

# CUSTOMER UPDATE

DECEMBER 2021 - LIFEBRIDGE AUSTRALIA LTD

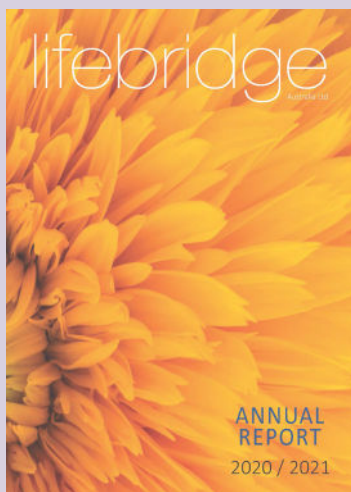


## ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS

Please be informed that the Lifebridge Annual Report and Financial Reports for the year 2020-21 are now available to download on our website.

<https://lifebridge.org.au/resources/annual-reports/>

We also have hard copy versions of the Annual Report available at the Kingscliff reception.



## CHRISTMAS PERIOD CLOSURES



The office of Lifebridge Australia will be closed for the Christmas period from close of business on Thursday 23rd December, 2021 and will reopen at 8.30am on Tuesday 4th January 2022.

During the Christmas shutdown period, all Community Services Groups (Aged Care and NDIS Services) will be suspended. Services to customers (with the exception of groups) will be delivered on non-public holidays during office shutdown. Only essential services will be delivered on Public Holidays.

### Contact number during Christmas Shutdown

If your matter is urgent during this period of shutdown please contact on non-public holidays Victoria Renwick on 0400 087 077 for all Aged Care and NDIS enquiries or Sharon Muntelwit on 0457 357 165 for rostering changes.

Alternatively please leave a message on 1800 043 186 and will return your call upon our return.

## LITTLE BLUE CHURCH MEAL PICKUP - KINGSCLIFF - FREE MEALS



Little Blue Church is partnering with FareShare to provide free precooked meals for those who need them, no questions asked. In these challenging times it is vitally important that the basic needs of the community of met. The good news is, tough times bring forth the best in most people.

The Kingscliff Community, The Kingscliff Anglican Church and FareShare is pleased to be able to partner to help those in need.

When: Thursday 11am to 1pm  
Where: The Church Hall  
41 Pearl Street, Kingscliff

Bookings are not required, however once the allocations of meals has been distributed the distribution centre will close.

## NDIS QUALITY INDICATORS UPDATES

The NDIS Commission has released new practice standards for Emergency and Disaster Management, Mealtime management and Severe dysphagia.

The quality indicators follow on from recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission and findings in relation to the causes of avoidable (and other) deaths for people with disability.

These new standards will apply to Lifebridge customers who need to be fully supervised at mealtimes (who have a mealtime management plan) or swallowing difficulties. Janelle and Andrew will be in contact with you where this applies to Lifebridge customers.

All Services are required to comply to new requirements by 24 January 2022.

# CUSTOMER UPDATE

## INTEGRATED SERVICE MODEL

You may recall in the August Lifebridge Customer Update; we introduced the concept of a new Lifebridge Integrated Service Model. This model is based upon recent changes in both the Aged Care and Disability sectors. The new Integrated Services model enables Lifebridge to better respond and adapt to more changes as they emerge from the Royal Commissions, as well ongoing changes from My Aged Care and the NDIS.

Lifebridge has noticed a shift in recent times where people with an NDIS package have been accessing services that have traditionally been offered through our Aged Care department. This has reinforced the idea that combining departments, sharing staff skills and expertise where it is needed, when it is needed, will increase the opportunity

to better target the supports people require. Lifebridge also recognises the benefits to be gained by creating our own “care workforce.” Combining our Aged Care and Disability Service departments will assist in providing greater flexibility and stability to current and future service delivery.

The Integrated model not only provides a great opportunity for a range of new and innovative programs. It also provides an excellent opportunity for Lifebridge staff for role diversification to work across both NDIS and Aged services groups.

