



benetas



2023-2024
YEAR IN REVIEW

About this Year in Review



Our Year in Review details the 2023-2024 financial year and gives us the opportunity to share our achievements, key events, stories and reflections from that period. It takes our stakeholders on a journey and gives them an insight into what makes Benetas special.

This year's theme is "uplifting communities" and speaks to the approach we've taken to encourage a sense of community across all our sites, by bringing people together with a shared sense of purpose and belonging.

Every day we strive to be an organisation that uplifts. One that makes people feel better about themselves, their lives and each other. Communities where care and compassion underpin actions and initiatives so that every person feels connected and supported.

Acknowledgement of Country

Benetas acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land where we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present. We celebrate the stories, culture and traditions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People of all communities who also live and work on this land.



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Uplifting communities

Uplifting communities is a fitting theme for this Year in Review, encapsulating what we see across Benetas every day.

Communities exist in the physical sense as places where we live, work and socialise, but community is also a feeling – a sense of belonging, where people share trust, a common purpose and care for each other. To uplift is to inspire with happiness, optimism and hope. When combined, uplifting communities are places, ideas and groups where we feel part of something that gives us joy and where we feel safe, secure and supported.

At Benetas, we build communities for our team members, residents, clients, their loved ones, volunteers and more broadly across the aged care sector. This includes the physical communities we build across Victoria for our retirement living, day respite and residential aged care clients. Our team members uplift the communities in which they work every day, proudly representing Benetas and helping our customers to enjoy their best lives.

A passion for advocacy

Our passion for uplifting communities sees us take an active role in advocating for our customers to governments, both directly and via industry bodies. In March, we welcomed the recommendations of the Federal Government's Aged Care Taskforce Report.

These recommendations included increasing consumer co-contributions for those who can afford it and other reforms to support a fairer and more sustainable sector, now and into the future.

We continued to advocate for the implementation of the recommendations to ensure the viability of the aged care sector, against a backdrop of Australia's ageing population and an ever-increasing demand on services.

We are acutely aware of the impact of industry-wide workforce shortages and are continually looking for new ways to attract and retain team members and advocate for systemic change to address this significant challenge.



Sandra Hills OAM, Chief Executive Officer, and Michael Urwin, Chair.





In October, we supported the Committee for Economic Development of Australia Duty of Care: Aged-Care Sector Running on Empty report, which addressed serious workforce issues in aged care. It highlighted the need to focus on housing shortages for workers and explore rental assistance initiatives to allow them to live closer to work, particularly in regional areas. It also called for the introduction of an essential skills visa for aged care workers and long-term residency opportunities, to increase the number of trained aged care employees.

In December, we successfully negotiated and lodged new enterprise agreements for community health and care and residential aged care team members. Both received ‘yes’ votes from employees during the first voting process and were approved by the Fair Work Commission.

This year, we continued to implement the new Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC) funding arrangements in residential aged care. We also engaged with the Federal Government and our broader industry to support the design of Support At Home changes.

Influencing through thought leadership

We took advantage of opportunities to influence the future of our sector with Benetas team members addressing a range of industry forums and seminars. We were active at this year’s Aged and Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) National Conference, with Benetas executives selected to present papers and participate in panel discussions, which focussed on sharing their experiences with the broader industry.

Throughout the year, our senior executives influenced in their area of speciality with multiple media opinion pieces featured in a variety of outlets. The focus of these articles was on supporting customers and advocating for their rights, as well as highlighting how our sector can be sustainable into the future.

We continued to build relationships with representatives at all levels of government, either by writing to them or meeting them face to face to share the challenges and opportunities facing our sector. In August, Kooyong MP Dr Monique Ryan visited our Broughton Hall residential aged care home.

Innovation and customer focus

We see innovation in aged care as a key tool to improve outcomes for older Victorians now and into the future. This year, we rolled out new electronic medication management technology across all our homes, designed to improve the automation, documentation and administration of medications.

We expanded our BestLife Model of Care program, which builds the skills of team members who work with residents and clients living with dementia. We also enhanced our care offering for residents living with dementia by rolling out Tovertafel interactive technology across all of our aged care homes.

We made strong progress with our Next Generation IT Strategy, improving the automation and performance of key systems that support our customers and teams.

We understand the increasing importance of technology in helping older people remain connected. This year, we undertook a research study exploring the digital habits of older Australians and the importance of cyber safety. We shared insights from the study through a range of media outlets and developed a partnership with the Cyber Safety Project to deliver interactive workshops in our retirement living villages, educating residents on how to stay safe online.

We also partnered with Andromeda Robotics in a four-month trial of Abi, an AI-powered robot. As part of a broader lifestyle activities program and supported by members of our team, Abi entertained residents at Colton Close for one hour a week with games, quizzes and other activities. While this type of technology will never replace the warmth and care of our dedicated team members, it provided an interesting and engaging interaction for our residents.

Benetas also launched its Consumer Advisory Body, working with clients, residents and their representatives to enable consumers to provide feedback on their experiences and identify areas for improvement.

Putting the community first

In January, we announced the redevelopment of unused independent living units at St Laurence Court Community in Bendigo. The refurbished units will become homes for older people who can’t afford to buy or rent a house. This is in direct response to the homelessness crisis, which permeates our society, with women 55 and older being the fastest growing cohort of homeless people in Australia. Women in this demographic will be prioritised as part of this important project.

We also invested in many of our existing residential aged care homes this year, with significant upgrades and refurbishments at Corowa Court and Broughton Hall. These works ensure that we will continue to provide comfortable and stylish environments for our residents.



Uplifting team members

Every day, our team members support our customers to deliver a positive, fulfilling experience of ageing where everyone has the opportunity to live their best life. To ensure our team members are motivated, focussed and enjoy their work, we actively seek opportunities to make Benetas a great place to work.

It's important our team members feel proud to work at Benetas. As leaders, it is our responsibility to ensure the organisation is environmentally and socially responsible, and always operating in the best interests of our stakeholders. In May, we released our new Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policy statement.

This document details our commitment to continued, holistic decision making that addresses customer care, social issues, governance and sustainability. This includes driving a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace. It was shared with all our team members, directors, partners and suppliers, for the benefit of our customers and the communities in which we operate.

Our focus on the career development and upskilling of our team members continued this year. This was done via our Benetas Scholarship program, various training programs and our annual leadership forums, which provided an opportunity for our leaders to connect and develop their skills.

Conclusion

When we look at how Benetas uplifted communities this year, there are numerous examples for us to acknowledge, which we detail in this Year in Review.

We are proud of the efforts of our team members, managers and executive leaders at Benetas. They have all worked tirelessly to proudly represent our organisation and core values by delivering excellence in aged care support and services and making our customers' lives better and brighter every day.

Michael Urwin
Chair

Sandra Hills OAM
Chief Executive Officer

Benetas at a glance

Vision

A positive, fulfilling experience of ageing where everyone has the opportunity to live their best life.

Mission

We will provide older Victorians, their families and carers, with high quality services and environments that respect their independence and individuality.

Values

RESPECT: We take the time to understand and value each person and respect their choices.

RESPONSIBILITY: We act with integrity toward our customers, their families and carers, our supporters and the broader Anglican community.

COMMUNITY: We strive to build strong relationships and communities of interest among all stakeholders by working together in an open, involving way.

SPIRIT: We build a positive and energetic culture dedicated to creating fulfilling life experiences for older people.

Who we are

Benetas is a leading not-for-profit provider of residential aged care, retirement living, in-home and community services, respite and allied health in Victoria.

We were founded by the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne in 1948. Today, while our heritage inspires our commitment to provide quality care, we are dedicated to the principle and practice that our services are not limited to those who share our story.

12

residential aged care homes

1,954

employees

489

retirement living residents

1,418

Home Care Package clients

865

residents in our residential homes

8,080

veterans receiving care and support

*All numbers as at 30 June, 2024



Caring residential aged care communities

Our 12 residential aged care homes support older people across Victoria, providing them with a sense of community and a feeling of home. We do this by paying attention to the small details – how our homes look and feel, the community environment we foster and the level of care that goes into important things like meal preparation.



Clarinda resident Pina Antonuccio and granddaughter, Laura.

