

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
to the
BUSHLAND HEALTH GROUP LIMITED
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Regrettably, as previously expressed last year in Graham Brown's report, it is still very difficult times in the aged care industry this year. We were able to turn around a loss last year to a profit of \$658,672 this year. This profit can be attributed to two main factors, the fact that the Federal Government did increase its financial subsidies last year and secondly the increased interest rates paid on our cash investments.

The "Acute Care" requirements of senior Australians continues to be very painful in our industry with chronic underfunding from the Federal Government. In particular, funding to attract staff by payment of salaries that would lead to staff continuing to work in our industry. As a society you cannot pay higher rates of pay to Registered Nurses in Acute Care (Hospitals) and the NDIS and yet attract staff (and indeed keep staff) in the Aged Care Acute Care Sector. It just does not work! This is the spotlight issue.

It also seems to be an issue that young people are reluctant to see nursing as a desirable career path.

As a Board we have been proactive in that we participate as a provider in the Australian Government's PALM scheme (Pacific Australia Labour Mobility) Scheme. This scheme has frankly been a godsend to our company and has enabled us to recruit 23 Assistants in Nursing, with 15 from Kiribati, 8 from Fiji, with another 5 more in the pipeline, so to speak. Frankly if we were not able to recruit these individuals post COVID, we would have been in dire circumstances which would have without a doubt affected our occupancy rates.

We still, in Old Bar, have a complete Banyula Lodge wing that we have never opened due solely to difficulties in obtaining and retaining staff.

To the staff that remain in our Company there is, and rightly so, unlimited praise, as their dedication to the residents and our industry shows no bounds. Short notice and even double shifts seem to be regrettably the norm.

With the immediate urgency of COVID-19 now receding somewhat, it is recalled the efforts of our nursing staff in having to don and then regularly change their personal protection equipment (PPE) sometimes many times in their shift, and all that in addition to other infection control measures. Their extraordinary efforts during these times are acknowledged and appreciated.

All Board Directors are acutely aware that we have received an unqualified Audit report. Thanks, must be to Errol and his staff for their efforts and indeed assistance to our auditors.

As a company we are progressing, in that very shortly we will be submitting to Mid Coast Council plans for “Independent Living” multi story apartments along the scenic Manning Riverbank which residents will be able to ultimately occupy on a “Loan/License” arrangement. We have already received many expressions of interest from the public in this development, which is very encouraging.

We are also progressing in planning a development, adjacent to Marie Ave Taree and directly opposite our Warrana Village, a precinct to be known as “Manning Rise”. This is a large development that will take many years to fully complete.

As a board we will continue to develop Independent Self Care precincts to reflect the demand from people in their senior years.

We now can deliver our future plans which are ambitious in scope and range.