

THE  
**VOICES** OF  
ST VINCENT'S  
AUTUMN 2024



ST VINCENT'S CARE



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## MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



### *Dear St Vincent's Care Community,*

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Autumn edition of Voices of St Vincent's. As we move further into the year, I am so excited to read about the lively happenings across our homes.

In April, as a community we came together to commemorate several significant days, each holding its own special place in our hearts. Easter brought us together in a time of reflection and gratitude, reminding us of the importance of faith, hope, and love. ANZAC Day served as a solemn time of commemoration, with heartfelt tributes across our homes as we honoured the bravery and sacrifice of our servicemen and women.

In May, we're celebrating International Nurses Day, Palliative Care Week, and Volunteer Week. These are occasions that highlight and honour the valuable contribution of members of our team. Nurses, carers, volunteers fulfil such crucial roles in delivering compassionate care to our community. Despite the diversity in roles, they all share a profound dedication and commitment to compassion and kindness, which is truly admirable.

In this edition of our newsletter, you'll find inspiring stories showcasing the wonderful

things happening across our homes including:

- Nancy's heart-warming story which embodies the essence of our Heartprint care model,
- the remarkable journey of our chefs David and Harry who represented St Vincent's Care at an international cooking competition in London,
- a sneak peak at the new season of our video series 'Celebrating You',
- meet members of the St Vincent's Consumer Advisory Body, and
- delve into fascinating research on how residents and families think about food.

These stories highlight the excellence, dedication, compassion and curiosity of our community, and I couldn't be prouder of the incredible impact we're having on this journey together.

God Bless,

**LINCOLN HOPPER**  
Chief Executive Officer



# NAVIGATING AGED CARE: CELEBRATING YOU RETURNS WITH A FOCUS ON FAMILY CONVERSATIONS

Following the heartfelt success of its first season, 'Celebrating You' is set to return with an even more impactful Season Two. This three-part video series, launching on June 3rd, delves deeper into the vital conversations surrounding aged care needs for older individuals.

Season Two of 'Celebrating You' focuses on fostering early discussions among seniors and their families about aged care decisions. It features intimate interviews with residents of St Vincent's Care, their families, and staff, tackling the often challenging topics associated with aged care. These include the emotional complexities faced by caregivers, the guilt family members may grapple with when transitioning their loved ones into care, and the surprising advantages of life in a residential aged care setting.

Every year, over 150,000 elderly Australians transition into residential aged care, affecting not only those individuals but also their families who need support through this significant life change. "We Australians don't like to talk about getting old, which is just crazy," says Prue Densley, Executive General Manager of Consumer Experience at St Vincent's Care. "We hope that shedding some light into the realness of it all, the good, the bad, the ugly, the everything in between. That's a really important story to tell and we should own it and be real about that journey."

We want people entering aged care to feel comfortable. We also want them and their loved ones to know this is not a full stop, it's just another chapter.

Lincoln Hopper, CEO of St Vincent's Care, emphasises, "We really hope this campaign gives people the information they need, that sheds light on the challenges and the reality of entering aged care, but through that, it empowers them to make the journey the very best it can be."

The series highlights a common reality: the need for aged care can arise suddenly and without warning. In a society that seldom discusses the implications of aging, misconceptions and fears about aged care persist, making the adjustment more challenging than it needs to be.

James Boshier, Head of Marketing at St Vincent's Care, hopes the series will inspire Australians to initiate conversations about aging earlier, preparing them to make informed decisions when the time comes. "We didn't want to shy away from the challenges of aged care because if you just sugar-coated it, you actually wouldn't meet the audience where they're at," he shares, "Those people are stressed. Those people have anxiety. Those people are feeling guilt about considering putting mom into aged care, and we actually want to connect with them there and say, that's normal,





and let us guide you through that range of emotion through the eyes of other people, but also give you hope on the other side that there's lovely welcoming communities where you can flourish, where you can find new things that engage you and that will make you see that this is not a full stop but the next chapter."

To complement the video series, Season Two introduces a new 5 episode podcast, Navigating Aged Care, featuring experts in aged care and health from across St Vincent's Health Australia. The podcast explores the aging process in depth, offering insights and practical advice to

help both residents and their families navigate the complexities of talking about and seeking aged care.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the residents, family members, and staff who have shared their personal stories for 'Celebrating You'. Your experiences provide authentic and relatable insights that we hope will guide and support others as they navigate aged care.

Stay tuned for the video series and podcast this coming June, as we continue to celebrate and support our community through 'Celebrating You' Season 2.





**PERSONALISED CARE**





# CELEBRATING THE HEARTWARMING LAUNCH OF HEARTPRINT



We had so much fun celebrating the launch of our new care model, Heartprint! The launch was a celebration of our commitment to valuing each person and placing people at the heart of everything we do at St Vincent's Care.

