



MEET THE STAFF

NAME:

Leanne Douch

BORN:

Bega NSW

YEARS WITH DIGGERS:

4 years

FAMILY:

Partner Eian, son Jesse

FAVOURITE FOOD/RESTAURANT:

Mexican - anywhere

FAVOURITE ALL TIME MOVIE:

Pretty Woman

FAVOURITE TV PROGRAM:

I Fish

PERSON MOST LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH:

Kevin Costner (without the wolves)

BEST PLACE VISITED:

Forster

HOBBIES:

Fishing (river) and swimming – west of Nowra – it's a little piece of paradise

MOST HUMILIATING MOMENT

In pool there's a tradition that if you lose to someone with all eight balls on the table you pull your pants down – I beat a guy that way and he insisted he played by the rules.

UPCOMING EVENTS...

Easter Weekend

Friday 3 April to Monday 6 April 2015

Daylight saving ends

Sunday 5 April 2015

ANZAC Sunday

19 April 2015

Corrimal RSL March
Service

ANZAC Day

Saturday 25 April 2015

Corrimal RSL Dawn Service/March
Wollongong March/Centenary Service

Illawarra Diggers Service
1.30pm

Mother's Day

Saturday 9 May 2015

Special Afternoon Tea
for residents & families
2.30pm – 3.30pm

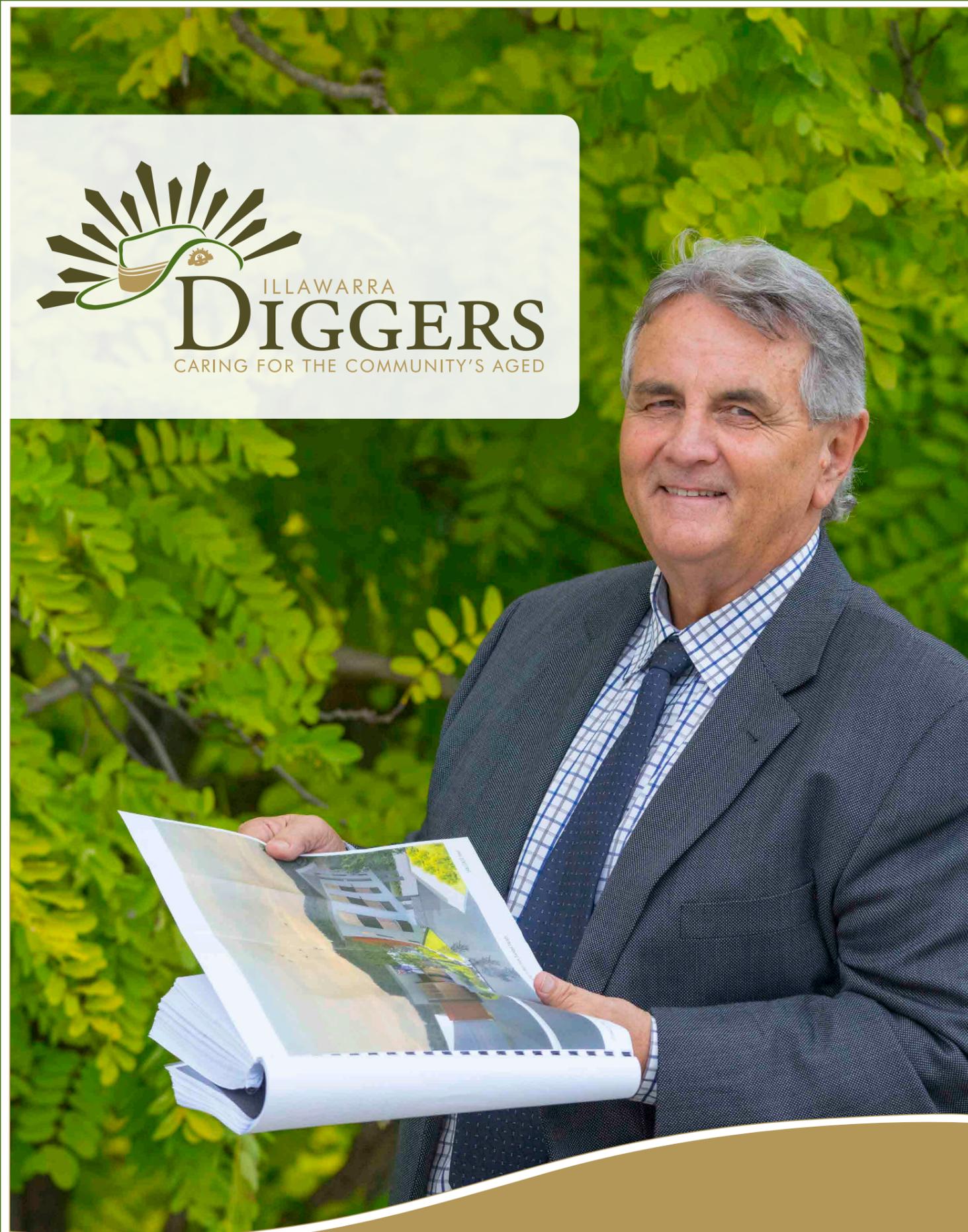
Mother's Day

Sunday 10 May 2015

Biggest Morning Tea at Diggers

Date to be confirmed

Front Page: Rex Leighton views the artist's impression of the new major extensions and refurbishment of the older part of Diggers.



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APRIL NEWSLETTER 2015



CEO'S MESSAGE

Hello and welcome to my last CEO's Message

March 2015

I cannot believe that its almost the end of March and Easter is upon us.

We have celebrated the Christmas and New Year festive season, Australia Day, St Patrick's Day and we're already into the football season with several resident Manly fans being very quiet.

In major news for Diggers we have received approval from Wollongong City Council of our Development Application (DA) for a major extension to and refurbishment of the older part of the Home which was originally constructed in 1977/8.

You can see an architect's impression of the new extension in this edition of the Newsletter. We are working towards beginning demolition of the existing car park and houses in July subject to a successful and timely construction tender process.

We have advised residents over time of the proposed development but we are happy to say it is now approved.

If you or your family and friends wish any information on the proposal please do not hesitate to ask at the office and we will be only too pleased to assist you.

The period of development will bring disruption and inconvenience but we will be working hard to minimise any impact on residents, staff and visitors during that time.

