



harbourside
PORT STEPHENS

Splash!

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ABOUT US

Harbourside Port Stephens (formally Port Stephens Veterans & Citizens Aged Care) is a local, compassionate, not-for-profit community organisation with a proud history spanning over 40 years. We are dedicated to providing care and support to seniors in the Port Stephens region.

We offer

- **Retirement Living** – Villages located in Shoal Bay, Salamander Bay, and Fingal Bay
- **Home Care** – Supporting seniors to live independently at home
- **Residential Care** – Located in Shoal Bay

Established and trusted, Harbourside Port Stephens continues to evolve to ensure our communities and services remain accessible and relevant to today's seniors. Our comprehensive range of professional, dedicated services provides residents, clients, and their families with peace of mind, knowing that additional care is available should their needs change.

Our Vision

The leading and trusted provider of aged care services to our community.

Our Mission

Partnering with our community to provide:

- Safe and respectful personalised care.
- Vibrant residential, home care and retirement living.
- Ongoing and innovative growth in service.

Making a Splash

Splash is more than just a newsletter—it's a celebration of the vibrancy, spirit, and joy of life at Harbourside Port Stephens. Here, we don't just go through the motions—we make a splash! Growing older doesn't mean slowing down; it's about embracing life with energy, passion, and enthusiasm. Whether it's trying something new, sharing laughter with friends, or making a difference in the community, every moment has the potential to be a Splash moment. Through inspiring stories, community highlights, wellness tips, and heartwarming connections, Splash is here to showcase the everyday magic that makes Harbourside so special. So dive in and enjoy!

OUR VALUES

CARE + Community

Compassion



Accountability



Respect



Excellence



+ Community



Message from the CEO

Welcome to the June edition of Splash!

As we move through 2026, it's wonderful to reflect on the energy, connection, and community spirit that make Harbourside Port Stephens such a special place. From residents and clients to staff, volunteers, and families, there is a real sense of optimism and pride throughout our organisation.

One of the highlights of the year so far has been our inaugural Harbourside Coastal Country Fair. It was fantastic to see so many people come together to celebrate community spirit, local connection, and everything that makes Port Stephens such a special place to live. Following the success of the event, we're pleased to confirm that the Coastal Country Fair will now become a regular part of the Harbourside calendar.

This edition of Splash also shines a spotlight on the special people who help make Harbourside what it is. During May, we proudly celebrated both International Nurses Day and National Volunteers Week – recognising the compassion, skill, generosity, and dedication of the many nurses and volunteers who contribute so much to the lives of our residents and clients each and every day.

At Harbourside, great care starts with great knowledge. That's why we've been building dedicated clinical portfolios across our organisation – focused on the areas that matter most to the people in our care. These include dementia and neurocognitive decline, palliative and end-of-life care, wound care, infection prevention and control, and chronic disease management. Each portfolio is led by staff members with specialist focus and training in that area, ensuring our team has the expertise, confidence, and support to deliver consistent, high-quality care. For our residents, clients, and their families, this means you can feel reassured that the people caring for your loved ones are not only compassionate – they are clinically skilled and continuously learning.

We are also proud to showcase the breadth of career pathways available at Harbourside. As one of the region's largest employers, we remain committed to supporting local people through traineeships, work experience opportunities, student placements, and meaningful long-term careers in aged care.

As our organisation continues to grow, we are also looking ahead to the future needs of our community. This includes exploring the re-purposing of the Bill King Centre at Fingal Bay, as part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring seniors across Port Stephens have access to the right care and support as their needs change.

At Harbourside, we believe growing older should continue to be filled with purpose, connection, opportunity, and community – and every day, we see that spirit reflected throughout our organisation.

Thank you for being part of our journey and for helping us continue to make a splash.

Warm regards, Paul Fitzpatrick CEO



More Than a Job: The People Behind the Care

When most people think of aged care, they picture nurses and carers. But at Harbourside Port Stephens – one of the largest employers in the Port Stephens region – there’s a whole world of opportunity behind the scenes. From hospitality and maintenance to administration, home care, and clinical roles, we offer a wide range of careers that make a real difference every single day. And we’re proud to grow our team right here – supporting people at every stage of their journey, from their very first step into the workforce through to long and fulfilling careers. The faces behind our care come from all walks of life, and together they reflect the warmth, diversity, and community spirit that make Harbourside so special.