Heartprint is our promise of human-centred leadership, it's about setting a new standard in care that's as unique and personal as the individuals we serve.

## Nancy's Heartprint: A Legacy of Fashion and Friendship

When I was 17 years old, I got my first job as a Personal Care Worker in Aged Care. As a student nurse, I was excited for what this role could do for my nursing career, but I had no idea what it would be like working with elderly people. By that point I had already lost all of my grandparents to cancer, with none of them reaching their 60s. I never thought I would enjoy spending time with older people, but also be lucky enough to call many of them my friends.

The resident who changed all of it for me was a lady by the name of Nancy, and I would like to tell you all a little about her.

Nancy, at 97 years young, was a petite lady, always perfectly dressed, with high heeled shoes. Her dark greyed hair was tightly done up into a perm that got 'set' once a week. She wore these giant glasses, and everyday would put on her foundation, blush and of course, a soft pink lipstick. On

my first shift in Nancy's area I nervously went into her room to help her get ready for bed. She told me what she needed, first to dress into her satin night gown and fluffy slippers, then to wash her face and apply night cream. Then we put on 3 hairnets secured with about 100 bobby pins and then we both sat on the side of her bed, and she took a huge sigh. "This is the important part" she told me and then asked if we could pick her outfit for tomorrow. This for Nancy, was the most important thing she had in her life, fashion was her only purpose.

I opened the wardrobe and was amazed. It was filled with bright clothing, skirt suits, dresses with matching belts. I never thought that I would share a love of fashion with someone 80 years my senior, but I would have worn every outfit in that wardrobe. I picked out a few outfits I thought she might like and complimented







her on how stunning her clothes were, and I have never seen a smile more beautiful than when I did.

I was having more fun at work than I ever knew possible. In fact, I loved it so much, that when Nancy asked me if I could help her tomorrow night too, I said yes. And from then on, whenever I worked, even if it wasn't in that area, Nancy would wait at her door for me each night, and we would complete her bedtime routine together. During these special moments we grew very close, I soon learned all about her life, and eventually she learned about mine.

Nancy was and will always be more than a resident. We were friends. She told me some amazing stories, and we laughed and talking about many things, I would hold her hand on the days she was sad, and she would hold mine on the days I was as well.

Nancy passed away, after I had moved into another job but my connection with her was so special the home called me to tell me she had passed.

In every aged care role since, I have always found a Nancy or two in every home. Those residents who pull you into their heart and make the difficult days easier, and the good days better. I too suffer the same dilemma as Nancy, staring into a wardrobe each day wondering what to wear for the next, and my nighttime routine looks very similar to how Nancy's did.

This connection helped me learn how to get to know the residents in the most important way, by understanding who they were before care. By caring about the person so I can better care for them. While I hope I left a Heartprint on Nancy, I know that she left one for me.





## HEALTH AND WELLBEING







## REACHING BEYOND – NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL

Each year in March, we celebrate the annual Seniors Festival. The festival celebrates the role and contributions of older adults to our local communities. It's the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere, with over 500,000 people attending a range of festival events each year. This year's theme for the festival was 'Reach Beyond!' aiming to encourage exploring things you may never have explored before.

We were thrilled to be a part of it with our Heathcote team hosting "Reaching Out: Finding Balance, Preventing Falls" an informative talk on the essential topic of balance and fall prevention among senior Australians.

We were lucky to hear from guest speaker and local member for Hughes, Jenny Ware, who discussed the benefits of embrace new challenges. She highlighted the importance of continuing to expand your horizons, whether by exploring new ways of living, broadening your social circles, or considering different health options, age irrespective.

We teamed up with physiotherapists from St Vincent's who provided attendees with an engaging session on the topic of balance and falls including the importance of maintaining stability and strength both at home and within the community.

This was followed by practical, interactive workstations where attendees learnt some easy exercises designed to enhance stability and mobility, to increase balance and prevent falls.







The event was a tremendous success, attracting over fifty participants, including St Vincent's residents and seniors from the local community. It was a great opportunity to meet like-minded people and discover new ways of ageing well. The day concluded with a delightful morning tea, providing a perfect opportunity for guests to mingle and discuss the day's activities. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many attendees expressing how much they enjoyed the session and appreciated the chance to learn in such a fun and supportive environment. They felt empowered with their new knowledge to increase balance and prevent falls.

We're proud to be part of supporting people to age well and reach beyond to explore new routines at any age.