Throughout the year, our team members worked hard to provide an uplifting atmosphere for residents, through care and a range of activities and services. There were also several inspiring milestone events celebrated, including some very special birthdays.

Refurbishing our homes

During the year, we refurbished apartments at Corowa Court, giving them a new, contemporary look and feel. In October, restoration works began on the heritage protected façade of our Tara building at Broughton Hall. This included repairs and rendering of the façade and parapet and carrying out maintenance of the balcony roof. As our first operating aged care home (opening in 1948) Broughton Hall holds a special place in our history, making the restoration works important to our organisation and the local community.

Farewelling Lovell House

One of the more difficult decisions we made this year occurred in October, when we permanently closed Lovell House. The building's layout and design, as well as a decline in occupancy, meant we could no longer continue to support our residents' needs at this location. Our team members worked closely with Lovell House residents and their families in the lead up to the closure, discussing relocation options and providing them with support. We also recognised the contribution of our Lovell House team, which provided a strong, caring and supportive environment. Residents moved into our homes at Clarinda on the Park, Broughton Hall and The Views at Heidelberg and our team members were also welcomed by nearby homes.

Using technology to uplift

Following a successful trial of Tovertafel technology at our Gisborne Oaks aged care home last year, we rolled out the technology across all residential aged care homes this year. The interactive games have proven very popular with residents, promoting joy and social connection, particularly for those living with dementia. The interaction stimulates cognitive, physical, social and sensory activity, leaving our residents feeling uplifted.

Events that shape our community

We work diligently across our homes to ensure residents enjoy their best lives and are supported to engage with our communities.

At Corowa Court, the resident choir performs in-house concerts for fellow residents, their loved ones and our team members. This year, choir members participated in a 12-week program where they reminisced, enjoyed each other's company and sang their favourite songs. The choir is led by opera singer and music therapist John Carlo Bellotti who enjoys engaging with residents and experiencing the positive impact the music program has on them. The choir's dedicated practice sessions and beautiful performances are a lovely way to showcase resident talent and also create a real sense of community at Corowa Court.

Music opens our minds and hearts and nothing highlighted this more than when our team members at Clarinda on the Park organised for resident Pina Antonuccio's granddaughter Laura to perform a concert. The beautiful performance lifted everyone's spirits and put smiles on their faces, even more so when they witnessed Pina's joy in hearing Laura perform.

Laura is a multi-instrumentalist, who studied Flamenco guitar while living in Spain. She currently plays and sings in restaurants, nursing homes, at community events and private functions while working as a speech pathologist.

Pina had no idea the home had arranged for Laura to sing and when she appeared, Pina burst into tears of joy.

The Clarinda on the Park resident kept repeating "it's my granddaughter, I can't believe it".



OUR FOCUS ON FOOD

Ensuring the food we provide residents is healthy, nutritious and diverse is one of the most important priorities across our 12 aged care homes, where chefs and caterers prepare and serve more than two million meals each year.

With a focus on freshness, all food is made on site in a commercial kitchen. To ensure menus meet resident needs and expectations, we work closely with residents and their families to plan cuisine options, thanks to monthly food focus meetings. These meetings include discussions about resident preferences and dislikes. Suggested alternatives and new options for upcoming menus are also discussed, with menus changed seasonally to avoid repetition. All of our menus are reviewed and approved by a dietician prior to implementation.

We often incorporate traditional and family recipes into our menus to help residents feel more at home and enable them to express themselves and their cultural background.

Our focus on food was highlighted in November when Contemporary Catering won the 2023 National Site Industrial/Institutional Caterer award for the food and services it provides to Dalkeith Gardens residents.

Food brings us together as a community and a quality meal experience is an uplifting one, so this remains an important focus for the Benetas team.

Building strong retirement living communities

Our retirement living communities across Victoria include Dalkeith Heights in Traralgon, Bridgewater Lake in Roxburgh Park and St John's Rise in Mooroolbark. Our residents are aged 55 and older and bring with them a diverse range of interests, backgrounds and a wonderful community spirit.

Uplifting communities with a commitment to affordable housing and more retirement living homes

In January, we expanded our commitment to social justice by announcing a plan to refurbish our independent living units at St Laurence Court Community in Bendigo. The refurbished 38 independent living units will provide affordable housing to people aged 55 years and older who do not have sufficient assets or income to buy or rent a house. Older single women – the fastest growing cohort of homeless Australians – will be prioritised with the first stage of the refurbished units becoming available in early 2025. The refurbishment comprises a complete internal and external makeover, including walls, ceilings, flooring, new kitchen, bathroom, laundry and wardrobes. This project will help meet the increasing demand for affordable housing across Victoria, particularly in regional areas where shortages are felt more acutely.

This year, we also committed to the construction of an additional 36 new retirement living homes as part of the second stage at St John's Rise. Stage 1 was completed in December 2023. The second stage includes a new community centre with indoor pool, fitness centre, wellness suite, hairdressing salon, cinema, library, craft room, billiards, lounge, dining and bar areas.

Competitive and community spirit alive and well

In what will now become an annual tradition, the inaugural Benetas Retirement Living Bowls Challenge kicked off this year at Mooroolbark Bowls Club in May. Nine residents from St John's Rise took the win on home soil against competitors from Bridgewater Lake and Dalkeith Heights. All competitors were cheered on by supporters from their communities who barracked from the sidelines.

Dalkeith Heights held an exhibition showcasing works by resident and professional photographer Norm Neilson in April. More than 50 people attended the exhibition launch in the retirement village's community centre with a number of the 83-year-old's pieces sold the same night.

The floors in the Dalkeith Heights community centre were also resurfaced in early 2024, rejuvenating the space for residents to enjoy activities and events.

Our Bridgewater Lake Retirement Estate had another year full of exciting events, including a lunch to mark its 21st anniversary in April. Celebrations included a Roy Orbison impersonator who was a big hit, and multiple live advertisements broadcast on 3AW radio. Bridgewater Lake's first residents Ken and Mary, who moved into the estate on 23 April 2003 were in attendance. Mary described the Bridgewater Lake community as being like a big family and a marvellous place to live.

The popular annual Benetas Bridgewater Lake Art Show ran in September and included 39 artists displaying more than 250 paintings, transforming the village's community centre into an upscale gallery.

Work was presented by residents and other artists from Glenroy Art Group, Craigieburn Art Group, Plenty Valley Arts and Sunbury Art Society. The show attracted more than 300 visitors. Funds raised from a delicious Devonshire tea event were donated to a local charity.

Bridgewater Lake also hosted AFL legend Kevin Sheedy in September for a special presentation on his more than 60 years in footy. The visit saw Sheedy catch up with Essendon Football Club royalty in resident Greg Sewell who played 171 games for the Bombers between 1952 and 1961. Sewell was Club President during Sheedy's first six years as coach. Fellow resident Val Deed also enjoyed the catch up, having joined Essendon as a volunteer in 1991 before working the phones at the club between 2010 and 2020.



Benetas Retirement Living Bowls Challenge.



Bridgewater Lake residents, Geoff and Maxine Wohlers.



DRIVING A BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY VIBE

Since moving from their family home of 33 years into Bridgewater Lake Estate about two and a half years ago, Geoff and Maxine Wohlers have been struck by the sense of community it provides. "This is home now," said Geoff, "and we love everything about it. From the security we now enjoy in our three-bedroom house and beautiful garden, to the friendship and events, to simple things like neighbours dropping by for a chat, there's nowhere else we'd rather be."

Living at Bridgewater Lake has given Geoff and Maxine more time to pursue their individual interests and hobbies. For Maxine, that's crafts and mosaics, and for Geoff, it's classic car restoration and helping out his nearby daughters with odd jobs that need doing around the house.

"I've been into cars since forever," said Geoff, "and it's still something I enjoy today. I like to keep busy and on Wednesdays I go to the A40 Car Club's North Sunshine factory and catch up with people, tinkering with various engines." Geoff has been a member of the club for more than 30 years and enjoys the monthly group excursions with Maxine and other club members.

"I've still got my 1953 Ford Customline, which I've had for 48 years, there's also my 1954 Austin A40 sedan convertible and my 1961 Ford Zephyr Mark II. I keep the Austin convertible and the Zephyr at the village and they're a great way to connect with people. There are a couple of other car enthusiasts who live here and most people who see the cars stop to have a chat about them, which I really enjoy," Geoff said.

