



# The Difference

BARGARA APRIL – MAY 2026



## SHAVE, FOR A CURE

We played our part in fundraising for a good cause - and the results are spectacular!

## COMMEMORATIONS ON THE CALENDAR

With Anzac Day and Mother's Day on the horizon, we spoke to some residents about what these dates mean to them

## AROUND THE GROUNDS

Catch up with what your Palm Lake Care neighbours are doing here and also further afield

# Welcome



## Palm Lake Care Bargara

SERVICE MANAGER,  
GENE DEMOS

As we ease into another change of season, it feels like the right moment to pause and reflect. Seasons shift, routines adjust, and as the ancient philosopher Heraclitus reminded us: "The only constant in life is change." It's a timeless quote, and it certainly rings true in our community.

Over the past few weeks, we've had some team members move on to new opportunities. While farewells are never easy, we proudly support their decision to grow, explore and take on new challenges. At the same time, we want to shine a light on the incredible people here. To all of you who continue to show up with heart, resilience and dedication: thank you. Your commitment to Palm Lake Care Bargara, and to the wellbeing of our residents, makes all the difference.

This past month reminded us just how strong and united we are as a team. The recent rain event affected our community in several ways, and it certainly put us to the test. Yet in the thick of that uncertainty, so many of our team stepped up. They supported one another, took on extra tasks and ensured our residents continued to feel safe and cared for. Their efforts were truly appreciated. We also extend our gratitude to our residents and their families. Your understanding and patience as we navigated a reduced workforce during the peak of the event were invaluable. Your support helped us stay focused on what mattered most: care, safety and stability.



## Palm Lake Care

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
DAN AITCHISON

Over the past few months, our focus at Palm Lake Care has been firmly on strengthening the quality, consistency and safety of the care we provide across each of our seven communities. We know how important it is for residents and their families to feel confident in the care experience, and we have been working hard to ensure this is delivered every day.

You may have noticed some of these changes in your community, including more structured clinical reviews, greater visibility of leadership teams, and improved communication around care planning and incident follow-up. We also continue to invest in our people, with additional training and the appointment of experienced clinical leaders to better support our frontline teams. Our Learning and Development lead role has been active in our communities over the past months, working face to face with staff to ensure the new Aged Care Standards are embedded into practice.

Looking ahead, we will continue to build on this work through improved systems, stronger clinical governance and ongoing engagement with our residents and their families. Your feedback remains critical in helping us shape better outcomes. You can provide feedback as regularly as you please via the forms available throughout your community. You could also catch up with your Service Manager or Clinical Manager when they are available. And, of course, we host monthly resident meetings where everyone's invited to attend.

I have visited a number of our sites over the past months and it's been great to catch up with residents and families to discuss what is happening in each of their respective communities. Thank you, as always, for your trust, your support and the important role you play at Palm Lake Care.

## Palm Lake Care Bargara

Looking for more information about Palm Lake Care Bargara? Here's where you can find us:

**PHONE:**  
07 4331 0000

**STREET ADDRESS:**  
55 Wearing Road,  
Bargara QLD 4670

**EMAIL:**  
bargaracarefm@pallake.com.au

**WEBSITE:**  
pallakecare.com.au

**GET SOCIAL:**  
Follow us on Facebook  
and on Instagram (@palm.lake.care)

## Key local personnel

**SERVICE MANAGER**  
Gene Demos  
GeneD@pallake.com.au

**SERVICE MANAGER SUPPORT**  
Currently recruiting

**CLINICAL MANAGER**  
Currently recruiting

**HOUSEKEEPING TEAM LEADER**  
Nerissa MacBeth

**LIFESTYLE TEAM LEADER**  
Currently recruiting

**CHEF MANAGER**  
Katrina Farrow

**MAINTENANCE**  
John Doolan



## News briefs

### Our Clinical Nurses step up

At Palm Lake Care Bargara, exceptional teamwork and dedication have been on full display as clinical nurses Peta Thuell, Navroop Randhawa and Carolyn Wessells continue to step up in the absence of a Clinical Manager. Their leadership, commitment and unwavering focus on resident wellbeing have ensured continuity of high-quality care during a challenging period.