# DO AGED CARE RESIDENTS AND FAMILIES AGREE ON FOOD?

As a part of ongoing surveys aimed at continuously improving the dining experience at St Vincent's aged care, residents and families are asked to answer two simple questions:

**Do you like the food options offered at St Vincent's?**

**Can you elaborate on your answer?**

Qualitative responses are gathered based on these questions and are then sorted into 8 key categories to compare.

The categories include:

- Quality
- Dining experience
- Variety
- Nutrition
- Temperature
- Dietary restrictions
- Meal simplicity
- Taste

So, what did the answers and subsequent analysis reveal?

*Have spoken to management regarding my food preferences, not spicy, just old fashioned cooking*

*I would like more curry and stews*

*My problem is with my special diet because it limits my choices. I would like more choices that suit my dietary needs.*

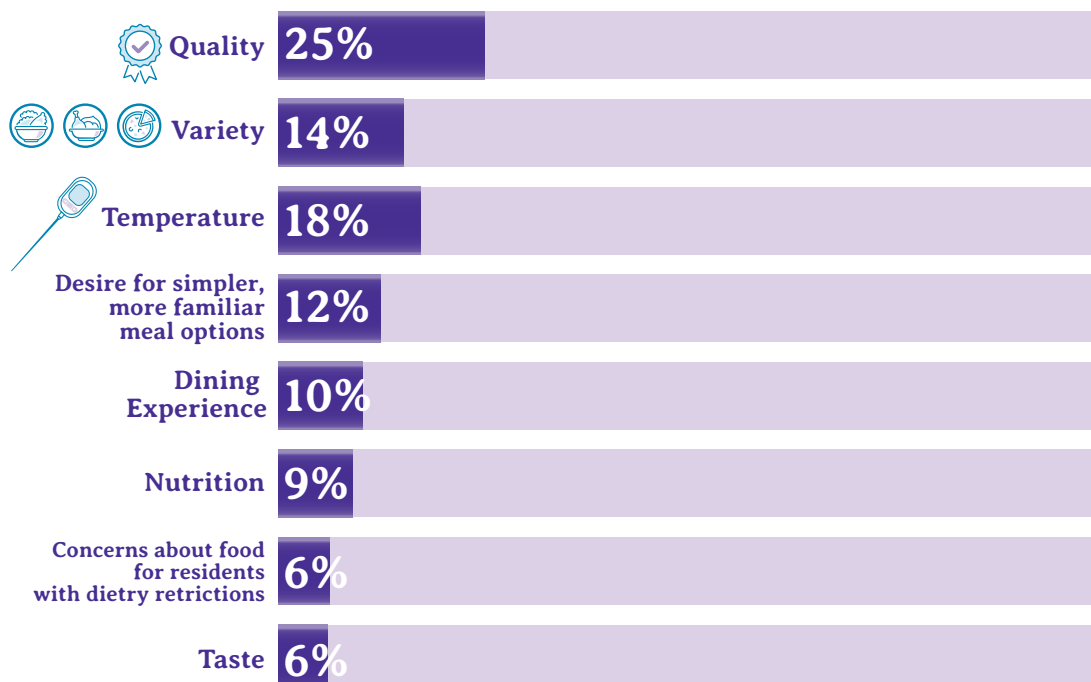
*Certain food do not agree with me, but if I don't like a meal staff will organise something else for me*



*Residents expressed different opinions on food which informed internal research and the subsequent report*

The survey revealed that while families and residents were aligned in areas, it was the emphasis placed on those areas that differed vastly.

## Family food preferences data



*Quality was a massive factor for families with variety and temperature close behind*

When it comes to residents, Variety reigned supreme with quality and temperature far behind

Because families play such an enormous role in aged care, the data is extremely valuable in understanding the relationships between family and residents.

### Why the differences?

While the differences in food expectations cannot be explained through this report alone, there are 2 potential reasons that could be explored as a part of future research:

#### 1. Residents are the ones actually eating the food

This isn't a mind-blowing idea, but it does explain a lot of the differences between residents and families.

For example, going on a diet, cutting out salt or drinking a kale smoothie all sound great for my health - but aren't exactly going to make my tastebuds sing.