We are very conscious we will be doing this in what is the residents' home (bit like home renovations I guess) but it is a big job and will require patience as we seek to provide a better home for residents both now and into the future.

It is an exciting development for us – already some four years of planning and design have been expended but we are hopeful that the end result will be significantly improved accommodation for many residents and some increased amenity for all residents – including a new entry foyer, hairdresser/barber shop, courtyards, consulting and examination room, increased car parking (underneath the new extension) and increased safety through the installation of fire sprinklers in those areas that don't have them.

I hope you enjoy the journey with Diggers as we move to a new future.

In other great news some 15 of our staff have, during March, completed nationally recognised training designed to improve their skills and knowledge in aged care services. Watching their journey from trepidation, concern, lack of confidence at the beginning to the joy, satisfaction, increased knowledge and confidence in understanding many of the issues of ageing has been a great pleasure. Congratulations to you all.

In saying that, I wish to advise you that this will be my last CEO's message after some seven and a half years (although I will be staying on for a period to assist Diggers through the project and continuing implementation of the aged care reform.)

It has been a privilege to serve Illawarra Diggers and its residents in that time. The original Diggers Rest Home opened in 1946 some 69 years ago through substantial support from the Sub Branches and the RSL movement



particularly the City of Wollongong Sub Branch, and has served this community and particularly Ex-Servicemen, for whom it was established, with great distinction. During that time substantial support has continued from many of

the Sub Branches and Women's Auxiliaries between the southern suburbs of Sydney and the south coast of NSW.



As a not for profit, charitable organisation it provides a valuable service to the community of Ex Servicemen and women and their families and many other older people in ensuring that their quality of life is the best we can possibly make it.

They have all fought for the values and freedoms we all hold dear or worked hard to make this country what it is. We owe an obligation to ensure that they received the best when requiring some services to assist in maximising independence and achieving that quality of life I mentioned.

I have now worked in aged care for almost thirty years, and for me it has been a labour of love full of privilege and wonderful experiences. It is not a calling where one becomes rich but it absolutely is one that is enriching in heart and soul.

