



The Difference

TOOWOOMBA AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2026



MAKE YOUR DAY EVEN BRIGHTER

It might be the middle of winter but we've got the Top 9 ways to brighten your day inside!

CELEBRATING FATHERHOOD

We're coming up to that special day of the year when we celebrate the special father figures in our world

AROUND THE GROUNDS

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

Welcome



Palm Lake Care Toowoomba

SERVICE MANAGER,
VANESSA GAWITH

They say moving into a new community is a big step, and I have certainly experienced this firsthand since joining your Palm Lake Care Toowoomba community. My first three months here have been an absolute delight. It has been a pleasure getting to know our residents and meeting the wonderful families and friends who play such an important role in their lives. I'm still working on remembering everyone's names and faces, and I look forward to meeting even more of our extended community in the months ahead.

It has been wonderful to see the positive response to our Lifestyle program and the enthusiasm for new ideas and activities. I particularly enjoy hearing suggestions from our residents, such as the recent visit from the Historic Society, which was very well received. Our Christmas in July celebration is just around the corner, and we hope it will be a joyful occasion for residents, families and friends to share together.

Again, thank you for the warm welcome I have received over the past few months. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I, or any member of our team, can assist you. Whether you have a question, a suggestion, or simply want to say hello, we are always happy to hear from you.



Palm Lake Care CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, DAN AITCHISON

As this edition of *The Difference* newsletter goes to print, we'll be gearing up to celebrate Aged Care Employee Day. Held annually on August 7, the event celebrates the thousands of dedicated workers in aged care, retirement living and seniors housing. From leaders and nurses to personal care workers, allied health professionals, volunteers, cleaners, chefs, cooks, maintenance workers, gardeners, administrators and more, every role contributes to the wellbeing of older Australians.

According to Ageing Australia, there are 456,000 aged care workers across our country supporting the 1.3 million Australians who receive aged care services. Here at Palm Lake Care, our workforce totals close to 1300 team members across seven care communities and our Central Support Office, which is why Aged Care Employee Day is such a highlight on our calendar. I know there are many fun team activities organised for the day across our group, as has been tradition over the past few years. And I'm sure there will be some delicious baked goods consumed – and not just by our team members, but also our residents who love to celebrate this annual event with us!

Given our ever-increasing workforce and the integral roles our team members play in our residents' lives each day, Palm Lake Care has recently employed Ben Winduss who is our own dedicated Executive Manager – People and Culture. While the function of HR across Palm Lake Care was previously fulfilled by Palm Lake Group's HR Department (which also covers Palm Lake Resort), Ben's arrival is tangible proof of the utmost and specific importance we place on finding, training, nurturing and supporting team members for Palm Lake Care.

Happy Aged Care Employee Day to you all!

Palm Lake Care Toowoomba

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

PHONE:
07 4580 3000

STREET ADDRESS:
149 Hogg Street,
Cranley QLD 4350

EMAIL:
toowoombacaresm@palmlake.com.au

WEBSITE:
palmlakecare.com.au

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

Key local personnel

SERVICE MANAGER
Vanessa Gawith

SERVICE MANAGER SUPPORT
Edward Townsend

CLINICAL MANAGER
Pinky Thomas

HOUSEKEEPING TEAM LEADER
Mark Barrett

LIFESTYLE TEAM LEADER
Narina Deadman

CHEF MANAGER
Lahiru Fernando

MAINTENANCE
Phillip Holton



News briefs



Turning our very first sod... in NSW!

An historic day in the history of Palm Lake Care was captured, above, as the first sod was officially turned for our first Palm Lake Care community outside Queensland! Palm Lake Care Forster will be our group's eighth care address and is located halfway between Port Macquarie and Newcastle on the New South Wales coastline. Palm Lake Care CEO Dan Aitchison and our team joined Federal Member for Lyne, Alison Penfold, who wielded the 'golden shovel' at the ceremony that marked the start of this historic build for our family-owned and operated company. Pictured above, from left to right are Palm Lake Works Planning Manager Andrew Magoffin, Development Manager Sara Burston, Construction Manager Mick Munro, Alison Penfold MP, PLC CEO Dan, Site Supervisor Ben Gunning and Palm Lake Care's new Chief Operating Officer, Amanda Boyd.

Meeting dates, for your diary

We are pleased to announce the upcoming meeting dates, where everyone is welcome to join in and share thoughts, ideas and feedback.