#### 2. There is a clear generational divide between families and their loved ones living in aged care

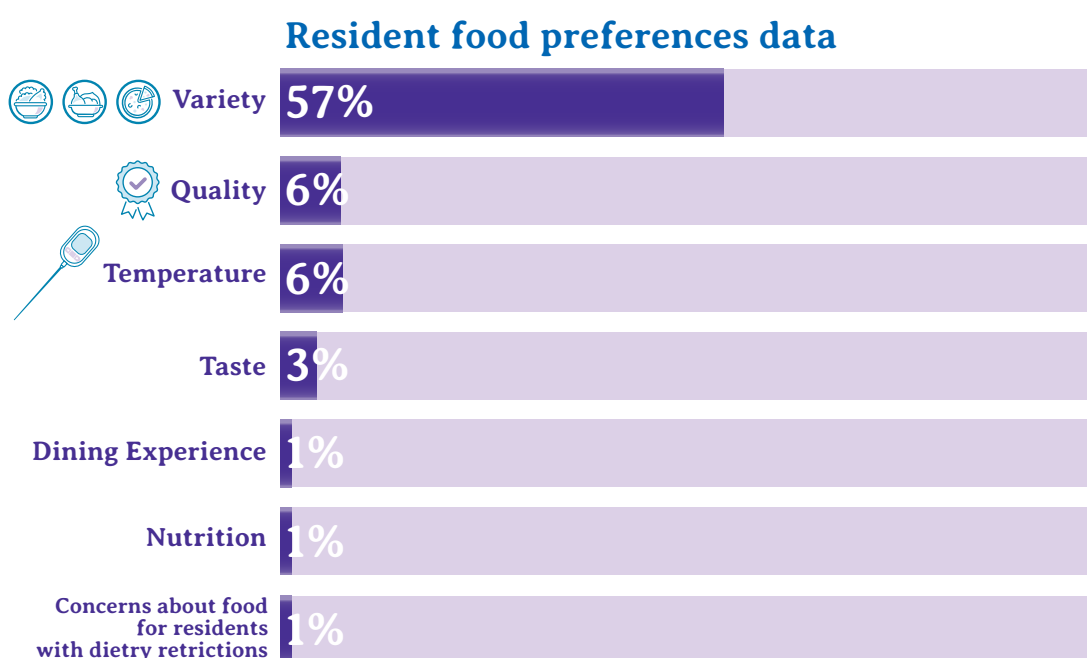
Whether it's because of the stage of life we're at, or because of intrinsic generational values, age plays a significant factor in what we value and when. Food is no different.

### Parting thoughts

While these are some hypotheses as to why these differences between residents and families exist, it's obvious that there's a lot more research that needs to happen before making any solid claims about why.

Families want to see their loved ones safe with good quality, nutritious food. Residents want to live their best lives with variety and great tasting food - frankly, who wouldn't want to live that way?

It's all of these balances that come with great care. Affording residents dignity of risk so that they can make their own decisions is a key part of dignified care and sometimes balancing that with family expectations can prove to be incredibly challenging for aged care homes.



*When it comes to residents, Variety reigned supreme with quality and temperature far behind*





## LIFESTYLE







# KANGAROO POINT RESIDENTS ENJOY NEW DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY “MAGIC TABLE”

Kangaroo Point’s aged care residents now have a new reason to smile, thanks to the efforts of St. Laurence’s College students. In 2023, these students raised funds during their College Walkathon to buy a Tovertafel projector, a “magic table” that creates interactive sensory experiences for people living with dementia. The college’s donation made through the St Vincent’s Foundation Queensland brought an innovative tool to Kangaroo Point, fostering joy and connection for residents.

## Students Fundraise for a Great Cause

The College Walkathon is a longstanding tradition at St. Laurence’s College. The students raised enough money to purchase a Tovertafel, ensuring that residents with dementia would have a new way to engage their senses and keep their minds stimulated. The students’ commitment to this cause reflects the compassion and community spirit that define their school culture.

## What Is the Tovertafel?

The Tovertafel projector is an interactive tool designed to assist people with dementia. It works by using a ceiling-mounted projector that shines lights onto a table, creating games and sensory experiences that respond to touch and movement. The games range from decorating a virtual birthday cake to clearing swirling leaves with realistic rustling sounds. This playful approach encourages physical activity, stimulates the brain, and reduces apathy,



making it an excellent addition to aged care settings.

## A Special Day at Kangaroo Point

In celebration of the installation, the students of St. Laurence’s College, accompanied by their Principal Mr. Ben Lowrie, went to Kangaroo Point to play games on the storyboard with the residents. The visit was filled with joy as the students and residents played together, shared stories, and created new memories. It bridged generations and demonstrated the positive impact of the Tovertafel.

## The Impact of the Tovertafel

The Tovertafel has already had a significant impact on the residents of Kangaroo Point. It provides a new form of entertainment and engagement, allowing residents to interact with their

environment in a way that stimulates their senses and encourages physical activity. This innovation also fosters social interaction, helping residents connect with each other and their carers.

Beyond the immediate benefits, the Tovertafel's presence at Kangaroo Point opens the door to further collaborations with St. Laurence's College and other community groups. It serves as a reminder of the power of community support and the positive change that can result from it.

