willowmeade residents came across some photos of the scarecrow trail from previous years, they decided to join in the fun for the first time in 2014.

Combining their artistic talents, residents found old clothing, painted faces onto pillow-cases and knitted hair to create a family of three scarecrows.

Named Stanley, Myrtle and Cyril, the Willowmeade scarecrow family were exhibited on the front fence of the residence, joining other scarecrows at nearby businesses, homes and schools for Halloween.

A week later, the Kilmore Mechanic's Institute Committee announced the competition winners – and Willowmeade won in the Best Health Centre category!

Congratulations Willowmeade and we look forward to next year's creation.

Scarecrow family; Stanley, Myrtle & Cyril



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

www.bluecross.com.au

BlueCross
community & residential services

AVONDALE HEIGHTS
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MOOROOLBARK
MOUNT WAVERLEY
MULGRAVE

SANDRINGHAM
SUNSHINE
SURREY HILLS

TEMPLESTOWE
TOORAK