

Sundale

Creating
Communities
1963 – 2013



Elaine and Inga Green

Sundale:
Growing Community
1963 – 2013

Elaine and Inga Green

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Authors' Disclaimer:

We are indebted to the many members of the Sundale family – the Board, the management team, residents, volunteers and others – who have assisted with this publication. We have relied heavily on Sundale Annual Reports where available, as well as a Rotary Garden Village history compiled by residents. However, we acknowledge that history can be remembered in many diverse ways by different people and although we have taken care to check our facts, we apologise if there are any errors. Please contact the authors directly with any additions or corrections at PO Box 251, Maleny Qld 4552.

We thank the Sunshine Coast Libraries for their valuable assistance in providing archival photographs. Many of these have come from the Bill Robinson Collection. The choice of photographs has been limited by availability and, where possible, the source of photographs has been acknowledged and people named, however, some details have been lost in the mists of time. Thanks to those who assisted with captions and to Sundale for creating and preserving history.

Graphic design by Thomas Hamlyn-Harris

Cover pictures: A Pole Sit-In was a novel way to raise funds for Sundale in 1962 and received enormous community support; contrasted with Sundale's newest venture into community housing in Doolan Road, Nambour in 2013

Pictured on the back cover from top to bottom: The Palmwoods Village Residents Choir (2010) in perfect harmony. Resident June Glanville enjoying painting for Hospital Art at the James Grimes Care Centre (2012) Clowning around - Sundale team member Judy Stanway with the Coastal Caring Clowns (2012)

Dedication

This commemorative book was written to celebrate Sundale's Golden Jubilee, marking fifty years of growing community in the Sunshine Coast region from 1963 – 2013.

It is dedicated with gratitude to all the residents, Sundale team members and management, the volunteers and the wider community whose generous and unselfish contributions – financial, physical and spiritual – have made Sundale Ltd today a diverse and innovative organisation dedicated to creating and sustaining community.

Welcome

Fifty years ago a young Nambour Apexian convinced his Club and the community that there was a pressing need for an Aged Care facility in Nambour. Little did he know that 'Sundale' - the name given to the organisation that realised his vision - would prosper and 50 years later be providing aged care services to 950 people (290 in their own home), rehabilitation services for 830 regular clients and child care for 117 children.

In the early years, Apex members and local businessmen provided a 'management committee' occupying a desk at Sundale to physically manage and guide its operations and growth as there were no paid administration staff. In time the Sundale 'management committee' became a formal 'committee of management' that included Apex nominees and community representatives. Rotary nominees joined the 'committee of management' to facilitate the construction of the Rotary Village in the early 1980s, complementing a very successful corporate structure that endured for the next three decades.

Management of Sundale started with local professional volunteers, evolved to a mix of Administrator and volunteers and graduated to a skilled Chief Executive Officer and a very experienced team of professionals with highly regarded expertise in finance, care and operations.

Changing times have necessitated reinvention of Sundale, a process initiated in recent years that will reach significant milestones in our 50th year, which include:

- Sundale will become a Company Limited by Guarantee relinquishing its Incorporation by Letters Patent.
- The 'committee of management' will become a Board of Directors with the same Governance standards and responsibilities as other Companies controlled by ASIC.
- The Sundale Brand will be refreshed and uniformly promoted across all Sundale sites and services.
- 50 years of Sundale service to the community will be documented in a book to ensure that the dedication, commitment and loyalty of 'Sundale People' are recognised.
- A Sundale Community Foundation will be established to give something back to the community through individuals and charitable organizations that build and strengthen our broader community.

In the future, Sundale will continue to build a better community, almost certainly in very different ways than the first 50 years. Aged accommodation options will change in line with community expectations and the range of services offered for in-home care and assisted living will grow and move toward consumer directed care to meet specific individual needs. Modern technology enhances care planning, client welfare and service delivery and will be continuously developed to ensure that the best possible care is provided for our elders. These changes are not predictions, they are reality and Sundale is already a part of that reality. Future Sundale developments will demonstrate that Sundale remains a leader in the provision of services for older Australians just as it was 50 years ago.

This book chronicles the path that Sundale has taken to build a better community through caring for our elders over a 50 year period and acknowledges the contribution made by volunteers, staff, suppliers, local businesses and Government for half a century. All who have been part of the Sundale story can justifiably be very proud as there is no other community organization that can match the success of Sundale.

**John Kleinschmidt,
Sundale President in 2013**

Foreword

According to the late Steve Jobs, former CEO of Apple, “The ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do”. This is the story of such a group - young men (all under 40), members of the Apex Club of Nambour, who 50 years ago conceived the concept we now know as Sundale. In the intervening years, with the support of local business and community groups, it has touched the lives of thousands and profoundly influenced communities across the Sunshine Coast and beyond, in ways never dreamed of at the time.

I have had a long association with Sundale and didn't expect to find in this fascinating book much that was new to me, but I did. Reading the draft copy, I was reminded constantly of the words of Thomas Morley, a noted English statesman at the beginning of last century, who said: “Great economic and social forces flow with a tidal sweep over communities only half conscious of what is befalling them. Wise are those who foresee what time thus brings, and who endeavour to shape institutions and mould men's thought and purpose in accordance with the changes that silently surround them”.

For this is a story, comprehensively researched by the authors, which traces the history of Sundale in the context of great economic and social change over the past 50 years (especially on the Sunshine Coast) and of successive management teams who have had the courage and the foresight to shape the institution in accordance with those changes, not just reacting to them, but anticipating and creating them. It is a story replete with examples of the contribution of many of those involved in its development. To name just three groups of many...

A small army of volunteers. People like J.D. Grimes, who was the full time administrator during the first few critical years, volunteers Joan and Graham Chapman, Joan for 40 years, Graham for 33 (21 of those as Chairman); Stuart Napier for 33 years (28 as Secretary); John Kleinschmidt (current Chairman) for 25 years and counting - and hundreds of others too numerous to mention here, but indispensable contributors to the life of Sundale.

A generous local community. For example, (expressed in current \$AUD values, after applying an average annual inflation figure of 5% to the funds contributed at the time): \$1.42 million for the first project, comprising 3 cottages, 20 units and a supervisor's flat; \$1.8 million for what is now known as the James Grimes Care Centre, all donated within 13 weeks of launching the appeal ; and \$8.2 million for construction of the first stage of Rotary Garden Village, not including the value of the 12 acre donated site.

The residents themselves, whose interest free loans for the duration of their occupancy, presently in excess of \$58 million, have been a vital factor in the continuing growth of the enterprise. It is an interesting story, enlivened with detail of some of those mundane matters which occupy our time - eating, doing the laundry, getting treatment for a bad back or a torn muscle.

For instance: From its main kitchen at James Grimes Care Centre, every day 1,450 meals are prepared and delivered, another 985 by Coolum, Palmwoods and Kilcoy facilities – that's 2,435 meals every day, 90,000 every year. Do you know of a commercial restaurant which matches this?

In October 2011 and again in January 2012, 40,000 kg of washing was done, over 50% of that from external sources (surely evidence of customer satisfaction). The Sundale Rehabilitation Centre now has over 1,180 community and low care clients, with 18,500 'episodes' provided in one year by 20 therapists.

This is an inspiring story, well told. I have enjoyed reading it, as I know you will.

Clem Renouf (AM)

Clem Renouf was born in Ingham on 19 April 1921. He enlisted for service in the Royal Australian Air Force shortly after the outbreak of World War Two, and served for 5 ½ years as a bomber pilot and flying instructor, completing two operational tours. Before enlisting and immediately after discharge he studied accountancy, qualified in April 1946, commenced practice in Nambour 6 months later, and practiced for 27 years. He is a Fellow of the Australian Society of C.P.A.s and an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Managers. He retired in 1973, but retains an active interest in land and property development.



Apart from his 60 years of Rotary membership, Sir Clem's principal community interests have been: for 26 years, Treasurer of Sundale Garden Village, and Chairman of Rotary Garden Village during its establishment phase; for 25 years either treasurer or Chairman of the Board of Governors of International House at the University of Queensland; member of Legacy for about 15 years; former Chairman and Treasurer for many years of Lifeline Sunshine Coast and former Trustee of National Seniors Foundation. In 1979 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) and knighted in 1988 for service to the community. Sir Clem became Patron of Sundale in 2000 and was the third and last Patron.

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Introduction

Although aged care today is referred to as an ‘industry’, it was once the province of benevolent societies with roots which lie deep within community.

Sundale Ltd has earned its place in the history of the Sunshine Coast because it provided the first residential care services for elders and because it has continued to literally grow caring communities for fifty years. Sundale Ltd began in the 1960s at a time when the frail and elderly in need of continuing care were simply not catered for in Government hospitals. The story of how Sundale Ltd grew with the support of the Apex and Rotary service clubs, private philanthropy, community fundraising and volunteer effort is heart-warming and empowering.

In 2013, Sundale Ltd celebrates its Golden Anniversary and the need for care is as great, if not greater, than when Sundale Ltd first started. The operating environment today is much more complex and regulated and it is a constant challenge to stay ahead in an extremely competitive and economically difficult world. A CEO and Executive Management Team along with a well qualified Board of Directors have replaced a part time Administrator and a voluntary Management Committee. But, after half a century, the volunteers are still there, still irreplaceable and much valued because Sundale’s roots are still deep within community.

Sundale Ltd now operates retirement villages and residential care facilities in five separate locations at Nambour, Burnside, Palmwoods, Kilcoy and Coolum Beach as well as in-home care services from Kilcoy and across the Sunshine Coast, through Suncoast Community Care. Sundale Ltd has become well known for the breadth of its rehabilitation services through the amazing success of the Eden Rehabilitation Centre at Cooroy and the Sundale Rehabilitation Centre in Nambour and through pioneering treatment of dementia care. Over the years Sundale Ltd has branched out into child care and affordable housing, providing innovative services to the much larger population of the Sunshine Coast area. Sundale Ltd have always been at the forefront of introducing innovative ways to care, and are proud of their involvement in bringing Eden to Oz and implementing the Eden holistic elder-centric philosophy in Australia from its foundation.

Sundale Ltd has earned a proud place in the history of aged care in Queensland and indeed in Australia, having been at the forefront of caring for and indeed creating community for fifty years.

The Seed is Planted

The Sundale story begins in Nambour in the 1950s. The Moreton Sugar Mill, with its sometimes sooty smoke stack, dominated the town's landscape and its economy as it had done since 1897. Fields of sugarcane covered the nearby low-lying flood plains of Petrie and Paynter Creeks, Bli Bli and Yandina. In the harvesting season, usually from July to December, the cane trains lumbered up Howard Street, Nambour, tooting pedestrians and vehicles, bringing the vital crop of cane into the mill. The cane was originally harvested whole and sometimes the larger sticks would break the timber posts on the verandah of the Royal George Hotel as the cane train passed by.

Primary production drove the local economy and the hills surrounding Nambour were mainly planted with pineapples, bananas and citrus. It was a picturesque rural scene and the larger area that we now know as the Sunshine Coast was then called the Near North Coast. Nambour was the undisputed centre of the region for business, shopping and administration as it had been since the formation of the Maroochy Divisional Board in 1890 and the coming of the railway in 1891. The Great North Coast Road, later called the Bruce Highway, ran right through the centre of town.

To the west of Nambour, on a prominent hilltop site, a general (or public) hospital had been built in 1930 to serve the entire region. Only 60% of the funding to build the hospital had come from Government and the remaining 40% was expected to come from the local authority; but when Maroochy Shire Council indicated that it could not afford this, community fundraising provided the difference. This was the spirit of the times. There were also several small private hospitals, including a 24 bed private hospital (Selangor) that had been established in 1947 in a large home by two ex-Army nursing Sisters who had served at Selangor in South East Asia during World War Two. An ambulance service had been provided for Nambour in the same way as the public hospital, with a State Government subsidy of two dollars for every one dollar raised by the community.

The pace of life was slower and much less complicated. It was a small close-knit community and in 1954 Nambour (including the Coes Creek and Burnside areas) had a population of 4,678. Popular community events like the Golden Pineapple Festival were part of the agricultural foundations of the area and Miss Golden Pineapple entrants raised funds for charity, forming part of a glamorous parade through town, with the winner crowned later at a glittering ball. The Chelsea Flower Show, inspired by an event of the same name in London, was started in Nambour in 1957 and held in the Maroochy Shire Town Hall for the next 30 years. It was run by an organisation of combined churches and raised many hundreds of thousands of dollars for community projects. People in this era were accustomed to pitching in and helping out for a good cause. An ethic of self-help rather than hand-outs was the general rule.



Entrants in the Golden Pineapple Festival Queen competition, Nambour, 1955.
Pictured: Miss Eudlo Hazel Johnson, Miss Palmwoods Irene O'Rourke, Miss Woombye Jean McLean,
Miss Montville Dell Manley, Miss Yandina Pat Rafter, Miss Show Society Beverley Williams, Miss
Maroochy Q.A.T.B. Hazel Potter, Miss North Coast Life Savers Corrine Apps and Miss Maroochydore
Sub-branch R.S.S.A.I.L.A. Carmel Schweikert
(Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

On the political landscape, David Alan Low had been the Country Party's State Member for Cooroora since 1947 (and was to continue in this office until his death in 1974). David Low was a passionate advocate for the region and is credited with being the first person to call Queensland the Sunshine State in 1949. He was also elected as Mayor of Maroochy Shire in 1952 and held both political positions until 1967. David Low recognised the potential of the area for tourism but realised that a lack of infrastructure hampered development. He was successful in 1954 in setting aside the land that would become the Maroochy Airport (later renamed the Sunshine Coast Airport) near Coolum, but the time was not yet right to push ahead with this vision to bring growth and prosperity to the area.

The chance came in August 1957, when George Francis Reuben (known as Frank) Nicklin became the first ever Queensland Country Party Premier, defeating a Labor Government after 25 years in office. He represented the State seat of Landsborough from 1950 and before that the seat of Murrumba from 1932. Frank Nicklin was raised on his father's banana farm at Beerwah and after active service in World War One he purchased a 20 acre (8 hectare) pineapple farm at Palmwoods under the soldier settlement scheme. Known as the 'Gentleman Premier', he was friendly and well liked by the people of Queensland. This quiet and unassuming man would soon become integrally woven into our Sundale story.



Frank Nicklin as Premier of Queensland with Donald O'Brien and John Hodgens at Peachester on election day 1963 (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

Meanwhile, the new State Government had created Development Leases over large areas of coastal Crown land, kick-starting land development on the Sunshine Coast. Some important milestones were achieved as part of David Low's vision. In 1959, a bridge was built for the first time across the Maroochy River at Bli Bli, and then a coastal road was constructed and subsequently named in honour of David Low. In the same year, the first plane also landed on an airstrip where Maroochy Airport, which would open two years later.

It was the beginning of big changes for the area and the Nambour Chamber of Commerce, along with the Real Estate Institute of Queensland, began advocating the name Sunshine Coast to better market the area. The advent of the surf culture in the 1960s provided just the stimulus needed. Strong demand firstly for holiday accommodation and then permanent residential land followed. Strangely enough it was a partnership of three men developing land, with a desire to give something back to their community, which would soon sow the seed of Sundale Garden Village.