Geoff and Maxine enjoy attending the various events and activities at Bridgewater Lake when it suits them. "We've booked in for an upcoming 50s and 60s night and Maxine went to the seminar on cyber security and how to keep your online information safe," said Geoff. "We really enjoy having activities within the village as options, to do if we want to," he said.

"It's the little things in the way Bridgewater Lake is set up that really adds to the sense of community," said Geoff. "When our friends come and visit us here they are amazed at how great it is. Beautiful people and surrounds, so much to do. I can focus on doing the things I love with the people I love and that's priceless."

Community is our name and focus

It was another busy year for the Community Health and Care (CHC) team, which encompasses our Home Care and Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) services, In Home Nursing Services, Respite Services and Primary Health Care services.



This year, we continued to make progress on several important projects within CHC. These included preparing our business technology to improve operational efficiency. We also scaled our services in preparation for the introduction of the Federal Government's Support at Home program on 1 July 2025. This program will bring together some of the current home care programs with a focus on providing a simpler and fairer system for older people.

Our Customer Journey Improvement Project continued to progress strongly. The project is focused on creating a great experience when welcoming new Home Care clients by using insights to better understand our clients and simplify processes.

In November, our Metro East Community Health and Care and In Home Nursing Service team members relocated from Mitcham to our Blackburn office. The team was welcomed to their new office with an afternoon tea hosted by our Customer Centre team, which is conveniently located next door.

Our In Home Nursing Service team of 30 registered and enrolled nurses continued to deliver services to clients across Melbourne and Macedon Ranges. Services include anything from providing support with client medications, to injections and wound care.

Our Macedon Ranges Health team continued to support the local community, offering a range of services including mental health, physical wellbeing, social support, nutrition and rehabilitation.

Our CHC traineeship program included 10 trainees completing their Certificate III in Individual Support this year – a fantastic achievement. The trainees were well supported by their “buddies” as well as senior team members who gave them great mentoring and guidance throughout their journey.

In July, we celebrated the one-year anniversary of our Gippsland CHSP-funded Warragul Social Support Group. Our team members joined group participants for a special lunch and a wide range of activities, including trivia and other games. The group provides clients with the opportunity to meet, develop friendships and form strong social connections within their local community.

Our Bridgewater Lake Social Support Group, also funded by CHSP, made community connections through outings to local garden centres and nurseries, parks and beaches. The group is available to all residents and participants are made aware of the range of activities a month ahead so they can choose the programs that suit their interests. Residents enjoy outings to museums, wineries, nurseries, gardens and beaches with trips including the Tulip Festival and Werribee Mansion proving popular.



Paul Hagl at Benetas Community Health and Care office in Blackburn.



PAUL HAGL FOUND HIS CARING CAREER IN THE MOST UNLIKELY PLACE

All it took was a cursory look at a home carer's badge in a supermarket aisle for Paul Hagl to realise what he wanted do with the next chapter of his working life. Almost a decade ago, the Ringwood father-of-two was growing tired working for a big corporation, eager to do something that benefitted his community. While shopping for groceries, he noticed the in-home carer badge worn by another shopper, prompting him to learn more about a role he'd never considered. He went on to complete a Certificate III in Individual Support, joining Benetas in late 2017 as an in-home service attendant across Melbourne's east. In the role, he helped clients with showering, shopping, general respite and taking them on social outings.

"I had two young kids at the time and I wanted a job offering the flexibility to still be with them while earning enough money to fix up our house," Paul said.

"What I quickly found was that no two clients were the same. I had to use my imagination to connect with them, whether it be via a joke or looking through a family photo album."

In 2022, Paul applied for a Benetas position as a senior in-home service attendant, which allowed him to split time caring for clients and supervising his colleagues.

"I think it was helpful already knowing the area and the clients because it allowed me to deal with any challenges," he said.

"It still allowed me to get out and care for clients, putting my skills to good use."

Before long, Paul had moved into a workforce coordinator role, based out of Benetas' Blackburn office, responsible for assigning carers to more than 330 clients across the eastern region. The job requires him to deal with unforeseen circumstances and thinking on his feet in order to ensure clients receive the care they require. He said it was a huge advantage being a former carer and understanding the role and the clients.

"Whether it's been caring for clients or coordinating carers, it's all come quite natural," he said. "I always wanted to have a job that didn't feel like a job and for me this is it."



Benetas' Springvale Vietnamese Social Support Group enjoyed a visit to the Tesselaar Tulip Festival in the Dandenong Ranges.



Uplifting spirits with a little respite

Caring for an ageing relative or friend can be tiring and while people who look after their loved ones do so with grace and dedication, occasionally they need a break. This year, we continued to provide peace of mind for carers, by caring for customers in our respite centres and residential aged care homes.

Kilby House and Hurlingham Respite Centre offer community based respite, which gives carers time to recharge, and their loved ones a chance to connect with other people and enjoy activities. The Kilby House team continued to embrace the cultural diversity of our clients through specialised activities and celebrations, catering for cultural traditions that we know bring value to our clients' daily lives.

From day trips to local attractions, our team at the Hurlingham Respite Centre are constantly finding ways to make meaningful connections that uplift our clients. Pilot programs with a local Day Care Centre, raising chickens and taking in local attractions like the beautiful Mornington Peninsula and Vietnamese Temple, ensure that our clients are fulfilled with variety in their days to support their cognitive and physical wellbeing.

Serving and uplifting our customer community

Our relationship with our community of customers is critical and we are always looking for ways to improve their experience. This year was no exception.

Better communication with our customers

We launched our new website in February, increasing general functionality and making it easier for people to find information about aged care and our services. The website was updated following a thorough review and consultation process, including input from team members and customers. It is now easier to navigate and read with more accessible colours, fonts and images, easier to use on mobiles, and includes new pages on our CHSP and Veterans Home Care (VHC) program. New postcode searches help users quickly find out if Benetas offers Home Care services in their area and better functionality helps customers to understand costs associated with aged care.

We continued to leverage our successful Care Comes Naturally campaign to support older Victorians.

Projects such as our website update, brand campaign and other programs benefit from input from our Consumer Advisory Body (CAB). We held our first session in April this year, including clients, residents and their representatives, all of whom provided valuable feedback. A total of 71 people were recruited across residential aged care and home care to engage in the CAB workshops, discussing a range of topics.

Innovation and technology

We partnered with Andromeda Robotics to trial the use of an AI-powered robot called Abi at Colton Close as part of a broader lifestyle program. Abi uses GPT4 artificial intelligence models to recognise residents, answer questions and customise conversations. For one hour a week over four months, Abi and our team members engaged with Colton Close residents and provided some fun and light entertainment including music, trivia and games. While recognising that robots can never replace the heartfelt care and connection our team members provide for residents every day, the trial was very well received and provided entertainment for residents who enjoyed the novelty of interacting with Abi.

Six of our aged care homes participated in a world-first ELUCIDAR study to see if invisible ultraviolet light can decrease the impact and incidence of COVID-19 and flu in aged care settings. More than 60 homes across Melbourne and Geelong are taking part in the 12-month study, which is completely safe for residents, visitors and team members. The purpose-built installation shines invisible, ultraviolet light across the ceiling with the purpose of neutralising particles of airborne viruses in the room.

A new electronic medication management system was also rolled out across our residential aged care homes in April, improving safety and efficiency in the delivery of medications to our residents.

Supporting older Australians through Veterans Home Care, Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing and Pastoral Care

Our focus on tailoring services to specialist communities within our broader customer group continued this year.

Our Veterans Home Care (VHC) team makes about 240 phone calls to veterans every day and receives more than 140 calls from service providers, veterans and their families. The phone calls, which range from five to 45 minutes long, are an important way we connect with and support this community. Our highly skilled team provides phone-based assessment services and is responsible for coordinating service delivery and allocation for other providers. The team also helps veterans navigate the systems they need to, facilitating service access and information for more than 8,500 clients in Victoria and Queensland.

The Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing (The Centre), supported by Benetas, promotes culturally inclusive services through different training offerings, including the Diversity Mentoring program, regional training and webinars. In December, The Centre held an industry breakfast at the Museum of Chinese Australian History, celebrating achievements and promoting culturally inclusive aged care. Attendees from across the



sector and broader community learnt about culturally appropriate food initiatives in aged care, cultural and linguistic diversity, and The Centre's popular One Size Does Not Fit All podcast series.

This year, The Centre also released its Exploring the Needs of Aged Care Providers in Regional Victoria report. The report was launched as part of The Centre's Interactive Webinar Series, which aims to equip aged care employees with knowledge and skills to better serve diverse older people, their families, carers and advocates. Key findings included the need for more resources, training and education being needed to support culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) seniors to navigate and access aged care services, particularly for those based regionally.

The Centre also developed communication cards with phonetics for use across the sector. The cards cover

basic activities, situations and concepts in different languages, to make communication easier for CALD clients and their carers. They come in 71 languages and address topics including food, personal care, feelings, mobility aids and medical issues.

The Pastoral Care service is part of a broader strategy that meets the needs of the whole person. The cultural, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of our clients, families and team members are central to the ethos and mission of Benetas. Our Pastoral Care team provides a valuable service across our communities, to all residents and their families, often at times when they require additional support following life changes or adjustments. We first offered pastoral care as a service in 2008 with two practitioners. There is currently a team of nine practitioners, operating a non-denominational and inclusive service, respectful of and sensitive to the client's beliefs, philosophy of life and where they find meaning.

Working together

Benetas team members represent our organisation, values and uplift our customers across our communities every day. Benetas celebrates our team members and supports their career growth and learning, ensuring the contribution they make is recognised.

Our team members are the heartbeat of our organisation, working diligently and with compassion and care to bring to life the services we offer our customers.

This year, we introduced BCareers, a new recruitment and on-boarding system, delivering an outstanding recruitment experience for candidates and hiring managers.

Diversity and inclusiveness are a way of life at Benetas and this year we co-signed the Joint Statement between LGBTIQ+ Health Australia and Australia's aged care sector. The statement was developed by LGBTIQ+ Health Australia in partnership with the Aged and Community Care Providers Association to promote inclusion across the aged care sector.

Growing, learning, leading and....

Our leadership forums provided opportunities for leaders to connect, share and learn. Across multiple forums, attendees enhanced leadership capability, including psychological safety, coaching and performance management and developed new skills in human-centred design. These forums also provide an opportunity to share and report on our organisational strategies.

Five Benetas team members received up to \$6,000 through our scholarship program to contribute towards the cost of their studies in nursing, wound care, dementia care, palliative care or to support career aspirations. Scholarship funds can be allocated towards tuition fees and essential materials for a university, TAFE or other accredited training program.

Team members also took advantage of our leave purchase program this year, which allows them to purchase an additional two or four weeks of leave per annum, allowing for greater workplace flexibility.

....listening

Every two years, we run our employee engagement survey and this year 76 per cent of our employees rated Benetas as a "Truly Great Place to Work". This compares to 64 per cent across aged care services generally.

The Your Voice Matters survey asks our team members to anonymously share feedback on their experience of working at Benetas. We have established a cross-business workforce management committee to follow up and implement initiatives suggested by team members via the survey.

Training and development

Redesigned in 2024, Benetas implemented monthly Clinical Education Forums, inclusive of all community and residential services clinicians. Registered nurses, enrolled nurses and nursing students were invited to attend forums that encompass all day workshops, typically covering three or four topics, as well as facilitated scenarios and collaborative problem solving. Topics and areas of focus included the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards, falls management and prevention, and nutrition. The Clinical Education Forum cohort also had the opportunity to participate in a training trial for 'D-Esc', a Dementia Australia Virtual Reality training program. D-Esc provides awareness and education on recognising physical and emotional signs and de-escalating behaviours of people living with dementia.

This year, we expanded our BestLife Model of Care program to improve the capability of team members caring for customers living with dementia. More than 90 team members have now completed the BestLife Model of Care education, training and mentoring, with notable improvements in care delivery.

In another important step, we committed to recruit a Palliative Care Specialist to drive education, training and support in best-practice palliative care for retirement living, community care and residential services.

Recognising our dedicated, long serving team members

In August, we recognised and celebrated the amazing contribution of all our team members as part of Aged Care Employee Day. In addition to running our annual awards process, each site was invited to hold its own celebrations, whether that be with a morning tea or special activity.



Meals on Wheels volunteer Peter.

MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERS COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Our Meals on Wheels volunteers provide a meal delivery service to people aged 65 and older across the Morwell and Traralgon communities.

These volunteers come from a range of backgrounds and ages and from Monday to Friday they deliver a three-course meal or a two-main meal option for clients.

The Meals on Wheels program has more than 30 volunteers and seven community groups delivering food each week, covering more than 980km to deliver a week's worth of meals. The team provides more than 1,400 individual items for 120-plus meal recipients. Peter has been volunteering with Gippsland Meals on Wheels for nearly 15 years since he retired in 2010. Along with the meals, Peter delivers joy, often lifting people's spirits with his humour. Peter said: "I cherish the genuine connections I make as part of my volunteering work, it makes my day."

This year, we received 94 nominations as part of the peer-nominated process, with team members honoured across a range of categories.

Being recognised for a job well done over a long period of time is important to our organisation and team. In November, we celebrated team members at our annual Employee Long Service event. Team members who have devoted 10, 15, 20 and 30 years to Benetas were celebrated for their contribution to the organisation and our customers. A total of 37 team members marked 10 years, 21 celebrated 15 years, six were recognised for 20 years and Corowa Court enrolled nurse Carmel Abels was highlighted for an astonishing 30 years of service.

Volunteers uplifting in the community

Benetas' dedicated group of volunteers donate their time across our organisation to lift the spirits of everyone they support. Our amazing volunteers engage with residents and clients, deliver Meals on Wheels, staff two opportunity shops and provide assistance to exercise programs and social support groups.

With a theme of "Something for Everyone" this year's National Volunteer Week in May focused on the diverse roles our volunteers play. Many Benetas locations hosted celebrations in recognition of, and to say thank you to, their volunteers.



Berta is a dedicated volunteer at our St George's home and engages with residents through various activities such as knitting, crafts and dancing.



Colton Close Clinical Services Manager, Ambily Varghese, supporting team members, residents and families.



A PASSION TO UPLIFT, GROW AND IMPROVE

The community atmosphere at our Colton Close residential aged care home in Glenroy is highly valued by our team members and residents. Clinical Services Manager Ambily Varghese says connecting with residents and families while always looking for ways to improve, is what fuels her passion for her work.

Ambily has been in this role for the past two and a half years, supporting team members, residents and their families, focusing on the clinical aspects of resident care. Ambily commenced her nursing career in hospitals in both Australia and India, but says she loves the variety aged care provides.

"I enjoy building relationships with our residents, spending time with them and making sure they are happy and getting the support they need," said Ambily.

"I've been very lucky at Benetas to undertake various training and professional development opportunities, including attending the monthly clinical forum which focuses on improving skills and knowledge and ensuring we are up to date with current standards," she said.

Recently, Ambily represented Benetas as one of a few Victorian-based aged care providers who participated in Queensland University of Technology's (QUT) End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC) project. The year-long project sought to better understand clinical progression in ageing Australians and how aged care providers can best deliver quality services.

"The project was extremely valuable, and it was a privilege to be part of," said Ambily. "Sharing the data and learnings with my colleagues means we can continue to improve how we support our residents and their families."

"It's important for me and my team to continue to learn and grow so we can provide the best care for our residents," said Ambily. "Pursuing learning is really important in helping to develop and ensure we provide evidence-based care."

Ambily was also featured in a Benetas video to mark International Nurses Day, which emphasised how proud she was to represent nursing.

"I am lucky to work with an amazing team and in an environment, which supports me to always improve. It was an honour to join some of my Benetas nursing colleagues and describe the passion we feel working in this industry and helping our residents every day," she said.

Recognising our communities

NAIDOC Week

This year's NAIDOC Week theme was "For Our Elders", paying respect to the histories, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. To mark NAIDOC Week, the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing organised a cultural awareness walk. Led by Uncle Shane Charles, the walk along Birrarung healing sites also included a Welcome to Country and a didgeridoo performance.