### **Gratitude and Future Collaborations**

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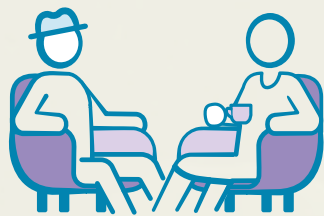
### **Gratitude and Future Collaborations**

The success of the Tovertafel project at Kangaroo Point would not have been possible without the generosity of the students and staff at St. Laurence's College and the support of the St Vincent's Foundation Queensland. As Kangaroo Point looks ahead, there are hopes for continued partnerships and future projects that will further enhance the well-being of residents.

The Tovertafel is more than just an exciting piece of technology; it represents a commitment to improving the quality of life for people with dementia. Thanks to the support of St. Laurence's College, Kangaroo Point's residents can enjoy a brighter, more engaging future.







## COMMUNITY









Allow me to reintroduce myself. I'm Ted Cole, a resident at St Vincent's in Carina. You may recall my story from the last edition of The Voices of St Vincent's. My journey picks up from where it left off.

After spending six months in the hospital coping with the aftermath of contracting a fairly rare autoimmune condition called Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), I entered care at Carina on 15 December 2021. My diagnosis was "partial quadriplegia" with severe mobility challenges. Thus, I required a very high level of care.

The unimaginable happened just two months later, in February 2022. My wife Cate, the love of my life, suddenly passed away. I was completely shattered! Another crushing event occurred only a few weeks after Cate's funeral. The Government-subsidised disability unit Cate and I had shared for over two decades was now unoccupied, and it had to be emptied. It was only by heavily depending on friends that I sold or donated the unit's contents over one weekend. A few weeks later, there was a flood in Carina, and because of it we had to vacate to another facility for a couple of weeks.

Describing the intensity of the trauma I endured during these four adversities is beyond words. For the first time in my life, I had to question what was left to live for, and I was consumed by depression.

However, even in its most devastating moments, life has a knack of surprising us, so it was in my case. With the unwavering support of family, friends, and the fantastic Carina care team, I was encouraged to seek counselling. It was also around this time that Physical Therapy entered the picture. Only after a few physical therapy sessions through

Allied Connect, I noticed a remarkable change began to unfold. Both my physical and emotional well-being started to recover, setting the stage for better times.



In October 2022, a change in funding model allowed rehabilitation for qualifying aged care residents. The recovery from GBS can take years. Also, the path of recovery is influenced by many factors, including the kind of rehabilitation and the timing of that therapy. All elements must have been in sync since an extraordinary thing happened. After many months of dedicated rehab, I took my first steps, 20 months after contracting GBS.

Thanks to the fantastic support from management, the care team at Carina and the outstanding, dedicated service from Allied Connect Physiotherapy, you can see from the photo I have improved to the point where I am walking the hallway circuit in my wing, supported by Anne-Marie. I'm not sprinting yet, and there





have been a few setbacks, but they have only made me more determined to stay on the road to recovery.

#### **Anne-Marie's message:**

*"It's been a momentous journey with many milestones, from the first time Ted stood up, to the first few steps, the progression from hoist to now being able to walk with a 4 Wheel Walker. We have been very blessed here at St. Vincent's, Sharon has supported us every step of the way and Ted's just one example of how rehabilitation is benefiting residents here."*

#### **Sharon's message:**

*"Managing St. Vincent's Care Carina is a privilege filled with remarkable moments. Ted's journey to increase his mobility was a joy to support. Working with Anne-Marie, we secured equipment to aid not only Ted but also other residents. Ted's determination paid off, inspiring others to achieve mobility success."*

*He represents the essence of why we work in Aged Care - to help individuals live their best lives. Helping to change lives in this field is truly magical, empowering, and an immense honour."*

Navigating through our physical and emotional pain is a unique, deeply intimate voyage. My journey has taught me a fundamental truth, that pain and suffering are inherent in everyone's life. Yet amidst these challenges lies our capacity to absorb lessons of resilience, enabling us to move ahead, empowering us to live our best lives.

I am fortunate to have a well-rooted belief system, strong values, faith and an unwavering sense of purpose to succeed. But I had to discover that I could only really start healing spiritually and emotionally when I made a conscientious decision to start being happy regardless of my challenges. This quote from Nightbirde says it all: "You can't wait until life isn't hard any more, before you decide to be happy."

Oh, you ask, what are Sharon, Anne-Marie and I doing in this picture? Well, isn't it obvious? We are having fun celebrating life since it is far too short to waste on anything less than joy and laughter. Seize every moment, cherish the simple pleasures, and make memories that will last forever.

Thank you for letting me share my journey with you. I dedicate this article in memory of my late wife, Cate, whose unwavering love, strength, and support remain a guiding light in my life.





