

Newsletter



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A message from our COO Joe Gaudiosi



We are getting closer to being able to announce the conclusion of negotiations with our preferred tenderer for the divestment of Blue Haven Bonaira.

Since launching the tender last August, we have moved steadily through the steps in this process – releasing the tender, receiving expressions of interest, evaluation, invitation to participate in a selective tender and Council's decision to decline all tenders and negotiate with the preferred tenderer.

We have been working hard, together with the preferred tenderer, towards drafting an agreement. As I'm sure you can understand, there is a lot to navigate in what is a complex and detailed negotiation process. And we want to make sure we get it right.

I very much hope that as you're seeing this, we will be close to an outcome that provides clarity for residents, staff and the community.

In other areas of interest to the Blue Haven community, you may have noticed our long-standing ILU Manager Steve Dawson recently returned from long-service leave. Welcome back Steve!

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Kim Garcia and all our hardworking admin staff who have juggled an enormous workload to keep things ticking along in the meantime. Your efforts are much appreciated.

As you may be aware, we've engaged a consultant who is reviewing our options for the future of Havilah Place. We expect an initial, internal report in the next few months and will keep the Blue Haven and wider community updated as soon as we have information to share.

In more good news, we're making progress on fixing the inclinator at Blue Haven Terralong, with repairs expected to occur mid-year. We're also catching up on the maintenance backlog at Terralong, with further works progressing.

I know this has been a difficult time for many in the Blue Haven community, with so much change afoot. I hope you have found our regular communications via our website and social media updates, in-person meetings, letters and emails and, of course, this newsletter, to be helpful and informative.

I want to once again assure you that, under the ownership of Kiama Council, Blue Haven continues to operate in a business-as-usual fashion in which the care and wellbeing of our residents and staff is paramount.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly if you wish to discuss anything further.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read 'Joe Gaudiosi', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Joe Gaudiosi
Chief Operating Officer
Kiama Municipal Council

Blue Haven Bonaira tender and EOI update

Published on 1 Feb 2024, updated 14 March 2024

Kiama Council's divestment of Blue Haven has moved a step forward. The tender for Blue Haven Bonaira was considered at an Extraordinary Meeting on 1 February in confidential session, due to its commercial nature.

Council resolved to decline all tenders and enter direct negotiations with the preferred tenderer.

This process was expected to take five (5) weeks but this was not possible. At this stage, an outcome is expected in a few weeks.

Any draft agreement arising from the negotiation with the preferred tenderer will be returned to Council for resolution prior to contract execution.

Once an agreement has been reached, we will be able to announce and update residents, staff and the general community.

Further, Council resolved not to include the Community Transport component in the main tender, due to Transport for NSW providing its own preferred tenderers for this portion of the business. The CEO was given delegated authority to directly negotiate on community transport with the specified tenderers.

The full text of the resolution is included below.

Kiama Mayor Neil Reilly said "This is one of the

biggest decisions ever made by Kiama Council and has not been taken lightly. I thank my fellow Councillors, Council staff and the executive team for the many months and in fact years of hard work it has taken to reach this point."

"I can honestly say this is the best outcome for Blue Haven residents and loved ones, our community and for Kiama Council. The divestment of Blue Haven Bonaira to the preferred tenderer, who is a registered Aged Care provider, will mean that Council can refocus on the core business of providing local government services, while knowing this much loved and valued asset will be well taken care of."

"As stated in the recent Ministerial review and Intention to vary a Performance Improvement Order, which was also tabled for information at tonight's meeting, Blue Haven is running at a loss, the sale is essential to reduce debt and reduce liquidity, and urgency is required."

"As we work through the next steps in the process, and as always, I want to reassure everyone that the wellbeing and care of Blue Haven residents and their families remains our highest priority," he said.

Council CEO Jane Stroud said, "While Blue Haven is in Kiama Council's ownership, we will continue

Open competitive tender process



Blue Haven Bonaira tender and EOI update continued

to provide the high levels of quality care we have always delivered. In the meantime I will be working hard on negotiations with the preferred tenderer to finalise the details of the contract so it can return to Council in five weeks.”

In the week following the 1 February meeting, Kiama’s Mayor, CEO and executive team held a series of meetings with Blue Haven residents and their next of kin, Independent Living Unit residents, Blue Haven staff and Kiama Council staff to share information and discuss next steps.

We are keeping our community updated as well.