Of course none of us grow younger and in the early 1960s those born from the original pioneer families of the area were starting to reach old age. There were few choices when it came to retirement. A Maroochy Council policy of Family Transfer blocks enabled farmers to carve off a small piece of land to fund retirement, or for mum and dad to live on whilst the younger generation took over the farming. But there

was nowhere that these pioneers, who had literally carved out the landscape and the economy of the area, could go for care beyond family. It was home or hospital in many cases and quite often elders had to go to Brisbane for adequate care.

The thought of honouring our pioneer families and giving something back to them was the motivating force behind the establishment of Sundale Garden Village. One man in particular, James Davidson (mostly known as J.D.) Grimes, himself a pioneer of commerce and development in Nambour, had ‘a great admiration for the pioneers of the area who with axe and spade and sheer hard work made it one of the show places of Queensland.’¹ This admiration and genuine concern for the welfare of the ageing pioneers was to become a driving force in the development of Sundale.



The site of the future Sundale Garden Village in southern Nambour looking east, 1958

A Fruitful Partnership

Back in 1954, the Commonwealth Government had enacted the Aged Persons Homes Act and J.D. Grimes had taken great interest in a newspaper advertisement for Commonwealth Government grants. For the first time, financial assistance was being offered on a pound for pound basis towards the capital costs of building aged care accommodation. A 1957 Amendment subsequently doubled this commitment by offering two pounds in Government assistance for every pound fundraised. The idea was formed to create a purpose designed community retirement village where elders could enjoy quality of life, with supported living arrangements available as required.

J.D. Grimes talked to his partners – accountant Clem Renouf and solicitor Roy Charlton – who were all very successful and well known business leaders in their own right. Together they were associates in a company called Enterprise Estates, which was developing residential land around Nambour at the time. Clem Renouf later wrote about these times:



J.D. Grimes with Roy Charlton, 1963
(Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

“One day a real estate salesman approached my two partners in the finance company, offering for sale a small subdivision at Noosa Heads which had been on the market for some time. We were able to buy it at the right price and sell it quickly at a good profit. Since that incidental launch in Noosa in the early 1950s we have bought, subdivided and sold hundreds of acres of land, most of it in the Maroochy and Noosa Shires. We have always had a subdivision either under construction or awaiting sale, and a land bank sufficient for several years’ supply.

Land development is a cyclical business. We have insulated ourselves from the attendant risks by operating in a small way, without external debt. Others have made more money buying large tracts of land, borrowing heavily, simultaneously developing large numbers of blocks, and marketing aggressively. But many of them have not survived.

The Sunshine Coast is one of the most rapidly developing areas in the State (in fact, in the country) so we have shared in that growth. In the late 1950s, at a time when we were doing particularly well, we discussed the possibility of donating to our church a 17 acre parcel of land close to the town centre, which we had acquired for subdivision, to be used by the church to establish an Aged Persons Village...”²

But before the partners could act on that discussion, they heard on the local grapevine that the Nambour Apex Club had similar ideas about the need for aged care facilities. Now here was a combination that could really make things happen.

The service organisation Apex began in Australia during the Great Depression years as a way to boost the morale of young men by giving service to those in need. Harry Packwood, a Palmwoods pineapple grower, is credited with providing the impetus

to form the Nambour Apex Club. Sponsored by the Gympie Apex Club, and with a membership of 24, the Inaugural Dinner was held at the Nambour Bowling Club on 9th June 1956, and attended by 140 guests. The club's charter was granted on 4th November 1956, and a celebratory Charter Dinner was held at the Nambour Showgrounds Pavilion in February 1957, attended by 250 guests. The first executive committee consisted of President Harry Packwood, Vice Presidents Bob Lanceley and Ian Hayne, Secretary Lloyd Williams and Treasurer Noel Parry. Some of their early fundraising included collecting and packing cardboard and sending it to the Petrie Paper Mill.

The ladies were also quick to become involved in the new service club, forming the Henpexian Club (called Apexiennes from 1965) on 6th June 1956.

“They met once a month at a member's home with their newsletters included with the Apex Dinner Notice. This club may have begun on a social basis, but all past members would agree that these ladies gave much ‘behind the scenes’ strength and the support they provided to the Nambour Apex Club cannot be overstated. They catered for many changeover nights and fundraising functions, created Santa and many other costumes, organised annual progressive dinners, provided food and assistance during service projects and raised valuable funds in their own right. Through it all they also had a lot of fun together. The club continued to run until the early 1980s.”³

It was under the chairmanship of Peter Wilkinson (1958-59) and Ian Hayne (1959-60) that the real genesis of Sundale Garden Village occurred. Apexian and journalist Peter Richardson, who had come to Nambour in 1957 to be the Editor of the Nambour Chronicle newspaper, was enlisted to run a reader poll to determine the community's greatest need. Peter later wrote:

“This established that need as an aged care facility that would end the need for frail aged residents of Nambour and district to leave their familiar surroundings and move to Brisbane and elsewhere when in need of residential care. Apex bravely took on the immense task of raising funds to take advantage of the Government subsidisation that had just been put in place.”⁴

And Apex history later recorded that:

“The establishment of Sundale Garden Village is undoubtedly the largest service project in the club's history and may well be one of the largest projects ever undertaken by a single Apex Club in Australia. A casual footpath conversation between shopkeeper⁵ Ian Hayne and J.D. Grimes early in 1960 gave the green light. Upon hearing about the club's goals J.D. Grimes promptly offered to donate £1,000 and then two weeks later informed Ian

that his two partners would also each donate £1,000. What a lift this gave the club and immediately meetings commenced between the parties and the first Committee was formed.”⁶

Foundation members of this first Committee were the three partners in Enterprise Estates: J.D. Grimes, Clem Renouf and Roy Charlton; and Apex Club of Nambour representatives Ian Hayne, Noel Parry and Peter Richardson. Their first meeting was held on 27th May 1960.

Ern Stollznaw, who subsequently wrote the commemorative book about Sundale’s first 25 years, made the very appropriate comment that:

“In retrospect we can only marvel at the strange but wonderful ways of providence in bringing about the fusion of the youthful energy, enthusiasm and abilities of the members of the Apex Club with the wisdom, experience and business acumen of J.D. Grimes and his partners. Thus vision and reality, passion and practicality, came together to ensure the success of what can only be described as one of the most important developments during the 1960s for the Nambour area, one which was destined to have far reaching effects and significance for aged people living at that time and for generations to come.”⁷

By mid 1961 a Deed of Trust was created and a formal Management Committee constituted with 7 members: Ray Wilson, Robert ‘Bob’ Sherwell, Ian Hayne and Noel Parry as representatives of Apex and J.D. Grimes, Roy Charlton and Clem Renouf as community nominees.



First Management Committee (L to R) standing: Ray Wilson, Robert Sherwell, Ian Hayne and Noel Parry;
seated (L to R): Clem Renouf, J.D. Grimes and Roy Charlton
(Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

It was truly a great partnership between local businessmen and a young, energetic service club. Peter Richardson acknowledged the ‘vision and irrepressible enthusiasm of Ian ‘Ideas’ Hayne; the quiet practicality of Presidents like Eric Williams, Alan Raine and Bob Sherwell; and the cheerful willingness of 30 odd Apexians to have a go at raising the funds for such a major undertaking as Sundale, which must surely have earned the Club its place in Apex history, as the Club that achieved the impossible, and had a lot of fun and fellowship in the doing of it.’⁸

As well as enthusiasm, these men had many professional skills to contribute. For instance, Noel Parry was a Building Consultant, which proved to be very fortunate for Sundale. He went on to be in charge of design and building for an amazing 15 years from 1960-75, and the Sundale Committee foundation Vice President from 1960-73. Noel described how in these early days:

“Possibly no other project had ever touched Nambour’s conscience as closely as did the Sundale project. For months the town seemed to revolve around fundraising to get the project started. At the height of the fundraising drive, 30 Apexians were collecting scrap metal three mornings a week before work and loading it into railway trucks. I remember (on) one occasion a few Apexians had to haul by hand a Caterpillar track from one of the Council’s bulldozers onto a railway truck. It took some doing but by sheer determination we did it and we still laugh about it.”⁹

It was a great beginning. Up until July 1961, over £600 (\$1,200) had been raised by the Nambour Apex Club but much more was needed for the seed of Sundale to take root and grow.

A Few Acres of Clay

In seeking a suitable place for Sundale, a particular site close to the town and the General Hospital was investigated. The new Selangor Hospital, which had recently opened at Netherton Street, was also nearby. Ern Stollznow later described the site as ‘a few acres of clay’:

“A muddy winding stream ran through part of the land, and in rainy periods it proved a haven for frogs with many long-legged cranes and egrets enjoying the feast. The area was overgrown with an almost impenetrable mass of groundsel, with a few tracks leading to the creek, only known to adventurous school lads and determined duck shooters. The higher land consisted of unyielding clay soil on which a pioneer farmer named Doolan had previously sought to make a living growing sugarcane. Neighbours were often amused at the volume of earthy Aussie language the farmer used to urge his unwilling

horse team up and down the rows of growing cane which were often partly ruined by early frosts before maturity. The words of Oscar Zander, then a neighbour and later a resident of Sundale, described the situation perfectly – *When Doolan’s cane turned white we knew winter had arrived.*”¹⁰

The first Committee knew the disadvantages of the site only too well, and despite an initial barrage of criticism from some sections of the community about potential flooding of the site, ultimately it was chosen because of its prime location close to the Nambour town centre and its easterly aspect. And ‘any fears were quickly dispelled when (surveyor) Fred Murray, assisted by a group of axe-wielding Apex members, criss-crossed the land taking levels, which proved the land was not flood prone and apart from one small corner was above any previously known flood levels.’¹¹



Carter Road, Nambour circa 1952-53.
The future site of Sundale
(Courtesy of Audry Elms)

The land, situated on almost 18 acres bounded by Doolan and Carter Roads and Petrie Creek, was purchased in 1961 for £3,625 (\$7,250) being funded by equal donations from Enterprise Estate partners J.D. Grimes, Clem Renouf and Roy Charlton together with money raised from the Sundale Appeal. Thanks to the generosity and conviction of the partners in Enterprise Estates, the land was purchased debt free. Sundale was off to a great start, but significant fundraising still lay ahead to make the vision a reality.

Queensland Premier Frank Nicklin became Sundale’s first patron in 1961 and the serious business of raising money to secure a Government grant began. J.D. Grimes actually walked Nambour seeking donations from business people. Eddie De Vere, who was then a Councillor for Division 1 of Maroochy Shire and who would also become an important part of our Sundale story, was allegedly talked out of two head of cattle (the first of several gifts of cattle) as a donation to Sundale in the very first week of the Appeal. After that, Eddie De Vere began walking the streets of Nambour ‘in zig zag fashion’ while keeping a wary eye out for J.D. Grimes, in order to keep the rest of his dairy herd intact.¹²



Pole sitters Tom Carter and Ian Hayne installed in their perch; below are Nambour's pioneer pole-sitter Wilfred Griggs with Ray Wilson (President of Apex Club of Nambour) February 1962
(Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

As part of the fundraising, something novel called a Pole Sit-in was undertaken in 1961 by Wilfred Griggs from the Nambour Chronicle.¹³ Based on an ancient practice, pole Sit-ins were revived in modern times, gaining popularity in the 1920s, but largely ceased during the Great Depression. The idea was revived again during the 1950s and 1960s, when people took to their poles to raise funds, often perched aloft in the growing number of shopping centres and car parks. Wilfred perched on a small platform on top of a pole in the middle of Nambour for 24 hours, all day and night, and attracted donations from the public. Unfortunately it was November, and it was a wet night – but it was an inspirational act that drew public attention to the Sundale project. At the same time a major publicity campaign was undertaken by Apex members delivering brochures to every household in the area.

The following year a fully fledged Pole Sit-in took place in the small square opposite the railway station right outside the old Maroochy Shire Council Chambers (in 2013 site of the Nambour Civic Centre). Obviously a Council permit was not a prerequisite and public liability was a still distant concept. The great Pole Sit-in all came together with the blessing of authorities and local businesses, fuelled by the energy of Apexians and their faithful Henpexians. Thankfully, Ern Stollznow recorded a detailed description of the event:

“Building the room on the pole was a combined effort on the part of the Club and professional people of the town. It measured 9 feet square, 20 feet from ground to floor level and another 10 feet to the top of the roof. The SEQEB provided and erected the sturdy pole and later connected electricity. Marcus and Poole built the room and Michael’s Plumbing Works roofed it and installed the plumbing. Telecom installed the two telephones. When all was ready, like Noah entering the Ark, Ian Hayne and Tommy Carter, armed with telephone directories entered the room at 8am on a Saturday morning in early February 1962 and came down exactly seven days later...

‘It was wonderful’, Ian Hayne said on his return to Terra Firma and he could have been alluding to the fact that he and his mate received royal treatment from the supporting ground crew. Twenty-one meals were hoisted up in a basket provided by twenty-one Henpexians, ensuring variety as each meal was prepared by a different cook. Cold drinks, fruit and cold oysters were provided by business people in lavish quantities. Only midnight revellers proved to be spoilsports. They rocked the stay wires of the pole and the resultant rattle and vibrations in the room caused Ian and his mate at first to think an early cyclone had arrived. Later these occurrences became routine and when Ian said ‘It was wonderful’, he wasn’t thinking so much of the excellent food they enjoyed but rather of the tremendous response from the 5,000 people contacted by telephone from the Pole Station...

Ian's friendly approach... consisted of giving information, encouragement and a challenge to participate in the exciting Apex project. It is little wonder that Ian could report that not one rebuff or sour note had been received by them during this comprehensive phone hook up and the fact that the Sundale Appeal was improved to the extent of £6,720 (\$13,440) was a fitting reward for a great effort.”¹⁴

As Anthropologist Margaret Mead is famous for saying – ‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world... indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.’ This is certainly true for our Sundale story. The energy of a small group of community-minded people has inspired all the dedicated volunteers who have followed them since – keeping the vision growing for an amazing 50 years.

When the Commonwealth Government began to issue licenses to small operators in the 1960s, it was the very beginning of what has since morphed into a huge modern aged care industry. The original operators across Australia were not large corporations, but community-minded people just like those involved in Sundale, motivated by caring Christian principles, giving freely of their time and expertise for the benefit of senior citizens. Income was derived from only small Government subsidies and fees from residents, so considerable fundraising would be on the agenda for some time yet. Sundale Garden Village was about to become the very first purpose designed village for aged care in the Nambour district and indeed the whole Sunshine Coast area.



Aerial view of Nambour, looking north-east from the intersection of Arundell Avenue and Carter Road , 1963 (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

The Gold Sovereign

Tenders were at last called for the first stage of Sundale to build three cottages and 20 hostel units with dining and kitchen facilities and a supervisor's flat. McKinnon and Blandford submitted the successful tender for £65,181 (\$130,362). This was a low price for such an undertaking and was only made possible because of all the voluntary work by Apexians – digging trenches for foundations and the like – all by hand.

To assist in fundraising, residents who applied for the first three independent living cottages were invited to contribute towards the cost. Although this has since become standard practice, it was at the time quite an innovative way to raise funds. Mr and Mrs James Gunn of Maroochydore gave the total proceeds from the sale of their home in return for occupancy of a Sundale cottage. This was an outstanding act of faith and a public demonstration of their complete trust in the new organisation – long before Sundale had the opportunity to prove itself. Miss E. Brimblecombe and Miss Haywood also responded and would become foundation residents, but not without some lengthy discussions first with Government, who had other ideas about single women occupying the cottages.