Lifebridge has an enormous wealth of skills, experience and knowledge in both Aged Care and Disability services.

## CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY



International Day of People with Disability (IDPWd) is held on 3rd December each year. IDPWd is a United Nations observed day celebrated internationally. It aims to increase public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability and celebrate their achievements and contributions.

IDPWd is an opportunity for us to make positive changes and to celebrate to the lives and achievements of the 4.4 million Australians with disability. To celebrate the day, the Legendary Lifebridge Sports group participated in an Action Sports day of paddling and picnicking at Kingscliff Creek.

Under the careful supervision of trained instructors and our resident Lifebridge Lifeguards Amy, Sam and Sophie, it was a great success. A day of challenges, friendships and highlighting the determination, skills and resilience of our Lifebridge customers.

## WE WILL BE BACK IN 2022 TO BRING THE NEW YEAR TO LIFE!



Just a reminder that the cottage and our Social and Community Participation programs will close for the Christmas holidays on Thursday, 23 December 2021, we will return on Tuesday, 4 January 2022.

We will be back with brand new Summer Menu of exciting programs including centre-based activities, Adventures, Cooking, Fishing group, Games Club, Active Living, Music, Art and Crafts, Healthy Lifestyle and more Road Trips.

Wishing all Lifebridge customers, families, carers and friends a truly peaceful and relaxing Christmas holiday period. Take time to rest and restore and let Lifebridge - Bring some 'Life' to 2022! If you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact the Community Services Team on 1800 043 186 at any time.

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## HOME CARE PACKAGES - what has changed?

The Australian Government is committed to improving the Home Care Program for care recipients.

From 1st September 2021 the Government changed the way the provider of your Home Care Package (your provider) is paid. These changes will provide you with a clearer picture of your home care package and unspent funds.

Providers will be paid only for the care, services and goods (the services) they actually delivered to you. This means that, the maximum amount of your package will go towards supporting you to remain in your own home for as long as possible, or will be held for you by Government until you need it.

These changes implement a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Your provider will now be paid only for the services they deliver to you. Instead of paying your Government home care package funds to your provider in full each month, the Government will only pay your provider for the services they actually delivered to you, after they were delivered. Fees for these services must be reasonable and agreed to by you and your provider in your Home Care Agreement.

Unspent funds will still be available for you to use. If your monthly Government home care package funds are more than what was actually spent on delivering your services in a month, these unspent funds will be held in a Government home care account for you until you need them. The Government home care account will be set up for you by Services Australia.

Your home care account cannot go into negative. You will need to discuss options with your provider if you need care or services that exceed your available funds.

You will have greater transparency of your unspent funds. In the coming months your provider will start to provide you with the details of your unspent funds and where they are held. Your provider will be able to report the balance of funds they are holding for you and the balance of funds held in your Government home care account.

Over time, your provider will use the unspent funds they hold for your care. Your provider may start using the unspent funds they already hold for you, before making a claim for additional Government home care package funds from Services Australia.

If your provider does this, your monthly Government home care package funds will be credited to your Government home care account to be held in that account until you need them.

Further information about these changes can be found on the Department of Health's website - <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/aged-care/aged-care-reforms-and-reviews/improved-payment-arrangements-for-home-care>

You have the right to speak to an aged care advocate. You can access free, confidential and independent aged care advocacy through the Older Persons advocacy Network (OPAN) on 1800 700 600 or visit [www.opan.org.au](http://www.opan.org.au)

## CLINICAL NEEDS - HCP CUSTOMERS



To meet the increasing clinical needs of our Home Care Package customers, Lifebridge now has Registered and Enrolled Nurses on staff who will be available to directly provide clinical care that can be funded through your home care package.

Care can be provided in your own home or at Cudgen Cottage and includes:

- Wound care, medication assistance and education.
- Health assessment and monitoring of chronic disease.
- Blood pressure and blood glucose monitoring.
- Weight monitoring and nutritional education.
- Stoma and catheter care, Continence support.