Resolution

That Council:

1. receives that by RFT process, Request for Tender – Blue Haven (November 2023) (RFT) Council invited tenders in relation to the sale of its aged care business known as Blue Haven – Bonaira located at 14a Bonaira Street, Kiama NSW 2533 (together with relevant assets used to conduct the Business and the land);
2. receives the confidential report in relation to the RFT, “Tender – Blue Haven – Bonaira Divestment” (Confidential Report);
3. receives that the RFT did not include the Council’s Community Transport Operations, due to issues raised by Transport for NSW (TfNSW);
4. declines to accept any of the tenders submitted in response to the RFT;
5. for the purpose of section 178(3)(e) of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (LG Regulation), resolves to enter into direct negotiations with the Preferred Tenderer identified in the Confidential Report in the manner described in the Confidential Report;
6. notes that the reason for Council determining to enter into direct negotiations with the Preferred Tenderer is that Council is satisfied that the Preferred Tenderer would be capable of meeting the requirements set out in the RFT; and
7. accepts that the reasons for Council declining to invite fresh tenders or applications under sections 178(3)(b)-(d) are:
 - (a) it is not expected that further market testing will provide a more satisfactory result;
 - (b) despite none of the tenders being capable of acceptance at the end of the RFT Tender, Council considers that there are reasonable prospects of achieving an advantageous outcome through direct negotiations with the Preferred Tenderers;
 - (c) inviting fresh tenders would delay the sale with potentially adverse consequences for the organisation;
8. authorises the Chief Executive Officer to directly negotiate with the Preferred Tenderer(s):
 - (a) in the manner described in the Confidential Report for the purposes of entering into an agreement to sell Council’s aged care business known as Blue Haven – Bonaira;
 - (b) ensuring in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009 that for a period of five years, the current terms and conditions of employment be transferred to the employment of the transferring employees with the new employer;
9. directs the Chief Executive Officer to table any draft contract arising from the direct negotiations with either of the Preferred Tenderer(s) before Council for resolution prior to contract execution;
10. resolves that because of extenuating circumstances a satisfactory result would not be achieved by inviting tenders for the sale of the Council’s Community Transport Operations related to Blue Haven-Bonaira, and notes that the reasons for forming that view are that a fresh open tender process would be difficult to conduct where Transport for NSW requires direct involvement;
11. authorises the Chief Executive Officer under s55(3)(i) of the LG Act, to:
 - (a) directly negotiate with the parties listed in the Confidential Report for the purposes of entering into an agreement to sell the Council’s Community Transport Operations related to Blue Haven-Bonaira and
 - (b) execute any agreement arising from those direct negotiations.

Announcements

Reception details

8:30am to 4:30pm – 7 days per week

enquiries@bluehavencare.com.au

(02) 4203 4055

Visitor hours – 8:30am to 4:00pm daily

Bonaira Chapel

Catholic Rosary is held every Monday at 1:00pm.

Catholic Mass is held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 1:30pm.

Non-denominational Service is held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Library service

We have a mobile library service with Kiama Library that delivers and picks up library books to resident's rooms. If you would like this service, please talk to a Lifestyle Team member.

Illawarra Taxi Network servicing Kiama LGA

Bookings can be made by calling (02) 4254 211 or online at

illawarrataxinetwork.com.au/booking



Upcoming activities – Bonaira

Knit and Natter

Wednesdays 2:00pm

Men's Group Cuppa and Chat with the Boys

Fridays 10:30am – Bonaira Family Room

Happy Hour

Fridays 2:00pm

Hairdresser

Thursdays and Fridays

Bingo!

Mondays 10:30am

As we move forward into the new season, we want to take a moment to update you on some important information regarding our safety protocols and COVID-19 precautions.

Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) Protocol:

We kindly remind all visitors to adhere to the requirement of waiting 15 minutes for the RAT test to fully develop before entering our facility. This waiting period is crucial for ensuring accurate results and protecting the health of our residents.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as our staff diligently enforce this protocol to maintain a safe environment for everyone.

Mask Policy Update:

We have recently removed the requirement for wearing masks within our aged care home premises. However, please note that this decision does not signify a relaxation of our commitment to safety.

While masks are no longer mandatory, we encourage individuals to wear them if they feel more comfortable or if they are experiencing any symptoms of illness.

Continued Vigilance:

We urge all residents, families, and visitors to continue practicing good hygiene habits, such as regular hand washing and using hand sanitizer provided throughout the facility.

If you are feeling unwell or experiencing any symptoms of illness, we kindly request that you refrain from visiting until you are feeling better.

We appreciate your ongoing cooperation and support in adhering to these safety measures. By working together and remaining vigilant, we can help ensure the continued health and well-being of our cherished residents.

Blue Haven ACQSC audit

Blue Haven Bonaira RACF gets full marks in ACQSC audit

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) recently conducted an unannounced two-day site audit at Blue Haven Bonaira Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF).

The audit results indicate substantial progress, with Blue Haven now meeting all 42 out of 42 Criteria of the 8 Accreditation Standards, showcasing a significant improvement from the previous assessment in September 2022 (bluehavenillawarra.com.au/4494) and subsequent audit in August 2023 (bluehavenillawarra.com.au/5068).

