

A message to the Lyndoch Living board from the front line

Friday 14th	Tuesday 28th
ND 2200-0700 x2	APC 0700-1530
Saturday 25th	APC 0700-1300
APC 1700-2200	APC 1330-2200
Sunday 26th	APC 1700-2100
APC 1700-2200	LL 1700-2100
LL 0700-1530 x2	Wednesday 29th
LL 1430-2200	APC 1700-2100
ND 2200-0700	LL 0700-1100
Monday 27th	
APC 0700-1300	
LL 0700-1530	

Staff shortages last week across Lake Lodge and the Audrey Prider Centre at Lyndoch Living.

Carol Altmann – The Terrier

Tonight, a message to the Lyndoch board from the front line: help.

This entire Lyndoch campaign by The Terrier has had one simple motivation, which is to expect the best of care for our elderly and vulnerable residents.

That must be the priority.

But Lyndoch is drowning.

I have written so much about this, I have shown you so many photographs of the shift shortages, like the one above, and now we are in uncharted territory.

Because Lyndoch, for the first time and unlike any other nursing home in Warrnambool, is facing sanctions unless it gets its act together after failing care standards set by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

And it's facing this battle while suffering acute staff shortages and losing more senior staff in one sweep than, I would argue, at any time in its 60 year history.

In the past four weeks the Director of Nursing has gone. The head of May Noonan Hostel in Terang has gone.

At least one nurse unit manager has resigned.

And another two, experienced senior staff last week joined the growing list of those taking extended sick or stress leave. There will be more.

Between them, these individuals have decades of nursing experience that is not easily replaced.

Some Registered Nurses are working double shifts, with the second shift overnight when they are the only RN in the entire Lyndoch complex.

They are tired.

Other care staff are "top and tailing" – starting their shifts two hours early, or finishing two to three hours late, just to help cover the gaps.

Everybody I have contact with is exhausted or upset, but they keep pressing on because they care deeply for the residents.

I could write reams, based on the cries for help that come in each week from Lyndoch staff.

But instead I will convey the message of just one person who summed it all up.

This person has never contacted The Terrier before, but they

are someone you need to hear, and we recently spoke for an hour.

They could no longer stay silent, they said, after reading that [highly experienced SWHC nurse Kate Sloan had her membership application rejected by the board.](#)

This, they said, proved the board was not listening.

It was not listening to the care staff who have been trying to hold it all together in the hope of change.

Staff have tried to raise their concerns, but if they speak up publicly, comment on this page, or approach the board directly, they are disciplined. (Test: see how many Lyndoch nursing staff comment on this post.)

Lyndoch staff surveys have come and gone.

Secret meetings between Lyndoch staff and local MPs have come and gone.

Senior staff have raised warnings in exit interviews and, in some cases, been brutally direct about an individual who cannot be named for legal reasons.

And little changes, other than staff continue to leave, the deck chairs are shuffled, and the gaps keep getting bigger.

I asked this person at the end of our long conversation what message they wanted to pass on to the Lyndoch Living board:

“I want the public and the board to know that the situation is every bit as bad as what it is.

“The staffing situation has become diabolical...the shortages are near impossible to deal with. What you are saying, it’s happening, it’s telling it like it is.

“The board need to get a sense of the immense pressure the staff are under so please, listen, come down and speak to the

staff directly. Please be interested in what is actually going on.”

This begs a question, does the Lyndoch board know what is going on?

Chair Sue Cassidy (Unisexcuts), Vice Chair Kerry Nelson (ex MPower CEO), Treasurer Kane Grant (Sinclair&Wilson), Prof Rob Wallis, Lorraine Mielnik, Ron Page, Andrew Paton (WCC) – do you ask? Are you told? Have you ever met with the non-executive staff?

All good questions for the AGM on 26 October which Kate Sloan, had she been accepted as a member, could have asked, and that is precisely why she wasn't.