Our nurses have extensive experience in community care and can provide you with direct care, or access to additional care through referrals. This will provide you with the clinical care that suits you and supports you to live well in your own home. Should you wish to discuss these services contact your Customer Care Manager.



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## AGED CARE QUALITY AND SAFETY COMMISSION - Complaints service we offer you

### What the Aged Care Quality Safety Commission does?

They can assist with your concerns about the quality of care or services you or someone else is receiving from Australian Government funded aged care providers.

These services can be aged care services for help at home or in an aged care home, including:

- Residential care or residential respite care.
- Home Care Packages.
- Commonwealth Home Support Programme.
- Flexible care, including transition care, and the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Programme.

They can support you to resolve your concerns directly with the service provider. They can also examine complaints relating to a service provider's responsibilities. This includes, for example, care, choice of activities, discrimination, catering, communication or the physical environment. They use different approaches to resolve concerns depending on the circumstances of each case.

This allows them to select the most relevant, practical, and efficient approach based on your concerns.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will:

- tell you as soon as they can if your complaint is not within their scope.
- where possible, give you the details of other organisations that may be able to assist you.
- Clearly identify the complaint issue/s and work with you to achieve the best outcome for the person receiving aged care.
- Acknowledge complaints as quickly as possible.
- Choose the best way to resolve your concerns from simple approaches to more formal lengthy processes.
- Provide you with the name of the contact person for your complaint and talk with you regularly about how your complaint is progressing.
- Contact and work with all relevant people involved in a complaint.
- Listen to you and give you reasonable opportunities to provide relevant information so we can explore your concerns.
- Treat you with courtesy and respect without discrimination.

- Tell you about the reasons for any decisions they make and give you opportunities to have your say.
- Provide feedback about their service at any stage of the process.
- Resolve your complaint effectively and provide feedback to you on the outcome.
- Tell you about your review rights.
- Act fairly, ethically, impartially, and objectively.
- Learn from complaints and act on opportunities to improve aged care.

You will:

- Clearly identify the complaint issue/s and work with them to achieve the best outcome for the person receiving Aged Care.
- Tell them promptly of any special needs you have so they can assist you.
- Tell them what steps you have already taken to raise your concerns.
- Cooperate with them and respond to their requests for information as quickly and accurately as possible.
- Provide as much information as you can, as early as you can.
- Treat them with courtesy and respect, without discrimination.

**Phone** 1800 951 822

**Web** [agedcarequality.gov.au](http://agedcarequality.gov.au)

**Write** Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, GPO Box 9819, In Your Capital City



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## COVID-19 CHECK IN CARD



The COVID-19 check-in card is a hard-copy (printed) card with a unique QR code that contains your registered contact details.

When you enter a COVID Safe business, a staff member scans your card and your visit to the premises is electronically recorded. If the business device is unable to read your QR code, the staff member will enter your details manually into the Service NSW business on-line webform.

This information, along with the details of the premises you are attending and the time and date of your visit, will comprise the record of your attendance at the venue. Service NSW will hold the record of your attendance for a period of 28 days from the date it was collected. The record of your attendance will only be disclosed to NSW Health for contact tracing purposes.

The card provides an alternative check-in method for customers who don't have smart phones and/or those who are not comfortable using the Service NSW business online webform.

When you create your card you'll need to enter your name. Only use characters that are in the English alphabet. Special characters or diacritical marks cannot be recognised by the system, so your form will be rejected if they are used.

Once you've created your card you can have it posted to you, or you can download a printable version immediately. If you select to have your card posted to you, please enter your full address such as Unit 12, 104 Grayson St, Courabyra NSW 2653. If you lose the card, or your contact details change, you simply create a new card.

**Note** - This check-in method is only available at businesses that have a QR compatible device. It is not mandatory for businesses to accept COVID-19 check-in cards.

### HOW TO GET ONE

To create a COVID-19 check in card go to <https://apply.service.nsw.gov.au/covid-checkin-card/> and complete the online check-in card creator.