NAIDOC Week

Wear it Purple Day

In August, we celebrated Wear It Purple Day, with this year's theme of "Write Your Story", giving voice to LGBTQIA+ youth and highlighting the importance of personal expression and individuality. Creating an environment where team members, customers and their families can be their authentic selves every day is a non-negotiable at Benetas.



Wear it Purple Day

R U OK? Day

R U OK? Day, held in September, raised awareness of mental wellbeing and the importance of meaningful conversations. A number of our sites held events to encourage each other to create meaningful connections and continue to foster a safe and supportive work environment.



R U OK? Day

International Women's Day

This year's United Nations International Women's Day (IWD) theme was "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" a focus that resonated strongly across our organisation, which comprises an 83.7 per cent female workforce. To support women within our organisation, we pay superannuation contributions on paid parental leave and focus on gender pay equity with a gender pay gap of -0.6 per cent. We also invest in professional training and development programs. Our St George's team held an event to mark IWD with residents sharing stories about what the day means to them. Our Customer Centre and Veterans Home Care teams marked the day by donating goods to a charity that supports women and children impacted by domestic violence.

International Nurses Day

International Nurses Day gives us the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the amazing contribution of our nurses. Nurses play a vital role in caring for our residents and clients and we value their dedication, compassion, and commitment. We marked the day by asking nurses from across Benetas to share what they enjoyed most about their roles, putting their stories together in a beautiful video.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

In March, we acknowledged International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD). Acknowledging IDERD encourages proactive, open discussions about racism and how to tackle and prevent it. Team members continued their multicultural awareness journey and anti-racism ally-ship through the promotion of opportunities, initiatives, resources and tools via the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing.

Teams and residents at several of our locations, including Clarinda on the Park and St Paul's Terrace, marked the day by enjoying traditional foods, outfits and cultural dancing. In our Support Office, team members acknowledged IDERD with an education session and culturally themed afternoon tea.

Our Board of Directors



Michael Urwin

Appointed to the Board in September 2016
Appointed as Chairman in December 2018

B.A. (Hons), Dip.Ed (Melb), FACE

Former Brighton Grammar School Headmaster Michael Urwin is an active member of the Anglican Church, having been a member of the Diocese of Melbourne Archbishop Council. He has served as the Vicar's Warden at his local parish, St Silas in Albert Park. He has also served as the Registrar of the Diocese.

During his time as Headmaster at BGS, Michael filled a number of external roles including Chair of the Associated Public Schools, Chair of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Heads of Independent Schools Association and Trustee of the International Boys Schools Coalition.

To contribute wherever he can, Michael understands it continues to be a demanding time to be involved in aged care and wishes to support Benetas to be the best aged care provider possible.

Michael believes in the power of strong, ethical leadership on younger professionals and the importance of creating a culture that allows all staff to be valued and developed. Michael also serves as Chair of the Board of Christ Church Grammar School.



Sean Balding

Appointed to the Board in October 2017

B.Comm, GICD

Sean Balding is an executive who brings significant experience across finance, risk management, M&A and organisational management to the boardroom. He is currently Chief Operating Officer at Planning and Property Partners, a boutique town planning and legal advisory firm.

Prior to that he was the Chief Executive Officer of insurer Eric Insurance and was a Partner at EY where he worked across audit, risk management and transaction advisory services. In his executive career he has also served as Chief Financial Officer.

He has more than 30 years of experience across multiple industries and has worked in highly regulated enterprises.

Sean brings a focus on strategy, balance sheet management, continuous improvement, digital transformation and information security to the Benetas Finance and Risk Management Committee of which he is Chair.

Sean is passionate about ensuring organisations align purpose with strategy. He looks forward to continuing to support the Benetas executive team as they implement the organisation's strategy.



Helen Bloustein

Appointed to the Board in June 2017

B.Comm, Cert. Actuarial Techniques (IFoA), MAICD

Helen Bloustein brings to Benetas broad experience in investment management, superannuation and best-practice approaches to sustainability management and reporting.

She has held positions as a fund manager and Australian equities investment analyst at global Investment Management firms and been a member of the executive management team at a leading Superannuation Fund.

Helen has also had roles in the Australian and Victorian Public Service including time project managing the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) in Australasia.

She was seconded to UNEP FI's head office in Geneva and worked with international financial institutions to integrate environmental, social and governance practices into their business processes.

As Chair of the Investment and Funds Management Committee, Helen is proud to contribute to Benetas and to support the organisation in its provision of quality care to older Victorians.



Professor Deirdre Fetherstonhaugh

Appointed to the Board in December 2016

Dip Appl Sci (Nursing); Renal Cert, BA, MA,; PhD, RN

Professor Deirdre Fetherstonhaugh is the Director of the Australian Centre for Evidence Based Aged Care (ACEBAC) at La Trobe University.

Deirdre's research focuses on the translation of research evidence into aged care practice and the ethical implications of clinical practice. It also looks at decision-making for people with chronic conditions such as dementia or renal failure, sexuality and dementia, and measuring performance and clinical risk in residential aged care.

She is also currently involved in developing and delivering education and training to the aged care sector. Deirdre is dedicated to raising the profile of care staff in residential aged care, strongly believing that they deserve greater recognition and understanding of the work they do.

With many years of experience in the aged care sector, Deirdre brings invaluable research skills and an understanding of the environment of aged care, including quality and safety, to the Benetas Board.

Throughout her life, Deirdre has always been grateful for the opportunity to keep learning. She recommends always looking for opportunity and that it's more about what you can do, not what you can't do.



Associate Professor Michael Murray AM

Appointed to the Board in August 2016

MB, BS, MPH, FRACP, AFRACMA, FAAG, FANZSGM, Clinical Associate Professor

Associate Professor Michael Murray has a broad range of management, clinical and clinical teaching experience in the area of aged care.

Michael is the Divisional Medical Director of Continuing Care and Director of Geriatric Medicine, Austin Health.

With almost 30 years' involvement in geriatric care, Michael's career highlights include extensive research in continence, public health, and public policy, as well as working in education and service development.

He was the interim Chief Clinical Advisor to the first Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner from its inception, and was the Geriatrician appointed to the COVID-19 Residential Aged Care response – Victorian Aged Care Response Centre (VACRC).

Michael is currently a member of the Aged Care Advisory group to AHPPC, and more recently appointed as member of the National Aged Care Advisory Council.

He holds several board and committee positions with a variety of health and educational institutions and is the president of the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) and the immediate past president of the Continence Foundation of Australia, among others.

As a former Head Scout, Michael lives by the words 'Good, better, best. Never let it rest, till your good is better and your better is the best.'



Julia Pryor

Appointed to the Board in February 2019

LLB, BA (History&Classics), ExecMA (Leadership&Mgt), MAICD

Julia Pryor is presently the Chief Risk Officer, Wealth at AMP (Australia and New Zealand), and brings more than 20 years' experience in governance, risk and compliance to her role on the Benetas Board.

Julia has expertise in areas of financial and corporate governance, as well as a tactical and pragmatic approach to overcoming obstacles. Julia is passionate about the superannuation outcomes of all Australians.

She has a strong customer focused approach which fits in well with the organisation's Next Generation Strategy.

With a proven track record in leading complex change management, Julia is well equipped to be a part of the future direction of aged care for Benetas and the broader aged care sector.

She endeavours to apply the motto 'have courage and be kind' to everything she does in life.

Outgoing Board members



Francis Warner

Appointed to the Board in December 2023

FCA; MAICD; MICDA; B.Bus.

Francis has diverse experience in finance, risk management, and governance gained through key roles in public practice, corporate sector, international capacity development, and not-for profit organisations.

Currently engaged as an interim finance executive with an entity focused on post-traumatic mental health and connected to the University of Melbourne, Francis is also serving as a director and treasurer of a franchised community bank.

In recent years he has had personal experience with residential aged care through managing the financial affairs of family members affected by dementia.

Francis is actively involved in the Anglican Parish of the Parks congregation and also Rotary as Club Treasurer. Francis is a member of the Board's Finance, Audit & Risk Committee.



