



# Our Home



## Christmas Greetings from Rona and Troy

As we write, the days are getting longer and warmer. Spring is in full swing, summer is coming and 2023 is rapidly drawing to a close. It has been wonderful to be able to open the windows again and enjoy the fresh air. We have been enjoying watching the flowers bloom.

The season has been tinged with sadness for staff this year as we have had to farewell our residents from Admatha Home. We have also had to say goodbye to some of the staff who worked there. This was a difficult time for us, but some residents and staff have moved over to Avonlea Dementia Care. These staff members have been valued members of our team and we are so fortunate to have them staying within DCNZ. We are now focused on continuing to provide wonderful care in Admatha Lodge.

Recently Troy Malagapo joined our team as our Operations Manager. He has been enjoying getting to know our residents and some of our families already. If you haven't yet met Troy, please introduce yourself.

We wish to thank all the EPOAs who have taken part in our recent survey. It is heartening to see some of the positive comments that came through. The survey is hugely helpful to us in identifying our gaps or areas that we can improve on. We strive to provide a very high level of care to your loved ones and your feedback enables our continuous improvement. A reminder that any specific concerns which may arise from day to day, should be addressed with us directly as soon as possible.

Our Diversional Therapy team continues to enrich our residents' days with a range of interesting and engaging activities. Residents enjoy van outings, mindful

coloring, cooking club days and live entertainment on Saturdays. As the days have warmed, residents have been enjoying heading outdoors for walks and picking flowers. Some special moments occurred in the Lodge recently when some children popped in for a visit. We were delighted to notice how engaged our residents became whilst watching them and being in the children's company. On another day a resident began to sing and dance when music from her cultural background was turned on. Good times for the resident and for the staff who were involved! There is nothing nicer than seeing our residents' eyes sparkle and big smiles spread across their faces.

On that note, we are excited to be planning our Christmas festivities. A Christmas tree and decorations will soon be going up in each of our small homes. We are organising our Christmas Family Gathering which is to be held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December for our residents and their families. We hope you will join us for this. The afternoon will include a special afternoon tea and Christmas cake. Some of the staff are also preparing an item to perform.

On Christmas day, our festivities will include a special Christmas menu which our cooks have prepared for the whole day, and an exciting visit from Santa Claus!

We wish you wonderful times with family and friends this Christmas.

---

**We warmly invite you to join us at  
our Christmas Gathering on  
Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> of December  
2.30-3.30pm**

---

We do things differently, and it works.

November 2023

## Magic Moments from our Homes around NZ

I have returned back to work from my parental leave recently. All the residents are excited to see me back. There is one resident who comes inside my office every day, goes behind my chair to have a look around and asks me, 'did you bring him today?' I asked him who he is looking for and he said... 'your baby boy ... I was checking if you are hiding him behind your chair.' When I took my baby to see him he was so excited to see him and said, 'oh you are finally here!' I was so touched by the glow in his eyes.

I was busy assisting a resident and one of our other residents suddenly approached me, gave me a hug and said, 'thank you and I love you.'

Our entertainers were playing and a staff member took a resident up to dance. He enjoyed this so much that he stood appreciating the music until the entertainers had finished.

During a kapa haka performance by school students, a resident stood up from her chair in the middle of the vibrant singing and paid full attention to the dance. She didn't sit down until after the performance. This resident keeps to herself always and it was lovely to see that she reacted so enthusiastically to the kapa haka.

## Happy Christmas from Andrew Sheard

Christmas is an exciting time with the opportunity to catch up with friends and whānau and to reflect on the many ups and downs a year brings. For me it is an opportunity to enjoy some family time and perhaps to catch up on some long-forgotten jobs around the house over the summer.

As I travel around our homes I really enjoy the special moments that come at Christmas time. A chance to catch up with some old friends, share a meal and some Christmas cake, or just to enjoy each other's company. These moments mean so much and really light up the faces of residents, staff and family members.

Please remember you are always welcome to come and make yourself a cup of tea or coffee at our homes and to join your loved one for a meal.

Christmas can also be a tough time of year for people who are away from their families or perhaps are missing family or friends that may have passed away. I am always mindful of many of our staff from overseas who are often away from their family for significant periods of time. This can be very challenging. I'm sure many of you will be missing a family member that you would love to spend Christmas with.

When I reflect on the past year, I notice that we have achieved many positive outcomes. We now have electronic records systems well embedded in our organisation, we have done significant work on our Māori and Pacific health plans, and we continue to innovate in the ways we care for people with dementia.

We are also starting to return to normal in terms of the number of Registered Nurses at our homes and we have been fortunate to recruit some very capable managers over the past six months or so.

It fills me with a sense of great pleasure to think about how our staff teams have managed some very challenging times over the past year or two with the global Registered Nurse shortage impacting our homes. Our staff family have responded so well, supporting each other and continuing to deliver the loving care they are so good at.

We have recently completed EPOA surveys. This is such a valuable source of feedback for us as it allows us to improve our service and plan for future improvements. Thank you so much for your input.

I wish you all the best for the holiday season and we very much look forward to seeing many of you at our Christmas gatherings over the next few weeks.