Beyond managing their own demanding workloads, Peta, Navroop and Carolyn have also taken on the responsibility of participating in the on-call rotation, ensuring that clinical support is available around the clock. Their willingness to shoulder this additional duty reflects both their professional integrity and their deep care for residents and colleagues alike. At the heart of their effort is a simple but powerful motivation: achieving the best possible outcomes for residents. Whether the task is large or small, routine or complex, each of these nurses approaches it with the same level of commitment and compassion. Their ability to work collaboratively, support the wider care team, and maintain calm professionalism has made a meaningful difference throughout the home.

Palm Lake Care Bargara is fortunate to have such dedicated clinical leaders — individuals who embody the values of teamwork, resilience and resident-centred care. Their contribution during this time has not only upheld standards but strengthened the culture of support and excellence within the service.

### Lend a hand?

One of the most rewarding roles across our seven communities is that of the volunteer. We have a small, yet mightily, band of volunteers who stop by to spend time with our residents and support our Lifestyle Team with the facilitation of activities, but we are always on the hunt to find more volunteer helpers, as our residents simply love interacting with them. If this sounds like a role for you, our contact details are on Page 2.

### Show you care

Did you know you can show your appreciation for our staff and residents on our website? Our 'Thank a Care Worker' page makes it easy to share a kind word or message of gratitude with the dedicated team who go above and beyond every day. You can also brighten someone's day through 'Message a Resident', a simple way to stay connected with your loved one by sending thoughtful notes and well wishes. Both features help spread joy and connection across our Palm Lake Care communities. Just head to [www.pallakecare.com.au](http://www.pallakecare.com.au)



## We welcome Oscar and Rachael

Pictured above, we welcomed a new therapy dog, Oscar, and his lovely mum, Rachael, recently. They will be joining us every Monday for some well-deserved doggie hugs and furry love!

## Meeting dates, for your diary

We are pleased to announce the upcoming Residents' Meeting dates, where everyone is welcome to join in and share thoughts, ideas and feedback. Our Residents' Meetings are scheduled for:

- April 9
- May 14
- June 11

These meetings are an excellent way to stay connected and informed about what's happening at Bargara.

They kick off at 10.30am but please confirm the time before arrival.

Our upcoming Food Focus Meetings will be held on:

- April 8
- May 13
- June 10

We look forward to hearing your valuable input as we continue to work together to make our Palm Lake Care Bargara community an even better place.

## A close shave

**Pictured right and below:** Palm Lake Care Bargara hosted a Worlds Greatest Shave recently, raising a wonderful \$300 at the event. This has taken our total amount raised to \$2075. Thank you to everyone who came out in support of this fundraiser. Our residents had a great time watching all the action and even getting involved with the cutting and colouring of hair.



## Harmony Day delight

**Pictured left and below:** We hosted a delicious team barbecue for Harmony Day, recently.



## Lest we forget

With Anzac Day on the horizon, we spoke to one of our valued ex-service personnel residents to gain an insight into their service and how that service shaped them as a person in the decades that followed. Meet Stewart Merrilees...

Stewart Merrilees' life of service began long before most teenagers have even finished school. At just 16 years old, on January 14, 1966, he enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy, stepping into a legacy shaped by his father, who had served during World War II. His family's commitment to service, combined with the limited opportunities available to him after arriving in Australia in 1958, guided Stewart toward a decision that would define the next 46 years of his life.

From the beginning, Stewart was thrown into the rhythms and realities of naval life. One of his earliest memories is travelling to the NSW/QLD border, helping prepare a ship destined for deployment to Vietnam. It was the first of many experiences that would forge his resilience, deepen his sense of duty and strengthen the values he carried during and after his service.

Life in the Navy wasn't without lighter moments. Stewart remembers fondly a simple dish known as "train smash"—a humble mix of crushed tomato and onions that, despite looking far from gourmet, became a comfort during long stretches at sea. Small things like shared meals, jokes among crew and quiet moments between deployments helped form bonds that would last a lifetime.