Residents' Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month:

- August 13, at 10am
- September 15, at 10am
- October 20, at 10am

Get social

Are you on social media? We are, too! You can find Palm Lake Care on Facebook and also Instagram. Make sure you like and follow our social media profiles to see even more news from all seven of our communities (and counting!).

Facebook: @palmlakecare
Instagram: @palm.lake.care

Feeling unwell?

With Toowoomba's beautiful crisp weather upon us, we know this is also the time of year when seasonal illnesses become more common. To help keep our residents, visitors and team members well, we kindly ask that if you are feeling unwell, please postpone your visit until you are feeling better. Thank you for your understanding and support in helping us keep our community members healthy.

Lend a hand?

One of the most rewarding roles across our seven communities is that of the volunteer. We have a small, yet mighty, 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. Visit www.palmlakecare.com.au

Around the grounds

Pictured this page: Our residents have been enjoying a varied Lifestyle calendar with the arrival of our new Lifestyle Team Leader, Narina, and her very experienced assistant, Leona, who joined us for a short stint from Palm Lake Care Mt Warren Park. We enjoyed a community barbecue, Xmas in July and loads of creative art projects, among all the other things.



Lifestyle Team's report

There has been plenty of excitement around Palm Lake Care Toowoomba recently as we continue to refresh and expand our social activities program. Residents have been trialing a variety of new activities, and it has been wonderful to see so many smiling faces, lively conversations, and enthusiastic participation. We are always looking for new ways to encourage connection, learning, and enjoyment, and the feedback from residents has been overwhelmingly positive.

One of the recent highlights was a presentation from the Toowoomba Historical Society on the history of local schools. The talk was extremely well attended, with many residents sharing their own memories of school days gone by. The presentation sparked wonderful conversations and reminiscing, and due to its popularity, we have already invited the Historical Society back for another visit. We are hoping to make these engaging history talks a regular feature of our activities calendar.

Music continues to be one of our most popular and meaningful programs. Whether it's the timeless tunes of the 1930s, the rock and roll of the 1950s, or the unforgettable hits of the 1980s, music has a unique way of bringing people together. It evokes cherished memories, lifts spirits, and encourages everyone to join in. Our weekly concerts have quickly become a favourite, with residents singing along, tapping their toes, and enjoying the wonderful atmosphere each week.

We also celebrated NAIDOC Week with a range of fun and meaningful activities. Residents tested their knowledge with NAIDOC-themed trivia and embraced their creativity by creating beautiful dot art paintings inspired by Indigenous Australian art. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the rich history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples while learning together.

Our cinema enthusiasts were treated to another enjoyable event with Joel, our much-loved "Movie Man." Residents were captivated by a presentation on the history of the film

industry before settling in to watch a classic movie together. The afternoon was filled with nostalgia, laughter, and plenty of shared memories about favourite films and movie-going experiences from years gone by.

Without a doubt, the highlight of the month was our wonderful Christmas in July celebration. Residents and staff embraced the festive spirit, enjoying a joyful concert featuring all of our favourite Christmas classics. There was plenty of singing along, laughter, and festive cheer as everyone got into the Christmas spirit despite the winter weather.

Following the concert, residents were treated to a delicious Christmas lunch lovingly prepared by our talented chef, Larry, who served up a meal worthy of the occasion. The celebrations continued into the afternoon with a Christmas-themed movie and festive trivia, creating the perfect ending to a truly memorable day. It was a wonderful way to brighten the cold winter season and celebrate together as a community.

Excitement is already building as our community prepares for our upcoming Carnival of Smiles, a special event celebrating Toowoomba's famous Carnival of Flowers. As part of our ongoing commitment to strengthening community connections both within and beyond Palm Lake, residents have been enthusiastically planning and preparing for this exciting day.

Mark your calendars for Friday, October 2, and come along to join us for a fun-filled community celebration. Enjoy a delicious sausage sizzle alongside our residents while admiring their beautiful floral displays, including decorated verandas, colourful potted plants and herb gardens, stunning flower arrangements, and creative floral craft exhibits. We look forward to welcoming family, friends, and members of the wider community to share in this wonderful celebration of colour, creativity, and community spirit.

**Narina and Leona,
Lifestyle Team**

Clinical update

A key focus for our team is supporting residents to remain safe, mobile and independent. Falls can occur for a variety of reasons, including changes in balance, strength, mobility, health conditions or medications. Staff are regularly monitoring residents, undertaking assessments and implementing individual strategies to reduce falls risk. We are also working closely with our physiotherapist, who supports residents through mobility assessments, exercise programs, strength and balance activities, and recommendations to help maintain independence and safety.