Setting the first brick, 18th February 1963. Pictured (L to R): Ian Hayne (Apex), Dr Allan Raine (President of Nambour Apex Club), E. 'Tibby' Scells (bricklaying contractor), Bill Blandford and Keith McKinnon (building contractors), Gavin Scells (laying brick), J.D. Grimes (Administrator of Sundale 1963-1973) and Noel Parry (design and building consultant) (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

When the first bricks were laid on 18th February 1963, Dr Alan Raine (then Apex President) placed a gold sovereign under a brick as a symbol of the golden opportunities for the aged to enjoy a rich and rewarding lifestyle at Sundale. As time will tell, it was also a symbol of ongoing good fortune for the Sundale cause.

Noel Parry had drawn up the plans and specifications, but long and often frustrating negotiations with State and Commonwealth Government officials occupied much of his time. Unbelievable as it may now seem, there was a last minute hitch when the Commonwealth Government was initially reluctant to approve a capital grant for independent living cottages unless they were occupied by married couples. The Government finally approved the capital grants on the two cottages occupied by Miss Brimblecombe and Miss Haywood – an acknowledgement that the Sundale Committee was spending public money wisely and in the best interests of aged people, whether married or single. Sundale's foundation residents eagerly awaited completion of their new homes.

It was possible to open Stage One much earlier than expected because of the generosity of Noel Parry, who donated an amount equal to his total fees to the project. To enable the Committee to have instant use of this donation in the early stages of the building program, Jack Kennedy provided an interest-free bridging loan. The loan was to be repaid only when the final Government grant was received at the completion of all stages.

The foundation stone was officially laid on 30th March 1963 by Sundale Patron and Premier of Queensland, Frank Nicklin. Long before the word recycling was in fashion, four Stegbar window walls which had been used for part of the Pole Sit-in room were re-used in the building of Stage One.

In true paternal form, nine months from inception, a very proud J.D. Grimes presided over the official opening ceremony, on Saturday 30th November 1963. The main building was named Nicklin Lodge and officially opened by namesake Premier Frank Nicklin. Sundale was off to a very auspicious beginning.



Sir Francis Nicklin, Premier of Queensland, performed the official opening ceremony and named the main building Nicklin Lodge. A fete was held in conjunction with the opening in November 1963
(Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

The entire Sundale Committee was rewarded and relieved when their estimates came in with only a very small difference of £12 (\$24). The importance of volunteers, something which Sundale has valued from inception was priceless, including Joyce Walden and the first Sundale Ladies Auxiliary (mainly drawn from the Woombye area) who worked very hard at fundraising. At the official opening day, they put on a celebratory fete and enjoyed a memorable day with the many people who had laboured together to bring a now shared dream into reality. Sundale Garden Village was providing a range of previously unavailable services in the local area for aged people and immediately the demand for these services far exceeded availability.



Above Left: Mr and Mrs Gunn, arriving at Rosemary Cottage in June 1963, are welcomed by Sundale President J.D. Grimes **Above Right:** Arrival of the first residents (L to R) Marjorie Copeland, Eunice Brimblecombe, Lizzy Cory, Vera Sinclair and Joan Cory. Welcoming them are Supervisor Joan Zander, Cook Trudy Brown, Attendant Maleta Wilson and Assistant Supervisor Pat Smith

Mrs Ellmore was the first Matron of Nicklin Lodge and (with her husband Stan) supervised the intake of the first residents. Mrs Muriel Swanson became the second Matron of Nicklin Lodge in 1964, and held the position for seven years. Matron Swanson, fondly referred to as 'Swannie', also became the Supervisory Officer for McGowan Lodge. Originally employed for a two week period as the cook at the brand new facility, Matron Swanson reminisced in her memoirs (written in 1989) about those early days of cooking for the first twenty residents, as well as the first Matron and her husband. She was offered the job of Matron after her first two weeks as the cook, but told the Administrator she felt had no experience. The Administrator replied that the organisation wanted her as the Matron because she knew her job well and the residents liked her and her cooking, and that was all the experience she needed.

As well as carrying out her duties with dedication, Matron Swanson recalled how varied her job was 'often a sink would get blocked in one of the units, mostly tea leaves. When this happened I had to go with a pair of Stilsons, (pipe wrenches) get under the sink and unscrew the pipe (being) everything from medic to handywoman (was just part of everyday life working at Sundale'

As well as her official duties, Matron Swanson also organised fundraising dinners, fetes and functions at Nicklin Lodge, and even catered for several weddings and clubs in the local community, all in her 'spare time'! Her husband Charles Kenneth (Ken) was also an active part of the Sundale family, spending countless hours volunteering. Matron Swanson and Ken, with one of their daughters, Heather, and their dog Bruno lived at Sundale in a specially modified two bedroom unit.



Above Left: Muriel Swanson (far right) with husband Ken (far left) and an unknown resident

Above Right: Muriel Swanson and unknown work colleague, circa 1967

(Courtesy of Patricia Anastasi)

In these early days, a cook was employed at a wage of \$40 per week and a domestic assistant at \$32 per week. The tariffs were \$16 a week for the Lodge units and \$6 a week for the independent living cottages. The aim of the Management Committee (and subsequent Board) has always been to make Sundale affordable and as a not-for-profit community organisation, it can return surpluses back to its members in benefits.

In 1965, the same year that the Beatles were awarded an Order of the British Empire, Noel Parry received the prestigious MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for services to Apex and the community. Noel's community work was indeed extraordinary. As well as being a foundation member, Treasurer (1956-57) and Secretary (1957-58) of Nambour Apex Club, he also served on the National Board of Apex when it was assisting the immigration of people from the UK. Noel was very involved in Scouting (District Commissioner), became the first Queensland Secretary for Nippers, and did a lot of volunteer work for the Endeavour Foundation. He went on to design and build many aged persons' villages across Queensland including Warwick, Chinchilla, Mt. Isa, Gympie, Maleny and at Kilcoy, which features in our Sundale story much later on.



Apex Club of Nambour officials, October 1966. Pictured (L to R): Doug Biggs (Nambour Club President 1965-1966 and District 4 Governor 1966-1976), Rod Smith (Nambour Club Treasurer 1961-1962 and President 1966-1967), Noel Parry (Nambour Club Treasurer 1956-1957, Club Secretary 1957-1958, Club President 1969-1970, District 4 Governor 1961-1962 and Zone 6 President 1963-1964) and Graham Ralph (District 4 Governor 1962-1963, Nambour Club President 1963-1964 and Zone 6 President 1966-1967)
(Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

On 14th February 1966, Australia introduced decimal currency and suddenly one pound (£1) became two dollars (\$2) and everything seemed twice as expensive. Despite rising costs, Stage Two of Nicklin Lodge opened in October 1966, consisting of 12 Lodge units and one self-contained unit.

When Britain entered the European Common market a year later, it was the end of guaranteed access for Australian exports. A loss of confidence in the dairy industry followed and over the next decade an unprecedented sell off of rural land in the region would occur – as the fertile agricultural lands were carved up for rural residential subdivisions and the region’s population started to grow.

In the local political arena, Eddie De Vere defeated David Low in the 1967 Council elections to become Chairman of Maroochy Shire Council. He adopted his predecessor’s enthusiasm for the potential of the tourism industry to stabilise the local economy against the continuing ups and downs that rural industries were experiencing.

Sadly Frank Nicklin suffered from ill health and in January 1968 he retired from the Premiership and Queensland Parliament. He served ten years and five months as Premier, which was then a Queensland record. Later in that same year he was knighted and dubbed ‘Sir Francis’. The long political reign of Joh Bjelke Petersen began, which would in time eclipse Nicklin’s record as Premier. At a public farewell, the local FruitGrowers organisation built a scale model of Nicklin’s home and pineapple

plantation at Palmwoods. Designed and supervised by Flo and Jim McGilchrist, the model was so large that it covered the whole of the hall stage where the function was held.

Matron Muriel Swanson, with her husband Ken's help, was also assisted by daughter Christine and husband Gordon Bing, from 1967-68, in a voluntary position in the everyday running of Sundale, helping out in the kitchen and dining room. Gordon also helped to maintain the grounds and was courier for the many catering items necessary for the residents. In a wonderful example of families continuing through the generations to care at Sundale, later in 1978 their daughter Patricia also followed the tradition of working at Sundale for a short time as a domestic at McGowan Lodge. Sadly, Ken Swanson passed away in 1968 and was greatly missed. With the support from residents and fellow team members, Matron Swanson gained the strength to continue at Sundale. She had witnessed the Sundale complex grow and take shape from the original 20 hostel beds to 46 beds by this time.

The Sunshine Coast's first commercial broadcasting station, Radio 4NA, went on air at 8am on 9th October 1968, broadcasting from the Maroochy Shire Town Hall in Nambour. The local radio station was very supportive and a boon to Sundale's fundraising efforts from its inception.

By May 1969, Stage Three saw a further 14 Lodge Units added to Nicklin Lodge and officially opened by the then Minister for Social Security, the Hon. W.C. Wentworth. This brought the total number of units to 58, but it seemed there was no end in sight to the demand for care and accommodation that Sundale was providing, and the Committee was working hard to try to meet that need.

Sundale's aim to meet the demand for accommodation was substantially boosted when Mrs L.B. McGowan of Caloundra left Sundale half of her Estate, a substantial bequest of \$50,000, which enabled planning for a second Lodge to go ahead. The skills of Noel Parry were once more enlisted. A tender in May 1969 by Latham and Haley for \$176,984 to build 36 hostel units with a dining room, lounge room, kitchen and supervisor's flat was accepted.



Signing the contract for Nicklin Lodge Stage 3: Ian Hayne, J.D. Grimes, builders Noel Poole, Andy Harcus and Noel Parry
(Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

On 3rd August 1970 Joh Bjelke Petersen, Premier of Queensland, officially opened and named McGowan Lodge to honour the bequest from Mrs McGowan which had made it possible. Seventeen of the 36 units were immediately occupied under Founder-Donor arrangements and more prospective residents were eager to enter the facility. Twelve more hostel units and one self contained flat were swiftly added to McGowan Lodge six months later by the same builders, at a cost of \$70,000.



Official opening of Stage 3 of Nicklin Lodge on 3rd May 1969
by Hon. W. Wentworth
(pictured in dark suit)
(Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

Joan Chapman, who volunteered at McGowan Lodge (and so much more!) recalls a function at McGowan not long after it opened. She remembers looking around and remarking that ‘My history is here, my Sunday school teachers, my parent’s friends and my neighbours. I always think of the history that is lost from the residents and (still) like to talk to them about their memories.’¹⁵ Joan also used to bring the Scout Cubs (aged 8-11 years) to Sundale to sit and listen to the stories of the elders, providing a cross-generational contact that enriched the lives of both age groups.

Interestingly, among the first intake of women residents to McGowan Lodge were a Mrs White, Mrs Green, Mrs Brown and, unbelievably, a Mrs Long and Mrs Short. Also among the early intake of male residents to Sundale were Val Thorp, former Manager of the Moreton Sugar Mill and Jim Blanch, a former Chairman of Nambour Cane Growers Council. They were both residents of McGowan Lodge at the same time. Birthdays for either of these two gentlemen meant an influx of cane growers or Mill executives from local and distant places and team members called these functions cane growers takeover days.

That gold sovereign cemented in the foundation bricks of the first building was symbolic of the generous and unselfish contributions – financial, physical and spiritual – that have flowed to the Sundale cause. It has brought good fortune beyond any expectations that could have been imagined at that time.

Thinking BIG

In an era of building BIG scale models to celebrate agriculture and attract tourists, an important local rural industry was celebrated at Woombye. A 16 metre tall fibreglass pineapple, dubbed the Big Pineapple, was officially opened on 15th August 1971 and quickly became known Australia-wide. The Big Pineapple literally put the Nambour region on the map, bringing 250,000 visitors to sample the local subtropical fruits, especially its famous fruit parfaits, in the first year of operation.



Above Left: The Big Pineapple **Above Right:** Caravan sponsored by the Rotary Club of Nambour promoting tourism on the Sunshine Coast, 1971 (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

By 1971 there were over 100 residents in the hostels and units of Sundale's Nambour complex. However, the Management Committee were deeply concerned that Sundale couples had to be split up when severe illness or physical disability made it necessary for one partner to leave the village, either temporarily or permanently, to go to hospital for 'nursing care'. They recognised an urgent need for a nursing home to care for residents onsite when they required greater care beyond that available in the hostels. The master plan created some ten years previously had always envisioned a nursing home as a vital part of Sundale and due to good planning and good fortune, the land had already been set aside right next door, leased in the meantime to Clyde Miles for cattle agistment.

The Commonwealth Government at this time established funding for two levels of care – low (hostel) and high (nursing home) care. Both Commonwealth and State Governments introduced new regulations to cover buildings and operations.

A Nursing Home Appeal was launched in June 1971 with an ambitious target of \$250,000. The Nambour Chronicle donated \$150 and two pages in the 10th June 1971 edition for a well presented feature article that provided great publicity for

Sundale. Amazingly, the fundraising target was reached in 13 weeks with support from Apex and other local organisations, and widespread donations from private individuals.

The Sundale Committee were overjoyed and decided to increase the number of beds from 30 to 40, accepting a tender from Harcus and Poole for \$287,935. The foundation stone was laid by then Governor of Queensland, Sir Colin Hannah, on 3rd September 1972.

In 1972, the Sundale Management Committee achieved charitable status in its own right. Until this time funds had been administered through the Apex accounts – creating many a headache for their successive treasurers. It was convenient that accountant Clem Renouf provided continuity. He was the inaugural Sundale Treasurer in 1964 and remained in that office until 1987, handling finances during an incredible phase of construction over a period of 23 years.

When the nursing home was officially opened on 9th September 1973 by Sir Frank Nicklin, 40 beds became available to provide nursing home care. It was a wonderful tribute to the faith of the community who had responded to fundraising appeals over so many years and to the Apexians and Sundale pioneers who steered the project. It was also a fitting honour to Sundale's founding Chairman to name the facility the James Grimes Nursing Home.



Representative of Nambour Jaycees presenting a cheque to Bill Robinson for the Sundale Garden Village Nursing Home Appeal, September 1971 (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)



Official opening of Stage 1 of the James Grimes Nursing Home by Sir Francis Nicklin, 9th September 1973.
Pictured (L to R): Hon. E.A. Adermann, Eddie De Vere, J.D. Grimes, Sir Francis Nicklin, William (Bill) Robinson and Hon. D. A. Low. (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

J.D. Grimes stood down as Administrator of Sundale in 1973 after 10 years in the position, but remained as Chairman. Roy Charlton's son Graeme took over for a short time (until the appointment of Mrs Joan Zander as Administrator in 1974).

The provision of more independent living cottages and units had also reached the planning stages by 1973. It was expected that a Government subsidy would be available, but it became apparent that Commonwealth grants no longer applied for this type of accommodation. The Committee was faced with a serious dilemma because they knew that the demand was there, and so they met this challenge with a new strategy called the Resident Funded Scheme. At this time, it meant that the prospective residents paid the total cost of the building, including proportionate site, services and landscaping costs. In return they enjoyed lifetime occupancy of the independent living units, subject to being able to care for themselves, and retained a financial interest as set out in a legal agreement between the resident and the organisation, that included the benefit of capital gain. Due to this innovation, Sundale was able to forge ahead without relying on Government assistance to provide more independent living units.

A major milestone was reached in 1973 when the final 12 units were built for Nicklin Lodge, bringing the total number to 58 units. From the initial seed, a whole community had grown and blossomed.