## PO BOX NUMBER



A friendly reminder that our Post Office Box number has been changed to PO Box 1403, Kingscliff NSW 2487.

We have now cancelled the redirection as it has been over six months since we changed our PO Box number.

Please note that any written correspondence is to be addressed to Lifebridge Australia, PO Box 1403, Kingscliff NSW 2487.

## TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING SERVICE

### National Relay Service

If you have a hearing or speech impairment, you can contact us through the National Relay Service.

**TTY users** - phone 1800 555 677 then ask for our number 1800 043 186

**Speak and Listen Users** - phone 1800 555 727 then ask for our number 1800 043 186

**Internet relay users** - Connect to the National Relay Service - <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub> and enter 1800 043 186.

### Interpreter Services

If you need an interpreter, you can ask us to arrange one when you call.

Alternatively you can contact one of the services below and ask them to help contact us:

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) - 13 1450  
Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) - 1800 334 944

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## COVID-19 VACCINATION AT HOME



The NSW Government Nurse Immuniser can now visit eligible people in their homes to give them a COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine.

You and your carers may be eligible if you:

- have an injury, health issue or condition that makes it hard for you to move around or leave home.
- have a disability.

If you are eligible, you can register for appointments in December 2021 and January 2022.

You, your carer or your health care provider can register your interest via phone or email.

As part of the eligibility criteria you will be asked the following questions:

- why home vaccination is best for you.
- a phone number and contact name to call about individual requirements.

You can contact the NSW Government on 02 6620 7766 or [email](mailto:NNSWLHD-NOR-COVIDVax-Callback@health.nsw.gov.au):

[NNSWLHD-NOR-COVIDVax-Callback@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NNSWLHD-NOR-COVIDVax-Callback@health.nsw.gov.au)

### IMPORTANT NOTE

Lifebridge Australia Clinical Nurse staff are not authorised to administer COVID-19 vaccines.

## ADVOCACY NETWORK - OPAN



Across Australia, there's a network of independent non-profit organisations giving a voice to older people at every stage of their aged care experience.

Nationally, these organisations come together as members of the Older Persons Advocacy Network, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, to deliver the National Aged Care Advocacy Program.

OPAN network members provide free, confidential, and independent support to older people seeking or receiving government-funded aged care services, their families, and representatives across Australia.

Together, they help older people understand and exercise their aged care rights, seek aged care services that suit their needs and find solutions to issues they may be experiencing with their aged care provider.

At a national level, they raise the voices of older people with governments, aged care providers and sector stakeholders to advance aged care reforms so that older people have a better aged care experience.

They also write submissions to Royal Commissions, Senate and parliamentary inquiries, participate in consultations and forums, develop responses to government policies and oversee our network to ensure national consistency in what they do.

You can contact their experienced and friendly team for support relating to aged care services, information or education sessions on 1800 700 600 from 8am to 8pm - Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays.

For further information you can visit the OPAN website - <https://opan.org.au>



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## INTRODUCING THE LIFEBRIDGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Norman Henstridge - Chairperson  
(appointed in 2014)**

Norm's background is in acute healthcare having worked in pathology, hospital administration, radiology in the public and private sector, and commercial organisations.

He retired from full time work in 2004 and has been undertaking health planning consulting work since then.

A long-term assignment has been planning and managing a diagnostic cardiology service in Fiji in association with an Australian cardiologist.

Norm is also on the Board of the Tweed Heads and Coolangatta RSL Sub-branch, having served as Treasurer for six years. In this role, he sees similar needs among the military veteran community as is served by Lifebridge in the general community.

Norm was a Medical Corps officer in the Army Reserve for 15 years, retiring with the rank of Major.



**Jenny Hicks - Director  
(appointed in 2005)**

A long-term resident of Byron Bay Jenny has held several community and voluntary roles in the town including school P&Cs, sporting and early childhood organisations.