Susan Campbell

Appointed to the Board in December 2014
Retired in December 2023

FCCA, MAICD, MBA, BCom, GradDip (SIA),
Cert IV TAA

Susan Campbell brought a range of skills to Benetas in risk and finance, and many years of experience in governance, having previously been a long serving board member with Heritage Bank. Her consulting company was also active in training in risk and finance for financial services companies.

Her previous employment has included working with global banks in Melbourne and London, corporate treasuries, CPA Australia and as a senior lecturer at RMIT University and La Trobe Graduate School. In addition, Susan is also author of a number of books on the topic of risk and is a regular contributor of articles to professional magazines.

She sincerely hopes that while the staff have done an amazing job, Benetas will continue to build an even better aged care system and a stronger organisation. Susan was a member of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, and the Investment & Funds Management Committee.



Deborah Law

Appointed to the Board in July 2016
Resigned in May 2024

MPolAdmin, GradDipBus (Health Admin),
DipPhysio

Deborah Law is a retired specialist in health service and workforce reform and policy, focusing her work on strengthening the interface between acute health, primary health and community care and aged care.

She has also worked on numerous committees at a state and national level, including the promotion of primary health care development, improving aged care, and better chronic disease management and prevention.

With a strong focus on quality systems, Deborah helped Benetas work towards being even more inclusive of diverse opinion and backgrounds. Deborah is excited by the approaches to care that Benetas is taking.

She believes that Benetas is a vibrant and energetic organisation that can continue to adapt future models of aged care for the benefit of all older generations.

Deborah feels she has been fortunate to have worked with a number of people throughout her career, who have been fearless, compassionate and courageous, with a high degree of emotional intelligence.

It is these attributes that she has tried to emulate and encourages young professionals to strive for something similar and seek out every opportunity where they present themselves.



Reverend Helen Phillips

Appointed to the Board in June 2017
Resigned in June 2024

BTheol, DipMin, CertBowenFamSystems

The Reverend Helen Phillips has brought more than 25 years of experience in governance, management, training and leadership in the Anglican Church and educational institutions in both Victoria and Queensland.

She is currently the Flourishing Communities Facilitator for the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide.

Helen is passionate about training and empowering others to reach their God-given potential, especially as leaders, and loves to play a part in shaping people and organisations for a healthy and resilient future.

Helen's contributions to the Anglican community are many and varied, and her extensive understanding of spirituality and faith in practice played a key role in Benetas' vision to deliver meaningful services to older people, regardless of background.

With a strong connection to the values of Benetas' Anglican foundations, Helen has helped to sharpen the organisation's strategic focus within the changing context of aged care.



Our Executive Team



Sandra Hills OAM

Chief Executive Officer

MBA, GDipHumanServMgt,
GCertHlthServR&E, BA (Psych and Soc)

Sandra Hills joined Benetas in 2009 with career experience in local and state government and the not-for-profit sector and has qualifications spanning: nursing, psychology, research and business management.

Sandra was acknowledged for her service to aged care and the advancement of women in the workplace with a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division, in the 2017 Queen's Birthday Honour List.

She has published works on social isolation, consumer engagement, promotion of good ageing and end-of-life experience, quality and best practice and future reform agenda.

As a future-focused CEO, Sandra understands that she has a clear role in providing strong leadership for the organisation, as well as contributing her knowledge to policy development in creating sustainable aged care services across Victoria.

She wants to give older people a stronger voice and feels they should be valued for their past and current contributions. Sandra has had a number of mentors across her career but ultimately believes that 'you are in the driver's seat of your career.'

Her advice to young professionals is not to be too concerned with status but be attuned to what you are passionate about and what you are good at.

Sandra continues to work in leadership roles within the industry including her positions as a Director of Anglicare Australia and a member of the National Aged Care Alliance. She is a member of the ACCPA (VIC) Members Advisory Committee, a member of Chief Executive Women and a Director of the Aged Care Workforce Industry Council.



Campbell Richards

Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary

BE (Civil) (Comm), CA

Campbell (Cam) Richards joined Benetas in 2022, having had a successful career spanning 17 years in public health, government, not-for-profit and professional services, including six years at KPMG.

Cam has managed broad portfolios such as investment, financial control, commercial and government funding, as well as corporate governance. Cam joined Benetas from Australian Red Cross Lifeblood where he spent the previous 10 years of his career. There he held roles, including Director of Strategy, Government Relations and Projects and various Finance roles including Capital and Strategic Investments, and Financial Controller.

Cam holds a Bachelor's degree in Engineering (Civil) and Commerce (Accounting). He is a qualified Chartered Accountant and has also completed the Company Directors Course certification with the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).

Cam is passionate about helping Benetas grow, providing strong Finance leadership as we continue to deliver sustainable aged care services across Victoria.



Helen Kemp

General Manager,
Community Health and Care

BA, MBA

Helen is a leading health and aged care practitioner with more than 20 years' experience spanning patient facing, management consulting and executive roles.

Appointed in 2020 as General Manager of Community Health and Care for Benetas, Helen oversees the organisation's essential home care and community health programs for people across Victoria.

Drawing on her expertise in workforce management and customer-centred care, she is driving forward the division's transformation to deliver an exceptional care experience for every person it serves. Prior to Benetas, Helen was in management consulting for 15 years with expertise in recruitment and workforce solutions for Australia's disability and aged care sectors.

She has further headed the People and Culture function at a large acute public health provider, performed in executive roles at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and Health Care Australia. She has been a CEO of two start-up organisations, both of which exited successfully through trade sales.

Helen holds an MBA from the University of Melbourne's Business School and a BA from the University of Queensland. She has also trained as a nurse. She further lends her voice to effective leadership and change management in Australia's care industries. This ensures consumers receive the quality of care that they need and deserve through passionate advocacy for employee development.



Verity Leith

General Manager, Residential Services

RN (Certificate General Nursing), Critical Care Nursing Certificate, BEd, GAICD

Verity joined Benetas in September 2019, with extensive experience within the aged care sector since 2000.

She has held a variety of roles including; aged care quality assessor, quality business partner and site manager. Verity has also held executive management roles within the industry, including previous positions at Estia Health and BlueCross as regional and executive manager respectively.

Verity successfully completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course in May 2022. She is committed to building and maintaining high-performance teams, enjoys meeting her customer-facing teams, and interacting with residents and their families.

She is eager to help Benetas achieve its Next Generation Strategy through strong business drivers with successful outputs. Verity's advice is to back yourself up as a professional and say 'yes' to challenges or opportunities, as you never know where they may lead.

Verity encourages young women to seek inspiration from other women who have successfully contributed and held leadership roles. In the future, Verity is looking to explore board opportunities to further her already sterling career.



Sarah McInerney

General Manager, Quality, Risk and Safeguarding

BComm/Law, Bpharm

Sarah joined Benetas in 2021 and has been instrumental in strengthening our quality, risk, and safeguarding initiatives.

With extensive experience across aged care, community, and health services, she brings both expertise and a genuine commitment to her role.

Specialising in predictive risk modelling and business resilience, Sarah's forward-thinking approach helps us navigate the complexities of the sector and adapt to its evolving regulations.

Her unique combination of legal and clinical qualifications enhances our ability to meet both regulatory and clinical governance responsibilities, while championing a culture of safeguarding where care remains meaningful and safe.



John Staines

Chief Information Officer

Grad. Dip. Computing and B.Sc (Applied Physics)

John joined Benetas in 2022 as Chief Information Officer, with extensive experience working in the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors.

Commencing his career as a software developer, his progression to leadership roles cemented his passion for developing engaged, high-performing technology teams, in turn leveraging contemporary and emerging digital solutions with which to enable high-performing organisations.

John takes an evidence-based approach to business technology transformational programs, and has accreditations in Enterprise Architecture and Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) to Expert level V1-V4.

John's experience across a broad range of industries globally has equipped him with capabilities to advocate and apply technical solutions to business objectives in the most effective manner, equipping organisations in the best stead for today and into the future.

His advice to young professionals is to seek out wisdom, learn to make evidence-based decisions the best way they can and learn positively from mistakes, while always looking to focus their talent in improving the lives and sustainability of all.



Bruce Webb

General Manager, Strategy, Infrastructure and Housing

BComm, MBA

Bruce has been with Benetas since 2011 and has been General Manager of Strategy, Infrastructure and Housing since August 2019.