In 1963, Sundale's assets were £80,500 (\$161,000). Ten years later, they topped the \$1 million mark and, importantly, all buildings were completely debt free. Successive Management Committees (and subsequent Boards) have adopted this philosophy of being debt free, because it provides security for residents and ensures that a moderate fee structure can be maintained. What a careful balancing act was performed in these early days of Sundale's history by these dedicated yet unpaid 'managers'. They not only had to plan for increasing maintenance costs and future replacements of buildings and equipment, but drive an ambitious expansion program as well.

Sundale was in fact becoming a big business and a major economic contributor to Nambour and the region. Staff wages, Social Security and Department of Veterans' Affairs benefits were all spent in the local area; significant purchases were made through local businesses and overall a large amount of money flowed both directly and indirectly through Sundale. The initial building program had also coincided with a recession in the building industry and Sundale employed many locals as contractors and sub-contractors, keeping them in jobs during this period of high unemployment.

The partnership with Apex in creating Sundale Garden Village was beyond value. Apex volunteers worked in construction, maintenance, landscaping and mowed the land every Saturday with Victa mowers – finishing up with a BBQ and sing-a-long with Hazel Smith on piano. (Hazel later became a Sundale resident and has continued to entertain at Sundale for more than 30 years.) Apex promoted the Sundale cause with fundraisers and inspired others in the community to come to the party so to speak. Apexians and other volunteers assisted with fetes, the annual Christmas carols and other events that brought joy into the lives of Sundale residents.

No amount of funding alone can ever provide the little things that make a building a home or give the care and companionship that truly enriches the lives of our elders. J.D. Grimes was always clear-cut about Sundale needing the backing of a good Ladies Auxiliary following the demise of the original Committee. He set about finding a lady who would be a natural leader and key figure in a newly formed Auxiliary. He found such a person in Mrs Betty Rook and quickly called a meeting of interested ladies on 4th March 1974, at which Mrs Rook was elected President, supported by Mrs Thyra Parkin as Secretary and Mrs Phyllis Grimes as Treasurer. The Ladies Auxiliary worked



Betty Rook, First President of the Sundale Ladies Auxiliary

tirelessly to provide physical comforts and facilities for residents year after year in the late 1970s, when Sundale's available finance was barely sufficient to provide the capital costs of the developing village.

The Sundale canteen was started up in 1973, initially operated by the Ladies Auxiliary and later by Friends of Sundale volunteers. It continues today, and stocks convenience items like stamps, groceries, soft drinks and ice creams. Cards and handicrafts, all sewn, knitted or crocheted by the members, raises funds to put back into providing comforts for residents.

So many people were drawn to help out as volunteers, providing friendship and warmth to residents and steering the spiritual traditions of Sundale. It would be impossible to name and acknowledge them all, but in terms of longevity Joan Chapman stands out because she has been helping out at Sundale for over 40 years, following in the footsteps of her parents, Bob and Jessie Webb, who were Sundale volunteers from the beginning.

Rising to the Challenge

By 1976, extensions to the Nursing Home were urgently needed as Sundale was being inundated by applications from people seeking beds. Recognising the need, the Nursing Home team took the initiative and mounted a large red pig money box on a wheelchair outside the Nursing Home entrance with a sign: Donations to Nursing Home extensions thankfully received. The Sundale Management Committee was optimistic, but uncertain whether the community would respond yet again to a third appeal.

However, all doubts were rapidly dispelled. The gold sovereign was still working its magic when Tom Shaw and Henry Williams, representing the R.S.L. North Coast Zone, offered \$10,000 to provide two additional nursing beds. Once these R.S.L. representatives learned about the pressing need for many more beds, they consulted with their members and subsequently offered the services of the R.S.L. in spearheading a community appeal. An ambitious target of raising \$100,000 in one year was set.

At the launch of the appeal, a Committee was elected which consisted of Tom Shaw as Chairman, Henry Williams as Secretary/Treasurer, Ern Stollznow and Bill Robinson representing Sundale, his son Ted Robinson representing the R.S.L., publicity officer Alf Hutchings, and Peg Syphers and Hugh Pearson as Group Committee representatives. Almost 20% of the required funds were pledged at the launch of the appeal. This included a generous donation of \$5,000 from James and Phyllis Grimes and \$2,500 from the R.S.L. North Coast Zone and their Ladies Auxiliary, as well as a pledge from Sundale team members for \$10,000.

The appeal received great publicity from a colourful street procession, led by a group of visiting Gurkha soldiers on horseback. Sir Frank Nicklin officially opened the Sundale year-long appeal at a huge fete held in the Nambour Showgrounds following the procession on 1st May 1976. Large donations, such as \$7,000 from Nambour Rotary Club, and generous donations from the Nambour Chronicle, Moreton Sugar Mill, Queensland Hotels Association and the ANZ Bank were received.

Sundale team members took a very active part in organising the successful fetes and garden parties in the grounds to assist with fundraising. Other fundraising initiatives included holding auctions. Percy Rattray, the town's parking meter attendant, and who later became a Maroochy Shire Councillor (circa 1965-66) was enlisted as an auctioneer, and had great success in conducting regular fundraising auctions. People and businesses donated items to Sundale, (including at one time a motor vehicle from Walton Motors) and along with outdated equipment like beds and chairs from Sundale and possibly Eddie De Vere's multiple donations of cattle, all came under Percy's hammer. Community contributions totalled in excess of \$25,000. The goal was reached and exceeded. What a tremendous community response.

From its very beginnings, Sundale had struck a chord within the community and the demand for Sundale's services continued to grow. Although the volunteer Management Committee continued to rise to the challenges, the original vision of the Foundation Committee was still not complete, and there was so much more to do.

J.D. Grimes still chaired the Committee, supported by Clem Renouf as Treasurer. A new recruit to the office of Secretary in 1977 was Graham Chapman, a nominee of Apex. According to Joan (in 2012 his wife of 53 years) Graham and J.D. Grimes initially had differences over the interpretation of the minutes at some meetings and Graham came home from his first meetings stating 'I don't think I'll last a year in this.' Not only did Graham last for six years as Secretary, he went on to serve as Vice President for three years and would then become President for an incredible 24 years.

When former Queensland Premier and Sundale patron Frank Nicklin's declining health necessitated care, he came 'home' to Sundale and occupied a unit in Nicklin Lodge. Ern Stollznow described how from his former role as a servant to the people of Queensland, Frank Nicklin spontaneously took upon himself a similar role at Nicklin Lodge, often being found in the kitchen, wiping dishes or just helping out. In his generosity and love for Sundale, he also donated many of his personal effects to Sundale which were placed in a special room known as the Sir Francis Nicklin Historical Room. A very special function was held at Nicklin Lodge on 18th December 1977, when the historical room was officially opened by Sir George Fisher and dedicated to Sir Frank. The dedication was attended by ten Knights and seven Ladies of the realm and surely a royal feast was the order of the day.

On the same afternoon as the historical room was opened, the foundation stone of Stage Two of the James Grimes Nursing Home was laid by Hon. Sir Lew Edwards, who was Minister for Health in the Queensland Government at the time and later achieved further distinction as the Chairman of Expo '88 Committee.



Some of the memorabilia donated to Sundale by Sir Francis Nicklin (pictured in Nicklin Lodge 2012)

Putting the Garden into the Village

Sundale Garden Village had by this time rightly earned its name, but not without a lot of volunteer effort to establish the wonderful gardens. Ern Stollznaw, who was intimately involved with Sundale for almost two decades of its formative years and later wrote the book about the first 25 years of Sundale's history, paints some warm and friendly portraits of these times. He described the transformation:

“Drainage has transformed the low lying areas into delightful gardens and green lawns. From the leached and treeless land, avenues of trees of great variety, provided and planted by the residents have flourished to the extent that they now frame even the tallest of buildings of the village. The same ground which in the past yielded poor and often temporary crops doomed to premature failure provided the base for a crop of permanent buildings especially designed for the needs of frail aged people in the community. The buildings themselves have formed a buffer, blocking out the cold blasts of winter, creating a climate for the gardens to flourish all year round. More importantly there is an aura of warmth about the place, an atmosphere of youthful spirit and friendliness, something that is immediately obvious to visitors and felt by residents, many of whom lovingly tend their gardens and proudly walk through the Sundale gardens with almost an attitude of reverence. The muddy soil of yesteryear has become precious to them; it is part of their life and part of the village which they love to call home.”¹⁶

Among the early Sundale residents dedicated to caring for the gardens was Dick Heley, who was a resident in Nicklin Lodge from July 1967 to August 1982 and then a resident of the James Grimes Nursing Home. Ern Stollznaw wrote about Dick:

“Dick Heley’s great joy was caring for the Nicklin gardens. Despite physical disabilities, he would sally forth from the workshop each morning, one hand supporting rake, spade, hoe and fork on his shoulder; the other hand grasping a huge watering can. Often he never reached the gardens – a loose stone or stick would trip him and cause him to crash with a thump to the ground amid all the gear in a tangled mess resembling something like a wrecked helicopter. Rising from the ground and bleeding profusely from the nose like a Rugby League player after a torrid match, Dick would apologise to those who dusted him off and, under the care of Matron Swanson, return to the Hostel to be patched up in the recovery room. He would not stay there. After a short time, he would be back on the job, determined to beautify the village which would be his home for more than two decades.”¹⁷

The work of Dick and other residents, Apexians, Cubs, Scouts, Committee members, volunteers and staff had certainly transformed Sundale into the Garden Village of the original vision. Ern Stollznow penned these words of tribute to the volunteers who made it happen:

“It is somewhat difficult to fully understand or appreciate the acts of service (performed) in respect to the beautiful established gardens, so much admired by locals and visitors. While each garden shows the individual preference of the resident, whether by design or otherwise, they seem to complement each other and blend perfectly into the overall scene in a way far beyond the wildest dreams of the architect and the Committee. Nor have such acts of service been limited to residents. Groups of school children provide concerts; high school students have sought and found work experience service at Sundale, while Scouts and Cubs have come to know Sundale residents personally during their many visits.

People and community groups provide cars and time to take residents on outings; volunteers work side by side with nursing and therapy staff. Visiting choirs provide items that delight even the oldest and frailest residents. The magnificent avenue of trees bordering the main thoroughfare of Sundale was established, after two previous attempts by Sundale staff had met with disaster, by the late Doug Grigg of Palmwoods. The list of acts of service to Sundale is endless.”¹⁸

Another new addition to the growing Sundale team in 1977 was the first hairdresser, Eunice Krome. As a hairdressing apprentice she had done Matron Swanson’s hair in the very early days of Sundale. Then, after working away in Brisbane, she found herself back at Sundale’s Doolan Street campus ‘doing hair’ in 1977, servicing the residents in Nicklin Lodge and the first three independent living units. One day a week or fortnight, with her two young children in tow, she would drag a little trolley filled

with the tools of her trade around the grounds to give residents the then mandatory shampoo, blue rinse and set.¹⁹ Eunice quickly became an important part of village life.

Ern Stollznow followed in the footsteps of J.D. Grimes, and became Sundale's fourth Administrator in 1977. He remained in this role for a decade, but Ern had been part of the Sundale family from the early 1970s. There were no university courses in aged care back then, no degrees or diplomas in administering a not-for-profit organisation, and the way that Ern Stollznow was appointed was typical of the acts of faith in people shown by Sundale Management Committee. Clem Renouf recalled:

“We were looking for someone who could take care of the grounds, and be a handyman around the then small but growing village. Ern had recently sold his cane farm and he was willing to work part-time for a very modest financial reward. I sometimes wonder whether J.D. realised when he made that appointment, the hidden potential of the part-time janitor. He probably did.

On paper, his qualifications to assume the responsibility of administration of the rapidly growing village in 1977 were meagre – no previous experience; no formal qualifications; no training in the administrative and financial aspects of such an organisation. But he loved Sundale and its people. He had already demonstrated that. He defended it fiercely (even illogically on occasions) against criticism. Publicly, he was its most ardent supporter. In Committee meetings he was unremitting in the pursuit of his goals for his cherished organisation. If on occasions he appeared firm in his advocacy (and he was) it was because he believed passionately in his work, and in the responsibility he had to the community and the residents of the village... In Sundale, we continue to see the guiding hand and the spiritual conviction of Ern Stollznow, who turned a job into a vocation.”²⁰

1978— a Landmark Year

In 1978, it was 15 years since that gold sovereign has been placed in the footings of the first building and Premier Frank Nicklin had laid the first foundation stone.

However, Sir Frank had suffered further ill health and he entered the James Grimes Nursing Home for higher level care. Whilst there he donated \$25,000 towards the extensions, showing once again his tremendous regard and support for Sundale. He died peacefully at Sundale on 29th January 1978, aged 82 years. By his own request, he was not given a State funeral.

Following the death of Sir Frank Nicklin, Maroochy Shire Council Chairman Eddie De Vere became Sundale's second patron and the work of getting the funds for extensions to the Nursing Home continued.

It was a sad beginning to what was to prove a very big year in Sundale’s history. The death of J.D. Grimes only a few weeks later dealt a double blow to the organisation. Ern Stollznow wrote this tribute:

“Looking back over almost two decades of personal involvement in Sundale by James Grimes, one can only marvel at how from the very beginning he was able to visualise the total concept of Sundale Garden Village – its goals and philosophies, its capacity to attract support from the community; the Committee and staff structures. By personal leadership and example he modelled for Committee members, staff and residents, the graciousness, concern and dedication of a Christian gentleman. Supervisors and administrators brought into service during his term of office were inspired by his friendly encouragement not to settle for less than their full potential in service to Sundale. They appreciated his interest in their views and opinions and his life is written deep into the affections of Sundale residents who knew him as a trusted friend and counsellor. Committee members remember him as a President who never laid a burden on them that he was not first prepared to carry himself; and a friend who gave of his time and ability until the very last days of his life.”²¹

Two streets in Nambour, Davidson Street and Grimes Terrace, and the J.D. Grimes Stand at Nambour Showgrounds bear testimony to his work with numerous other community organisations as well as Sundale. He was awarded an MBE for a lifetime of charitable work in the community.



Eddie De Vere, Chairman of Maroochy Shire Council 1967-1982,
who became Sundale’s Patron in 1978
(Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

William ‘Bill’ Robinson, who had been on the Committee since 1966 and Vice President since 1973, took over as the President. Bill had served for five years as an RAAF photographer and then founded a photographic studio in Noosaville in the late 1940s with his wife Phyllis. In 1949, they moved to Nambour and opened a photographic studio and later camera shop in Currie Street called the Lucky Tourist Agency, which was at the time renowned for being the only one in Queensland with a Golden Casket agency.

Australia celebrated the life of Sir Robert Menzies when he died on Australia Day in 1978. He was widely regarded as the founder of the Liberal Party and was Prime Minister for a total of 18 years, 5 months and 12 days (which was in 2012 the longest serving time of any Australian Prime Minister).



Bill Robinson in his photographic studio, circa 1978

At this time, the Federal Government, now under Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, was facing significant economic challenges. With unemployment close to 7%, there were 20 unemployed people for every job vacancy advertised. Inflation was running at more than 7% and the promised capital grants for nursing homes were deferred by one year. The Government grant of four dollars for every one dollar fundraised when Sundale began its appeal was reduced to two dollars for every one dollar fundraised. This made it necessary to raise additional funds to fill a gap of \$37,000. Fortunately the bequest from Sir Frank Nicklin assisted Sundale to reach this target.