The ACQSC reported that the facility has successfully addressed previous concerns and unmet standards, affirming Blue Haven's commitment to excellence in aged care provision.

Joe Gaudiosi, Chief Operating Officer of Kiama Council said: "This unannounced visit underscores the robust compliance and regulatory framework of the ACQSC. We view external feedback as a valuable opportunity to enhance our services and ensure the highest level of care and safety for our residents."

Mr Gaudiosi further added, "Despite undergoing a period of management changes, the action plans and improvement initiatives have yielded positive outcomes, demonstrating our commitment to continuous improvement."

Blue Haven remains transparent and committed to open communication with residents, families, and the broader community.

This outcome does not impact on Blue Haven's accreditation, which was granted to April 2025 after the visit in September 2022.

Background:

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Accreditation Assessment evaluates facilities based on 8 Quality Standards, encompassing a total of 42 criteria. Blue Haven underwent a rigorous assessment in September 2022 and subsequent audit in August 2023 to ensure compliance with the highest standards of care and safety for its residents. With the latest audit, Blue Haven proudly announces meeting all 42 Accreditation Standards, reflecting its unwavering commitment to excellence in aged care provision.



Aged care workers pay increase



Aged care workers to receive pay increase following Fair Work Commission decision

The recent decision by the Fair Work Commission (FWC) to grant aged care workers across Australia a pay rise of up to 28 per cent has been welcomed by Kiama Council. This significant decision, which includes the interim 15 per cent pay rise awarded late in 2022, has been long-awaited and is considered fair and necessary by Jane Stroud, the Chief Executive Officer of the Council.

While recognising the importance of compensating aged care workers, Jane Stroud also points out the financial challenges faced by smaller operators, such as local governments and small charities, within the aged care sector. The decision, though commendable, amplifies the financial pressures on these entities, potentially impacting their sustainability in delivering aged care services.

The FWC's ruling on Friday, 15 March, comes after a prolonged campaign led by the Health Services Union (HSU), which began in November 2020. The union advocated for a 25 per cent increase in wages, citing the evolving complexity of aged care work and the predominantly female workforce as key factors in the undervaluation of the sector.

"This decision marks a historic milestone towards ensuring decency and dignity within our aged care facilities," remarked Gerard Hayes, National President of HSU. "For years, aged care workers have shouldered immense responsibilities under inadequate pay and job security. Today, they have achieved wage justice."

Kiama Council, which currently operates a 134-bed aged care home at Blue Haven Bonaira, has been in the process of divesting its aged care services since October 2022. CEO Jane Stroud emphasises that while the FWC's decision is a positive step towards compensating staff, it also underscores the challenges faced by standalone operators in sustaining their presence in the sector.

"Our decision to divest from the aged care sector was driven by financial considerations and the increasing complexity of governance," explained Ms. Stroud. "While we commend the FWC decision, it validates our strategic move to exit this sector, allowing larger operators to take the lead."

Kiama Council anticipates announcing the outcome of negotiations with its preferred tenderer for the purchase of Blue Haven Bonaira later this month. Additionally, assurances are given that any transfer of ownership will prioritise the protection and continuation of Blue Haven staff's conditions and pay increases.

In alignment with its commitment to advocating for improved Federal assistance in the aged care sector, Kiama Council and Blue Haven remain actively engaged in advocacy efforts for ongoing improvements.

The Lifestyle Team

Blue Haven celebrates Australia Day with Seaside Group

On Thursday, 25 January, the spirit of Australia Day echoed through the halls of Blue Haven as residents and staff gathered for a special celebration with the Seaside Group.

Amidst the joyous atmosphere, laughter, and camaraderie, our residents and guests came together to commemorate this significant day in Australian history. With smiles as bright as the summer sun, we captured precious moments in our Australia Day photos.

From left to right, the photos feature the dynamic pairs:

- **Volunteer Karon and Janet**
- **Support Worker Scott and Lily**
- **Volunteer Karon and Jan**
- **Volunteer Jan and Valerie**

Throughout the festivities, we took the opportunity to reflect on what it truly means to be Australian. From heartfelt discussions to engaging Australia Day trivia, we explored the essence of our national identity.

Of course, no Australia Day celebration would be complete without indulging in some iconic Aussie treats. We savoured the taste of Vegemite sandwiches, a quintessential Aussie snack that never fails to delight.

To add a touch of excitement, we livened up the day with Aussie-themed active games, fostering friendly competition and encouraging everyone to get moving and have fun.

As the day drew to a close, we cherished the memories created and the bonds strengthened during our Australia Day celebration. It was a reminder of the beauty of coming together as a community to honour our shared heritage and embrace the diversity that makes Australia truly special.