Jenny has over 20 years' experience in Tertiary Adult Education, particularly in the areas of Childcare, Aboriginal Health and Nursing with TAFE NSW, ACE and Southern Cross University. In her teaching role at TAFE NSW Jenny established and coordinated the Cert. III Aged Care/Nursing at Murwillumbah and Kingscliff and acted as head teacher of both Nursing and Child Studies at TAFE NSW.

Training included Staff Selection, Conflict Resolution, Risk Assessment and Workplace Safety. One of Jenny's many achievements was coordinating and enabling a group of indigenous students to complete a state first Cert IV in Aboriginal Health, which included writing of the curricula. Jenny is also on the Board of the Tweed, Byron and Ballina Community Transport.



**Claire Treadgold - Director  
(appointed in 2014)**

Claire has over twenty years' experience in non-profit management, with a particular focus in health and community services.

As well as managing her own consulting business, she is the National Manager of Research and Evaluation for the Starlight Children's Foundation.

Previously Claire was the General Manager of Operations and Services for the national charity CanTeen (the Australian Organisation for Young People Living with Cancer) and before that the national director of the YWCA's breast cancer support program, Encore.

Claire has held a number of community and voluntary roles including as a member of the Cancer Australia National Reference Group, the Australian Government's Ministerial Advisory Committee on Mentoring, a Board Member of the Reg Waite Award for Young Australian Achievers and is the current Chair of the YWCA's national nominations committee.

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## INTRODUCING THE LIFEBRIDGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Garry Smith - Director  
(appointed in 2010)**

Garry's background is in Local Government Town Planning.

He has worked at Maitland Council in the Hunter Valley, Leichardt Council in Sydney and at the Tweed Shire Council.

Garry retired in 2008 after spending almost 43 years in this field and the last 20 years were predominately in Management positions that provided experience in governance, human resources, finance and legal matters associated with the field of town planning.

Garry was made a Life Member of the Murwillumbah Apex Club in 1988 and is a member of the Murwillumbah Branch of the State Emergency Service.



**Jennifer Howe - Director  
(appointed in 2015)**

Jennifer's commercial experience spans business development, operations, human resources and consulting. Jennifer has worked in Australia and Europe in strategic and operational HR management in a global IT company and a large commercialisation organisation.

Jennifer is currently Head of Sales and Marketing for a national career management firm.

Qualifications include Bachelor of Science (Psychology), Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD), Chartered Member of the Australian Human Resources Institute (CAHRI).



**Susan Williams - Director and  
Company Secretary  
(appointed in 2015)**

Corporate Governance professional and non-Executive Director with experience in both disability and community housing since 2008.

Executive career including CFO and Company Secretary roles with ASX, NSX and NASDAQ listed companies, as well as private and not for-profit organisations across a range of industries.

Qualifications include Member Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD), Fellow Certified Practising Accountant (FCPA), Fellow Governance Institute of Australia (FGIA), Fellow Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (FCIS), Master of Business Administration (International Business), Graduate Diploma of Applied Corporate Governance, Bachelor of Arts (Accounting), Registered Tax Agent.



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## MYSTERY ROAD TRIPS - a staff member's account of the day (Warren Hanly)

We woke to a beautiful sunny day creating a positive vibe for our second exciting integrated group mystery tour day out.

After successfully picking up all participants we enjoyed the picturesque journey through the hinterland to our first mystery destination - the Crystal Creek Cafe where the staff were very helpful and accommodating. There is an order at the counter process which was all part of the fun for the group coming up and, with a little support, ordering their own choice of drinks and snacks.

For our enjoyment, carafes of beautiful crystal creek water were supplied to our table, it was so nice to have water straight from the source. From our relaxed position perched straight above the creek, everyone thoroughly enjoyed conversations and laughter. The lovely Sophie and Jannah took some happy snaps.

We all worked off our morning tea by with a little bit of exercise by taking one of the short walks along the creek to the amenities down the back of the cafe and spotted turtles and a friendly water dragon lizard sunning himself on the rock.