For Stewart, mateship is everything. It's the unspoken promise to look after each other, no matter the circumstances. That commitment didn't fade when he left active service; he still keeps in touch with former shipmates, especially on days of remembrance such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. These occasions hold deep meaning for him — moments to honour those who served alongside him, and those who never made it home.

His philosophy, shaped by decades of service, is simple but powerful: "Don't die, and look after your mates." Those words capture both the practical wisdom and the heartfelt loyalty that defined his career.

Stewart's 46 years in the Royal Australian Navy didn't just build a career, they shaped the man he is today. His service instilled in him a strong sense of responsibility, compassion and respect for others. These qualities continue to guide him beyond the uniform. Anzac Day remains an important and emotional day for Stewart. It is a time to reflect, to remember, and to honour all who served and sacrificed. His hope is that his story reminds others of a simple but vital truth: Always help each other. Lest We Forget.

## The symbols of Anzac Day

Each year on Anzac Day, Australians and New Zealanders pause to remember those who have served in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping missions. For many, 111 years on from the landing at Gallipoli, it's a deeply personal and reflective day, rich with tradition and symbolism. Here are some of the key elements often seen or experienced:

- **Dawn Service:** Held at first light, this quiet ceremony reflects the time of the original landing at Gallipoli in 1915 and invites peaceful reflection.
- **The Ode:** A short verse from 'For the Fallen' is recited to honour those who died in service.

- **Laying of wreaths:** Flowers are placed at memorials as a sign of respect and remembrance.
- **The Last Post:** This bugle call signals the end of the day and is played to commemorate the fallen.
- **Minute of silence:** A shared pause to reflect on sacrifice and loss.
- **Rosemary sprigs:** Worn as a symbol of remembrance, as rosemary grows wild at Gallipoli.
- **Anzac biscuits:** A traditional treat linked to soldiers' wartime rations.

Whether at a service or simply taking a quiet moment, Anzac Day is a time to remember, reflect and give thanks.



# Mum's the word

With Mother's Day on the horizon, it's important to honour not just the celebration itself, but the women whose lives and stories remind us what motherhood truly looks like. When we sat down with Lorna Murchie, it quickly became clear that her story would be one worth sharing.

Lorna Murchie grew up far from city life, on a cattle station in Monto, around 200km west of Bundaberg. She was the only daughter in her family and she speaks with a soft smile about following her mother everywhere — "like her little shadow," she says.

Her mother was the church organist in Mt Perry and young Lorna would sit beside her at the organ, legs swinging, watching fingers glide over the keys. These were simple moments, but ones that shaped her earliest memories of love, learning and togetherness.

Her mother's hands were always busy — sewing, stitching, crocheting — and she passed those skills down to Lorna with patience and pride. Lorna still remembers the warmth of sitting beside her, needle and thread in hand, creating something beautiful from almost nothing. These quiet lessons, shared over fabric and yarn, stayed with her throughout her life.

Years later, when Lorna became a mother herself, life moved at a different pace but the heart of it remained the same. Raising three boys meant weekends filled with soccer boots, canteen runs and muddy jerseys. She laughs when she says: "I was a real soccer mum". She wasn't just on the sidelines; she was on the committee, helping where she could, building a community around her children.

Some of her happiest memories were made by the water at Turkey Beach, in the home her husband built with his own two hands. Family holidays were filled with sunshine, boat rides, barbecues and the comforting rhythm of waves rolling onto the shore. Lorna keeps photo albums filled with these moments — children growing, memories layering, time rolling

on like the tide. She still loves looking through them, letting the memories wash over her.

When asked about what she has learned along the way, Lorna pauses, her voice thoughtful but steady. The world has changed, she says, and families face challenges she never knew. But some truths remain.

"Let kids be kids," she offers gently. Have rules, but give them room to grow. Be strict, but be supportive. Encourage their dreams, even when those dreams look nothing like your own.

And what makes a good mum? For Lorna, it isn't perfection or having all the answers. It's being present. Listening. Taking an interest (really taking an interest) in what your children are doing. Being someone they can come to when they need advice... or simply a friend. Above all, she believes a good mother teaches respect and kindness, raising children who grow into humans that care about others.