Sarah Carnell – Student Nurse (Work Placement)

Sarah came to nursing the way many do – inspired by someone she loves. Her mum was a theatre nurse who came home with stories that sparked something in Sarah from an early age. “She taught me how to be a caring person,” Sarah says. “She’s my inspiration.”

Now in her second year of nursing studies at 45 – and mum to two daughters of her own – Sarah is proof that it’s never too late to follow your calling. She’s no stranger to Harbourside either. Having worked here for a decade in various roles some years ago, including as an Allied Health Team Leader, she knew exactly where she wanted to do her placement when the time came.

Four weeks in, she hasn’t looked back. Sarah has spent time across Carter and Richardson Houses – on the floor, diving deep into wound care, and spending time with the clinical team doing injections



Sarah Carnell – Student Nurse & Ebonnie Bentley – Care Manager

and assessments. It’s wound care that has truly captured her heart, and she hopes to specialise in it as a registered nurse.

But it’s the quieter moments that have stayed with her most. “Being part of the guard of honour when a resident passes – it gives staff and families a chance to truly honour them. It’s very special.”

Sarah is already planning to apply as a new graduate nurse at Harbourside. “The culture here is just wonderful. I really don’t want to leave.”

Millie Simmonds – Trainee, Personal Care Assistant

Millie grew up in Mudgee surrounded by cows and horses – but she always had a feeling that the sea was calling her. When a traineeship opportunity at Harbourside came up earlier this year, she did something bold. She packed up, moved to Nelson Bay, and hasn’t looked back.

“I’ve always wanted to try living by the beach,” she says. “And I love it here.”

Starting in February, Millie is working towards her Certificate III in Aged Care – her first step into a sector she is quickly discovering has a lot to offer. The shift from a background in community care to residential care has been a big one. Instead of focusing on one person at a time, she is now



Millie Simmonds - Trainee, Personal Care Assistant

responsible for an entire group of residents, juggling set tasks within set timeframes in a very go, go, go environment.

"It was eye-opening at first," she says. "But I got used to it."

What has surprised her most is how much connection matters in the work. Millie has learned to read each resident – to be bright and cheerful with some, and quiet and respectful with others. She has also experienced the harder side of the role, learning to cope when a resident she has grown close to passes away.

The team has made all the difference. The Registered Nurses are encouraging and keep things moving, and one piece of advice has stuck with Millie from the start.

"They told me there's no such thing as a silly question. That really helped."

Ashley Wenzel – School Based Apprentice & Trainee (SBAT)

For Ashley, choosing Harbourside felt like coming home before she'd even arrived. With her mum, sister, brother-in-law, aunty, and uncle all working in aged care, she'd grown up hearing about the rewards of the industry from people she loves most.

"Hearing about their experiences made me want to



Ashley Wenzel - School Based Apprentice & Trainee (SBAT)

learn more for myself," she says.

When the opportunity to do a School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship came up through school, Ashley didn't hesitate. Working alongside her studies, she is now working towards her Certificate III in Aged Care – with her sights set on becoming a Registered Nurse down the track.

Her first weeks at Harbourside have been everything she hoped for. Settling into daily routines, getting to know the residents, and learning the rhythms of a busy care environment, Ashley has been struck most by the warmth of the team around her.

"I was surprised by how welcoming everyone is and how much teamwork there is between staff," she says. "Everyone has included me and helped me learn along the way."

For a student balancing school and work, that support has made all the difference. Ashley's favourite moment so far? Simply feeling part of the team.

Her advice to other students thinking about an SBAT? "I would definitely recommend it. It's a great opportunity to gain experience, meet new people, and learn skills while still at school."

National Volunteers Week Celebration

Your Year to Volunteer – Celebrating Our Harbourside Volunteers

This year, National Volunteers Week carries the theme Your Year to Volunteer – and at Harbourside, that couldn't feel more fitting. Every week, our wonderful volunteers give their time, warmth, and energy to make life brighter for our residents and clients. During May, we celebrated them at a special High Tea – a small but heartfelt thank you for the enormous difference they make.