Before departure our trivia games were introduced, which once again were a hit with participants busy searching out their targets. We ventured on another majestic drive through the mountains and rain forest out the back of Murwillumbah through the village of Uki to our second destination, the gorgeous Crams Farm Reserve where many a positive comment was expressed with the rolling hills, waterway and Mount Warning backdrop.

With assistance from group members we donned the tables with their covers and prepared our delicious barbecue lunch which consisted of a generous range of salads and meats. Everyone delighted in their lunch before finishing off with some Tiramisu Ice cream slices for desert.

We created some really fun group photos with Jannah suggesting a great spot with the glory of Mount Warning as a backdrop.

After loading up the buses for departure it was unanimous a drive by the lake viewing area at the bottom of the property was a good idea so off we went on our return journey via the lake through the rain forests and creeks, valleys and ranges safely returning all our wonderful guests to their homes.

Our guests showed their elation for a great day out with all looking forward to next time, our third Integrated social group mystery day out. Bring on the fun times!

Big thanks to the team Janelle, Andrew, Jannah, Sophie and Warren for a well planned, thoroughly enjoyable, safe day of mystery and trivia.



## GROUP INTEGRATION MODEL

Saturday, 6th November 2021 saw the commencement of the group integration model (combining NDIS and Aged Care customers) on a 'Mystery Road Trip'.

'Mystery' was the enduring theme of the day with Car bingo, trivia and other surprises.

Integration activities only targets customers (50 years and over), they are not aimed at our younger Lifebridge customers.

Due to public demand 'Mystery Road Trip 2 hit the road on Saturday, 4th December 2021.

The 'Mystery Road Trips' will continue right throughout 2022!

For more Information on the new Integrated Services activities, feel free to call Janelle Egas or Andrew Weir on 1800 043 186.

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR ANNUAL REPORT



### Dancing with a true star

Dorothy 'Dot' May John celebrated her 100th Birthday at the cottage on Thursday, 24 June 2021. Dot is a much loved regular at the Lifebridge cottage over many years.

All her life, Dot has always been an exceptional dancer, she once graced the hallowed timber floors of the Sydney Trocadero club in George Street, Sydney.

Our Dot still maintains, that style, sophistication and class. The Trocadero was once regarded as the "most glamorous dance palace in Sydney and accommodated up to 2,000 people" and Dot was a true dancing star!

Turning 100 hasn't slowed Dot down and she still loves to dance, socialize, play bowls and sing at her cottage visits, her favourite song is 'I love you, yes I do' by Bull Moose Jackson.

Dot has been very much part of Lifebridge family for over 5 years. She attends the cottage every Tuesday and Friday for groups.

You will always recognize Dot by her determined independence, her cheeky demeanor, irreverent 'one liners' and her penchant for one particular chair at the cottage.

Read the full article in our Annual Report available on our website:

<https://lifebridge.org.au/resources/annual-reports/>



### Meeting NDIS Goals in unusual ways

Young Bailey Hayes, lives at home with his truly wonderful grandparents Betty and John. Like any other young man, Bailey has a variety of interests including hanging out, music, gaming and Lumber Punks.

Bailey has been receiving supports from Lifebridge for a few years including Support Coordination and drop-in support. Bailey has a team of dedicated Lifebridge staff including Jason, Michael, Peta and Tanya, all providing an integrated and person-centered approach.

Bailey's NDIS goals include increasing independence, building confidence, domestic, social skills, and community inclusion.

It was Jason that had the idea and introduced Bailey to Lumber Punks, the gentle art of axe throwing. It started as a suggestion that perhaps Bailey might like to try something different. Turned out after one visit, that Bailey had the natural eye, and temperament to be a Lumber Punk.

Both Bailey and Jason attend the weekly competition Lumber Punks every Monday night on the Gold Coast.

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR ANNUAL REPORT



### Meaning and Purpose

When people have meaning and purpose in their lives it can lessen the effects of depression and anxiety. Many studies have shown that having a sense of meaning and purpose can impact our health in a positive way and even slow down the ageing process and increase longevity. Meaning and purpose is all about doing things that matter and make a difference to others in a positive way. It is also about finding things that help us grow and become a better person or reach our potential – no matter what our age or disability.

