



ANZAC DAY

Lest we forget

APRIL TWENTY TWENTY ONE EDITION



Our spritely 102 year old resident David Napper, who was in the armed services during World War II, with his eight year old great granddaughter, Molly Napper, at the Anzac Day Service.

CEO's Message

Hello to all our residents, relatives, staff and interested readers of our glossy little publication,

My favourite time of year is Autumn and we are having a very special one this year. The days are warm in the sun and a little crisp in the shade. Our residents are quite expert at following the sun and finding the best places to sit and absorb the warmth in the various sitting rooms and gardens. Our gardens still have plenty of blooms and we have just recently planted our new VEGE-Pod mobile garden. We are looking forward to the fresh produce coming from that in the coming months.

While COVID is still a significant issue throughout the world, we are very fortunate that our experience so far in 2021 has been very different to last year. We have finally managed to free ourselves of wearing masks; we have resumed a full program of bus trips; and we are starting to re-engage outside entertainers as well. Reconnecting with our friends from Greenacres and from the Pioneer Rd child care centre is also very welcome.

Most importantly we have been able to open the doors to our families and friends and it all feels a lot more "normal". A constant reminder that we have to be ever vigilant is the ongoing need to screen all staff and visitors every day for flu-like symptoms as well as the ever changing hot spots and restricted locations. I do not see an end to this requirement for a long time to come based on global experience.

Within these few restriction, however, life is pretty good here at Illawarra Diggers.

In March and April our residents and some of our staff were able to receive

both doses of the Pfizer vaccine. A few residents were unavailable at the time and we have also had a number of new residents in that time who have also not yet been vaccinated. We are still waiting for the Department of Health to advise how they will be attended to. While about 30 of our staff were able to get the vaccine in March, it has taken till this week to learn that the remaining 80+ staff will be able to get vaccinated at a Hub in Wollongong in the coming weeks. This is very welcome news.

In April we have also been fortunate to be one of the first in the Illawarra to rollout the 2021 flu vaccine to our residents and staff. Nearly all residents have been vaccinated and staff will be progressively completed in the coming weeks. The government has not made it a compulsory condition of entry to residential aged care homes yet as they did last year because of the 14 day gap between the flu and COVID vaccine requirements. Last year this compulsory requirement contributed significantly to the positive health of our residents throughout the year. Nonetheless, we are encouraging all visitors to get vaccinated for influenza again this year. It assists greatly with enhancing the health and well being of our residents and preventing a possible flu outbreak which can be very dangerous to our vulnerable residents.

I know this edition will be filled with some lovely photos from our ANZAC service. As always it was a pleasure to attend with our residents, staff and families. Please remember that you are always welcome to attend our ANZAC and Remembrance Day services at our home. They are always a very positive experience. And this year we had fresh baked ANZAC biscuits to follow – what's better than that?!

Finally a nod to our back-page star Peter Pfister. An inspiration with his sky diving escapade at aged 90. I have no desire to emulate his feat but I can admire the determination and sense of adventure that got him out the door of the plane. Well Done Peter.

I hope you all stay warm, stay safe and enjoy your association with us at Illawarra Diggers.

Peter Whittall
CEO



A Message from the Lifestyle Manager

It's lovely to be getting back into the swing of things this year. Autumn was welcomed with open arms and to embrace the lovely weather we've had some lovely outdoor bus trips, including BBQ's at Cordeaux Dam and Stanwell Park, Gerroa Fisherman's Club Lunch and Bulli Beach café. Most residents have been eager to venture a little further from home this year. Residents are also enjoying visiting our local Pioneer Rd Preschool and next month the kiddies will be visiting us on alternate weeks. This will give more residents an opportunity to visit with the preschool and share in their enthusiasm and games.

Greenacres' Community Connect group have re-established their program this year. The group has just completed a new garden in our main courtyard. This was quite an ugly corner where the bird cage used to be and took a bit of work to get the space ready for planting. The garden should look amazing once the bulks bloom and the other plants take off.

In staying with the garden theme we purchased a Vegepod; an accessible garden on wheels. These mobile gardens are a wonderful idea to bring the garden to those who can't come to the garden. It is fully self-contained, with a shade cloth cover and built in sprinkler. It is wheel chair friendly and supports a positive garden experience for those who can no longer bend or kneel in regular garden spaces.

It's been wonderful being able to plan events this year after 2020's restrictions. Being joined by the 26 Australian Cadet Unit - Wollongong and other dignitaries for this year's Anzac Day service was very special for all our residents but especially our ex-service men and women. We're looking forward to organising several more events that will include families and our community members as the year progresses. The next one, Mothers Day!