Here we introduce three remarkable volunteers – from our youngest to our oldest.

Miley Adams, Age 14 – Our Youngest Volunteer

Miley joined us through her Duke of Edinburgh Award. Visits to her Pop in a nursing home sparked a genuine love of spending time with older people, and Harbourside felt like the natural place to be. Once a week she chats with residents, listens to their stories, and talks through meal preferences. Simple moments – but meaningful ones. “I love hearing people's back stories,” she says. We think they love hearing hers too.

Mollie Carter & Marion Bratton – Class of 1938, Still Making a Difference

Between them, Mollie and Marion have given close to half a century of service to Harbourside.

Mollie's 28 years of volunteering at Harbourside have taken many forms – from leading the Pink Ladies, to volunteering at the Day Centre in Fingal Bay, and today volunteering at Harbourside Residential Care and proudly serving as President of the Fingal Bay Craft Group. “I just love helping people who can't do things for themselves,” she says.

Marion has volunteered since 2011, initially as one of the Pink Ladies and now she joins the Rock Church Singers monthly for a resident sing-along. “Seeing people respond to the music brings me so much joy. It's just fun.”

At 87, both are a beautiful reminder that the spirit of giving knows no age limit.



Miley Adams



Mollie Carter



Marion Bratton

Our Nurses

Caring for our Community:

Harbourside Port Stephens proudly celebrated International Nurses Day on 12 May, recognising and thanking the incredible nurses who provide compassionate care and support to our residents, clients, and community each and every day.

Across our sites, the day was filled with smiles, appreciation, and moments of connection as staff came together to honour the dedication and professionalism of our nursing teams.

A special highlight was our **“A Little Lift for Your Shift” Wellness Stations** — set up to give our nurses a chance to relax, refuel, and refresh during their busy day. With wellness goodies, tea, coffee, and iced tea on offer, it was a simple but heartfelt way to say thank you.

We also had some fun with our **International Nurses Day Photo Challenge**, with teams showcasing their creativity and team spirit through fun group photos. Adding to the celebrations was a **Guessing Competition**, where staff were invited to guess how many years of service badges had been pinned on our HR Business Partner — creating plenty of laughter and conversation throughout the day!

International Nurses Day is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the vital role our nurses play in the lives of those we care for. Their kindness, clinical expertise, patience, and dedication make a meaningful difference every single day.

To all our nurses — thank you. We are incredibly grateful for everything you do.



MAKING A Splash



AUSTRALIA DAY

At Harbourside Seniors Hub, Australia Day was celebrated with plenty of fun, laughter and good company. Clients enjoyed a classic lamington morning tea, Australia Day Bingo, themed craft activities and a delicious BBQ lunch, finishing the day with individual pavlova desserts. It was wonderful to see everyone coming together to celebrate and enjoy another special day at the Hub.



EMINENT RESIDENT AWARDS

Residents at our Shoal Bay Retirement Living village celebrated their annual Eminent Resident Awards, recognising the kindness and community spirit that make village life so special. This year, residents proudly honoured Dan Redmond for his generosity and willingness to always lend a hand, along with a posthumous award for Richard Harris, whose kindness left a lasting impact on the village community.



VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day at Harbourside Residential Care was made even more special with visits from pet therapy dogs Alfie and Esme. Dressed in adorable love-themed scarves, the pair delivered Valentine's cards and red roses to residents, bringing plenty of smiles, cuddles and joy along the way. Their gentle presence and unconditional love created many heart-warming moments throughout the day.



CELEBRATING OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

This month we had the pleasure of hosting our Harbourside Volunteer High Tea to thank the wonderful volunteers who give their time, kindness and care to support our residents, clients and community. It was a lovely morning of connection, laughter and shared stories.





Making a Splash is our feel-good roundup of the past six months—celebrating the moments that brought joy, connection, and a little extra sparkle to our community. From fun-filled outings to creative activities and everyday moments of laughter, this section captures the memories our residents and clients have shared together.