Tenders were called in early 1978 for Stage Two of the Nursing Home and were awarded to Hope Constructions to build a 30 bed extension for \$290,000. Construction started in March 1978 and eventually a design for 38 beds was negotiated for \$330,000.

The original dream of providing an easy transition for Sundale elders from independent living to nursing home in the one village was well underway, thanks to the hard work of the Sundale Committee and the tremendous support of staff and the community.

During 1978, the Management Committee received an unusual proposal. At that time, the enthusiastic Vice President of Sundale was Ray Grace, who sought to interest his friends, Mr and Mrs Fred Johns, in taking up residence at Sundale. Ray introduced this couple to the Committee with their proposition that they would provide approximately 90% of the cost to build a residence in Sundale, one which was identical to their beloved home in Buderim. It became literally a home away from home for the Johns and they spent nine happy years at Sundale, eventually moving to Nicklin Lodge and then into the Nursing Home. It was a unique proposal that proved to be an example of an unexpected gift of mutual benefit to the donor and the recipient. (The house was still in use in 2013 as administration offices for Sundale).

1978 was also the 75th anniversary of the Nambour Chronicle, which played such an important part in promoting Sundale. A special newspaper supplement was published that included an article titled ‘Garden Village ... Home away from Home’. It described the strong community support that had made possible the extraordinary growth of Sundale. People believed in Sundale because it was a local community organisation helping the most vulnerable and frail members of society. In 1978, fifteen years after that first building was completed, Sundale Garden Village was providing a happy home for almost 200 residents.

Among these early residents was Fred Mayer, who moved into Nicklin Lodge in 1978 along with his pheasants. Ern Stollznaw wrote about Fred’s legacy to Sundale:

“Little did anyone realise the impact this quiet gentleman would have on the lifestyle of residents in drawing them out of their lodge units to the great outdoors, or the prestige Sundale would achieve from being one of the first aged peoples’ villages to recognise the therapeutic value of having pet birds or animals about the village.”²²

Fred Mayer had in fact received an MBE for his work in establishing the Baiyer River Sanctuary in New Guinea and obtaining a collection of small mammals for the British Museum. As a resident of Sundale he set up two aviaries which he cared for meticulously, searching the grounds daily for thistles and grubs to ensure that the birds had a nutritious and balanced diet and delighting residents and visitors. He also bred mealworms to feed the birds. The descendants of the male and female Golden Pheasants that Fred brought to Sundale in 1978 reside in the aviary in 2013. The male is a particularly impressive and colourful bird and obviously king of the roost.



Fred Mayer and one of the aviaries he established at Sundale Garden Village

Finally, still in 1978, Clem Renouf (one of the partners in Enterprise Estates which gave the original land for Sundale Garden Village) was elected as President of Rotary International. The significance of this for our Sundale story will soon be revealed.

Building Community

The pressing challenge was to see the completion of Stage Two of the James Grimes Nursing Home, amid a shortfall created because the Commonwealth grant of four to one, when the appeal was launched, had been reduced to two to one. The substantial donation of \$25,000 by the late Sir Frank Nicklin had helped Sundale to reach the goal, and the official opening of Stage Two of the Nursing Home was held on 3rd February 1979, bringing the total number of beds to 81 beds. Ceremonies were performed by Hon. Evan Adermann and Sundale President, Bill Robinson, spoke at the opening:

“The concept of caring for others in need is a wonderful concept – a truly Christian concept – you cared enough to make this building possible, you cared enough to help fulfil this need in our community. Your thanks will come not from my inadequate words, but from the hundreds of grateful people who will come here to receive skilled and loving care in their times of illness and distress.” ²³

With rumours of Commonwealth building subsidies drying up the Committee had to consider going it alone without a Commonwealth grant to complete the Nursing Home with 26 more beds attached to another (A) wing. This was happily not the case, but the following story shows how the resourceful Committee had to consider politics as a survival tool.

As an exercise in public relations, the Management Committee had invited Senator Margaret Guilfoyle, Minister for Social Security in the Fraser Government, to visit Sundale and lay the foundation stone during one of her visits to the area. Political protocols being what they are, very short notice was finally received that the Minister would be in Nambour on a certain date. Being ill-prepared with little to show the Minister, the architect produced a mock-up wall of the building and plans and the Committee spoke enthusiastically to the Minister who, apparently, did not need sweetening up. She announced at the function that the extensions would receive a Commonwealth grant and spoke glowingly about the high standards at the existing Nursing Home.

However, there was no doubting the fact that Government funding for independent living units was off the budget list, but thanks to the forethought of the Committee, Sundale expansions were full speed ahead. The Resident Funded Scheme was of benefit to all concerned – providing residents with high standard units or cottages at the lowest possible cost. The younger group of residents who came into these units took great pride in their new homes and added new dimensions of beauty to the gardens. You could say that the place blossomed under the care of these new residents. But more than that, they gave friendship and service to residents in the nursing home and hostels – strengthening the village community with strong webs of supportive human relationships.

While J.D. Grimes did not live to see the project materialise, on 27th October 1979, his wife Phyllis became the first person to occupy a duplex unit. She was closely followed by Mr and Mrs Edgar Perren. These three foundation residents played a great part in the success of the project by opening their doors and allowing their units to be used as ‘display units’ for other prospective residents. It is believed that Sunvilla, Nicklin and McGowan Courts were all completed as part of the original Resident Funded Scheme.

The Sundale Garden Village master plan (dating back to 1963) had provided for a third hostel style building (lodge) to be constructed adjacent to the Nursing Home. When Miss Daisy Bowder entered McGowan Lodge on 9th July 1979, this enabled the Committee to proceed with building the last lodge at the Nambour site. Over a decade previously an agreement had been made with Daisy Bowder and her sister Kathleen, whereby a property at Yandina would be donated to Sundale when the need to move into Sundale facilities arose. So, when Miss Daisy Bowder moved into McGowan

Lodge, the agreement was activated, the property subsequently sold and the Committee resolved that the new lodge, with \$50,000 from this extremely generous bequest, would be named Bowder Lodge in memory of the generosity of Misses Daisy and Kathleen Bowder. The Committee was ready to go with the rest of the funds and started planning a 32 unit lodge.

In 1980, the Norcon Building Company tender of \$237,319 was accepted to build the final stage of the Nursing Home to provide 26 additional nursing home beds. During construction, it was decided to add eight more beds at a cost of \$46,000 and later these extra beds were also approved for a Commonwealth Government subsidy. The 34 beds were completed and occupied by October 1980, bringing the total number of beds to 115.

This was the pinnacle of the nursing home concept according to Sundale's original master plan. What a great achievement by and for the whole community. It built community and kept alive the philosophy of 'Doing unto others as you would have them do unto you;' as old age is something that with the best of life's fortunes, awaits us all.

Joan Zander was an important team member for many years, serving in a number of positions that included Administrator of Sundale from 1974-1977 and Nursing Superintendant from 1974-1980. Joan would go on to serve as Domestic Supervisor from 1980-1982 and in other positions as yet uninvented. She was typical of the loyalty that Sundale inspired in people who worked there and in her 'spare' time Joan would form the Sundale Choir.



Staff of Sundale Garden Village at a gathering to honour Joan Zander, circa 1980. Pictured (L to R)
Back Row: G. Funke, C. Pickering, L. Eland, P. Haben, C. Wood, L. Watson, K. Pearman (Deputy Administrator), D. Henman and J. Petek **Second Row:** G. Harris, T. Bertram, F. Winston, N. Marshall, T. Daveson, G. Kopp, P. Assaillet, D. Hitchins, R. Morrell, (unknown), J. Duff, M. Tebbut, Joan Zander, B. Rogers, P. Hargraves, S. Czislowksi, S. Foster, R. Stower and M. Ellis. **Front Row:** C. Adermann, D. Steinhardt, R. Wilson, J. Sturgess, J. Wood, D. Fair, M. Cummings, P. Cain, J. Heazle, D. Brook, J. Jensen, A. Sawrey and J. Kerle (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

Because they did not have to pursue the interests of shareholders or remote management like large corporations, the Sundale Committee were dedicated to providing affordable homes to meet the needs of residents. They decided to extend the services of Sundale in another new direction by providing less costly bed-sitter independent living units attached to McGowan Lodge for single people who would be under supervision from Lodge staff, ensuring they could remain in their bed sitter units as long as possible. Brown & Thorne's tender of \$227,000 for 14 bed sitter units was accepted in June 1981. The job was completed and McGowan Court officially opened on 17th November 1981.

Another new addition was a hairdressing salon in Nicklin Lodge. The Sundale Ladies Auxiliary raised funds for the salon, which opened in September 1981. No longer would Eunice Krome have to drag her little trolley around the Sundale grounds, and the residents enjoyed getting their hair set in comfort in the new salon.²⁴

Meanwhile Bowder Lodge was proceeding more slowly than anticipated due to lengthy discussions with the Department of Community Services. The Government would only approve a capital grant for 20 units out of the proposed 32 units, and only if the building was



Eunice Krome, hairdresser at the first salon in Nicklin Lodge, with Mrs Manners and Mrs Fergus, September 1981
(Courtesy of Eunice Krome)

used exclusively for hostel purposes, not the mixed uses as initially planned. The ever optimistic Committee decided to proceed with building 32 units, accepting a tender from Bli Bli Nominees for \$448,200. The extra funds were provided by the generous action of most of the 32 foundation residents, who made donations ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,000. Joan Zander was appointed the Supervisor of the newly erected Bowder Hostel.

And the icing on the cake – the Government funded 20 units and then at a later stage subsidised the remaining 12 units – a suitable reward for the courage and conviction of the Management Committee. The official opening of Bowder Lodge took place on 28th November 1982. Daisy Bowder unveiled a plaque on 11th July 1982, in recognition of both sisters’ contribution.



Daisy Bowder unveiling a plaque to commemorate the laying of the foundation stone for Bowder Lodge, 11th July 1982. Pictured (L to R): Rod Voller, (Architect of Sundale from 1976), Daisy Bowder and Bill Robinson (President of Sundale 1978 to 1985) (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

Ern Stollznaw described the official opening by then Queensland Senator, Flo Bjelke-Petersen on 28 November 1982:

“Outside the building on the day of its opening... the weather was rainy, bleak and cold, in direct contrast to the warm glow on the faces of the foundation residents as, together with a huge gathering of people, they witnessed the opening of Bowder Hostel by Hon. Lady Flo Bjelke Petersen. In her inimitable style, the Senator referred to Sundale as being similar in size to many small but important towns in Queensland.”²⁵

Indeed Sundale was like a small town, a community in its own right. The original Sundale Garden Village master plan was complete, but the energetic Committee now had plans for a Day Therapy Centre and a Chapel on the site. Whilst these would take several more years to materialise, other exciting developments were waiting in the wings.

History Repeats Itself

The population of the Sunshine Coast's three Local Government areas topped 100,000 in 1981 and a period of rapid population growth followed across the region. A symbol of the times was the publication of the first regional newspaper, the *Sunshine Coast Daily*, on 7th July 1980.

Pressure for land to accommodate housing and industrial development increased enormously during the early 1980s. The gradual disappearance of the pineapple farms – once part of the backbone of the region's economy – was another sign of the declining agricultural foundation. However, agricultural based tourism had become popular with the Big Cow, the Macadamia Nut Plantation next to the Big Pineapple, Ginger Town at Yandina and the Deer Park at Forest Glen celebrating the farming heritage of the area. By the mid 1980s tourism would overtake sugar as Maroochy Shire's major industry. Although most of the land development was taking place on the flat land on the coast, Nambour's retail sector received a big boost with the opening of Stage One of Nambour Plaza on 8th July 1982.

1982 also brought a major political change to Local Government in Maroochy Shire when Eddie De Vere was defeated by Don Culley, after 15 years as Mayor. As well as patron of Sundale, Eddie De Vere was patron to more than 50 organisations and his many contributions to public life, which included 31.5 years on Maroochy Shire Council, had been recognised with the award of an OBE (The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in December 1980.

A significant proportion of new residents moving to the Sunshine Coast area were in fact seeking retirement in a warm climate and the demand for Sundale's independent living units far exceeded availability. With the original Sundale Garden Village all but complete and the land almost fully allocated, a new chapter was destined to begin. History was about to repeat itself.

As previously mentioned, Clem Renouf (one of the original Sundale benefactors) became the President of Rotary International in 1978. Rotary is a worldwide organisation of business and professional leaders with a mission to provide humanitarian services, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations and help to build goodwill and peace in the world. Rotary International exists in 160 countries and has more than a million members. The Rotary Club of Nambour was the first Rotary Club established on the Sunshine Coast. It was chartered in 1949 and Clem Renouf was the first Secretary, then moving through the ranks as President of the Rotary Club of Nambour (1954-55; District Governor (1965-66); Director of Rotary International (1970-72) and finally reaching the highest office of Rotary International President (1978-79).

A second club, called the Rotary Club of Nambour 76, had been chartered in 1976 and together these Clubs were going to make Rotary history and initiate one of the largest and most significant projects undertaken at this time by two Rotary Clubs in collaboration.



Rotary Club of Nambour 76 Charter Night 1976. **Pictured Standing:** New club President Col Grimes (on podium) beside District Governor, Ray Sadler. **Seated include:** Clem Renouf, (centre at end of table) a charter member of the Rotary Club of Nambour and Cr E.O. De Vere, Chairman of the Maroochy Shire Council (far left behind table) (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

Ern Stollznow commented on these times:

“It was the strength of the initial effort by the Apex Club and concerned citizens of the area that guaranteed from the very beginning the phenomenal future growth of Sundale. In a strange unexpected way history was to repeat itself by the establishment of Rotary Garden Village in 1982, which in many ways paralleled the establishment of Sundale Clem Renouf took on the same role that Ian Hayne had played 20 years before, that of challenging the Rotary Club of Nambour and the Rotary Club of Nambour 76 to come on board and support Sundale’s vision with some hard work.”²⁶

Fortunately, the residents of what became the Rotary Garden Village have compiled their own history, with acknowledgement given to the work of residents Myra Blanch, the support from John and Phyllis Keenan and others including Wally Oswin and his son Kelvin (Rotary Club of Nambour), Alan Donaldson (Rotary Club of Nambour), Ethel Booth (a pioneer resident), Megan Gower, Jessie Watt, Sir Clem Renouf,

Robyn Stower, Phillip Tierney and George Watt for photographs. In this resident's history of Rotary Garden Village, Myra Blanch records that:

“When Clem Renouf returned home in July 1979 after having served as the President of Rotary International in 1978-79, he asked the Rotary Club of Nambour to suggest a project, preferably youth oriented, to which the \$US25,000 he had received as an honorarium could be contributed... Surprisingly, it wasn't easy – not for such a modest sum. In those days the Australian dollar enjoyed a premium against the U.S. dollar, so that the \$US25,000 was worth only \$22,500 in Australia. How things have changed. It was during this period of searching for a meaningful youth-oriented project that the Committee of Sundale Garden Village became concerned with its inability to meet the seemingly insatiable demand for accommodation for aged persons, because of a lack of capacity on its site, now largely built out. It was obvious that here was a real need which could and should be met, and the (Rotary) Clubs decided to direct its efforts in this direction. Accordingly, a plan was prepared, but not before an approach was again made to Enterprise Estates to acquire a site in Windsor Road. They agreed to donate 15 acres.”

