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Apollo Care celebrates 30 new beds, new technology and staff housing at PresCare Groundwater Lodge

Residents in the regional Queensland city of Maryborough have more aged care options than ever as Groundwater Lodge opens the final six of 30 new beds today at its 60-bed community.

Apollo Care acquired the community in 2021 from PresCare, along with sister properties PresCare Yaralla Place in Maryborough, and Alexandra Gardens in Rockhampton, 400km north.

Stephen Becsi, CEO of Apollo Care, said: “We knew the vital role PresCare and Groundwater Lodge played in this local community, so we immediately rolled out a program of crucial behind-the-scenes improvements to finances, compliance and governance.

“At the same time, we began rolling renovations across the site to improve the buildings and grounds and to bring new beds online. We’ve specifically selected furniture and furnishings in the bedrooms, dining and living areas to create a real sense of home. Each renovated bedroom has an ensuite bathroom and some have an adjoining door that can be unlocked so couples can live together.

“These final six suites, officially opened today by the Member for Wide Bay, Llew O’Brien MP, reflect our deep commitment to continuing the legacy and ethos of PresCare in this community.”

Touring the new suites, the Member for Wide Bay said: “I congratulate Apollo Care, PresCare, and their staff and residents on the upgrades and improvements that have taken place here at Groundwater Lodge.

“Currently, almost 30 per cent of Maryborough’s residents are aged 65 years and over. This number will continue to climb as our population ages and more Australians discover the natural beauty and lifestyle advantages of living in Wide Bay.

“Apollo Care’s willingness to invest in facility improvements, staff services and new technology will lead to improved aged care outcomes for Wide Bay residents into the future.”

Apollo Care has also completely upgraded the community’s kitchen and created a fresh food program where all meals, including texture-modified diets, are created freshly onsite and residents are consulted on the menu to ensure they are receiving the food they love.

In response to high regional demand, Apollo Care has also developed a 20-bed specialist Dementia Support Unit at Groundwater Lodge.

“All told, we’ve created 30 new beds here,” said Mr Becsi, “which is quite an accomplishment given there were only 1000 new beds created nationwide in 2023.”

Meanwhile, there’s been a technological revolution at Groundwater Lodge.

The community has been piloting a mobile ‘one tool device’ – loaded with powerful programs – since mid-2023, delivering impressive results for staff plus improved organisational performance and resident outcomes

Every frontline worker carries a ‘ruggedised’ device specifically designed for frontline workers with long-lasting batteries, sensitivity to gloved fingers and walkie-talkie functions. The devices are loaded with a consolidated set of tools connecting them to clinical and quality systems, technology platforms, other team members and residents.

“Before this ‘one tool device’,” explained Mr Becsi, “staff constantly ran back and forth between residents’ rooms and the nurses’ stations, accessing information from laptops or physical files for regular care and ad-hoc requests.

“Now, staff have immediate access to every resident’s care plan – from personal lifestyle preferences to behaviour and medical charts.”

Importantly, tasks are performed with residents and recorded at the point of care, which leads to more quality time with residents and more accurate notes.

Staff can also access CCTV and receive alerts if a resident living with dementia is wandering outside of familiar areas, and they have the ability to remotely lock or unlock doors or gates to keep residents safe.

“There’s even a bedside voice connection so staff can speak directly with residents as soon as they call,” explained Mr Becsi.

Jinto George, the Residential Services Manager at Groundwater Lodge, said: “When I arrived here last year, I was truly impressed by Apollo Care’s plan to introduce technology in a way that would help residents and staff.

“I’ve worked closely with staff on the rollout of the device, and everyone reports it’s easy, convenient and improves efficiency and accuracy.

“We also know that when workers spend more ‘soft skill’ time with residents, it increases quality-of-life for residents and job satisfaction for workers. This technology has not only transformed care for residents at Groundwater Lodge, it’s also helped us attract and retain great workers.

“Staffing is the number one issue nationwide in aged care, so our ability to attract 25 new workers in the past six months is a really significant feat. This is also because we’re providing staff accommodation onsite. Twenty three of our 24 two-bedroom units have been assigned to workers from places as diverse as Zimbabwe, the UK, Canada, Fiji and the Solomon Islands, as well as some from intrastate and interstate.”

“Once they join Apollo Care,” says Mr Becsi, “our award-winning employee wellbeing program helps us retain them. All our communities provide staff with the ‘Work-Rite’ program which builds psychological resilience and identifies what’s going well and where we might need to provide more support. At Groundwater Lodge, it’s delivered on the ‘one tool device’ via weekly 10-minute on-the-job learning.

“Everyone benefits from this investment. Staff enjoy greater job satisfaction and improved wellbeing; residents and their families are happier; and more staff and residents are attracted to work and live here.”

Apollo Care was built from the ground up seven years ago by a team of industry specialists with 85 years’ cumulative experience. In addition to Stephen Becsi OAM, former CEO of Bethanie, WA’s largest NFP provider, Apollo Care’s leadership team comprises Barry Ashcroft, former CEO of Domain Aged Care, now Opal; Kylie Radburn, former National Care Governance Manager at Aveo; and John Young, a leading equity capital specialist.

The other communities in Apollo Care’s alliance are in New South Wales - Bundaleer (Wauchope), Charingfield (Waverley), Harden Grange (Harden), Vincent Court (Kempsey), Tenterfield Care Haddington (Tenterfield) and Tenterfield Care Millrace (Tenterfield); Queensland - PresCare Alexandra Gardens (Rockhampton), PresCare Groundwater Lodge (Maryborough), PresCare Yaralla Place (Maryborough) and Nanyima Care (Mirani); and Victoria – Yackandandah Health (Yackandandah) and The Bays (Hastings).

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