SENIORS WEEK

Our Harbourside Retirement Living residents came together to celebrate Seniors Week with a special outing aboard the Wangi Queen Showboat. Embracing the theme “Live Life in Colour,” residents enjoyed beautiful water views, plenty of laughs and wonderful company while creating memorable moments together.



SENIORS HUB

Our Seniors Hub group recently enjoyed a wonderful day out, starting the morning at Three Beans Café watching jets take off before heading to The Bank Hotel for a beautiful lunch together. Filled with plenty of laughs, great company and special moments, the outing was a lovely reminder of what the Hub is all about — enjoying our community and making memories together.



WORLD CIRCUS DAY

Harbourside Residential Care came alive with colour, laughter and fun as residents, staff and community celebrated World Circus Day 2026 under the big top. With wonderful performances, classic circus games, fairy floss and plenty of nostalgic treats, the day was filled with smiles, great company and memorable moments for everyone involved.



HARMONY DAY

Our Harbourside team came together to celebrate Harmony Day with a BBQ lunch, great conversations and plenty of smiles. Celebrating diversity, inclusion and belonging, the day was a wonderful reminder of the supportive and welcoming culture shared across our team and community.

COASTAL COUNTRY - FAIR -

Coastal Country Fair Bringing Community Together

Harbourside Port Stephens would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us for our inaugural Coastal Country Fair. What a beautiful day it was – filled with fun, laughter, music, and true community spirit.

It was incredibly special to see our residents, families, staff, and the broader Port Stephens community come together to enjoy everything the fair had to offer. One particularly touching moment came from a resident who became emotional as she walked through the fairgrounds, taking in the atmosphere and smiling faces around her. With tears in her eyes, she quietly said, “This is wonderful. I feel proud to be a Harbourside resident.” Moments like these remind us just how meaningful events like this are for our community.

We were thrilled to welcome a wonderful range of local stallholders and entertainers on the day – including Matt our talented balloon artist, country musician Mick Fetch who kept the country spirit alive throughout the day, the energetic Bay Bootscooters Nelson Bay Line Dancers, Amelia and her adorable baby animals, Sara with her beautiful native plant stall, Deb from Flavourista, and Eli Kok with the ever-popular Lucky Dip. Our own Harbourside Men’s Shed and Craft Stall teams also proudly showcased their creations, adding so much warmth and colour to the day.

A huge thank you to the incredible Harbourside team who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make it all happen.

We are delighted to confirm that the Coastal Country Fair will return next year – Saturday 27 March 2027. Save the date! And if you’re interested in holding a stall, please email us to register your interest. Spaces will be limited.







We Care !

At Harbourside Port Stephens, our **home care team** is here to help you stay independent in the place you know and love.

Contact our team to learn about **how we can support you!**

 4984 1811

Still living life on her own terms

Dawn Crawford, 92, Harbourside Shoal Bay

Dawn Crawford has called Port Stephens home for over 40 years. At 92, she still lives independently – travelling to Victoria to see family, keeping up with 15 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren, and doing things her way.

“I like to be independent,” she says. “I’ve always been that way.”

Dawn has lived at Harbourside’s retirement village in Shoal Bay since 2012, and the Home Care team supports her with the things that make that independence possible. Domestic assistance keeps her home tidy and helps with meal preparation. Meals on Wheels arrives on time. Transport takes her to the shops. A nurse is there when she needs one. And every Wednesday, Ryan the physio turns up – which Dawn will happily tell you about, often mentioning that she is apparently his favourite client.

Her home has also been set up to be accessible, so the way it is built quietly supports the way she wants to live. The support wraps around her life without taking it over. It is not about doing things for Dawn – it is about making sure she can keep doing the things that matter to her.

For Dawn, having the right Home Care support in place – in the community where she lives – has meant the difference between managing and truly living. If you are wondering what Home Care might look like for you or someone you love, Dawn’s story is a good place to start.



To learn more about

HARBOURSIDE PORT STEPHENS

Call our friendly team on **02 4984 1811** or

email **contactus@harboursideps.com.au**

Visit our website **harboursideportstephens.com.au**