Kind Regards

Vikki Wilesmith

(Lifestyle Manager)



Staff Profile

Melissa Mate

LIFESTYLE TEAM MEMBER

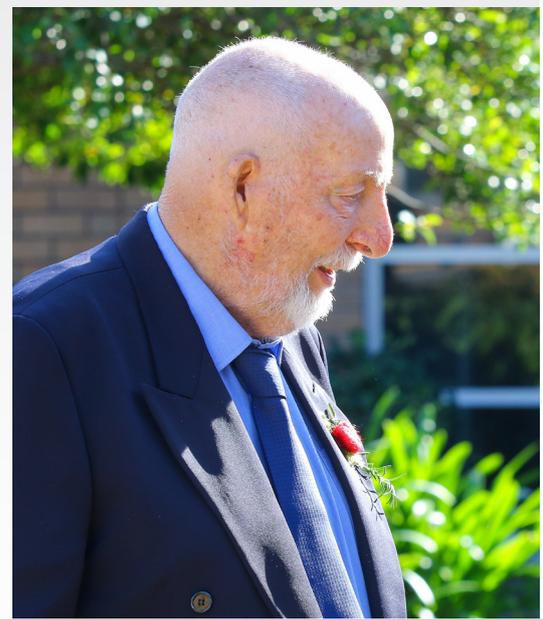
Melissa, one of Illawarra Diggers newest staff members, has worked for around 17 years in aged care.

"It is always a privilege in meeting with and sharing so many wonderful memories with some very amazing older people," she said.

"I am looking forward to getting to know the residents as I work across all lifestyle areas and looking forward to knowing what they like doing."

In her personal life Melissa loves spending time, particularly enjoying outdoor activities, with her husband Gavin and their two children, 23-year-old Brooke, a firefighter at Redfern Station and 21-year-old Haigon, who is a plumber.





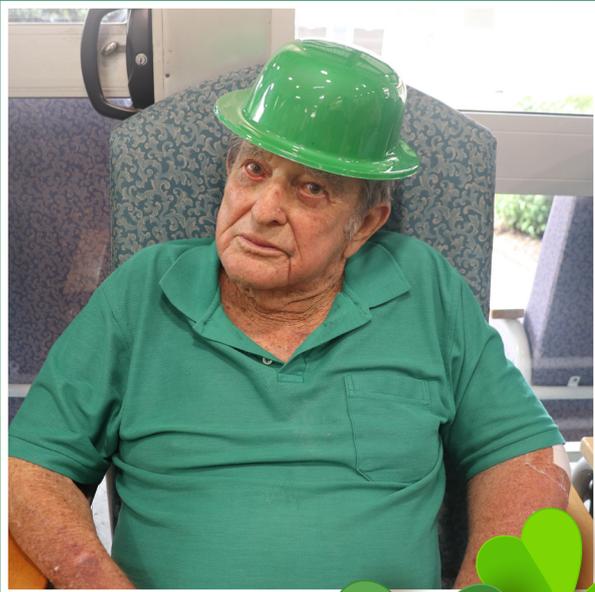
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Our resident Peter Pfister celebrates 90th birthday with tandem skydive



By Brendan Crabb - Illawarra Mercury

Members describe him as a "thrill-seeker", and Peter Pfister said celebrating his 90th birthday by jumping out of a plane was an exceptional experience.

"I've done everything except Mount Everest," he said. "I couldn't believe I'd done it. I wouldn't say it would be suitable for everyone... But once I commit to something I go through with it."

Read more: Yours and Owls Festival: How revellers enjoyed live music again during COVID pandemic

Mr Pfister, a father of four, grandfather of six and great-grandfather of one, is a resident of Illawarra Diggers Aged and Community Care at Corrimal.

He turned 90 last Friday, and on Sunday celebrated by skydiving for the first time.

Also taking part in the tandem jumps on Sunday morning were Mr Pfister's sons Grahame and Neil, as well as son-in-law Tony Parry.

"I didn't think he'd be fit enough, but they reckon he is, so well done to him," Grahame said.

The jump was run by Skydive Sydney-Wollongong, with the participants landing near Fairy Meadow surf club.

Minutes after landing, Mr Pfister laughed and told the Mercury he felt "100 per cent, now that I've stopped".

"I've been up that high many times, but never in one of these things," he said.

"When they said, 'you're going out there', and we jumped out the door, I looked down and thought, 'oh my God, what am I doing?'



"Going 250km/hr is a little bit hard, isn't it?"

"All I'm looking for now is a pub to have a beer."

Family members attended the landing, and had a birthday lunch afterwards.

One of Mr Pfister's daughters, Maria Parry, was present to watch the landing.

"He was the thrill-seeker out of Mum and Dad," Mrs Parry said. "He has a real appetite for life. He's trekked in the Himalayas, and done a lot of world trips."

His other daughter, London-based Janice, a former champion parachutist, was unable to be there.

At age 21, Janice attempted a jump at a championships in Victoria, but the wind changed, and she landed on 22,000 volt power lines.

She lost her arm and suffered severe burns to her hip. After five months in intensive care, she eventually returned to parachuting.

Unfortunately, the wind changed again, she hit a tree and was knocked unconscious. She then retired from parachuting.

Due to this history and for fear she would convince him not to do it, Mr Pfister had attempted to keep his skydiving plans secret from Janice until he had successfully completed the jump.

However, she found out two weeks ago and was the first person to speak to him after landing.

"She was very happy with it, even though she had that terrible accident," Mr Pfister said. "She said, 'Dad, I'm proud of you for doing it.'"

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