Ngā mihi nui

**Andrew Sheard, Managing Director**

**“Unity is strength. . . when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.”**

**- Mattie Stepanek**

It has been a challenging time since 2020 due to the nationwide nursing shortage in New Zealand. This has been impacted and compounded by international health workforce shortages, the effect of COVID-19 on retention rates, and immigration challenges. We have been reliant on internationally trained nurses to fill the workforce gaps which developed over years of increasing nurse retention issues in New Zealand. Like so many of our partners in the health system, we continue to manage our workforce shortages in this way. These internationally qualified nurses are working with us as level 4 senior caregivers and are in a registered nurse (RN) support role. Working in an RN support role, they have shown excellent initiative.

With support and oversight from our senior clinical team, our level 4 RN support staff have made sure residents and the quality of their care are always at the centre of our decision making. On behalf of the entire team of Dementia Care NZ we would like to express that we appreciate and admire their phenomenal efforts in the workplace. We are impressed at how well they have managed their work and all the hours they have put into the job. Their professionalism has motivated the entire team. Thank you so much!

Although workforce shortages continue to be an issue, we have been fortunate to continue to recruit new registered nurses, some of whom started as level 4 caregiver/RN support staff and then went on to complete their pathway to New Zealand nursing registration and have since become registered nurses. They are working as RNs across all our DCNZ facilities. In addition, we have recruited new registered nurses who applied through advertisements on various platforms. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new RNs into the DCNZ team. They bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to DCNZ homes and it is great to have them join us.

With Christmas just around the corner, we are thankful that we can enjoy catching up with family and friends. We are looking forward to celebrating Christmas by enjoying food, gifts and each other's company. We are both happy to be joining the homes for their Christmas Gatherings and celebrations alongside residents and staff.

We wish all our Dementia Care NZ families a safe and happy Christmas and every good wish for the New Year. We look forward to catching up again in 2024.

**Urmee Rahman and Arrah Bagtang, Regional Clinical Managers**

## **The importance of our ‘Best Friends Approach to Dementia Care’ training**

With Christmas approaching I am drawn to thinking about the things that are important to us; our traditions, customs and values. Some time ago, before I joined Dementia Care NZ, our Visions and Values were developed. These are a guide for how we should conduct ourselves and treat others. You may have seen this on a poster at one of our facilities. Our Vision and Values is the foundation for all that we do, and we introduce these to all of our new staff at an informal session facilitated by Andrew, one of our directors. Once this foundation is in place, we can then help to build on it, knowing that the foundation is steady and secure.

I am very fortunate to be someone who helps to pass on these values when I meet with staff and facilitate some training called ‘The Best Friends Approach to Dementia Care’. This training is undertaken by all of our staff, organisation wide. Over three sessions we explore and discuss many different ideas. The starting point is ‘What qualities does a best friend have?’ Inevitably we discover that a best friend is non-judgmental, compassionate, trustworthy and kind. We can then discuss how we can bring those qualities with us to work and treat the residents we care for (and our colleagues too), as if they were our best friends. A win-win situation for all concerned.

Another key purpose of the Best Friends training is to encourage our staff to develop empathy for someone living with dementia. What is it really like? How must it feel to wake up and not quite know where you are? Why do some residents not want to take a shower? Why do some seek a way out of the facility? These things can be easily explained and understood if you can put yourself in the resident's shoes. This is true empathy, and once developed it is the greatest thing. It is like discovering gold.

Speaking of gold, I hope that you are able to enjoy the Christmas season.

**Simon Hamley, Education Co-ordinator**

## Cultural care in our homes

Over the past year or so we have been doing a lot of work on how we deliver cultural care in our homes. We have been working with a cultural advisor on the questions we ask when a new resident moves into one of our homes, while bearing in mind that this may be a lot to share when you're just moving in. We are also making sure our team has the skills to meet those needs.

Finding out about what makes each person unique and special is at the very core of the work we do. Our Vision and Values focus on how we interact with each person: understanding their values, interests and hobbies, and getting to know their whānau.

When we do our Vision and Values training for each new staff member, we share our own culture, values and family connections as this is another key part of creating trusting relationships.

This is an excerpt from our Vision and Values:

*Kia tomo mai ki te tautoko nei i tō whānau.*

*Kia whakatuarā mātou i te kotahitanga me ngā uara hoki o te mana o ia tangata.*

*Kia whakanui hoki mātau i te kotahitanga ahakoa ngā rerekētanga.*

*We welcome family/whānau and the wider community as integral to people's lives.*

*We promote inclusion and the rights and values of each person.*

*We celebrate unity in diversity.*

Our Best Friends training builds on this work. Simon talks about our Best Friends training in this newsletter – if we can treat everyone as if they are a best friend, we will all experience positive interactions, filled with love and compassion.

As we move forward we are building on these foundations.

Over the course of this year we have been working to ensure everyone in our organisation completes Treaty of Waitangi training. We are also gaining cultural input when we plan projects we are working on over the next year. The question we are asking is: what are the things we need to work on to make our homes even more welcoming and inclusive?

Over the next year we will be focusing on continuing to improve the ability to understand and be with people of differing cultures, building closer connections to community organisations around our homes and some te reo training for staff.

One of the things that always comes up as we discuss cultural care is involving whānau in the care of their loved ones. Family members coming in to share the interests of our residents creates such magic moments for our residents. We really encourage you to continue to share interests with your loved ones where you are able and to share stories with us so that we might be able to better understand your loved one. Thank you for your visits, thank you for sharing with us. You are so important to us.

**Peter Hume**

**Communications, Engagement and Governance  
Advisor**

### *Cup Day at Admatha*

We got dressed up in our finery and fancy hats. We had a wonderful time chatting and whiling away the time together. What fun!