With winter bringing an increase in colds, flu and other respiratory illnesses in the community, we remain vigilant in monitoring residents for any changes in their health and wellbeing. Our teams continue to follow infection prevention and control measures and respond promptly to any signs of illness. To help protect our residents, we kindly ask family members and visitors to postpone their visit if they are feeling unwell or experiencing symptoms such as a cough, fever, sore throat, or runny nose. Your support helps us maintain a safe and healthy environment for everyone.

**Clinical Manager
Pinky Thomas**



Nine ways to brighten your day

Getting out of a winter slump can feel impossible. But with warmer weather on its way – and R U OK? Day on September 10 – now is the time to focus on your mental wellbeing. If you don't know where to start, try one of these nine mood-boosting activities.

Enjoy the sunshine

Sunny weather can be unpredictable on the east coast of Australia, so we need to make the most of the sunshine while we have it. Feeling the warmth on your skin after a long, cold winter isn't just enjoyable – it's essential for your mental and physical wellbeing. From stronger bones and muscles to improved immune function and even oral health, not to mention cognitive function and mood regulation, the benefits of vitamin D are innumerable.

Move your body

The physical benefits of exercise are well-known, but did you know it's just as important for your mental health, too? If you've come down with a case of the winter blues, try the following: 10 gentle shoulder rolls, forwards and backwards; 10 ankle rolls, forwards and backwards; and 10 seated marches on each leg. Notice the energy moving through your body. For more, join one of the exercise classes on offer in your community.

Check in on a friend

Our communities are built around connection – between residents, their loved ones, staff and volunteers. Why? Because social connection is essential for reducing the risk of loneliness, depression and cognitive decline. It's the premise behind R U OK? Day, a national movement that encourages us to check in on one another. Doing so can spark unlikely conversations, improve relationships and help you learn more about yourself and others. Yes, a lot of good can come from three little words!

Join an activity

Our Lifestyle Teams are experts at creating fun. From crafts to celebrations, themed dinners to dance parties, there's always something to participate in around your community. While we understand some prefer to keep to themselves, there are so many benefits to participating in activities – even if it's only once in a while. You'll make new friends, new memories and new discoveries about yourself and those around you.



Listen to music

One of the best ways to turn your mood around is a good tune. Whether it's the latest hit or an old favourite, music helps us regulate our emotions, process feelings and cope with stress. So put on a song or album you love, tap your foot along to the beat and enjoy the stress-relieving, mood-boosting power of music.

Spend time with animals

Whether they're furry, feathery or scaled, animals have a way of putting a smile on our faces. Patting a visiting therapy dog, watching birds in the garden or interacting with the animals you see out and about can lower stress hormones and boost feelings of connection. Keep an eye out for approved animal visits in your community and notice the instant the joy they bring when they come around.

Make something by hand

There's something deeply satisfying about creating with your own two hands. Whether it's knitting, painting or tending a pot plant, hands-on hobbies help calm the mind and bring a sense of accomplishment. You don't need to be an expert – the joy is in the doing, not the result. Now is the time to pick up an old hobby or try something new at your next craft session.

Wear your favourite outfit

Never underestimate the power of getting dressed. Slipping into an outfit that makes you feel confident and comfortable – be it your Sunday best or your favourite cosy cardigan – can genuinely lift your mood for the day ahead. So next time you're deciding what to wear, choose the outfit that makes you feel like you.

Do something for someone else

Kindness has a funny way of benefitting the giver just as much as the receiver. Whether it's holding a door open, sharing a kind word or helping a neighbour with a small task, small acts of generosity release happy hormones and strengthen our sense of purpose. So next time you spot an opportunity to help, take it – you might just brighten two days instead of one.



Here's to the dads!

Father's Day may only come once a year, but for many of us, the influence of a good father figure lasts a lifetime. Ahead of this year's celebration – which falls on September 6 – we asked one of our resident fathers to share what the role has meant to him.

The tradition of Father's Day is believed to have begun in the United States in the early 1900s, when a woman named Sonora Smart Dodd wanted to honour her own father, who raised six children alone. The idea spread over the decades and eventually made its way to Australia, where it's now a chance to celebrate the dads, granddads and father figures in our lives.