There are many who see ageing as a problem and the aged as a burden (if I hear Tony Abbott use the phrase "intergenerational theft" again I will scream – it's an insult to every aged person in this society). We should see it as an opportunity

We live in a society that has embraced the scientific model as the answer to everything and the only objective

evidence worth considering. Earlier societies valued the "wisdom of the elders" and it's my view we have unfortunately strayed from this to a large extent.

The wisdom, the experiences, the life lessons, the values, the respect for others, the willingness to accept adversity without complaining unless it's right to do so, the willingness to accept responsibility, the ability to be able to say sorry, the inspiration gained from the achievements of many even at very old ages that I have experienced over those years never ever ceases to amaze me.

The friendliness with which so many greet every day has made every day of coming to work with Diggers a pleasure.

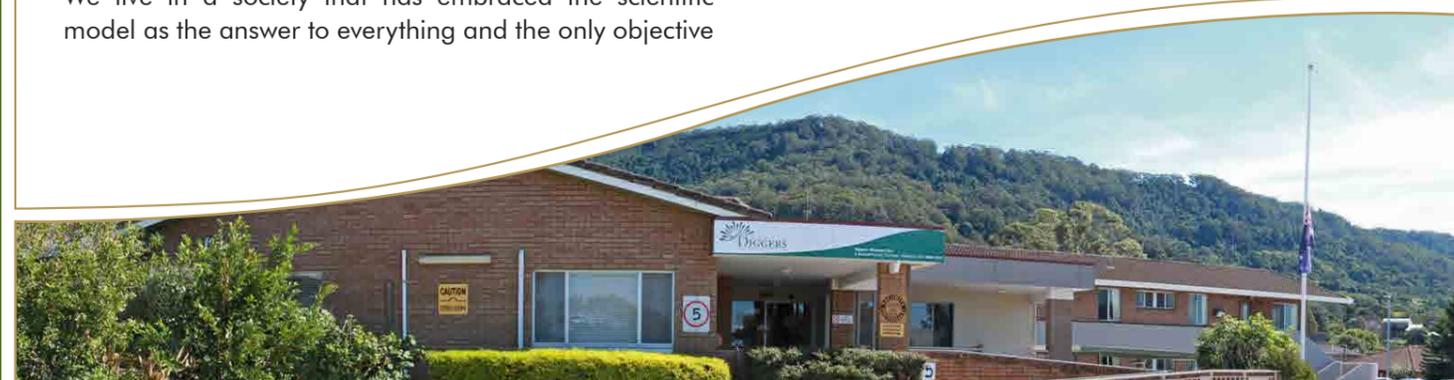
There are always frustrations, and dealing with Governments, upper middle class university educated policy makers determining aged care policies without understanding the needs of people from all walks of life, has made me wonder over time why do I do this.



An artists impression of the major extension and refurbishment of the older part of Diggers. Wollongong City Council recently granted us approval to go ahead.

Every day I walk in the door at Diggers and speak with residents or families I know why I do it and why I regard it as a privilege.

It would be remiss of me not to also make mention of the staff with whom I have worked over those years. In years





passed I worked in both the public and private health systems and saw incredible dedication. I have never seen dedication like the aged care industry.

It takes a special person to work in aged care. It does not pay well because Government does not fund it well and the people we serve have been out of employment for 30 years.

But the dedication and commitment of staff (and volunteers) is amazing and Diggers is very, very well served. It is humbling at times to see the dedication to residents exhibited by staff.

Working with the staff here has also for me been a very significant privilege (and I use the term "working with" very deliberately). I cannot speak highly enough of so many of them and the group as a whole.

We have achieved a lot and there is always much more to be done. The greatest advertising for what we do is

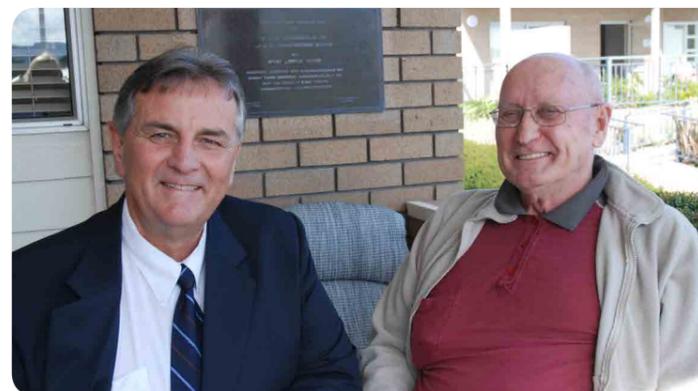


word of mouth and our reputation. Because of the efforts of the staff, their approach to residents and families – sometimes in very difficult circumstances, Diggers is held in high regard in the community.