Until next time, let's continue to celebrate the spirit of Australia, not just on special occasions but every day, as we cherish the values of mateship, resilience, and inclusivity that define us as a nation.



The Lifestyle Team continued

Seaside Group Bocce tournament

We're thrilled to highlight one of our favourite pastimes: the Bocce Tournament! At Seaside Group, we believe in the power of fun and camaraderie, where laughter fills the air, and friendships flourish.

While our Bocce Tournament is all about enjoyment and relaxation, every now and then, the competitive spirit sneaks its way in, adding an extra layer of excitement to the game. But fear not, we always maintain our light-hearted approach, ensuring that the primary goal remains laughter and good times shared among friends.

Join us as we delve into the world of active games at Seaside Group, where afternoons are filled with laughter and friendly competition. Whether it's a round of Bocce after a morning of bingo or musical reminiscence sessions, there's never a dull moment at Seaside Group.

So grab a cup of tea, settle in, and let's explore the joy and camaraderie that make our afternoons at Seaside Group truly special.



The Lifestyle Team continued

Celebrating George's style at Seaside Group!

Our dear client George stole the spotlight once again with his impeccable sense of style.

George, known for his flair and creativity, wowed us all with his carefully curated outfit, which he had been planning for two whole weeks! His ensemble was a tribute to the Chinese New Year and the 'Year of the Dragon,' showcasing his love for culture and festivities.

With gerberas adorning his hat, cleverly representing the eyes of the dragon, George's attention to detail was truly remarkable. And let's not forget his choice of attire – sporting his St. George NRL shirt paired with joggers he personally painted yellow, George certainly knows how to make a statement!

But beyond his fashionable attire, George embodies the spirit of fun and camaraderie. Always ready to entertain others with his unique style, he effortlessly turns heads and sparks conversations wherever he goes.

At Blue Haven, we applaud George for his creativity, his boldness, and his infectious enthusiasm. He reminds us all to embrace our individuality and celebrate life's little joys, one stylish outfit at a time.

Until next time, keep shining bright like George!



Introducing our newest trio of Community Staff

We are thrilled to announce the arrival of three exceptional individuals who have joined our community as part of our dedicated team. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Sophia, Lachlan, and Toyah!

These talented individuals recently participated in our Support Worker Training on 28 November, where they demonstrated their passion for caring and commitment to making a difference in the lives of our residents.

Sophia, with her compassionate nature and unwavering dedication, brings a wealth of experience and empathy to our team. Lachlan's enthusiasm and willingness to go above and beyond makes him a valuable asset to our community. And Toyah's warm smile and positive attitude uplifts everyone around her, creating a welcoming environment for all.

As they embark on this new journey with us, Blue Haven's Lifestyle Team extends our support and encouragement to Sophia, Lachlan, and Toyah. Together, we look forward to continuing our mission of providing exceptional care and support to our beloved residents.

Please join us in welcoming Sophia, Lachlan, and Toyah to our Blue Haven family!



The Lifestyle Team continued



Welcoming you to our Support Worker training recap and pre-Christmas get-together

We are excited to share with you the highlights of our recent Support Worker training session, where our dedicated team delved into important topics to enhance our community's care and support services.

During the training, our team covered crucial topics including incident reporting and complaints handling. These discussions not only serve to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents but also empower our staff with the knowledge and skills to address any challenges effectively and compassionately.

But it wasn't all serious business! In the spirit of the upcoming festive season, we also took the opportunity to come together for a pre-Christmas party. Laughter filled the room as we shared stories, enjoyed delicious treats, and strengthened the bonds that make our community so special.

As we gear up for the holiday season, let's carry forward the lessons learned from our training and the joy shared during our get-together. Together, we are better equipped to provide the highest level of care and support to our residents and each other.

Tap Dance troop



The Lifestyle Team continued

Celebrating joy and gratitude: Blue Haven 2023 Community & RACF Christmas party

As we wrapped ourselves in the festive spirit, we took a moment to reminisce on the joyous memories created at our recent Christmas party held at the Kiama Bowling Club on 6 December. It was an evening filled with laughter, love, and cherished moments shared among friends and family.

We're thrilled to share some snapshots from the event, capturing the essence of our wonderful community coming together to celebrate the holiday season in style. Among the highlights of the evening was Marisa's heartfelt presentation of appreciation awards to our dedicated transport support volunteers, recognising their invaluable contributions to our community.

As the warmth and cheer in these photos show, we really embraced the magic of the season!



The Lifestyle Team continued

Blue Haven Christmas party



Seaside Group Christmas



The Lifestyle Team continued



Discover the craftsmanship behind Seaside Group's woodworking magic!