# EXPLORING OUR RICH HERITAGE: THE CABLE STATION CHRONICLES

Our De La Salle Village in Southport has a rich and distinctive history, making it a unique destination for those seeking a place to call home. Once home to a cable station of great significance, this history has played a pivotal role in shaping our community's identity.

The Cable Station became operational in 1902 and with its international capabilities served as a crucial link during significant moments, including the declarations of war in 1914 and 1939. During World War II, the cable became an essential resource, guarded and armed to safeguard its importance. While the Cable Station concluded its operations in 1962, its legacy lives on.

Interestingly, two weatherboard office buildings from the Cable Station found a new purpose at The Southport School. Now transformed into delightful music rooms, these buildings proudly hold heritage listings, preserving the essence of a bygone era.

We're excited to share a curated collection of vintage newspaper articles and photographs that invite you on a journey through time. Join us in exploring the remarkable history at Southport!

Images and Captions below:



Tuesday, 4 November 1902, Darling Downs Gazette, Toowoomba.

## THE PACIFIC CABLE. OPENING CEREMONY AT SOUTHPORT.

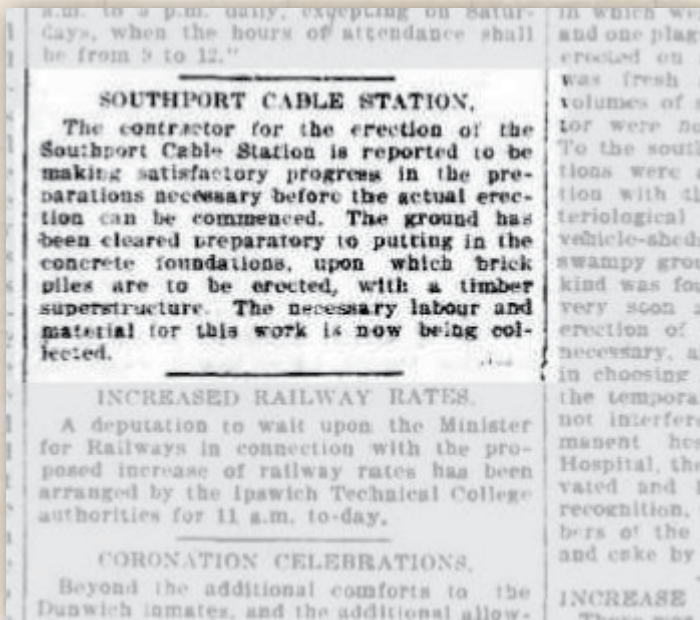
The opening ceremony of the Southport cable station for the Pacific cable took place today. At the invitation of Hon. J. G. Drake, a large number traveled by a special train and were entertained there. Among them were the Premier, Mr. Foxton, Sir H. M. Nelson, Hon. J. Murray, Hon. A. J. Thynne, Hon. A. J. Carter, the Mayor of Brisbane, Mr. T. Glassey, and others.

After inspecting the buildings, the party was entertained by Mr. Drake at the Pacific Hotel. Congratulatory cables were sent to New Zealand, Fiji, Vancouver, and London. At the banquet, Mr. Drake proposed the toast of 'The King.' He read the following cable, sent by Mr. F. R. Lucas, from the cable steamer Anglia, on 31 October, to the King: "At the moment of completing the Pacific cable, it becomes possible for the first time to send a message from the Antipodes through both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, and as cables are entirely British, the first message to pass the sunrise by one route and to sunset by the other is properly addressed to the Sovereign of the British Empire, on which the sun never rises or sets."

Mr. Drake proposed the toast of 'Success to the Pacific Cable.'







Page 4 of the Brisbane Courier on Thursday, 12 June 1902.