He was previously Business Development Manager, playing an integral role in Benetas' two major amalgamations with Dalkeith Heights and Macedon Ranges Health.

Bruce has previously held a range of senior analyst and development management positions in the investment, property and healthcare sectors.

Bruce is focused and eager to oversee the successful delivery of Benetas' Communities of Choice strategic outcome. This aims to develop integrated communities that will offer a choice of accommodation, care and services, of which there are a number of plans underway.

He is passionate about strategy and is a firm believer in having an inquisitive mind. Bruce regards having personal values that align with those of the organisation as a key factor to success.



Alicia Goddard

General Manager, People, Culture and Diversity

BAB (Bus, HR), GDip ER/IR, GCert Health Systems, MBA

Alicia joined Benetas in January 2023 with more than 20 years' experience in health, government and education industries, across not-for-profit and for-profit organisations.

She has experience across strategy, governance and risk management and a strong appreciation for the role of leadership and culture in improving organisational performance.

Her highly collaborative approach has brought together partnerships within public health services to deliver transformation change in workforce practices and clinical operating models.

Alicia has experience leading people and culture teams across strategic HR, business partnering, organisational development, change management, culture transformation, occupational health, safety and wellbeing and diversity.

Her approach to building and coaching others to develop and deliver strategy has resulted in teams being awarded recognition through the Australian HR Institute and Institute of Public Administration.

Alicia's focus is on building an employee experience that fosters relationships and creates strong, collaborative communities. With the people, culture and diversity team, her ambition is to provide services through shared values and ensure Benetas people provide older persons in our community with the opportunity to live their best life.



Elyssia Clark

General Manager, Customer, Insights and Marketing

BA(Psy)(Media), PG Dip (App. Science), MA (Str Marketing)

Elyssia was appointed in October 2022, bringing a wealth of knowledge in data, customer experience and marketing, with deep expertise in using insights and analytics to design and deliver better customer experiences.

Building her background in research at local and overseas research agencies, Elyssia then held several senior leadership roles at Mercer, responsible for Insights and Analytics, Marketing and Customer Experience teams.

Prior to Benetas, Elyssia spent five years leading the Customer Insights and Strategy team at SEEK. She introduced a real-time Voice of the Customer capability, streamlining feedback and focusing resources on priority areas that had the greatest customer impact.

Elyssia is also an elected Director of the Research Society Board, a Co-Chair of the CX Collective, a Customer Insights Symposium Advisory board member and also a judge of the annual Insights Award category.

She holds a Masters in Strategic Marketing, a Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Science (Social Statistics) and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Media.

Meetings attended by Directors

Financial year ending 30 June 2024

	Directors meetings		Quality and Compliance Committee	Financial Audit and Risk Management Committee	Investment Funds Management Committee	Governance Committee
	Meetings held		Meetings held (4)	Meetings held (11)	Meetings held (6)	Meetings held (3)
	Eligible	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended

Directors

Michael Urwin	8	8	2	10	4	3
Susan Campbell	3	3	-	4	2	-
Deborah Law	9	9	3	-	-	2
A/Prof Michael Murray AM	10	9	3	-	-	-
Prof Deirdre Fetherstonhaugh	9	8	4	-	-	-
The Reverend Helen Phillips	9	5	3	-	-	2
Helen Bloustein	10	9	-	-	6	-
Sean Balding	10	9	-	11	-	-
Julia Pryor	10	10	-	10	3	-
Francis Warner	5	5	-	5	-	-

External Advisors

Dr Graeme Blackman AO	-	-	-	6	-	1
Keith Dickie	-	-	-	-	5	-
Elizabeth Loftus	-	-	-	-	5	-
Rev Dr Robert Mitchell AM	-	-	-	-	-	3
Dr Therese Riley	-	3	-	-	-	-
James Smith	-	-	-	-	5	-
Claire Richards	-	-	-	3	-	-
Lisa Somerville	-	-	3	-	-	-

Non-Directors

Sandra Hills OAM	-	10	4	11	5	3
Campbell Richards	-	9	-	11	6	3

Please note:

- Leave of absence was approved by the Board for Michael Urwin (2), Susan Campbell (2), A/Prof Deirdre Fetherstonhaugh (1), and The Reverend Helen Phillips (1) during the year.
- Susan Campbell retired as a Director on 8th December 2023.
- Deborah Law resigned as a Director on 6th May 2024.
- The Reverend Helen Phillips resigned as a Director on 3rd June 2024.
- Francis Warner was appointed as a Director on 4th December 2023.
- Julia Pryor was appointed to the Investment & Funds Management Committee on 14th February 2024.
- Dr Graeme Blackman AO retired as an External Advisor on 27th November 2023.
- Claire Richards was appointed as an External Advisor on 4th March 2024.

Financial summary

Benetas achieved an operating surplus of **\$6.4m** (2023: operating deficit of \$5.1m) for the year ending 30 June 2024. While some improvement was observed in operating conditions, the favourable operating result was aided by \$4.6m in COVID grant income that related largely to outbreaks occurring in prior years.

The result also reflects the final amortisation of bed licences of **\$7.9m**. The year ended 30 June 2024 is the final year of amortisation with all licences now having a carrying value of nil.

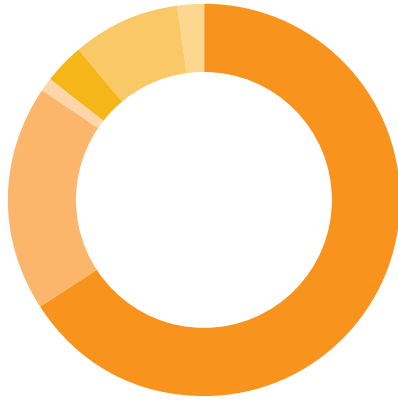
After statutory accounting adjustments, the company recorded a final net deficit of **\$0.5m** (2023: final deficit of \$0.8m), which reflected fluctuations in financial markets arising from our investment portfolios as well as fair value increments arising from our investment properties, both existing and those under development. Of note within these movements were:

- **\$1.2m** in fair value gains relating to managed fund investments; and
- **\$8.2m** in net fair value decrements following the annual valuation of retirement village investment properties and associated lease liabilities (2023: increments of \$4.2m). These reflect increases in property prices and stage of completion of projects reflecting project risk and deferral of development margin.

The total comprehensive income result was **\$3.3m**, which reflects a further **\$3.8m** in fair value gains in the investment portfolio where fair value movements are recognised directly to equity. This was a decline on the prior year of \$8.1m and reflects market prices of Australian and International equity prices.

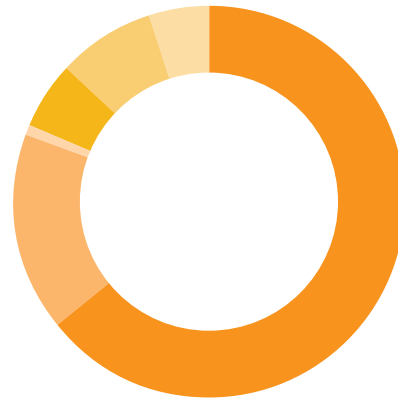
The term “social dividend” can be understood as Benetas undertakes each year to make a “social dividend” contribution from its operational surplus. Such activities include funding pastoral care services and research and advocacy which are not funded under the Aged Care Act, providing affordable housing for older people, funding our “One Wish” program, “Hardship” fund and “Given the Chance” program. Funding for all these activities continues and last reached in excess of **\$0.6m**. Benetas also cares for a large number of “supported” residents in our residential care services. The average supported ratio throughout 2023-24 was 41%. Benetas is excited to be developing St Laurence Court Community to establish affordable housing for the local Bendigo community and further enhance its social dividend contribution.