This Mother's Day, Lorna's story reminds us that motherhood is many things — joyful, challenging, unpredictable and beautiful. It is stitched together from everyday moments: hands guiding small hands, cheering from the sidelines, quiet conversations, shared meals and gentle wisdom passed from one generation to the next.

To all the mothers, grandmothers and mother-figures within our Palm Lake Care Bargara community, we thank you — for your strength, your patience, your stories and the love you've poured into the world. Your legacy lives on in the people you've shaped and the memories you've made. Happy Mother's Day to you all!

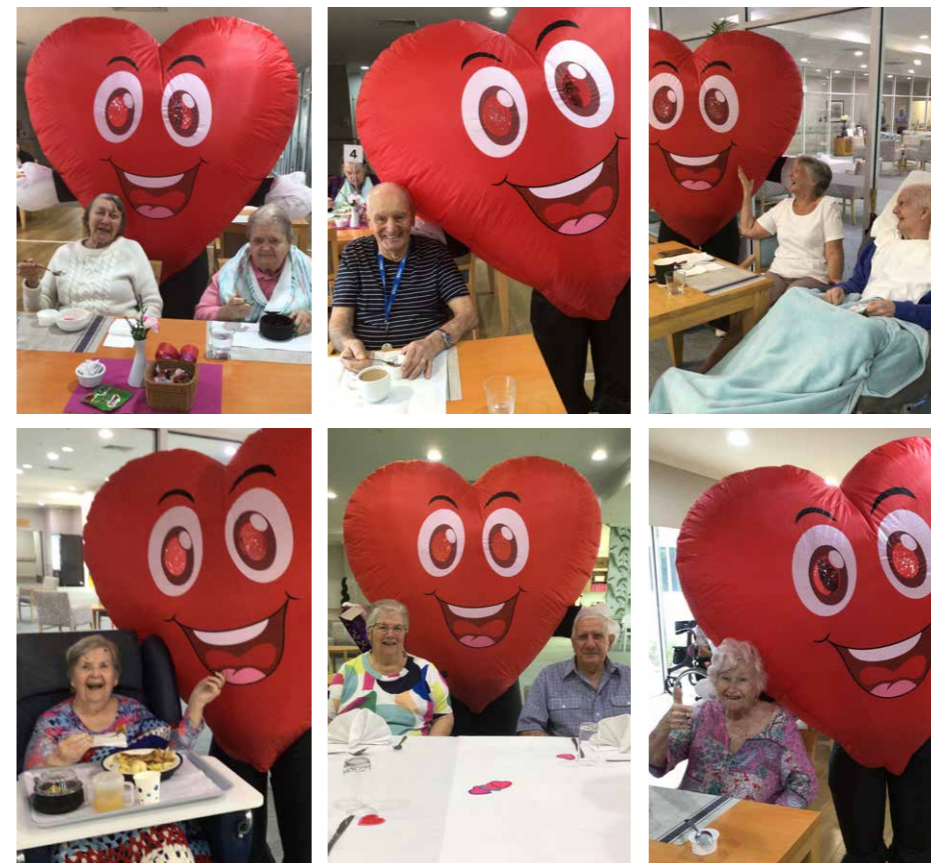
## High five!

**Pictured right:** Our Palm Lake Care Bargara community is lucky to have such dedicated staff members as these four. Gabby, Carlie, Leesa and Chrissy recently celebrated their five-year anniversaries with us. They sure are incredible and valued team members!



## Happy New Year

**Pictured right, below:** We enjoyed the colour and spectacle of these impressive visitors for Chinese New Year.



## Love is all around

**Pictured left:** It's easy to spread the love on Valentine's Day when you're a giant inflatable heart! Our residents were delighted by our radiant red guest.



# OUR COMMUNITIES



We're strengthening our clinical governance capability

We've welcomed three new faces to our Central Support Office.



## Central Support Office

**Palm Lake Care's renewed journey to strengthening clinical governance continues, with the CEO and Board endorsing further investment in the skills and capabilities of our Clinical Governance team.**

A key component of this commitment has been the appointment of three Clinical Practice and Risk Advisors who will join our existing team members. We are pleased to welcome Kym Manteit, Ian Corney and April Pacifico to these important roles.

