

RSL Veterans' Retirement Village

The RSL Veterans' Retirement Village is a charitable organisation formed in 1911 to provide care and service to veterans. The War Veterans Nursing Home provides care to 147 residents in two separate facilities, catering to high care frail-aged residents and those with dementia. .

Resident focus

Resident input is sought by way of monthly resident meetings, six-monthly focus groups, regular surveys and face to face interactions, and communicated through newsletters, notice boards and resident sub-committees.

A high level of rapport has been established between management, staff and residents. Feedback from residents and relatives show that management is responsive to issues raised in all aspects of care and service and that they are kept well informed.

ANZAC Day march

In consultation with residents who can no longer travel into the city for the annual ANZAC Day march, the Village has introduced its own ANZAC march through the village, led by a police band and cheered on by crowds that line the street. This year, more than 250 residents participated to proudly show their ANZAC spirit.

The Village Olympics

Complete with opening ceremony, competitions and medal ceremonies, the Village held their own "Village Olympics" to coincide with the Greek games. Events included lawn bowls, shuffleboard, scooter races, cake decorating, sit-down dancing, swim-walking and trivia.

Leadership

A comprehensive leadership training program has been implemented, including professional development, competency assessment, a leadership survey tool for residents, and a major benchmarking exercise with a large health care organisation. Resident survey results indicate that 92% of respondents were satisfied with the management and leadership.

Staff recruitment and training

An issue for many homes, the Village found it difficult to attract and retain staff. By rewriting its job advertisements to focus on 'looking for a change', removing the necessity for previous experience and introducing a four-day orientation course before employment, the Village has reduced its reliance on agency nurses dramatically.

Ongoing staff development and training is also a strong focus, with a broad education program available to staff including competency based training, nationally accredited training courses, undergraduate and post-graduate courses, scholarships, leadership and management programs and a vocational training program to assist cognitively impaired people to gain employment.

The Village is also one of the few aged care centres in the country that has university affiliation and is employing a Professor Ageing to complete research into mental health for war veterans as they age.

Benchmarking

The service has developed its own auditing system based on the accreditation standards, and benchmarks with a range of partners on specific topics, including education, recruitment and retention of staff, dementia care, leadership, admission processes and care documentation.

The admission process

A new admission process was developed following negative feedback. The new admission process focused on more two-way information and involved an interim care plan developed at pre-admission to ensure a smooth transition for the resident. After the introduction of the new process, 92% of new residents agreed they have all the information they need and 100% of staff agreed they have all the information they needed to provide appropriate care.

Therapy program

All high care residents received individualised therapy programs as part of the 'Adding years to life and life to years' program. This is being extended to all low care residents. Results have shown increases in mobility, speech, strength, independence and confidence. Some residents have moved from the nursing home to the hostel due to their improvements.

Care planning

The Village has developed a new care planning system that is much more individualised to each resident. The four-page care plan is easy to read and has resulted in less paperwork, happier staff and more appropriate funding.

Other improvement initiatives implemented by the Village include an occupational health and safety program, fire safety and spiritual services.