Gift-giving doesn't need to be complicated. A favourite book, a new jumper, or a framed family photo are always well received. Homemade cards and gifts from little hands are treasured just as much, if not more. As for activities, sometimes the simplest options are the best: a game of cards, a shared meal, or just sitting down together for a good chat over a cup of tea.

With Father's Day on the horizon, let's hear from one of our resident dads, Grahame Bourne about what fatherhood means to him...

What are your fondest memories with your father? My fondest memories of my father are around the football games that he would take me to.

What are your fondest memories with your children and/or grandchildren? When my daughter graduated university, I was very proud. I also have fond memories of when I lived in Melbourne and she would come and see me down there.

What did your father teach you that you still carry with you today? Taught me what not to do – and that was not to be a bad father. You need to be a good father to keep their love.

What advice do you have for young dads today? Look after your children as your first priority.

What is your definition of a good dad? Someone who accepts who you are.



Meet the team

Like integral links in a very important chain, everyone's role here at Palm Lake Care makes a difference. Meet Gail Ryan (pictured above), who is an amazing Administration Officer.

What are three words that best describe you? Kind, caring and efficient.

Tell us about your other employment/work roles leading up to your current position with PLC? I have worked in aged care for more than 20 years.

What does the average day entail, in your role here at Palm Lake Care Toowoomba? Anything and everything from basic administration and rostering to general enquiries.

What's your favourite part of your job? Chatting to our lovely residents and rostering. I enjoy the fulfilment of filling a roster!

How do you like to spend your downtime/days off? I like to go camping in my caravan.

What is something that our residents may not know about you? I used to ride horses when I was younger and compete in horse events.

What advice do you have for others considering a career in aged care? Be patient and respectful to the residents and your work colleagues.

Care is a noble profession

If you know someone perfect for a role at Palm Lake Care (ours is a proudly family-owned-and-operated company), please encourage them to visit our website. Simply go to www.palllakecare.com.au, click on the 'About' tab and select 'Careers'. We look forward to welcoming even more bright new faces to Palm Lake Care while also celebrating our incredible existing workforce.

OUR COMMUNITIES



One team, one way

How we are empowering our leaders to build even stronger local teams...



Central Support Office

Palm Lake Care held the first in a series of “One Team, One Way” Leaders Workshops in recent weeks. The day brought together our Service Managers, the Central Support Office Leadership Team and Executive Team, with two members of our Palm Lake Care Board also attending.

With seven Palm Lake Care communities in our group (stretching geographically from Bargara in the north, south to Bethania and Mt Warren Park, and west to Toowoomba), the workshop gave our leaders a rare opportunity to come together as one group, to share ideas and reflect on how they lead and support their respective teams. By strengthening leadership and creating greater consistency in how our teams work, we aim to deliver an improved and more standardised experience for residents and families across every Palm Lake Care community.

The day-long workshop was centred around Palm Lake Care’s vision that belonging and connection are fundamental rights of ageing. We talked about our purpose of building active, engaged and inclusive care communities, and our company priorities around people, community and listening. Through discussions and group activities, participants

explored the important role leaders play in shaping their teams and workplace culture. The group considered how strong leadership, open communication, psychological safety and accountability can help employees feel supported, work well together and provide reliable, high-quality care and services. Leaders also discussed what an exceptional resident experience looks and feels like. They identified practical opportunities to strengthen and standardise how our teams work, while continuing to respect each resident’s individual needs, preferences and choices.

The day concluded with each leader making a personal commitment to turn what they had learned into meaningful action. As the first in a three-part series that will conclude before the end of this year, future workshops will continue strengthening our ‘One Team, One Way’ philosophy to provide an even more exceptional experience for residents.

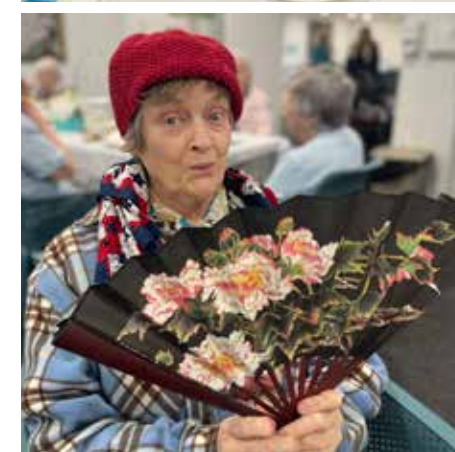
Travelling the world, from home

Celebrating other cultures brings a welcome sense of adventure to everyday life. Sharing food, music and traditions from around the world offers residents a chance to learn, connect and reminisce – all without leaving home. For some, these celebrations spark memories of travels past; for others, they open a window to somewhere new. It’s a simple way to add colour and variety to community life, encouraging conversation and curiosity along the way, and reminding us just how much there is to discover together, right here at home.