Ern Stollznaw described the land:

“The land involved was part of an old sugarcane farm which in earlier years had produced record crops of cane, during the time it was owned by the McKinnon family. In 1982 only a few tottering bridges, a derelict timber derrick and rusted tram rails embedded in the top soil remained as evidence of the times and work of a pioneering family during the developing years of the Nambour sugar industry. It was the very same land that in 1962 had been considered by the first Sundale Committee as a site for a Sundale village. Before a decision could be made at that time, the land was withdrawn from sale. How remarkable that after two decades, this particular land would come into the possession of Sundale, at no cost, through the generosity of the same group of people – the partners of Enterprise Estates, the Grimes family, Roy Charlton and Clem Renouf.”²⁷

Myra Blanch continues the story:

“And so the elements came together – the land; the honorarium; the idea; and the commitment of the Rotary Club of Nambour and Nambour 76 to raise an additional amount of about \$40,000 by each club to get the project under way. That plan, although later amended, was the original financial blueprint, and the basis on which the two clubs voted to proceed with the establishment of the Nambour Rotary Garden Village.

The original intention was to establish it independently of Sundale, and for that purpose a not-for-profit private company was formed, limited by guarantee, with a Board of Directors comprising equal representation from the two Rotary clubs. However, before the land could be transferred without involving the donors in paying income tax on its value (about \$120,000 despite the fact that it was being donated), it was necessary to obtain tax deductibility for any donations to the company. This took a further 18 frustrating months.

But there were compensations. The original \$AU22,500 grew to a little over \$AU33,000 after paying US tax on the interest earned, which was also aided by a devaluation of the Australian dollar. The two Rotary Clubs had raised their \$40,000 each. And there had been time to consider the advisability of bringing the new village under the direct ownership and control of Sundale Garden Village, although as a separate identity.”

Before the project could get off the ground an enormous amount of discussion took place. It was a matter of great concern to all parties to avoid competition for public support between Sundale and the Rotary village, which were two institutions with similar objectives in this case. Ern Stollznaw, as Administrator of Sundale Garden Village, was keen to see a formal partnership rather than a loose co-operation and Clem Renouf steered discussions with Rotary by proposing a formal partnership with Sundale. Although some in Rotary may have wanted to go it alone, the fact that the Sundale administration was respected and well-established convinced everyone to work together and the proposal was adopted. In hindsight, this can be viewed as one of the most positive steps taken by both the Sundale Management Committee and the two Rotary Clubs, to work toward a common goal instead of becoming competitors, a trait which Sundale continues to embrace.

Formal agreement was reached on 25th March 1982 and it was settled that subsequent amendments to the Sundale Constitution would provide for an enlarged Management Committee to consist of four representatives from the Apex Club of Nambour; two from the Rotary Club of Nambour; two from the Rotary Club of Nambour 76; and three community representatives. It was also agreed that the complex would be called the Rotary Garden Village: a Division of Sundale. Residents in the Rotary Garden Village would be given access to Sundale facilities and hostel type accommodation, nursing home and other care as required, because it would be years before that level of care could be provided in the new Village.

The rezoning application went through Council in mid 1982. Max Imhoff had already pegged out the internal roads and a small part of the land further along Windsor Road was set aside for a kindergarten under separate ownership. By July 1982, contracts had been let to build six 2 bedroom units, five 1 bedroom units, a duplex of 2 bedroom

units and a single dwelling. Unbelievably, they were all spoken for and additional units were already being planned. Stage One was proposed to comprise 53 units at a cost of approximately \$1.9 million. It was financed by Sundale bridging finance with around 10% from resident funded loans, with absolutely no Government subsidies.

Myra Blanch records that the final hurdle of obtaining title to the land was removed by the agreement that Sundale would be the legal entity to hold the land:

“The way was now clear to proceed. The not-for-profit company was no longer needed. Tax deductibility was irrelevant because Sundale provided that. And so finally, on 7th February 1983, a contract was entered into between Sundale Garden Village and Enterprise Estates for the purchase of 15 acres (5.99 hectares) of land in Windsor Road, Nambour at a cost of \$120,000. On the same day, Enterprise Estates made a donation of the same amount to Sundale.”

But in fact, the work had already begun. In mid-December 1982 the first bulldozers had trundled onto the site, and begun the earthworks to re-shape the block. The overgrown 15 acres of land on Windsor Road, Burnside was being transformed.

“The rapid transformation from a deserted cane farm overgrown with blady grass to choice residential land was the direct result of voluntary labour provided by Rotary Club members under the direction of Ian Bennett. Unlike Apex Club members, who in the early development of Sundale had to work with hand tools, picks and shovels, the Rotary volunteers had the assistance of heavy machinery provided by farmers and friends of Rotary. Working with machinery also helped in vanquishing a few former inhabitants (snakes) of the disused cane farm noted for their black and brown skins, and fierce determination to maintain their ‘land rights’.”²⁸

The other great thing about the service clubs like Rotary, and Apex, is of course the professional skills of members. Among those enlisted was Rod Voller, who had recently come from Brisbane to Nambour to retire, but soon found himself caught up in the project to which he would contribute thousands of hours on a voluntary basis as honorary architect and planner.

A working sub-committee had been set up comprising seven members: two from each Rotary Club, and three from Sundale with Clem Renouf as Chairman, Doug Clarke as Secretary, Keith Hallett, Graham Chapman, Keith Swan, Geoff Littler and Col Grimes. Rotary accepted responsibility for the development of Stage One to a value of \$60,000, which covered ground development, roads, water, sewerage, light and power and construction of up to 42 resident funded units. At that stage they would hand over to the Sundale Garden Village Management Committee, which provided administrative and financial support from Day One.

Whilst others were making big money in land development along the Sunshine Coast, the development of Stage One of what became the Rotary Garden Village was the primary responsibility of a sub-committee of seven volunteers. It was taxing work and mostly done before or after their ‘paying jobs’.



Work begins on Rotary Garden Village, 1983

A Wet Beginning

1983 was a year of extremes. The terrible Ash Wednesday bushfires started in February and burnt out 300,000 hectares of land in Victoria and South Australia resulting in 71 deaths, 2,000 homes destroyed and property damage estimated at \$400 million. Also in that February, huge dust storms had carried away 50 million tonnes of topsoil from the Victorian Mallee and Wimmera regions, which was followed by the wettest month since 1910 in the same area. In Queensland, drought breaking rains had begun in March. By 3rd May 1983, all of Queensland was declared a disaster area, after 14 days of continuous rain flooded nine river systems.

The Bob Hawke led ALP Government was elected in March 1983, ushering in what would prove to be a lengthy term for Labor in the Federal Government arena, and the Sundale Management Committee awaited the inevitable changes in Commonwealth policies affecting aged care.

Meanwhile, on 13th April 1983, the Sunshine Coast region was in a state of excitement about a royal visit by Prince Charles and Princess Diana. The royal couple arrived by RAAF jet at Maroochy Airport and then travelled along the Coolum Road to

the Yandina Ginger Factory to be greeted by a huge crowd before visiting the Big Pineapple and were fortunately not interrupted by the rain which had so recently plagued the region.

But 1983 however is best remembered locally for Wet Wednesday, which occurred on 22nd June 1983, when 350mm (14 inches) of rain was dumped in 24 hours, to 9am in the morning. Nambour received a colossal 250mm (10 inches) of rain between 4:45am and 8am. Petrie Creek rose to unprecedented levels but thanks to good planning, Sundale Garden Village was high and dry. The Coles supermarket next to Petrie Creek experienced a metre of water through their store and in nearby Coronation Drive, a massive wall of water surged down Petrie Creek sweeping away 14 vehicles in Ray Grace's Mitsubishi car dealership (in 2013 site of the R.S.L. car park).

Sundale Management Committee member Graham Chapman had been called in to help Ray Grace move office equipment in the early morning before dawn broke, at the height of the downpour, and was there when Petrie Creek broke its banks. The water burst into the shops opposite, flushing through the bakery ovens and fridges, breaking the glass doors of the Ray Grace showroom opposite. It was clearly time to leave and Graham described their dramatic escape, thanks to a nylon rope. After scrambling up onto the top of the Kevlar tent, where cars were stored under for sale, and with the water still rising Graham explained:

“I grabbed a spanner or something... tied it to the rope and threw it across to the tyre business (Beaurepairs) on the opposite corner of Mitchell Street where the tyre workers were sheltering, and they tied it to a street sign. I tied my end to a little fence at the end of the used car lot and one by one we went along the rope. When my turn came, the road was washed out underneath my footing and I had nothing to stand on. Holding the 10mm anchor rope, I slid down to the middle of the stream of water – the rope cutting into my hand – holding on with water rushing along at 20km/h. I was repeatedly washed under and took gulping breaths each time I came back up. Pat Egan, the Ray Grace Service Manager at the time, came across on the rope and broke his hand open too, and then together we let go and the current washed us down the road. We were able to get out where the current slowed and we could walk out. Office Manager Mal Stewart was rescued from the roof but Ray was trapped in the roof void and only when the SES arrived and took off the roofing sheets were they able to pluck Ray Grace from the roof later that morning.”²⁹

Graham Chapman (in 2012) still keeps in touch with and often visits Pat Egan. As Graham describes it, he is simply looking out for Pat, just like Pat looked after him on that fateful Wet Wednesday.

Ray Grace had served as Sundale Vice President from 1978-83 and when he stepped down, Graham Chapman became Vice President, and as part of the reshuffle, teacher Stuart Napier became Secretary at the 1983 Sundale Annual General Meeting. Stuart would go on to serve for an outstanding 28 years as Secretary as well as dedicating much of his time as a volunteer to bring joy into the lives of residents. Some Sundale memorabilia saved by Stuart includes a gilt-edged invitation to the 20th Anniversary Dinner for Nicklin Lodge on 24th October 1983, which provides a real taste of the times. The menu was superb and included an exotic fruit trifle for dessert and coffee with Drambuie. Now that's a celebration.



A dramatic rescue on Wet Wednesday, 22nd June 1983
(taken by Robinson Studios and part of the *Wet Wednesday* publication)

At Rotary Garden Village, construction had commenced in March 1983 with the first six 2 bedroom town houses. Despite the wet weather, six months later, on 21st September 1983, the very first resident, Phyllis Lyneham, moved in. Ern Stollznov has recorded the event in his inimitable style:

“The first resident, Mrs Phyllis Lyneham, occupied Unit No. 9 and for a brief period was the sole occupant of the new Village – and what an introduction to a peaceful and secure Village she received. Dogs howled all night long; curlews, as in protest at being banished from their natural habitat, gave out their melancholy piercing shrieks, right at the back door. The pale rising moon etched the many skeleton buildings under construction in eerie shadows and, when the breeze sprang up, unfastened materials from these buildings brought forth many different versions of what is commonly known as things that go bump in the night. Mrs Lyneham’s ordeal was short lived, as Mrs Isabelle Cunningham and Mr and Mrs George Sealey arrived three days later and settled into units close by...

Under Rod Voller's supervision, practical, functional, well-equipped units and cottages became available at low cost to eager applicants and the project also brought people home. People who had left Nambour in bygone years returned to the circle of their former friends (and) people living in the cold regions of other States availed themselves of the opportunity to retire in the warm Sunshine Coast area." ³⁰



Above Left: Phyllis Lynham, the first resident at Rotary Garden Village, 1983

Above Right: Units 9 – 14, 1983

A great example of someone returning to their roots was Myra Blanch, who had been born in Nambour in 1910 and came back to live in Rotary Garden Village in November 1983 – towards the end of that very wet year. Myra had trained as a nurse at Nambour Hospital. Another resident who arrived at the same time was Ethel Booth, who had worked at nearby Selangor Private Hospital for approximately 20 years on the staff, becoming Deputy Matron. Many of the women who came to live at the Village had been nurses and carried on their caring traditions of a lifetime within the Village. Myra Blanch has written her own personal account of these pioneering days at the Village:

“I took up residence in Rotary Garden Village on 26th November 1983. There were ten other residents already settled in on the Windsor Road aspect, a row of cottages and town houses. So, I just didn't make the Top Ten, but can honestly lay claim to being one of the pioneers.

At that time of the year, of course, it can always be expected to rain at any time – and it did. There had been some turf laid on the south western road entrance only. Access roads inside the Village site were gravel, and there were heaps of it with boulders and rubbish on the embankment on Windsor Road side. Although workers were busy erecting a brick retaining wall, water used to spurt through the weep-holes at the base of the wall and flood our little

courtyards continually. I am told that the lower section of Windsor Road used to be known as Puddles Road, which I thought very apt. The residents in the town houses on the top of the hill were the Lavender Hill mob.

We had no postal services then. All mail had to be addressed through Sundale. No transport, unless you had your own car. The Suncoast Taxi Service did not know where we were and if you called them, minute instructions as to how to find us had to be given. We had to warn them to tell the drivers to start counting at Number Two because Number One just wasn't there. Sticking house numbers on the uprights of carports helped.

For all that, we were a happy little bunch, all pitching in and helping each other. Our philosophy was - Well, we chose to come here, knowing it was not yet fully established and it was up to us to make the best of it and make it work, which we did. A sense of humour helped. And the administration and maintenance staff of Sundale were unfailingly helpful. What they could do for us, they did. What they could not do at the time – well, we waited for it.”



Early residents plant trees at Rotary Garden Village, including 2nd resident Isabelle Cunningham in front

Getting To Know You

The generation who were moving into Rotary Garden Village had been through the Great Depression and two World Wars. A spirit of self help which characterised their lives was alive and well at the new Village. Reminiscences of these first residents are peppered with memories of the mud, along with gratitude for the care and concern shown by Sundale and some of their Windsor Road neighbours. The first units were actually quite raw and there was initially no turf or landscaping. Nambour was a much

smaller community back then but had numerous community groups – many of which got solidly behind the new aged care facility. Olive Blanch from the Nambour Garden Club recalled their involvement in the early days at Rotary Garden Village in the residents' history:

“Early in the establishment of Rotary Garden Village, the Garden Club of Nambour offered assistance in supplying and planting trees. We were able to assist in watering the lawns when turf was laid down around the first units that were built and continued until they were occupied. Mr John Borg of Green Valley Nursery gave us a large number of trees and shrubs for us to use in the beautification of the area. Some of our members planted and maintained some of these, but as the Village was not ready for any more planting until the architect had drawn up a plan, the remainder of the trees and shrubs were handed over to Rotary until they had a planting guide.”

The close proximity of the Nambour TAFE campus (Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE in 2013), virtually opposite the Village, provided a natural synergy. Discussions had first taken place in June 1983 to see if the Village could provide some practical landscaping experience for a TAFE course - giving young unemployed people some basic skills in landscaping and at the same time benefiting the Village. The Commonwealth Employment Service selected the students, the Rotary Club of Nambour supplied the materials and TAFE supplied the teachers and expertise to conduct a 16-week course at the Village. The first class commenced on 15th August 1983 and finished on 23rd September 1983. (It was a runaway success and a forerunner of similar community partnerships, with further courses starting on 16th July 1984, 25th March 1985 and the last course which commenced on 24th June 1985).