Meet Derek, Our Woodworking Wizard! At Seaside Group, we take pride in the artisans who bring creativity and passion to their craft. Today, we're shining the spotlight on Derek, our woodworking wizard extraordinaire! From his humble backyard shed, Derek works his magic alongside his son to create stunning wooden truck creations that captivate hearts and minds alike.

A Family Affair: Crafting Memories Together

For Derek, woodworking isn't just a hobby – it's a family tradition. With his son by his side, Derek transforms raw wood into works of art, infusing each piece with love and dedication. Together, they blend traditional craftsmanship with modern flair, resulting in timeless creations that delight customers of all ages.

From Shed to Showcase: Craftsmanship in Action

Step inside Derek's backyard shed, and you'll witness the alchemy of wood and passion coming to life. Every cut, every carve, and every detail is meticulously crafted, ensuring that each wooden truck reflects the highest standards of quality and craftsmanship. It's not just about building toys; it's about crafting memories that last a lifetime.

Delivering Joy, One Truck at a Time

Once Derek and his son put the finishing touches on their creations, it's time to share them with the world. Whether it's through local markets, online platforms, or special events, Seaside Group's wooden trucks find their way into the hearts and homes of customers near and far. Each delivery isn't just a transaction – it's a moment of joy and connection, made possible by Derek's dedication and craftsmanship.

Celebrating moments together: High Tea Family Celebration

We're still revelling in the warmth and joy of our recent High Tea Family Celebration at Matterson Hall on Wednesday, February 28th! It was an afternoon that epitomised the essence of community and togetherness, as residents and their families came together to create unforgettable memories.



The Lifestyle Team continued

The event was a delightful blend of elegance and camaraderie, with tables adorned with delectable treats and fragrant teas. Laughter filled the air as guests engaged in heartwarming conversations, reminiscing about cherished moments, and creating new ones.

Adding to the ambiance was the enchanting live music that enveloped the hall, setting the perfect backdrop for moments of connection and joy. From gentle swaying to lively foot-tapping, everyone found themselves immersed in the melodies, with some even taking to the dance floor to share in the celebration.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who graced us with their presence, making the occasion truly magical. Your smiles, laughter, and presence filled the hall with warmth and happiness, creating a tapestry of beautiful moments that we'll treasure forever.

As we reflect on this wonderful celebration, we look forward to many more opportunities to come together, share stories, and create lasting memories. Here's to the spirit of community and the joy of celebrating life's moments together! Cheers to many more magical moments ahead!



The Lifestyle Team continued

In the spotlight: Dance Therapy Session, "Dancing with Charles"

We are thrilled to share the joyous moments captured during our recent Dance Therapy Session, "Dancing with Charles"! The energy and spirit of the event were truly remarkable as our residents embraced the rhythm and movement alongside Charles and his incredible team.

The afternoon was filled with laughter, connection, and a beautiful trip down memory lane. Our residents reminisced about the days when dancing held a special place in their hearts, creating a heartwarming atmosphere of nostalgia and camaraderie.

At Blue Haven, we believe in the power of togetherness and the importance of embracing life's moments with joy and enthusiasm. "Dancing with Charles" exemplified this spirit as we danced through life's memories and celebrated the present moment with fervour.

Let's continue to dance through life's moments together, cherishing each step and creating lasting memories along the way.

Keep an eye out for our upcoming events and activities as we strive to create more unforgettable experiences for our cherished residents!



Our Community

Honouring Jan's 20 years of dedicated volunteer service at Blue Haven



With heavy hearts and grateful spirits, we gathered to bid farewell to our dear Jan after an extraordinary 20 years of volunteer service. The emotional 'farewell' ceremony was a poignant reminder of the profound impact one individual can have on a community.

Tears of gratitude mingled with smiles of reminiscence as we reflected on Jan's unwavering dedication and selflessness. Her presence has been a beacon of light, guiding us through moments of joy and sorrow with kindness and compassion.

From lending a listening ear to offering a helping hand, Jan's contributions have touched countless lives, leaving an indelible mark on our hearts. Her legacy of love and service will forever be woven into the fabric of Blue Haven, inspiring us to continue her noble work.

As we bid farewell, we carry forward the spirit of Jan's generosity, knowing that her light will continue to shine brightly in our memories and actions. Jan, your 20 years of dedication and friendship have enriched our lives beyond measure, and for that, we are eternally grateful.

We wish you all the best in your future endeavours, confident that wherever life takes you, you will continue to make a difference. Thank you, Jan, for everything.



Our Community continued

An Interview with volunteer Jan from Blue Haven

In the serene coastal town of Kiama, nestled amidst the gentle waves and rolling hills, lies Blue Haven – a place for the elderly, cared for and cherished by dedicated volunteers like Jan. For two decades, Jan has been a cornerstone of the community aged care service, weaving tales of compassion, resilience, and joy. In an exclusive interview, she shares her journey from humble beginnings to becoming a cherished figure in the hearts of many.



