



What's the European Model of Care?

History

In 2014, the Committee of Management (COM) started a strategic planning exercise. In the early discussions, the focus was on viability and growth. It was felt that in order to remain viable we needed to expand. More beds? Different and new services?

The COM developed a five-year Strategic Plan. The plan was very practical, looking doable on the surface – but not so in a changing residential aged care environment.

The bigger question was 'how do we want these services to look?' This was the starting point to getting to where we are today.

As the COM gained a greater understanding of the industry we started to have discussions on what was already different about Yackandandah Health and what did we want Yackandandah Health to be and look like in the future. We started to ask the question – 'if it was me what would I want' and realised that although we all agreed that Yackandandah Health was one of the best RAC services that we knew of, we all wanted more. We wanted to be the bench mark. To do this, we needed to look further afield and learn from those who were considered to be innovative and ahead of the field. At the time, we weren't sure where this would lead but were prepared to cast a wide net.

In Australia, when people need care, they have to leave their friends, they have to leave their community and they have to go to somewhere where those services are provided. This is not the best way for people to age well and we started to look for a better model.

Europe

Our attention was drawn to Europe. They were doing things differently and we liked what we saw. The model so often repeated in Australia of creating villages where the



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old are separated from the young on the pretext of safety and support wasn't happening in Europe. They valued and embraced their elders and their solutions on the difficulties that ageing often presents were creative and inclusive. People may be old, but they're still people. People may even be not very well, but they're still people and they want to be able to say, "I would like to do this or that."

Stage 1

Stage 1 is the construction of 16 new residential aged care units situated in two homes. A maximum of 8 people will live in each home.

Our plan is to support you to live life as usual in a normal house with a normal household. Houses with a front door, a living room and a kitchen. And a terrace or garden to sit outside in the sun. A house with your own bedroom, that is furnished in the style of your own home. A house where you have input into cleaning the house, washing and ironing the clothes, preparing the meals – a daily routine that you have helped to plan.

The overall aim is to provide pleasure and a meaningful life. Our aim is that those who live with us are happy, have as much independence as possible, are valued and have value. Nursing Care should be back of stage with living life as usual at front of stage. For this to work we need a cultural change. We need to stop planning our routines and care around a medical model and put the person front and centre. Routines have to be flexible and adaptable. Our professional and highly skilled staff will work together to integrate all aspects of life for the resident so that they may experience a normal life and have their health care needs supported as required.

Connected to the Community

A great building will not provide the full vision. We want our residents to be connected to the community. We want to draw the community in so that spaces are shared and the residents truly feel part of the community. We want them on a daily basis to be able to mix with different age groups and different people.



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This is Stage 2. Here we will create a community hub. Services such as the medical centre, meeting rooms, a gym, a café, hair dressing salon, art spaces and outdoor spaces to sit and wander. Stage 2 is where the community and the residents come together. The aim is to create a social space – residents can shop, have a coffee, enjoy a walk in the fresh air, go to a concert, see a movie. The possibilities are endless – but for every activity the community will be welcome. People of all ages will enjoy this innovative and unique community hub.

What will this model give our residents? – more autonomy, reduced behaviours, less stress, more exercise, more social involvement, improved cognitive function and most importantly increased happiness.

What about the staff? – less stress, happier residents, increased pride and satisfaction in working for an organisation that is innovative and ground breaking.



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