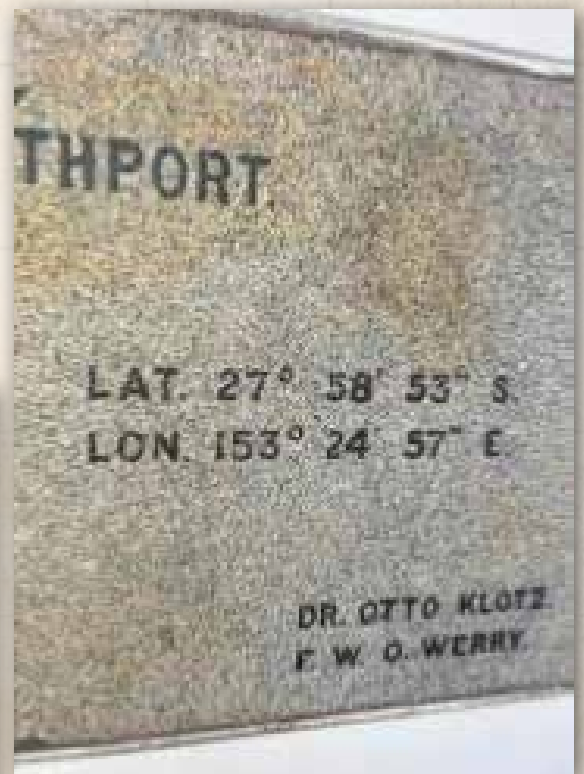
### SOUTHPORT CABLE STATION

The contractor for the erection of the Southport Cable Station is reported to be making satisfactory progress in the preparations necessary before the actual erection can be commenced. The ground has been cleared preparatory to putting in the concrete foundations, upon which brick piles are to be erected, with a timber superstructure. The necessary labour and material for this work are now being collected.

Today, as you pass by the Southport library entrance, you'll come across a commemorative plaque, proudly displaying the coordinates of the Cable Station, which served as the vital link between Australia and the global community. It stands as a powerful reminder of the historical significance of this site and its enduring importance in our shared heritage.



Believed to be Cable Station Guards having tea, Southport, circa 1914. Photographer unknown



Laying the Pacific Cable in a trench at Main Beach, 1902. Photographer unknown





# CELEBRATING SUCCESS

We've got some fantastic news from our very own culinary wizards at St Vincent's Care Services Kew! Chefs David Martin and Harry Shen recently flew to London to compete in the International Salon Culinaire — one of the globe's most prestigious culinary competitions—and guess what? They totally rocked it!

Imagine whipping up a meal that not only tastes fantastic but also looks so good it could easily belong in a high-end restaurant. Well, that's exactly what our duo did, creating dishes that would make any foodie's heart skip a beat. Against

competitors from the likes of the Hilton, Harrods, and even the Royal Air Force, our chefs brought home not one, but two silver awards!

David and Harry showcased their extraordinary skills and commitment by cooking a seafood paella using ingredients like fish cheeks and prawn heads to create a dish bursting with flavour. And they didn't stop there; they also crafted a dessert that turned heads and won hearts — a coconut rice pudding with creme brulee topping, served in a creatively carved pineapple husk.

Here's how our champions fared in the competition:



## **Mystery Grand Prix Basket: Silver**

(2nd in class against 16 of the world's best teams)



## **Tilda National Team Chef of the Year 2024: Silver** (2nd in class against 8 international teams)



## **Waitrose National Team Chef of the Year 2024: Highly Commended Award**





# AT THE INTERNATIONAL SALON CULINAIRE!

David shared his thoughts on the experience, saying it was “Truly a humbling experience to represent St Vincent’s on the International Stage in London. We competed against the world’s best chefs, from Michelin-starred restaurants to the Ritz. The judges were amazed about our insight into what our residents enjoy each and every day.”

David’s drive to transform the reputation of aged care cuisine shines through in his commitment to residents. “I give the best that I can to our residents,” he says. “We are part of a special time in their lives. We are able to show love and care through our food, and to leave a lasting impression.”

Let’s give a huge shout out to David and Harry for their passion and dedication. Your hard work not only raises the bar for culinary excellence but also brings immense pride to our St Vincent’s family. Here’s to many more fantastic meals!

*“I give the best  
that I can to  
our residents,”*





# HONOURING OUR HEALTHCARE HEROES: HAPPY INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY!

This month, we came together to celebrate International Nurses Day, a time to express our heartfelt gratitude and admiration for all of our amazing nurses across St Vincent's.

Your unwavering dedication, compassion, and care are the cornerstones of our aged care system. Each day, you make a profound difference in the lives of our residents and their families, providing comfort, support, and healing when it is needed most.

It is noteworthy that nursing has been an essential part of our St Vincent's heritage,







dating back to the founding of the Sisters of Charity in 1842. Today, our nurses continue to embody the spirit of nursing, keeping this proud tradition alive and making the world a better place every single day.

To all our nurses, your work has touched countless lives, and we are honored to have you as part of our team. Thank you for your dedication, your compassion, and your commitment to excellence. You are the heart and soul of St Vincent's, and we celebrate you today and every day.



# EXCITING NEWS: OUR CONSUMER ADVISORY BODY IS UP AND RUNNING!

We're excited to share that we've had our very first meeting of the Consumer Advisory Body (CAB) here at St Vincent's! The CAB is a volunteer advisory group that represents the voices of our residents and their families across our residential aged care homes and national home & community care services St Vincent's provides.

We are fortunate to have a wonderful representation of across our community, including current residents, family/next of

kin of existing residents or clients, three St Vincent's employees', an independent chair and an independent engagement adviser.

