

Woburn's new Facilities Manager embarks on a journey of care and connection

Woburn Masonic Care is poised for an exciting future with the completion of its new build.

With the new facility now built, Woburn Masonic Care in Lower Hutt offers an ideal blend of natural beauty, community spirit, and convenient amenities. It offers a peaceful and secure environment for those requiring rest home and hospital level care, while still being close enough to vibrant city life.

And making sure it all runs smoothly for residents is new Facilities Manager, Heidi O'Reilly, who brings a wealth of experience and a deep passion for serving others during their golden years.



Heidi O'Reilly, Facilities Manager at Woburn Masonic Care

Heidi's journey in the aged care industry began a decade ago, when she started working as a nurse educator. Progressing through various roles over the years, she has honed her skills and gained valuable insights into the inner workings of aged care communities.

When Woburn Masonic Care was established, Heidi saw it as an opportunity to take her career to the next level and relocated to the facility.

As the Facilities Manager, Heidi is responsible for overseeing day-to-day operations and ensuring a high standard of care.

"It's early days but we are focusing on ensuring staff, residents, and family are comfortable and cared for," says Heidi.

Her previous managerial experience has equipped her well for this role, as she understands the intricacies involved in running a care home and fostering a thriving community.

What Heidi cherishes most about her work at Woburn is the opportunity to connect with people and make a positive impact on their lives.

Heidi has already formed a close bond with Woburn's residents, who have become like an extended family. She values the close-knit community and the strong bonds that are being formed within the facility.

The focus on creating a warm and supportive environment is what sets the care facility apart and makes it a special place for residents to call home.

Heidi's vision for Woburn Masonic Care is to build a strong culture and foster effective communication. She believes that residents deserve to be kept informed and engaged in the decision-making processes. By ensuring transparency and timely updates, Heidi aims to create an environment where residents feel valued and connected.



The Domino Effect Campaign: Raising awareness of the aged care crisis



The Aged Care Association has launched a public campaign to pressure the government to address the many and varied issues affecting the aged care sector, particularly significant underfunding.

The campaign, dubbed 'The Domino Effect', (www.dominoeffect.co.nz) highlights the far-reaching consequences of continued underfunding in the aged care industry.

It also highlights the impact on families, who are shouldering the responsibility of caring for their elderly parents while managing their own lives and work commitments.

The Masonic Villages Trust's Chief Executive (and Deputy Chair of the Aged Care Association), Warick Dunn, says the sector has suffered a lack of capital investment over many years.

"This has led to a dire shortage of 1,200 registered nurses and increased operational costs," Warick says.

"On top of that, almost 1,000 beds have closed in the past year across the sector.

"An additional 1,200 beds are closed temporarily due to staffing shortages."

With continued strain on emergency departments, growing wait times for surgeries, and overcrowded hospital wards, Warick says this situation paints a bleak picture for the future, with more bed closures expected.

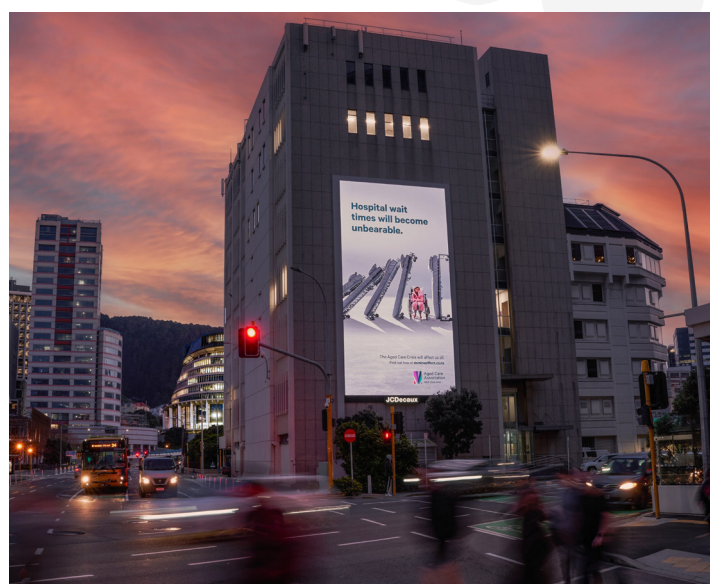
The anticipated increase in the elderly population requiring aged care beds indicates that New Zealand could face a shortage of 13,200 beds by 2030.

"Consequently, this shortage might result in hospital bed blocking, leaving individuals in need of round-the-clock elderly care with limited options: either remaining at home or relying on support from extended family members.

"Set against a backdrop of New Zealand's rapidly aging population, it seems unwise at best for government to ignore the needs of the aged care sector."

The campaign's goal is to mobilise the public and encourage the government to take decisive action to address the crisis.





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Warick says the government has put some money into the sector to support registered nurses, which has been well received. “But it’s not the ultimate solution.”

He says sustainable funding pathways can ensure enough beds to meet the increasing needs of the aging population, and it will help retain staff, with improved working conditions and fair pay incentivising skilled professionals to remain in their roles.

Equally important is the need to ensure equitable access to senior care services. This would mean everyone, regardless of their background or location, can receive the care they need and deserve.

And there’s the indisputable fact that properly supporting and funding the aged care sector would reduce impacts and costs for the wider public health system.

The campaign’s central message is clear: the aged care crisis impacts not only the elderly but also healthcare workers, families, and the entire health system.

Warick says The Masonic Villages Trust is not as badly impacted by the difficulties in the sector as other providers, partly because it has built a significant retirement village operation to support its care operators.

“But we must think of the bigger picture and the fact not everyone lives in one of our villages and care facilities.

“This is one of many reasons why The Masonic Villages Trust fully endorses the campaign.

“We believe that proper funding is essential to ensuring the well-being of our aging population.

“Government has a responsibility to invest in and support our aging New Zealanders. ‘The Domino Effect’ is about asking them to remember that and step up to this responsibility.”

Putting our people first at Edale

Running a care facility in a rural community is no easy task, but The Masonic Villages Trust's Edale home in Marton is making changes to better serve its residents and the local community

Edale offers both a retirement village and a care facility. But any residents needing hospital-level care had to relocate to facilities in Whanganui. This meant being separated from loved ones during times of ill health, which obviously isn't ideal.

To overcome this issue, the Trust has embarked on a project to provide comprehensive hospital-level care on the Edale site by converting the existing dementia unit into a hospital-level care facility.

This will ensure residents who need more intensive care can now receive it in familiar surroundings and close to people they know and love.

"We are thrilled to offer this enhanced level of care and support to our residents," says Karen Adrian, the Facility Manager at Edale.

"And these changes are significant for the entire community.

"Introducing hospital-level care means the demand for registered nurses will rise, creating new opportunities and strengthening the relationship between us and local healthcare professionals."

The Trust was keen to engage staff who are directly involved in the residents' care and well-being in the proposed changes.

So, the Trust gave them the proposal and asked for feedback. And they consulted thoroughly with the Whanganui District Health Board (DHB).

The upshot is that Edale now features nine hospital level beds and 21 rest home level beds, perfectly aligning it with the evolving needs of the community.

And those needs are driven by the changing demographics of the local community, particularly the increase in the number of people over 65.

"We want to ensure we can provide the right kind of care and support – and the right level of care – to the community now and in the future," says the Chief Executive of The Masonic Villages Trust, Warick Dunn.

"That's very much in keeping with our mission of always putting people first and gearing our operation to their needs."



Karen Adrian
Facility Manager at Edale.