Each of our new team members is an experienced Registered Nurse and a dedicated aged care professional, bringing extensive operational, quality, compliance and multi-site management experience, alongside strong commitment to collaborative communication and practical application. Their collective expertise will further support our approach to clinical governance, which is resident-focused and grounded in data-driven decision making.

The expanded team will continue to work closely with Palm Lake Care's Executive Manager Clinical Governance, Lisa Patterson, to develop and implement advanced reporting tools that enhance clinical and care management, executive leadership oversight and Board visibility.

"In addition, they will provide in-person mentoring and support to Palm Lake Care's local management and clinical teams, helping to guide best practice and effectively manage care and compliance risks," Lisa explains.

"Working collaboratively with residents, local management and staff, they will contribute to the delivery of resident-focused care outcomes that reflect Palm Lake Care's commitment to safety, quality and continuous improvement."

Lisa says the trio of new faces is passionate about building systems that promote continuous improvement, resident safety, staff development and organisational integrity, ensuring they will play a vital role in supporting excellence across our communities.

"Kym, Ian and April tell us they are excited to join the Palm Lake Care team and are committed to contributing meaningfully to our mission and values while helping shape a future where care remains safe, person-centred and of the highest quality," Lisa says.

"Please join us in warmly welcoming Kym, Ian and April. We are confident they will make a positive and lasting impact across Palm Lake Care."

## We love to craft!

Art and craft offers aged care residents meaningful ways to express themselves, stimulate memory and maintain fine motor skills. Creative activities can reduce stress, boost mood and encourage social connection, fostering a sense of purpose and achievement while supporting cognitive health and overall wellbeing in a relaxed, enjoyable safe environment.



## Mt Warren Park

**We knew our Palm Lake Care Mt Warren Park residents were talented - and now greater Beenleigh knows it too!**

We recently entered some of our residents' artwork into the Beenleigh Show and were beyond thrilled to receive First Prize and Second Prize certificates for several of our pieces. You can check out some of our winning resident artists here. You guys all did us proud!



## Toowoomba

**Another Palm Lake Care address finding acclaim for its creative and talented resident population is Toowoomba.**

The 2026 Royal Toowoomba Show gave our Toowoomba residents the chance to flex their creative muscles with some wonderful handicraft entered - and winning! Residents enjoyed a day trip to the Show to see their work on display and take in the joy and wonder of this popular event.



# OUR COMMUNITIES



## We love love

Valentine's Day traces back to ancient Rome, possibly linked to the festival of Lupercalia. It later became associated with Saint Valentine, a martyr. By the Middle Ages, it was tied to courtly love, evolving over centuries into a global celebration of romance, marked by cards, gifts and heartfelt gestures - as our Palm Lake Care residents will tell you!

### Deception Bay

**A highlight of Valentine's Day at Palm Lake Care Deception Bay was a visit from the students of BUSi.**

As part of their event planning studies, the group organised thoughtful gifts for each of our residents. Our people were also treated to a beautifully presented Valentine's high tea hosted by Chef Manager Bernie, featuring an array of delicious sweet and savoury treats. Kris and the Lifestyle Team ensured everything ran smoothly. Love was certainly in the air!



### Caloundra

**...and it seems love found its way up the highway as well!**

Valentine's Day provided our Palm Lake Care Caloundra community with a very good opportunity to spread the love around via a lovely private dining experience. Our kitchen crew plated up some incredible meals that were shared in a fine dining setting with our loved ones. We hope our lovebirds enjoyed their time together, making memories.



## Grow our own

Palm Lake Care's "Grow Our Own" initiative supports our team members to upskill, gain further training and certifications, and continue developing their careers within our community.



### Beachmere

**Mollie Pennay is our very first success story from the "Grow Our Own" project at Palm Lake Care Beachmere.**

Starting with us as a Lifestyle Assistant, Mollie was supported to complete her Level 4 training. Through her dedication and hard work, she has now stepped into the role of Lifestyle Team Leader — a wonderful achievement and a testament to her commitment to both her professional growth and our residents.

