



**PRESIDENT'S REPORT
2020 AGM**

Introduction

It is with pleasure that I present this, my second president's report to the membership of Warrina Innisfail for the 2020 annual general meeting.

Facility Redevelopment

The facility redevelopment has very much been a shining light this year to what has otherwise been a hard year overall for aged care providers throughout the country including ourselves.

The new building remains on budget and on track for completion in early November 2020.

The unseasonably wet weather has led to delay in practical completion but that said, the delay in my view has not been unreasonable considering that "wet weather" in the Cassowary Coast seems to be an entirely unique concept when compared with what the rest of the nation regards as "wet weather".

There has been a lot of work behind the scenes to keep the redevelopment progressing with the progress of construction evident to anyone who walks past the new building on a weekly basis.

Regulation and Compliance

The deliberations stemming from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has seen a dramatic increase in regulation and compliance to all providers. To say that there has been a crack-down in the way aged care is delivered is an understatement.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (**Quality Commission**), which was established at the beginning of the year, states as one of its roles to "...*protect and enhance the safety, health, well-being and quality of life of people receiving aged care*". Somewhat unpredictably, this has seen an expectation for board members to have an in-depth knowledge of operational aspects of facilities, including in particular clinical care.

For board presidents, there is now a requirement to meet with Quality Commission representatives at short notice (approximately 48 hours) for an interview to gauge the extent to which boards are practically applying the quality standards, knowledge of clinical care and the more hands-on operational aspects of the provider. It is evident that there is a gradual deterioration of the traditional corporate demarcations of governance and operations which have served many organisations so well for so long. I am aware of a board president from a nearby facility (who out of respect and courtesy I will not name) who explained to me how he was, in his own words, “grilled” by two representatives from the Quality Commission and asked complex questions regarding clinical and operational aspects of the facility which only someone who is clinically trained and works directly in the field could competently answer. Quality Commission representatives appear to have an enormously broad scope of power in acting as quasi-police in an interrogatory roll. Simply referring these lines of questions onto appropriately qualified senior employees of an organisation no longer cuts the mustard.

I fear the impact of all this upon many boards and board presidents who act in good faith in an entirely voluntary community service role. It is very much a disincentive and another step towards fully paid, “professional” board members acting in a role not too dissimilar to directors of for-profit corporate providers, which is a shame for many of those who wish to serve their communities in a voluntary capacity and maintain a link to family members and friends who may be residents in facilities.

COVID-19

I am sure I can speak for many when I say that when it comes to COVID-19, it is probably best to put a line through 2020 without saying anything more.

As an organisation, Warrina has gone above and beyond to ensure that our processes and procedures in complying with all State and Federal Government health guidelines as issued are strictly complied with. As has been seen elsewhere, the transmission of infection amongst aged care facilities has had devastating consequences. It is certainly something that we at Warrina Innisfail do not want to replicate. I am 100% satisfied that the organisation has taken all necessary precautions and steps to satisfy its duty of care to residents and their families. The results speak for themselves with no COVID-19 infections on site to date.

Thanks to Chief Executive Officer Peter Roberts

I feel this year in particular has been an incredibly tough one for the CEO Peter Roberts and certainly perhaps the toughest year that I have observed in the approximately 7 years that I have been involved with the organisation.

None of us at the beginning of the year contemplated having to navigate our way through a pandemic, in addition to carefully overseeing the final stages of completion of an \$18 million building redevelopment, plus getting our heads across a transformed and ever changing aged care regulatory and compliance landscape.

The involvement and support of the CEO has been instrumental in these areas. I can speak on behalf the board in saying just how reassuring it is knowing that we have a truly committed CEO dedicated to ensuring that the above areas are tackled head-on right from the outset. On behalf of the board I wish to thank Peter Roberts for his extraordinary efforts and commitment this year and hope that the next 12 months sees a much more manageable workload and perhaps some well-earned time away for rest and refreshment.

Welcome Kerry Shorney

It has been a pleasure this year to welcome Kerry Shorney to our board. Kerry has already proved that she is not backwards in coming forwards in making a number of constructive contributions to the board. I look forward to having Kerry on the board for many years to come.

Thanks to the Board

I would like to make special mention of Kevin Bliss vice president. Kevin has provided tremendous support to me in attending many events on site and having day-to-day contact with staff, residents and families in my absence due to work and professional commitments. Thank you Kevin for your ongoing support and assistance to me over the past 12 months.

My sincere and heartfelt thanks also to the whole of the board for their steadfast and unwavering commitment to the organisation these past 12 months. I am grateful to sit alongside such positive and dedicated people who give many hours of their time on an unpaid voluntary basis. It is truly refreshing.

Conclusion and Thanks

In closing, I would like to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation on behalf of the board and membership to the 240 hard-working, dedicated staff and 60 equally hard working and dedicated volunteers for their excellent work and efforts over the past 12 months. In particular, I would like to single out the senior management team who have all been faced with enormous workloads and continual oversight from media, the Royal Commission, the Quality Commission, families and residents. Warrina is a standout amongst its industry peers because of its people, all of whom deserve the highest levels of appreciation and respect.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as president these past 12 months. I commend my report to membership.



**Chris Kahler
President
Warrina Innisfail**

22 September 2020