The energy and enthusiasm of all participants at our first meeting was fantastic! It was inspiring to see our volunteer consumer advisory members coming together to discuss ways to make our services even better and tackle any issues facing our community.



## **Meet the independent CAB members Lisa and Sandy:**

We are very fortunate to have engaged Lisa Guiver as the external Independent

Chair. Lisa has worked in aged care for over 35 years, her nursing background supported her skills in management, quality and consumer communication in both community and residential aged care. Lisa has always had a passion for supporting consumers to have a voice, to be heard and to understand why and how decisions are made. This passion has been amplified by personal experience as a number of her close family members have required support, including advocacy that care reflects their individual needs, and in decision making due to disabilities, dementia and chronic illness.

To help strengthen the consumer voice we also welcome Sandy Deans as the external Independent Engagement Adviser. Sandy has been a trusted advisor across the

banking, government, energy, hospitality, aged care and health care sector, marrying analytical rigor with authenticity and empathy. She is passionate about fostering meaningful community and business relationships where she can share her knowledge, expertise and resources to help achieve valuable outcomes. Sandy is a member of the National Aged Care Project Advisory Board and has remained a member of the Australian Aged Care Best Practice Community and the All about Aged Care Advisory Board.

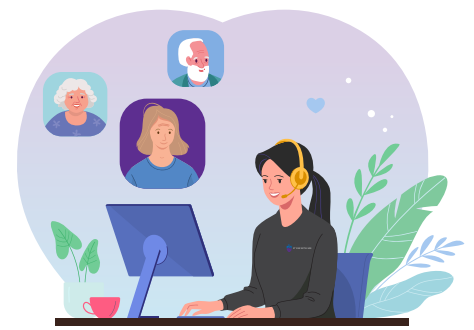
Sandy's role is an additional independent role we recruited as part of the advisory body because we are serious about making sure all residents and their families and friends feel heard and know that they truly are the heart of everything we do.

Over the coming months, as the new volunteer group find their feet, and their voice, they will begin to provide updates to the wider St Vincent's community to keep you informed, seek your opinions and experiences on various topics that matter most to our community.

We're excited to see what we can achieve when we all come together like this.



# FEEDBACK FOCUS: ENHANCING YOUR PHONE EXPERIENCES WITH US



**We're excited to share some new improvements from our St Vincent's Care Call Centre!**

Last year you told us that you were finding it difficult to contact us via our national call centre. In fact, we noticed a significant increase in feedback telling us we were missing calls and voicemail messages or on hold for long periods of time. Your feedback prompted us to investigate what was causing these challenges and from this review, we have upgraded our phone system.

Your feedback has shown us just how crucial it is to reach us reliably and efficiently. With 23 aged care homes and 8 retirement villages across our network, streamlining communication between our central phone line and all our locations has been a top priority. So, we've taken a significant step to enhance our communication system. In October 2023, we installed a new phone platform (called Genesys), and the team is now better equipped to connect with you when it matters most.

Here's a summary of the improvements you can expect when next you call us:

**Fewer Missed Calls:** The frustration of missed calls is becoming a thing of the past. Our new system reduces these occurrences, so we're here when you need us.

We have seen a significant improvement in calls being answered – jumping from 65% to 95% of all calls now being answered the first time, and most calls answered within 40 seconds!

**Text Us Anytime:** With our new SMS feature, you can now text us just like you would a friend. Whether you have a quick question or need more detailed support, we're here to chat.

Try it next time you need to know something! SMS us on 0483 942 500

**Less repeating yourself:** Our database and phone systems are smartly and securely linked so that we know who is calling and have access to their previous requests. This means it will save you time on the call and ensures we can manage your request quickly and efficiently. No more having to tell your story many times to get an answer to your enquiry.

**Ongoing improvements:** We're now able to monitor our performance and provide more training to our call agents, making sure we meet your needs swiftly and effectively. Better reporting also enables us to plan for peak call periods, understand call trends and investigate feedback quickly in the future. All this to provide you with better overall phone experience.

You can reach the St Vincent's Care Call Centre Team on **1800 778 767**.

The team are ready for your call 8am – 6pm, from Monday – Friday, and 8am - 4pm on Saturday. The Accounts Team is also available 8am – 4pm, Monday to Friday.

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This improvement was due to your feedback so thank you for letting us know what we needed to improve. Our commitment to continuous improvement is ongoing, so keep that feedback flowing in. We look forward to hearing from you – whether through a text or email – your feedback is always welcomed and valued.

*The Consumer Experience Team.*



ST VINCENT'S CARE

Q St Vincent's Aged Care



**Please don't hesitate to call  
1800 778 767**

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