Bob Jackson was the Senior TAFE Teacher involved and he found the experience a very rewarding one, later writing:

“It was not uncommon for students to bring their parents to the Village to proudly show the work that they were involved in. Many of the students are now working in nurseries or are involved in some way with landscaping. One young man who had been to the Nambour Special School and who completed the landscaping course is now running a successful lawn mowing business... One group of students was much older than the others. The ages of these men were between 25 and 50 years. The College was involved in the construction of the workshop and our bricklaying students helped construct part of the rear wall of the Hall. I often take advantage of the close proximity of our College and the Village to drive through and slowly admire the gardens and landscaping and I feel that it must be a pleasant place to live in retirement.”³¹

In January 1984, finally the embankment was levelled off, the courtyards filled and turfing completed. Myra Blanch commented ‘No more mud. We had also acquired Norm, our groundsman and good friend, who came two days a week’. Early 1984 saw two more residences occupied on Lavender Hill and another down at the entrance. The Sundale Ladies Auxiliary financed a fountain and rock pool with a garden near the entrance and a beautiful rock retaining wall was professionally built on the south-western aspect of the hill. Meanwhile, residents were busy establishing their gardens, putting in a lot of individual personal effort and putting the Garden into the Village.



Above Left: The beginnings of landscaping at Rotary Garden Village **Above Right:** A community partnership with TAFE from 1983-85 was of mutual benefit to residents and participants

The 7th April 1984 was set for the official opening of Stage One of the Rotary Garden Village and maintenance staff from Sundale worked hard getting everything looking just right. Taking advantage of his presence in Australia on official Rotary business, Rotary International President William Skelton was persuaded to perform the official opening and the naming of the Village.

Resident Jessie Watt described this wet beginning:

“A big marquee was erected in the grounds... we were all so proud of our Village. And then it rained – as it can rain in the Nambour area. So we had to repair to Sundale for the function and International President, William Skelton, planted his tree at Rotary Garden Village in the pouring rain. It has grown well.”

Approximately 400 guests heard Clem Renouf, who was Chairman of the Rotary sub-Committee that had worked tirelessly to develop this enormous project, speak. The Rotary Garden Village residents’ history recorded part of his speech:



Official opening of Rotary Garden Village, Stage 1. Pictured (L to R): William (Bill) Robinson, unknown, Mrs William Skelton, Norm Cornwell, William Skelton (World President of Rotary International -1984), and Clem Renouf (Chairman of Rotary Garden Village Committee)
(Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

“Fifteen months ago the bulldozers started work. Twelve months ago the frames for the first six units were going up – not yet to roof stage. As this is being written (early March 1984) we have roads, water, sewerage and underground power to service the 17 units completed and the six under construction... 14 are occupied. More than \$1 million has been committed on work to date. This is about one third of the total to be spent before the two Rotary Clubs in Nambour complete their share of the total project, under the control and management of Sundale Garden Village Committee. At that stage there will be about 100 units built, providing accommodation and a range of caring services to approximately 150 people. But that will not be the end of Rotary’s involvement; for this Village will provide endless opportunity for Nambour’s two Rotary Clubs working together in the future as they have in the past, to serve people.”

Resident Jessie Watt takes up the residents’ history of the early days at Rotary Garden Village. Her account of these times is a story of how the Village was becoming a community:

“We decided to settle in a suitable location such as Rotary Garden Village while in reasonably good health, and so grow in friendship with people around us as we grow older. In the beginning we looked at the just commenced Village when there were bulldozers moving earth to make access roads, and skeletons of some buildings on top of a hill which sloped down to a large piece of vacant land... When in January 1984 we had a second look there was a neat row of buildings, and the second row foundations about to be commenced. We chose Number 20, and... finally moved, in early August 1984...

The next few years were quite an exciting time, with new buildings going up – another concrete foundation slab going down, trucks and semi-trailers of all sizes carrying in soil, bricks, timber, cement and such-like... the excitement of wondering who would be moving in next and when each would be completed. Never were there so many building inspectors as we were. A lovely time of growing, and getting to know you, such as when the electricity blackouts and strike times came... (under the Bjelke Petersen Government) and we would sit out on the lawns and look at the stars and have lovely get-togethers. We would watch the lawns and gardens started and see them grow...

Such activity came in the middle and latter part of 1984 and how exciting it was to see the various buildings growing. Units 1, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25 and 26 on the lower side of the ring road were established and occupied. Access roads, sewerage lines and drains – oh we all learned a lot about building and used to watch with fascination our good friend Tom Couacaud with his earthmoving equipment in action. Other good friends were Wally Ford and Noel Poole, Sundale men, who seemed to be always working on some building on the site.

The ring road was kerbed... channelled and sealed... then on 20th September, work on sealing our drive-ways was started. Of course it rained... In October 1984, the Management Committee put on an Anniversary Dinner over at Sundale for residents. Intending residents who had negotiated for units but were not yet in residency were also there. This was another good getting to know you opportunity... The Christmas party of 1984 was held in the carport of Myra Blanch. What a wonderful party it was too. Sundale donated four dozen cups and saucers and also an urn for use by residents.”

There was soon a need for the growing community to have its own meeting place. For a while a vacant unit was used (Number 11) and residents recalled a visit by Senator Flo Bjelke Petersen who presented the residents with an Australian flag, a picture of the Queen and the Coat of Arms at a morning tea held there. Resident Jim Groom, an Englishman with active war service in India, was delegated the task of caring for the flag and ensuring that it was used with the correct protocols.

By the end of 1984, a further 7 two-bedroom cottages, 6 two-bedroom duplex units and 5 single bedroom units had been completed at Rotary Garden Village and were soon occupied. Demand still exceeded supply and planning was in the pipeline for more units, a function centre, a hostel and a nursing home. Ern Stollznow wrote about the success of the new Village:

“Then the floodgates of demand opened. Rod Voller, the architect, simply could not prepare plans quickly enough, and within the short space of 42 months, the House Full sign had to be put up, even though the number of buildings was extended from the original goal of 46 to 65. These consisted of cottages, single and double bedroom town houses, single and double bedroom duplexes and separate two bedroom cottages. The brainchild of the two Rotary Clubs had exceeded all expectations.”³²

Just like Sundale Garden Village, the Rotary Garden Village was genuinely a project for community supported by community. It would never have been possible without the initial gift of the land along with impressive and ongoing support from Sundale, the two Rotary Clubs and local businesses. It would also have cost so much more and keeping entry affordable to everyone was always a primary concern of the Sundale Management Committee.

On 1st August 1984, Treasurer Paul Keating formally de-regulated the Australian financial system and for the first time allowed foreign banks into the country. What this might mean in the future was uncertain at this time, but at the budding Rotary Garden Village, an ambitious building program, inspired by a lengthy waiting list was going ahead with great confidence.

However, there were big changes being considered in Government policies that would profoundly affect Sundale’s future plans and operations. Some not so welcome surprises were also around the corner for the growing Sundale family.

A New Era

Roy Douglas Charlton had set up his legal practice in Nambour in 1963 and was intimately tied to the growth and development of Sundale and then Rotary Garden Village from the very beginnings. Roy was a partner with Clem Renouf and J.D. Grimes in Enterprise Estates which had generously provided the land on which both villages were built. He was a foundation member of the original Sundale Committee and provided honorary legal advice, as well as enthusiastic support, over more than 20 years. When Roy passed away at the age of 81 years in 1985, it was in many ways the end of an era. His generosity to Sundale continued with a bequest from his estate and Douglas Street and Charlton Court in Nambour is named to commemorate his contribution to the growth of the area.

At the budding Rotary Garden Village, the need for a community meeting place and recreational centre was becoming greater as the number of residents increased. The Bob Hawke Government had a labour market program called the C.E.P. (Community Employment Program) which provided an economic stimulus to assist unemployed people gain work experience via community building programs. When Maroochy Shire Council indicated that there was a last minute opportunity for a community project, Nambour Rotary 76 President Norm Cornwall suggested the near impossible task of lodging an application with a very short timeline for C.E.P. assistance to help build a community centre. Nambour Rotary Club got behind it and with the assistance of Sundale Administrator Ern Stollznow, the deadline was met.

Their efforts were rewarded a short time later when the success of the application was announced and the real work began on building the Rotary Community Centre on Windsor Road. Harvey Draper was employed as Works Foreman, supervising at various times seven or eight workers. Graham Chapman recalled that part of the C.E.P. guidelines were for gender equity, but that the number of women wanting to work as builders or carpenters was at that time very small. Stage One included a hall with kitchen, change rooms, other meeting rooms, toilet facilities and car parking. The C.E.P. provided 70% of the \$178,000 cost with the remainder raised by two Rotary Clubs.

A fine community centre with seating for 300 people was officially opened on 27th April 1985 with Federal Member Manfred Cross doing the honours. Of course, the visionaries saw a second stage with an outdoor amphitheatre, extensive landscaping, walking tracks around the creek and through bushland and a croquet lawn in future stages, but it was off to a great beginning.



Rotary Community Centre 1985

For the residents, the Rotary Community Centre provided a great stimulus and on 1st May 1985, Sundale President Bill Robinson chaired a meeting which formally inaugurated the Rotary Garden Village Recreation Club. Edith Newman became the Foundation President and later on that same year she was awarded an OBE for a lifetime of service to the community. The Secretary was Wally Oswin, Treasurer John Vickary and Committee members were Jessie Watt, Mavis Bronham, Elsie Taylor and Elsie Vickary. Later, on the resignation of Elsie Taylor, Ced Byrne joined the Committee.

Members organised parties, dances, stalls and catering activities to raise funds for further facilities at the Rotary Community Centre. The Committee had no funds whatsoever at the beginning, so it was suggested that the residents pay \$1 for life membership. This was accepted and soon there was a bank balance. Members started fundraising for equipment, with indoor bowls being an initial aim. However, first there was a prior commitment to pay for the stage curtains.

A group of Rotary Village women interested in craft had formed a group called the Crafty Cobblers. They met in each other's homes on a rotating basis and later moved to the Rotary Community Centre for weekly meetings. Attendance varied from 5 to 29, with an average of 12 core members. Three of these women, Ethel Booth, Val Schofield and Mavis Morris, took on the task of creating a unique set of curtains for the stage. They designed patchwork motifs and Mavis embroidered the Rotary insignia on each part of the curtain. It involved an estimated 700 hours of work over a period of three or four months. Ethel and Val then spent two full days preparing the curtains for hanging, which was done by Trittons Furnishing Company. Vera Cunningham of Moffatt's Fabrics and Lindsay Goeldner of Trittons provided invaluable advice and the result was truly a work of art. The cost of around \$900 was raised by the Recreation Club with great support from staff and residents.



Ethel Booth and Val Schofield
stand in front of the stage curtains created by
hand with love

Many other local businesses and clubs were also generous with support, equipping the centre with two indoor bowls mats and a set of bowls, 15 packs of playing cards, a billiard table and a ping pong table. The Community Centre was soon well set up and quickly became a hub of the burgeoning Rotary Garden Village community. Monthly dances with Joy Freeman and the Music on Wheels started at this time and were a highlight of the social calendar.

Sundale hairdresser Eunice Krome was also servicing the women of the Rotary Garden Village, and after the community centre was built, she initially worked out of the dressing room upstairs. The room was so small only one client could fit inside at any given time, so the other ladies used to line up across the stage waiting to get their hair done.³³

The Nambour Library was already operating a volunteer service to Sundale's James Grimes Nursing Home and lodges and because many residents at Rotary Village did not have their own transport, a Committee was set up called Friends of the Library. The first members were John Vickary, Marion Muller-Kobold, Maree Christie, May Ryan, Elsie Taylor, Myra Blanch, Ada Christie, Joan Bierne, Maurice Blythe and John Keenan. Due to illness and other commitments, Ada Christie and Maurice Blythe were replaced by Megan Gower and Jack Taylor.



Official opening of the Library. Pictured (L to R) Clem Renouf, John Vickary, Noel Parry, Graham Chapman, Fred Murray and Rod Voller

One of the rooms (called the Club Room) was designated for the Library. Materials for shelving were provided and the ever helpful students from the Nambour TAFE constructed the shelves. A rotating bulk loan of 250 books, including large print, magazines and talking books was provided from the Nambour Library collection and a simple lending system set up.

There were so many ideas for recreational facilities and the residents were a very enthusiastic group who were prepared to put in the time and effort to raise the funds to make their ideas become reality. Flushed with success, they embarked upon the ambitious project of raising funds for a swimming pool. These fundraising activities were also 'fun raising' and included cent auctions, craft days, garage sales, market days, raffles, produce stalls, private morning teas, garden parties and special games days.

1985 brought in a new wave of settlers to Rotary Garden Village with 22 extra units being occupied. Resident Jessie Watt described how residents worked together:

“By now we had a full time maintenance team of two, with extras being sent over from Sundale at times. We had a shuttle bus from Sundale, known as The Rocket, which used to (take) residents requiring transport for shopping over to Sundale to connect with the Nambour Bus Service shoppers' bus on Wednesdays and Fridays. Though we now had our own mail boxes, we still had quite a way to go to post a letter. Representations made by John Vickary, who at that time was very active in the Recreation Club, gained us the concession that fully stamped envelopes of regulation size, if placed in a suitable box at the two banks of letterboxes could be picked up by the mail delivery officer, and taken back to the Australia Post centre. This was a great help, and John wasted no time in providing a suitable posting box. Going back to when we first got our individual mail boxes, the people living on Lavender Hill had a little problem. It is quite a steep climb up there and you don't want to walk down and back again unless you are pretty sure the Postie has been. So, Ethel Booth, an expert on patchwork, made us a pennant with the Rotary emblem outlined in beautifully crafted patchwork, which is hoisted when the postal delivery is made by George Davey, who lived opposite the bank of mail boxes.

This same George, though in his 80s at the time, undertook to deliver the free weekly papers to each unit in the Village. That was fine when we were no more than 24 houses, but when it got to be over 60, it was quite a big effort. When George for some reason could no longer do this, Jim Groom took it over. Jim would hoist our flag each morning and bring it down at sunset each evening. He also got the chore of holding the keys of the Community Hall and that

entailed many little jobs down there that most of us knew nothing about. A feature of our Village life has always been the way in which all had concern for the welfare of our fellow Villagers. This developed into a quite informal and unstructured Neighbourhood Watch... we just had to look out for each other and good neighbours became good friends”

The Sundale Management Committee provided a bridge for residents in these early days. Graham Chapman and Vice President Graham Roberts in particular were on site regularly during construction and liaised with Sundale on behalf of residents. There were then 80 residents with plans for another 10 units and a hostel, which would result in a permanent population of around 200 residents.

The year ended on a sad note when Sundale President Bill Robinson passed away on 30th December 1985. Bill had been on the Sundale Management Committee since the very early days in 1966, being Vice President from 1973-78 and, after the death of J.D. Grimes, became the second President from 1978-85. Bill was a popular figure with a great sense of humour. Journalist Peter Richardson wrote the following tribute:

“Nambour may not realise it yet, but it won’t be the same town in 1986. Bill Robinson not only presided over but breathed enthusiasm continuously into the wonderful Sundale project during his seven year term as President. Without Bill Robinson’s quiet behind the scenes organisational work in caring community organisations – without his dry self-deprecating sense of humour and sharply observant eye for human frailty, and without his finger on the pulse, the town where Bill spent most of his working life and many of his retirement years as a public benefactor, has lost a precious non-renewable source of service.”³⁴

Graham Chapman was well qualified to take over the Presidency, having served on the Sundale Management Committee as Secretary from 1977-83 and then as Vice President from 1983. Graham had also worked in every phase of the building industry from design to construction, hardware, timber supplies and concrete for more than 30 years. As he modestly put it, ‘Hopefully I was able to offer a bit of advice to the Sundale Board, which was going through a huge construction phase at that time.’³⁵ Graham was an active member and very involved in the burgeoning construction of first Sundale and then Rotary Villages, always checking on progress before going to work.

