



Media Release

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New Aged Care Facility Requirements and Recruitment of New Staff: Strengthening Care for Our Seniors

For immediate release.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has extensively highlighted the importance of staffing levels and ensuring high-quality residential care. As a result, the commission has recommended that all residential facilities must now have at least one Registered Nurse (RN) present on site at all times.

Starting from July 1, 2023, the Federal Government has mandated that approved providers of residential Aged Care facilities with more than 30 beds must have at least one RN available on-site and available 24 hours a day, 7 days week for each facility they operate. This new requirement has posed an additional recruitment challenge for Gilgandra Lifestyles' Cooee Lodge Hostel, which compounds an already existing nationwide issue across the aged care industry in attracting and retaining RNs.

Donna Dobson, Director of Aged Care and Disabilities says,

“Council has been working closely with the Federal Department of Health and Aged Care to reach a practical outcome with the introduction of this new requirement, there is also respite in knowing that residential Aged Care Facilities of less than 30 beds have been temporarily exempt from meeting this requirement. We are also very fortunate to have appointed Delwyn Gates as the Cooee Lodge Manager, Delwyn has a strong history in nursing and aged care, including Clinical Nurse Educator and Care Services Manager, and is a welcomed member of the team”

Adding,

“We have maintained regular communication with both the residents and their families, throughout this transition period. Despite the extensive media coverage highlighting the challenges faced by the aged care sector, Cooee Lodge, in addition to Delwyn has successfully recruited 4 RN's as part of our staff, demonstrating our commitment to providing high-quality residential care to all residents”.

As a result July 1, 2023, Gilgandra Lifestyles' Cooee Lodge Hostel will have a total 5 RN's employed across a range of experiences and skills, ensuring all residents receive comprehensive care and support 24 hours a day, 7 days week.

RN's are not the only sole foundation of functioning aged care facilities. There are numerous roles, such as personal carers, Assistants in Nursing (AINs), and Endorsed Enrolled Nurses (EENs), that also play an equally significant part in the successful operation of each aged care facility. Ensuring Cooee Lodge has the sufficient number

of staff members to maintain round-the-clock residential aged care requires a substantial workforce.

Councillor and Chair of the Lifestyles Committee, Paul Mann says,

“Taking a positive approach, Council will be supporting and serve as the host to 10 trained AINs from the Philippines, who will be employed under long-term contracts. This initiative, known as the Groworx program, aims to alleviate staffing pressures and contribute to maintaining the quality of care at Cooee Lodge aged.”

“The Groworx program is a very positive program for our community, not only are we encouraging new people to join our community, they will also bring much needed skills and a touch of multiculturalism to an already vibrant community. These new staff will work across a range of the community services offered by Council and we look forward to welcoming them in October!”

Adding,

“Jack Towney and Cooee Lodge Hostel have significant roles within our community, providing high-quality residential aged care options for individuals who wish to remain in Gilgandra as they age and their needs evolve. The addition of these 10 staff members will enable both facilities to operate at full capacity, ensuring that our community members receive high-quality care and support”.

Gilgandra Lifestyles’ Jack Towney Hostel is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific aged care facility. Funded for 13 places, we offer a mix of residential and community places. Cooee Lodge Hostel contains 50 beds; 40 standard beds, and a further 10 beds in a purpose-built Special Care Wing.

In addition to round-the-clock personal care, meals and laundry services, residents are able to access to a number of key services including hairdressing, medical assistance, podiatry, physiotherapy and other allied health services.

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