What initially inspired you to become a volunteer with Blue Haven?

Reflecting on her journey, Jan reminisces about the day when the call to volunteer beckoned her. "I was volunteering with another group at the community centre, the Tuesday Friendship Group, and I was doing that for about two years," she recalls. The invitation to volunteer at Blue Haven marked a turning point, igniting a flame of purpose within her. "I enjoyed both groups," she shares, "but I loved every minute of volunteering for Blue Haven."



Our Community continued

How has your role evolved over the 20 years you've been involved in the community aged care service?

Over the years, Jan has witnessed the evolution of her role within Blue Haven. "I think it's gotten easier," she muses, reflecting on the changes. Yet, she emphasises the unwavering commitment to the well-being of the elderly, acknowledging the challenges and triumphs that come with the territory. "It's gotten easier because I've been doing it for so long," she admits.

"I've done everything except drive the bus. But I love every minute," Jan adds with a chuckle.



What are some of the memorable experiences you've had while volunteering with us?

"Oh, my heart really has too many memorable experiences. Last year, George and his wife came to Seaside group every Thursday. Sadly, George's wife passed away, and he had some time absent from the group. I've known them both for 22 years," she said. "But, when George came back to the group, he was just so grateful to see everybody in the group and to see everything was still the same after all his sadness, you know." "He was happy to be back amongst what he called his friends and part of his family," she reminisces.



An Interview with volunteer Jan from Blue Haven – *continued*



How do you believe your contributions have had a positive impact?

When asked about her contributions to the aged care community, Jan's humility shines through. "I hope it's been positive," she says. From ensuring the safety of bus trips to brightening their days with her infectious smile, Jan's legacy is one of kindness, compassion, and unwavering dedication. "I always try to make people happy, keep them safe on the bus trips," Jan shares, reflecting on her mission to spread joy and ensure the well-being of those under her care.



What challenges have you faced as a volunteer?

While challenges have been few and far between, Jan credits the unwavering support of her colleagues for smoothing the journey. "I can't say there have been many challenges, or probably any challenges, because the staff are just fantastic," Jan affirms, highlighting the strength of teamwork in overcoming adversity.

What advice would you give to someone considering volunteering?

"Go for it. What have you got to lose? And look what you've got to gain."



Our Community continued

How do you maintain a sense of fulfilment and motivation in your volunteer work?

In the pursuit of fulfilment, Jan finds solace in the simple act of giving. "It makes me want to wake up every day and think, "Wow, I'm going to do something great today," she shares. "I've lost my husband and I lost my eldest son. And volunteering kept me sane, whatever sane is, and got me through it."

Looking back on your 20 years of service, what legacy or impact do you hope to have left?

"A smiling face," she says, her voice filled with warmth, "and the knowledge that I've made a difference in someone's life. "I hope people have enjoyed my company as much as I have enjoyed volunteering with them," Jan concludes, her love for her work evident in every word she speaks.



Our Community continued



Celebrating love: Joan and Barry's 70th Wedding Anniversary

We are delighted to share some heartwarming news that warms our souls and inspires us all. Our beloved residents, Joan and Barry recently marked a remarkable milestone in their journey together – their 70th wedding anniversary!

In an era where lifelong commitments are increasingly rare, Joan and Barry's enduring love story serves as a beacon of hope and a testament to the power of love, companionship, and resilience.

To commemorate this extraordinary occasion, the ABC Illawarra had the privilege of interviewing Joan and Barry. Their love story captivated the hearts of many as they shared anecdotes of their seven decades of partnership, filled with laughter, tears, and countless cherished memories.

Joan and Barry's interview not only touched the hearts of our local community but also reminded us of the profound beauty found in the simplicity of everyday love and devotion.

As part of our Blue Haven family, we are immensely proud to celebrate this milestone with Joan and Barry. Their unwavering commitment to each other serves as an inspiration to us all, reminding us of the importance of cherishing every moment with our loved ones.

Please join us in congratulating Joan and Barry on their 70th wedding anniversary! Let us continue to surround them with love, warmth, and appreciation as they embark on the next chapter of their extraordinary journey together.

ABC Interview: abc.net.au/listen/programs/illawarra-mornings/barry-and-joan/103541196



Independent Living Units



Celebrating a century: Meet Jean McBride

We are delighted to extend our warmest congratulations to Jean McBride, who recently reached an incredible milestone by turning 100 years young on 26 February. Jean's journey through her life is a testament to the power of a vibrant spirit, dedication, and a commitment to wellness.

Born a century ago, Jean McBride has witnessed and experienced an extraordinary evolution of our world. Through the highs and lows, she has remained a beacon of resilience and positivity, inspiring all those around her.