Mt Warren Park

Our Palm Lake Care Mt Warren Park residents living ‘la vie en rose’.

Who doesn’t love travelling – especially when you don’t even need to leave home to do it? Palm Lake Care Mt Warren Park celebrated Bastille Day on July 14 with a French-themed morning tea along with games, a ‘Build the Eiffel Tower’ challenge, laughter and plenty of fun as they embraced a little French culture.



Beachmere

Residents at Palm Lake Care Beachmere recently enjoyed a delightful outing to the Beachmere Butterfly House!

Residents took in the sights and sounds of this beautiful sanctuary, with many pausing to admire the butterflies up close. It was a wonderful chance to get out and about, enjoy some fresh air, and experience a little slice of nature together.



One hundred years young

Living beyond 100 is a remarkable achievement, and this year Palm Lake Care has been fortunate to celebrate several centenarians across our communities. These milestones are a wonderful reminder to sit down with our elders and hear their stories – perhaps even recording them for family to treasure. As for longevity, many of our centenarians point to the same simple secret: staying connected to the people they love.

OUR COMMUNITIES

Deception Bay

On June 11, Palm Lake Care Deception Bay resident Daphne celebrated turning 101, surrounded by family and friends!

Born in Brisbane, Daphne married her late husband Norman and had four children: daughters Norma and Karen, who remain an active part of her life, and twins Dianne and Lynette, who passed away.

In her younger years, Daphne enjoyed basketball, tunnelball and ballroom dancing, and music has remained a lifelong joy. She also worked as a seamstress, starting out in upholstery.

Daphne is proud of having “a go at everything,” crediting her determination for a long, fulfilling life. Norman taught her to be fair and give everyone a chance – advice she still lives by. Congratulations, Daphne, on this impressive milestone!



So much to celebrate

Special occasions offer more than just a reason to celebrate – they bring structure, connection and joy to everyday life. Activities like baking, crafting and decorating give residents something to take pride in, while shared celebrations create opportunities for conversation and laughter. Having family join in makes these moments even more meaningful, strengthening bonds and creating memories together. Whether it’s a birthday, a seasonal tradition or something a little unexpected, celebrating together reminds us all of the importance of community and togetherness.

Bargara

Palm Lake Care Bargara brought festive cheer forward with a Christmas in July celebration!

Residents got into the spirit making delicious slices, crafting beautiful Christmas flower decorations, and coming together with friends and family for a day of fun and connection. The community was filled with laughter, colour and cosy winter warmth as everyone embraced an early taste of the season. It was a wonderful reminder that there’s always a good reason to celebrate together, any time of year.



Caloundra

Sunshine, fresh air and beautiful surroundings – Palm Lake Care Caloundra residents are soaking it all in.

In our Caloundra community, our residents take every opportunity to make the most of our beautiful surroundings. Whether strolling by the lake in the sunshine or tending to the community gardens, there’s always a chance to get outdoors and enjoy the fresh air. It’s a simple pleasure that brings a real sense of wellbeing.



Bethania

Palm Lake Care Bethania swapped uniforms for pyjamas in support of National Pyjama Day!

Our amazing staff embraced the fun, arriving in their comfiest sleepwear to help raise awareness – and funds – for the Pyjama Foundation, which supports the literacy and wellbeing of children in foster care.

It was a light-hearted day filled with laughter, but one with real purpose behind it. A big thank you to everyone at Bethania who got involved and helped make a difference for vulnerable kids across the community.



Important information

Meet our Central Support team

Chief Executive Officer:

Dan Aitchison

Chief Operating Officer:

Amanda Boyd

Executive Manager – Clinical Governance:

Lisa Patterson

Executive Manager – Quality and Risk:

Patricia Heke

Executive Manager – People and Culture:

Ben Winduss

Operations Support Lead:

Caroline Bosnic

Support Services Manager:

Steve Wheeler

What to 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.

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 www.palmlakecare.com.au and click on "About" and then click on "Careers". We look forward to welcoming you to our team.

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@palmlake.com.au And, of course, our Service Managers are also available to chat at any time. Their door is always open.

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".

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!