"My favourite part of the job is seeing our residents smile and sharing a laugh together. It's such a rewarding feeling to know you've brightened someone's day," Mollie smiles.

"Also one of the most meaningful parts of aged care, for me, is hearing residents' stories.

"Every person has lived such a unique life, with different experiences, challenges and achievements. Listening to their journeys has helped me grow so much as a person and has taught me valuable lessons about resilience, gratitude and what truly matters in life.

"Every story shared is a privilege, and it's one of the most wholesome parts of what I do."



### Bethania

**Romantic love originally brought PCA Emmaruth from the Philippines to Australia almost a decade ago. But it's a mother's love (for her three children, who remained behind in the Philippines to finish their schooling) that has kept this dedicated mum happily employed here at Palm Lake Care Bethania.**

"They all had dreams of becoming doctors," Emmaruth smiles, "and I wanted to find a job that would help me put them through school."

That job turned out to be a PCA role at Palm Lake Care Bethania, which Emmaruth took on in July 2018. She was immediately drawn to the Admin team's 'firm but fair' approach — they set a high standard for their staff, but were kind and good hearted if anyone needed help. So Emmaruth knew exactly who to ask when her daughter, Andreana, needed a new job. Andreana had moved to Australia to support her mum after her husband passed — even though that meant doing her study and exams again, despite working as an RN in the Philippines for five years. Now, Andreana is here on a student visa, studying a Diploma of Nursing while working as a PCA alongside Emmaruth. Though Andreana ultimately wants to become a GP, she says she loves her role at Palm Lake Care — especially taking lunch breaks with her mum.

"My parents aren't around anymore, but before my mother passed, she told me, 'Focus on your career' — so I did," Emmaruth says. "And because I did, my children now get to do that, too."



# Important information

## Meet our Central Support team

**Chief Executive Officer:**

Dan Aitchison

**Operations Manager:**

Katie Cooley

**Executive Manager – Clinical**

**Governance:** Lisa Patterson

**Executive Manager – Quality and**

**Risk:** Patricia Heke

**Operations Support Lead:**

Caroline Bosnic

**Support Services Manager:**

Steve Wheeler

**Customer Experience Manager:**

Carmel Morgan

## We love your feedback!

We highly value all types of resident and family feedback - it enables us to continually improve our already high standards. There are so many ways you can provide feedback but the easiest way is to complete a feedback form. Blank forms are available from our Reception desk and, once complete, can be submitted in the Feedback Box, also found at Reception. You can also email your feedback directly to [plcfeedback@palllake.com.au](mailto:plcfeedback@palllake.com.au) And, of course, our Service Managers are also available to chat at any time. Their door is always open.

## What should I do in an emergency?

**FIRE:** Spotted a fire? Let a staff member know and press the alarm, if I can.

**EXITS:** I need to remember my closest way out. Leave things behind and get out quickly.

**CRISIS:** If something else happens, I'll stay calm. I'll help my neighbours if it's safe to.

**PREPARE:** I'll remind myself of safe places and the best way to leave, if needed.

Note to self: If I'm unsure, I'll ask a staff member.

## Volunteers are the best people

We are always on the lookout for volunteers to stop by and support our community. You might like to help our Lifestyle Team facilitate their regular group activities? Or you might like to spend some one-on-one time with our lovely residents? Many love to share a cuppa and a chat! Maybe you have a specific skill you can share? If you'd like to volunteer in our community, and enjoy the reward that comes with it, simply contact our team via the details on Page 2. You can also go to our website and click on "Join us".

## Care is a noble profession

If you've been looking for a career that is meaningful and rewarding, maybe aged care is for you? We have an ever-changing list of vacancies across a variety of positions, from housekeeping and admin to carers and grounds staff. To find out what vacancies are currently available in each of our Palm Lake Care locations, go to our website and click on "Join us". We look forward to welcoming you to our team.

## Your meals, your choice

At Palm Lake Care, your choices shape our menu. Our dedicated chefs create meals that not only nourish but also cater to your tastes. Through our Food Focus Group meetings, your feedback directly influences our culinary direction. We value your voice, ensuring that your dining experience is truly tailored to our residents' preferences. Share your thoughts and savour the difference!