Jean attributes her remarkable longevity to a life filled with movement and passion. In her youth, she embraced the sport of tennis, a passion that undoubtedly contributed to her enduring vitality. The discipline, agility, and joy found on the tennis court have not only shaped her physical health but also her mindset towards life.

As we celebrate Jean's remarkable journey, we are reminded of the profound impact that lifestyle choices can have on our well-being. Her dedication to staying active and engaged serves as a powerful reminder that age is but a number, and that a life lived with purpose and passion knows no bounds.

Introducing our new Residents Committee Members!

We are excited to announce the addition of two dynamic individuals to our Residents Committee! As we strive to continually enhance our community and ensure that the needs and voices of all residents are heard, we warmly welcome Allan Holder who's taking over from Valerie McNamara, and Ken Tucker.

Fire warden training and drills at Terralong & Bonaira ILUs

Kiama Council's Risk Management Officer (Safety), Bruce McLeish organised a training session for Blue Haven's fire wardens at Terralong and Bonaira Independent Living Units this March.

The training was run by Council's contracted fire safety training organisation.

Held at Council Chambers, two fire wardens apiece from Bonaira and Terralong ILUs attended the training session. A further session will be held for the two additional fire wardens who are based at Terralong who weren't able to make the March training.

Fire safety compliance and evacuation drill exercises will also be conducted at both Terralong and Bonaira sites in the coming months.

Bruce advises that evacuation drills are compulsory, but resident participation is not mandatory. However he encourages ILU residents to participate so as to be well prepared in the event of an emergency.

Dates for the upcoming drills will be communicated via Bonaira and Terralong Residents Committees.



Independent Living Units continued

Celebrating excellence in Embroidery: Maureen Rugg's remarkable triumph at the Kiama Show!

We are thrilled to share with you an extraordinary tale of talent and unexpected triumph that unfolded at the recent Kiama Show. Maureen Rugg, a gifted artisan in the realm of embroidery, walked away with an astounding five first prize awards, marking a momentous achievement in her craft.

What makes Maureen's success truly remarkable is the element of surprise that accompanied it. Unbeknown to her, her entries had garnered accolades but she wasn't aware until she arrived at the Kiama Show to simply have a look around. Imagine the astonishment and delight that must have filled her heart upon discovering her five prestigious wins!

Embroidery is an art form that requires not only skill but also patience, dedication, and a profound love for the craft. Maureen's triumph serves as an inspiration to all aspiring artisans, reminding us that dedication and passion can lead to unexpected and awe-inspiring achievements.

As we celebrate Maureen's remarkable accomplishment, let us also take a moment to appreciate the beauty and intricacy of embroidery as an art form. It is through the hands of artisans like Maureen that this timeless tradition continues to flourish and captivate audiences worldwide.



Caretaking at Blue Haven

As part of our continuous improvement efforts to enhance community living at Blue Haven, we have recently provided information to our residents on the roles and responsibilities of our valued caretakers. They are the silent guardians of our peaceful abode, ensuring everything runs smoothly so that we can focus on enjoying the best of our golden years. Below, we outline the responsibilities undertaken by diligent caretakers.



Blue Haven is pleased to offer a wide variety of accommodation options – in the stunning town of Kiama. Prices vary depending on unit size, views and other factors.

Please call **Steve Dawson** on **0419 600 981** to find out how to join the email notification list to be informed of unit availability or scan the QR code provided here.



Independent Living Units continued

Spring into Summer luncheon at Blue Haven Terralong

We recently celebrated the arrival of warmer days with our delightful "Spring into Summer" luncheon at Blue Haven Terralong. It was a joyous occasion filled with laughter, good food, and wonderful company.

We're excited to share some snapshots from the event:

Photo 1: Pat Gates and Annette Young sharing smiles and stories.

Photo 2: Allan Holder and Pearl enjoying each other's company.

Photo 3: John Ashworth and Muriel Shurety radiating happiness as they mingle with fellow guests.

Photo 4: Yvonne and Shurety, epitomising the spirit of camaraderie.

Photo 5: A mixed group coming together to celebrate the season's arrival.

Photo 6: Pearl and Geoff Heinecke sharing a moment of warmth and friendship.

These photos capture the essence of our community – a place where friendships flourish, and every moment is cherished.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this special luncheon. Your presence made it truly memorable.



Senior's Week Festival

Capturing memories at Seniors Week Photo Booth event at Blue Haven Seaside Group

Seniors Week at Seaside Group began with an explosion of fun and laughter as our beloved Seaside residents gathered for an unforgettable photo booth session on Monday, March 11th! The air was buzzing with excitement as residents and staff alike embraced the spirit of celebration, ready to capture precious moments that would last a lifetime.