Illawarra Diggers is an icon in the Illawarra given its 69 year history and you all should be proud of its reputation created through your efforts and dedication. Nothing is ever perfect and things can always improve but I am deeply privileged to have worked with you all.

Last but not least I would like to thank the Board for their support and guidance during those 7 and a half years. They are committed community members who assume the significant responsibilities as Directors for no reward and do so with a desire and commitment to ensure that those who have served this country are provided with the best that we can possibly achieve.

Their support of direction and decisions and their commitment to the Home has also been a privilege to experience.



Peter Whittall will be assuming the position Of CEO from the end of March and I am sure he is the best person to take Diggers through its next stage of continuing the fabulous community service it provides.

I am sure you will provide him with the support that has come my way and would, on behalf of you all and from me wish him every success.

Best wishes
Rex Leighton



A MESSAGE FROM THE LIFESTYLE CREW

Hello Everyone!

We've said goodbye to summer and autumn is now here, lets hope we get to enjoy some lovely autumn days.

Firstly welcome to new residents, may you find comfort & friendship in your new home.

Residents have enjoyed many celebrations since the last newsletter. New Years Eve, Australia Day, Saint Patrick's Day with lots of laughter, music, drinks, jokes, lucky door prizes and special meal treats relating to the different themes and many thanks to those who assisted with these special days.

Easter time for quiet reflections, Easter Church services, Catholic Mass held in house. Easter Raffle will be drawn Tuesday 31/3/15, Anzac Day is a very significant time for us to show our respect for those who served and currently serve in the Defence Forces. Lest We Forget.

Times for Marches & Services with Corrimal RSL & Wollongong RSL to be confirmed. Flyers will be placed on noticeboards early April for this information.

Next will be May with The Biggest Morning Tea to support the Cancer Foundation – date to be confirmed.

Mother's Day – special afternoon tea for residents & families to be held on the Saturday before Mother's Day. Letters will be sent out to families confirming time and date. Please ensure you respond by the due date, this is very important for catering & seating to be organized.

Well folks that's all till next time.

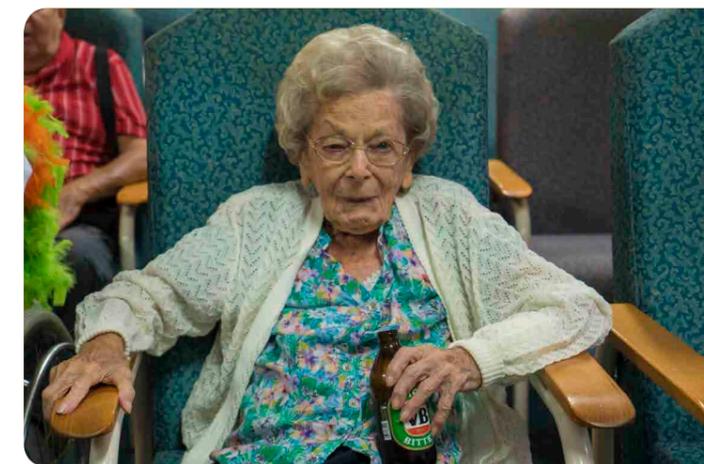
Take care, God bless

From your Lifestyle crew.

Quote: "A hug is a great gift, One size fits all".

ELEANOR JOHN

Our oldest resident Eleanor John recently celebrated her 104th birthday– first being thrown a party by her family and then an afternoon tea with her friends at Diggers. Known as Nell, she attributes her long life to "doing nothing special" although she would be the envy of many women today as she has never been on a diet. Nell was born in the heart of the Victorian Mallee and enjoyed country life as a young girl. "We made our own fun riding



our ponies and drinking milk straight from the cow," she said. Nell moved to Wollongong more than 10 years ago to be with her loving family. "My husband did all right living to the age of 90 and we both enjoyed more than 40 years lawn bowling." "I think I've had a great life and have no complaints."





St. Patrick's Day

Happy St. Patrick's Day