If a person has a disability, a chronic health condition, dementia or is simply “slowing” down their sense of independence is often diminished. If we are unclear as to how we fit into the world around us, we may find it difficult to find any meaning or purpose. We all need to feel wanted and valued. We need to know that we still have a place in society and a valuable contribution to make.

We need goals and things to achieve and look forward to. Even if these things are not attained it is the pursuit of something new and different and bigger than us that make our lives feel worthwhile and valuable. This is why at Lifebridge we have the Lifebridge Advantage. It is a philosophy that is based on the principles of Montessori and Positive Psychology.

It identifies people’s strengths and uses these so that each member of the Lifebridge community can continue to learn, grow and contribute to the overall community or group that they belong to. This all starts by getting to know each person’s story. By taking the time to listen and engage fully there is an opportunity to see the whole person.

Our Care Managers and Support Workers are genuinely interested in learning and discovering the amazing things that each of our customers have done and the life experiences that make them the person they are today.

In our Annual Report we have included three short vignettes. Each one highlights the importance of listening and getting to know each other, identifying a person’s strengths and applying it all through the lens of Lifebridge Advantage.

In this way it benefits everyone associated with Lifebridge. Our customers, our volunteers and our employees.

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## REMEMBERING MILENA MORROW

On 11 October 2021, Lifebridge lost one of its greatest Champions with the passing of Milena Morrow.

Milena was a Lifebridge Director for 11 years, 10 of those as Chairperson. On first meeting many would consider Milena a softly spoken, empathetic, reserved yet keen listener with an excellent understanding of the issues. But she was also a powerhouse in her own right!

Milena was a strong, outspoken advocate for people with a disability and the elderly.

Fighting for their rights was her specialty making Lifebridge a perfect match for her passion and advocacy work. Although Milena was born with a severe physical disability, she never let it define who she was or stop her from chasing her dreams and goals. Rather she used it to build her determination, courage and resilience.

Milena began her association with Lifebridge when we were Tweed Valley Respite Service. Through her administration business, she was initially engaged as the board minute taker and then to backfill as bookkeeper when staff were on extended leave. Eventually, Milena was asked to join the board.

As a Director, Milena not only brought an insight into the lived experience of a person with a disability, but she also brought a wealth of knowledge around Corporate Governance. As she led the Board through the process of becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee, she also recruited new directors. She ensured there was the right mix of expertise and skill that would serve the company then and into the future.

It was Milena who led the interview team that appointed me as CEO. The relationship that develops between a Chair and CEO is quite special – especially if it works!

Both roles carry enormous responsibility and accountability, so it is important that they work together and support one another. I am honored to say that this was the case between Milena and I. Together we worked through difficult decisions as the organisation experienced the historical and unprecedented changes initiated through the introduction of the NDIS.

As a newly appointed CEO I often looked to Milena for guidance and mentorship, and she never failed me.

Lifebridge was not the only Board that Milena sat on. She was Chairperson of another company based in Sydney and a key member of the Tweed Shire Access Committee.

In between committee meetings she also found the time to write and self-publish her memoir “Sipping Champagne Through a Straw”. The title says it all. Milena achieved more in her short lifetime than many of us dream of doing.

Milena’s husband Rob is a quiet achiever but integral to her success. He would work alongside Milena giving her the physical support that she needed to enable her work to continue.

Rob became as much a part of the Lifebridge family as Milena. And of course, many of us came to know and love her beautiful dogs who were always by her side for companionship as well as official duties.

The best way I know to honor someone like Milena is to ensure that her legacy lives on.

Everyday when we turn up to work with an attitude that says “I can” and with the positive intention of supporting someone to achieve their goals and aspirations, we are supporting her vision of creating a truly inclusive world.

Bronwyn Mitchell  
CEO