From the moment the first flash went off, it was clear that this event would be nothing short of spectacular. Our Seaside residents brought their A-game, displaying their creativity and infectious enthusiasm with every pose. Whether striking a pose with friends, donning quirky props, or simply flashing their brightest smiles, each snapshot radiated the joy and camaraderie that defines our vibrant community.

The photo booth became a hub of activity, with laughter echoing through the halls as residents shared in the delight of creating cherished memories together. From silly faces to heartfelt embraces, every click of the camera captured the essence of Seniors Week – a celebration of life, laughter, and the bonds that unite us.

As we reflect on the incredible success of our photo booth extravaganza, we're reminded of the power of community and the importance of cherishing every moment we share together. Here's to more laughter, more joy, and more unforgettable memories as we continue to celebrate Seniors Week in style!



Blue Haven in the news

NSW Seniors Festival 2024

From the Mayor

Overcoming age-related limitations: reach beyond

If we have a good attitude toward ageing, and we do what we can to live healthily and take care of our thoughts, age becomes irrelevant. We reach beyond it. My inner self is about 19 (true!). The rest of me is about 70 and showing understandable wear and tear, and some bits are way out of warranty, but I'm happy.

I'm happy because I am able to reach beyond the aged me, out to others. Sometimes to ask a favour, sometimes to give one... but reaching beyond is the important bit. The theme for the NSW Seniors Festival 2024 is 'Reach Beyond'.

'Reach Beyond' in the context of ageing can have a motivational interpretation. It suggests



the idea of striving for goals, dreams, or experiences that may seem challenging or beyond our comfort zone.

As people age, maintaining physical and mental health becomes crucial. "Reaching beyond" could mean pushing yourself to stay active, engage in physical exercise, and keep the mind sharp through learning and cognitive activities.

It implies continuing to learn, grow, and evolve throughout your life, despite the common misconception that personal growth is only for the young.

This could involve challenging the societal or self-imposed limitations related to age, such as starting a new career, learning new skills, or pursuing hobbies that are typically associated with younger people. "Reaching beyond" might also mean maintaining and expanding social connections, volunteering, or engaging in community activities, as social interaction is a key component of a healthy and fulfilling life at any age.

For some, this could refer to focusing on what we can contribute to future generations, whether it's through mentorship, sharing knowledge, or other forms of legacy-building.

This could involve deeper exploration into one's own beliefs, values, and emotional understanding, possibly through meditation, spiritual practices, or introspection.

Each individual might interpret "reach beyond" differently based on their personal experiences, goals, and challenges. It's a reminder that ageing is not just about growing older, but also about continuing to aspire, learn, and contribute in meaningful ways.

This year Kiama Council and Blue Haven held a program of Seniors Festival events to help you Reach Beyond. I hope you enjoyed attending at least one of them!

Cr Neil Reilly, Mayor, Kiama Municipal Council

Medal of Order of Australia

'I've just loved it': Val Brunker receives OAM for dedication to netball – *Illawarra Mercury*

By Joshua Bartlett

Picture by Adam McLean

January 25 2024 – 10:00pm

Minnamurra resident Val Brunker has received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her dedication to netball, particularly in Kiama.

Whenever people think about netball in Kiama, there's always one name that springs to mind: Val Brunker.

For more than 40 years, Mrs Brunker has been a driving force behind the growth of the sport in town.

Her journey with the Kiama Netball Association began as a founding member in the early 1980s and she has held almost every title possible since – including being club president for 19 years.

The Minnamurra resident's contributions to the association have been recognised through becoming a life member, and having Kiama's Val Brunker Centre named in her honour in 1999.

Now, Mrs Brunker has been bestowed with one of Australia's highest individual accolades, after receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) on Friday for her dedication to netball.

On top of her service to the Kiama community, Mrs Brunker spent more than a decade with the Blacktown Netball Association, Seven Hills Netball Club and Beachettes Netball Club. She has also been a stalwart of the Kiama and Shellharbour Tennis Association and Minnamurra Tennis Club, volunteered at the Blacktown Junior Rugby League Club and was a sports delegate to the Kiama Sports Council for two decades.



Other highlights include being named on the Kiama Sports Honour Roll in 2009, receiving Netball NSW's Anne Clark Service Award in 2006 and being awarded an Australian Sports Medal in 2000.

However, Mrs Brunker said she felt "very honoured" to be recognised with an OAM.

"I've just loved it, I've loved netball, loved the kids and everything to do with it," the 87-year-old told the Mercury.

"We moved down here 44 years ago and someone had a little comp going after school with the kids and they asked if I would take it over, so I did. And the parents started to ask me if they could play, so we put flyers all around the shops asking for names and when they registered, we had enough for eight teams.

"I'm so proud to see how far it's grown from there."



Blue Haven Bonaira

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RESPECT



INNOVATION



INTEGRITY



TEAMWORK



EXCELLENCE