**Summary of Income
by service type 2024**



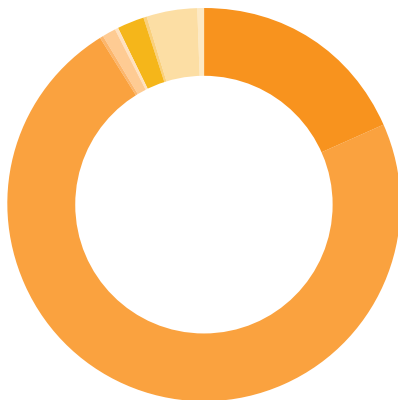
- Residential (65.8%)
- Home Care (18.6%)
- Day Centres (1.2%)
- Housing (3.2%)
- Investments (9.0%)
- Other (2.1%)

**Summary of Expenditure
by service type 2024**



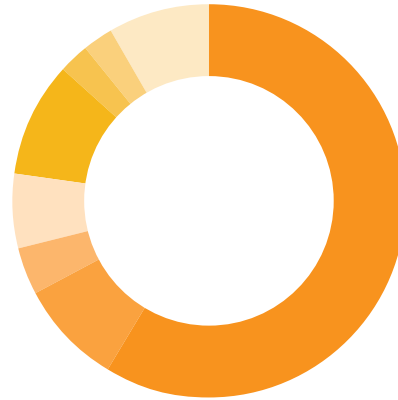
- Residential (64.2%)
- Home Care (16.5%)
- Day Centres (0.9%)
- Housing (5.5%)
- Investments (8.0%)
- Other (4.9%)

Income by source



- Client service income (18.4%)
- Government subsidy (72.8%)
- Donations (0.1%)
- Dividends received (1.2%)
- Other income (0.4%)
- Interest received (2.2%)
- Gain on disposal (0.1%)
- Lease income (4.4%)
- Rental income (0.3%)

Expenses by source



- Employee benefits expenses (58.8%)
- Depreciation and amortisation (8.5%)
- Repairs and maintenance (3.8%)
- Rental expense (0.2%)
- Catering expense (6.0%)
- Client specific costs (9.4%)
- Cleaning expenses (2.6%)
- Utilities, rates and insurance (2.3%)
- Interest paid (0.2%)
- Other expenses (8.1%)

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 (\$'000's)	2023 (\$'000's)
REVENUE		
Revenue	207,430	169,176
Other income	9,460	7,789
Total revenue and income	216,890	176,965
EXPENSES		
Employee expense	(123,746)	(101,068)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(17,973)	(18,456)
Client specific expense	(19,762)	(17,684)
Catering expense	(12,732)	(11,926)
Cleaning expense	(5,529)	(5,390)
Repairs, maintenance and vehicle running expense	(8,056)	(7,632)
Rental expense	(356)	(260)
Utilities, rates and insurance expense	(4,811)	(4,800)
Other expenses	(7,369)	(6,480)
Interest expenses	(10,121)	(8,346)
Operating surplus / (deficit)	6,435	(5,077)
Fair value of investment property	(3,067)	13,920
Fair value of lease liabilities	(5,102)	(9,680)
Fair value of financial assets	1,237	866
Impairment of bed licences	-	(850)
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	(497)	(821)
Other comprehensive income		
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss		
Fair value movement of investments (financial assets)	3,818	8,142
Other comprehensive income for the year	3,818	8,142
Total comprehensive income for the year	3,321	7,321

Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS	2024 (\$'000's)	2023 (\$'000's)
Cash and cash equivalents	46,414	32,550
Accounts receivable and other debtors	13,827	13,743
Financial assets	68,935	58,785
Total current assets	129,176	105,078

NON-CURRENT ASSETS

Financial assets	98,934	88,627
Property, plant and equipment	184,644	187,678
Right-of-use assets	3,298	3,898
Intangibles	128	8,104
Investment properties	168,950	156,137
Total non-current assets	455,954	444,444

Total assets	585,130	549,522
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LIABILITIES

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and other payables	20,387	18,407
Client equity contributions, RADs, accommodation bonds and leases	319,051	293,337
Lease liabilities	943	817
Employee provisions	16,854	12,238
Total current liabilities	357,235	324,799

NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES

Lease liabilities	2,899	3,609
Employee provisions	3,002	2,441
Total non-current liabilities	5,901	6,050

Total liabilities	363,136	330,849
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Net assets	221,994	218,673
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EQUITY

Retained earnings	212,526	211,150
Other contributed equity	3,793	3,793
Reserves	5,675	3,730
Total equity	221,994	218,673

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2024

	Other Contributed Equity \$'000's	Major Maintenance Fund \$'000's	Investment Revaluation Reserve \$'000's	Retained Earnings \$'000's	Total Equity \$'000's
Balance at 1 July 2022	3,793	2,226	(6,437)	211,770	211,352
Deficit for the year	-	-	-	(821)	(821)
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-	8,142	-	8,142
Total comprehensive (loss)/ income for the year	-	-	8,142	(821)	7,321
Transactions with Members in their capacity as Members:					
Major maintenance fund provision	-	297	-	(297)	-
Realised gain on disposal of investments	-	-	(498)	498	-
Balance at 30 June 2023	3,793	2,523	1,207	211,150	218,673
	Other Contributed Equity \$'000's	Major Maintenance Fund \$'000's	Investment Revaluation Reserve \$'000's	Retained Earnings \$'000's	Total Equity \$'000's
Balance at 1 July 2023	3,793	2,523	1,207	211,150	218,673
Surplus for the year	-	-	-	(497)	(497)
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-	3,818	-	3,818
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	-	3,818	(497)	3,321
Transactions with Members in their capacity as Members:					
Major maintenance fund provision	-	213	-	(213)	-
Realised gain on disposal of investments	-	-	(2,086)	2,086	-
Balance at 30 June 2024	3,793	2,736	2,939	212,526	221,994

Statement of cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 (\$'000's)	2023 (\$'000's)
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Commonwealth, State and Local Government grants and client income	198,282	151,787
Receipts from donations, bequests and raffles	218	56
Payments to suppliers and employees	(174,271)	(151,421)
Interest received	4,863	1,976
Dividends received	2,625	2,214
Interest paid	(460)	(495)
Net cash from operating activities	31,257	4,117
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds from property, plant and equipment	427	3,405
Payments for property, plant and equipment - residential aged care	(4,421)	(2,989)
Payments for property, plant and equipment - non-residential aged care	(4,677)	(1,706)
Proceeds from sale of investments (financial assets)	48,369	45,972
Payments for investments (financial assets)	(63,739)	(45,576)
Payments for intangibles	-	(149)
Payments for investment property assets and development	(12,992)	(10,444)
Net cash used in investing activities	(37,033)	(11,487)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Refunds of residential RAD's, accommodation bonds and entry contributions	(46,602)	(51,633)
Proceeds from residential RAD's, accommodation bonds and entry contributions	59,458	49,928
Refund of ILU entry contributions	(61)	(305)
Payments for leases	(972)	(888)
Refunds of retirement village leases	(59,706)	(6,361)
Proceeds from retirement village leases	67,523	27,423
Repayment of borrowings	-	(5,680)
Net cash from financing activities	19,640	12,484
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	13,864	5,114
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	32,550	27,436
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	46,414	32,550

Acknowledgement and thanks

Our people

Thank you to our incredible employees and volunteers who selflessly dedicate their time to support Victorians who receive Benetas services to live their best life. Your contribution to our community this year has been phenomenal and every single one of you has stepped up in a time of great change amidst a number of challenges.

Our supporters

Thank you to the following individuals, groups, and trusts who have generously supported Benetas.

Our Community

- Anglican Christ Church Essendon
- St Dunstan's Anglican Church

Bequests

- Estate of the Late Reginald Alan White
- Estate of the Late Margaret Grummet

Foundations and Trusts

- The Gahn/Duff Fund
- Frank & Sybil Richardson Trust
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation – Ann Rusden Fund
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation – Meg & Frank Sims Fund
- Equity Trustees – Estate of the Late Eric Lang
- John Robert Ball Trust

How you can help

You can help make an impact and support Benetas to continue to provide high quality health care services to Victorians.

Become a volunteer

Our volunteers make a huge difference to the lives of everyone at Benetas. Not only do they selflessly give their time to improve the lives of residents and clients at Benetas, but they also form strong bonds and help to support our employees. To learn more, please visit benetas.com.au/volunteers or call us on **(03) 8823 7900**.

Make a donation

Your financial donation is appreciated, no matter how big or small, and can be made to Benetas online by visiting our website benetas.com.au/donate or by calling **(03) 8823 7900**.

Leave a bequest

By making a bequest through your Will, you leave a lasting legacy.

For more information, please email info@benetas.com.au or call **(03) 8823 7900**.