John Kleinschmidt, who was then Chief Health Surveyor at Maroochy Shire Council, was welcomed to the Committee in 1986. It was the beginning of an enduring union, as John is in fact Sundale President in the year 2013 when Sundale celebrates its 50th anniversary, having served for an incredible 27 years continuously on the Committee.



John Kleinschmidt held senior management positions at Maroochy Shire Council from July 1981 until March 1999. He joined the Sundale Management Committee in 1986, was elected President in 2007 and continues serving in that role in 2013 (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

The passing of Sundale resident Phyllis Grimes in July 1986 had caused much sadness. As a foundation resident of Sunvilla Court and widow of J.D. Grimes (after whom the Nursing Home was named), Phyllis had also been part of Sundale from the beginning and Treasurer of the Ladies Auxiliary for many years. The Ladies Auxiliary decided to honour her memory by constructing an enclosed garden patio at the entrance to the Nursing Home.

“It was in the area where the commemorative plaque is now placed, that Mrs Grimes worked alongside her husband, Jim, in turning the builders’ dump into a garden in time for the opening of the Nursing Home in 1973. Enormous amounts of broken tiles and jagged bricks were dug up and removed by hand so that flowers and shrubs would grace the entrance of the Nursing Home... The plaque honours the memory of Mrs Grimes, not only for her gardening efforts and interest, great as these have been, but also for her outstanding qualities of love and compassion manifested in unrestrained acts of love and service to residents over many years. There has always been an indefinable quality of inner peace and contentment evident in the life of Mrs Grimes, something that was reflected again and again as she either inspired, encouraged or consoled those privileged to know her during her residency at Sundale.”³⁶

Going It Alone

The next phase of development in Rotary Garden Village was construction of a hostel. McKinnon & Sons tender was accepted for \$454,000 to build 30 units with kitchen, lounge and dining room facilities sufficient to cater for an additional 30 units at a later stage. Although it had been planned in consultation with the Department of Community Services, unfortunately at a late stage the Department declined to provide any funds whatsoever for the hostel, even after it was recommended for funding by the Commonwealth Co-ordinating Committee.

Capital grants and subsidies from Commonwealth and State Governments had been a crucial factor in the growth of Sundale facilities for aged care, and this was a severe blow. It left the Management Committee in a very difficult position. But there was really no choice because Sundale was dedicated to keeping faith with the needs of the more frail aged people who needed care. They went it alone without any Commonwealth Government financial assistance.

It was a fitting mark of respect to Rod Voller, who had been the honorary architect involved in planning and building at Sundale and Rotary Garden Villages from 1976 onwards, to name the hostel after him. The expertise of Joan Zander as a Sundale employee since 1974 was put to good use when she took up the appointment of Supervisor of the new hostel at Rotary Garden Village. At the official opening of the Rod Voller Hostel on 26th October, 1986, Clem Renouf paid the following tribute:

“Many have contributed to the realisation of the original dream, but none more than the man whom today we honour in the naming of this hostel. Rod has brought to his task, as the architect who planned and supervised every facet of the development of this Village, not only a lifetime of experience, but more importantly an enthusiasm and concern for the project which has rubbed off on all who have been associated with him in that work. William James the philosopher once said: The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it. Rotary Garden Village is testimony to the validity of that statement and the naming of this hostel in honour of its architect is a permanent reminder and acknowledgement of his great contribution.”³⁷

In less than four years, 64 units and cottages, 30 hostel units and the Rotary Community Centre had been completed, making Rotary Garden Village a home to 117 people. This was impressive progress in anyone's books and even more so because of the major work undertaken by Rotary volunteers. Rotary Garden Village was living up to its name – becoming a small community in a beautifully landscaped setting – thanks to the contributions by residents, Rotary members, volunteers and Nambour TAFE students.

The landscaping designs of Rod Voller were carried out with care. The landscaping weaving paved recreational areas with sturdy brick and stone retaining walls among the gardens.



Pictured (L to R) Entrance and rear to the Rod Voller Hostel

Together, Sundale and Rotary Garden Villages were now providing homes for 300 residents with an impressive staff of 140. The value of all assets was over \$4 million and the annual operating budget over \$2 million, but there was still so much more to do. As a concession to the new era of the computer, Sundale installed its first computer system with a sophisticated accounting software package to closely monitor income and expenditure.

The change in Government policy not to subsidise new nursing homes was in fact symptomatic of a raft of changes that occurred in the 1980s when the Commonwealth introduced a new system of classification that tied funding to the care needs of residents. This was to have a profound effect on aged care Australia-wide and was motivated by a growing awareness of the Baby Boomer generation as an enormous bulge in the future aged care population. The Australian Bureau of Statistics was predicting that by the year 2000, nearly 3 million Australians (1 in 7) would be over the age of 65 years. With better health care, people were living longer, which was good, but the Government was becoming increasingly concerned about how to pay for aged care in the future. This concern ushered in an era of change and innovation. It was the beginning of a major Government policy push for increased numbers of people to receive care in their own homes, although the infrastructure for delivery was still many years away.

The years from 1963 to the mid 1980s had been a time of incredible growth in the provision of aged care services throughout Australia and saw the emergence of an actual 'aged care industry'. These were the golden years for Sundale, but it was becoming clear that not only the Commonwealth but also the State Governments were embarking upon a series of reforms and regulations that would profoundly affect how aged care services would be provided.

Aged care had started to become increasingly bureaucratic and over the next ten years a system would emerge with strict residential care benchmarks, case management and Community Aged Care Packages. The concept of Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) was introduced and they became the sole assessors for admission to residential care. The Home and Community Care (HACC) Program was also set up through which the Commonwealth Government jointly funded not-for-profit community care services with the States. The 1985 nursing home funding reforms had limited nursing home fees payable by consumers and increased the access of low income groups to services. This effectively reduced the number of nursing home beds available. Sundale had already proved that it was willing to go it alone but of course it had to remain viable and there were some big challenges ahead.

Completing the Sundale Master Plan

The Sundale site is bounded by Doolan Street, Carter Road and Petrie Creek. Almost 25 years since the original master plan had been conceived, the site was looking very established with well maintained villas, lodges and courts nestled amongst colourful gardens. At its very heart was the Nursing Home, which had been completed in three stages over seven years to provide 115 beds. Instead of having to relocate and lose touch with friends when bed care (high care) became necessary, Sundale residents continued to be part of their community. Residents in independent living units provided great support as volunteers in the nursing home, along with many good hearted folk from the wider community.

The site was almost completely full, but there were two more buildings to come, both of which had extremely long gestation periods.

The idea of a Day Therapy Centre was in many ways a reflection of the Sundale philosophy, as Sundale was a pioneer in the area of therapy applied to aged care, and was always looking for ways to improve the quality of life for all elders. The concept included offering the benefits of occupational therapy, physiotherapy and outdoor therapy to the wider local community as well as residents and providing transport for those who needed it to attend the Centre on a regular basis. Part of the commitment to treat the 'whole person' included opportunities to participate in gentle exercise and trips such as shopping, fishing and sightseeing. Keeping as independent and active as possible were seen as the keys to health and wellbeing. Although these ideas have since become mainstream, in the late 1980s they were quite new.

The unstinting Management Committee had been lodging submissions to the two relevant Commonwealth Departments of Health and Community Services for six years to try to fund a Day Therapy Centre. Interestingly, the Department of Health had immediately seen the benefits and agreed to its share of the funding, but the

obstacle was that capital grants for the building had largely dried up through the Department of Community Services. However, the Sundale Committee kept up the pressure, lodging new applications for funding every year and making personal representations. Their efforts were finally rewarded with approval of a grant of just over \$200,000 to assist in building and equipping a Day Therapy Centre for the whole community.

Although there were not many such centres in existence at the time, the Sundale team of architect Rod Voller, Management Committee members, nursing and therapy staff visited and evaluated those that did exist, in the quest for the best design.

The new Day Therapy Centre was finally commissioned with the successful tender awarded to local builders McKinnon and Sons at a cost of \$204,700. Equipment and furnishings added a further cost of \$57,200 and grounds development costs of \$110,100 completed the \$372,000 investment.

The official opening of the Day Therapy Centre was held on 4th December 1987 with Hon. Evan Adermann MP assisted by Federal Member Michael Lavarch. In the first month, treatments were provided for 94 Nursing Home residents, 52 residents from Sundale and Rotary Garden Villages and 52 people from the wider local community. It was a great success right from the beginning and has remained at the core of Sundale both physically and emotionally, bringing intensive therapeutic care to those in need and resulting in an improved quality of life for many people.

The Sundale site had been further beautified with an arboretum, or rose garden, that had been brought to reality by the efforts of many, but especially John Mansell and Phillip Tierney. The original garden consisted of 68 rosebushes donated by 68 residents or friends of Sundale, in memory of loved ones and was 'opened' by Joan Chapman. It was a well loved and carefully tended garden that put on several beautiful displays every year of both fragrance and colour, which more than rewarded the effort.

There was however one more building to fit into the Sundale complex. Although it was not part of the master plan, the idea of an inter-denominational chapel had been around for almost a decade, but had been pushed aside by more pressing needs of caring for the physical needs of residents. It was however an idea whose time was soon to come.

During 1987 some notable changes took place at the management level. Another link with the past was severed when Ern Stollznow retired on 21st April. He was a popular figure, having been Sundale Administrator since 1977, and even on the first day into his retirement, he was turning over the ceremonial sod for the new swimming pool at the Rotary Garden Village.

There was nobody better placed to record the history of Sundale than Ern Stollznow and he accepted this offer upon his retirement and immediately started work on the commemorative book for the 25th anniversary the following year. A nationwide search for his replacement as Administrator was carried out, which resulted in the appointment of Peter Kennedy from Alice Springs Old Timers Complex. Aged care administration was becoming increasingly more specialised and complex. And, always at the forefront of cutting edge technological innovation, Sundale used a new system called 'telephone conferencing' to interview Peter for the position while he was still in Alice Springs.



Ern Stollznow turns the first sod for the swimming pool at Rotary Garden Village, 1987

Clem Renouf achieved 27 years of service to Sundale when he also retired in 1987. As an accountant, he had been Treasurer since the inaugural Committee and provided expert financial guidance over all those years. On Monday 19th October 1987, which became known as Black Monday, a dramatic crash of global stock markets occurred, producing catastrophic losses in the value of stocks around the world. Ern Stollznow recalled just how good Clem Renouf's financial judgement really was.

"It is noteworthy that we have had a parcel of MIM shares for many years, the result of a bequest, and one of the last decisions that Clem took was to sell them in early October 1987. Yes, we sold at the top of the market only one week before the notorious crash! Even the stockbroker who forwarded our cheque added the comment: I must compliment you on the timing."³⁸

Replacement member on the Committee was Bob Sellars, who in his role as Commonwealth Bank Manager, proved a fitting replacement for Clem. In order to keep tariffs as low as possible, the Committee took a far sighted decision to set up a Maintenance Reserve Fund of \$500,000 with the goal that the interest from this money would cover future major maintenance projects without adding costs to residents.

In the early months of 1988, foundation residents at Rotary Garden Village, Myra Blanch and Ethel Booth – both with careers in nursing – started Neighbour Care. They built up a stockpile of medical support equipment which was loaned out to assist residents with recuperation after illness or operation. It was a free service supported

by donations, which enabled the purchase of new equipment, and was typical of the self help philosophy of the Sundale Villages.

New residents were welcomed into the fold and soon became involved in the various activities. However, when Shirley Cash moved into the Rotary Garden Village in April 1988 it would have felt more like coming home, because Shirley had lived nearby on a small farm as a child. She had attended a 'one teacher' school at Perwillowen until 1935 and was a foundation student at the Nambour High School. Shirley used to walk three miles to school, crossing the creek at the bottom of Rotary Garden Village – long before the Village was there of course. She remembered that the area was covered with sugarcane and that the cane train tracks went down what is now Windsor Road. It was not even a road back then – just a dirt track – and in those days the cane trains were steam locomotives and not diesel.

1988 is also remembered as the Bicentennial year of Australia, celebrating 200 years since the arrival of the First Fleet. In April, Queen Elizabeth II officially opened Expo 88 in Brisbane, which was an outstanding success. However, generally things in Australia were not going so well. Financial de-regulation in 1984, which had certainly increased competition in the banking sector, had also led to some heavy corporate losses and then a credit crunch. But nothing could dampen the enthusiasm for Sundale Garden Village, which was preparing to mark a quarter of a century with its own celebrations.



Aerial view of Rotary Garden Village in 1988

1988 Celebrations

With the 25-year commemorative book nearing completion and the Chapel under construction at last, things were looking pretty rosy and celebrations were definitely on the agenda.

The announcement of a knighthood for Sundale stalwart Clem Renouf provided additional cause for celebration. Raised in North Queensland during the Depression, the inspiration for Clem's community work came from his memories of people roaming the countryside looking for work, and the kindness of his parents to these people. The knighthood was a well deserved acknowledgement of a lifetime of service to the community and indeed provided a spur to Sir Clem to continue his charitable work. His community service had previously been recognised in 1979 when he was awarded an AM (Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia).

Among several highlights in Sundale's 25th year was the construction of the Chapel. It was something that former President Bill Robinson had been absolutely passionate about, and in 1980 he had solicited the first donation of \$1,000, from Father Frank Hefferan. The initial donation was kept in a special Chapel account and although many sketch plans were prepared, they languished in a drawer for several years because there had simply been more pressing priorities. However the spiritual welfare of residents was always at the forefront of Sundale's operations and a special sanctuary area had already been provided for worship in the James Grimes Nursing Home.

Although the idea of an inter-denominational place of worship had not actually been part of the Sundale master plan, it was with a great deal of satisfaction that the Chapel became the last piece of the jigsaw to fit into the Sundale Garden Village site. Not that this was an easy task. Ern Stollznow described how:

“Like an army on field manoeuvres, Sundale Committee and staff spent hours examining all possible sites on Sundale grounds and many lengthy discussions were held without arriving at a definite decision. No less difficult was the matter of deciding the purpose and use of the building. Should it be a chapel only or a dual purpose building serving both as a chapel and assembly recreational hall. To assist in resolving these weighty problems, Rod Voller provided many different sketch plans of the proposed Chapel situated on different localities for the Committee's perusal and it is noteworthy that the end result both in respect to use of the Chapel and its location conforms almost exactly to the thinking and expressed views of the late Bill Robinson when he first promoted the building of a Sundale Chapel some eight years previously.”³⁹

Joan Zander was another special enduring part of the Sundale family, having served in a variety of positions since 1974. Joan also strongly supported the Chapel project and over the years took up the fundraising cause with great enthusiasm.

It was impossible to obtain any government grants to assist with building the Chapel, and a figure of \$100,000 was estimated. This was no deterrent to those who got behind it. With enthusiastic support from staff, annual fetes, and donations from residents this figure was almost reached within five years.



Architect Rod Voller's sketch plans for the Sundale Chapel

While the Chapel was finally under construction, plans were being made for Sundale's Silver Jubilee to celebrate 25 years of great achievements since the humble beginnings in 1963.

Office bearers during the 25th anniversary year were: Graham Chapman (President) Company Director and representative of Apex Club Nambour since 1977; Graham Robertson (Vice President) Nurseryman and representative of Rotary Club of Nambour 76 since 1983; Stuart Napier (Secretary) High School teacher and Apex representative since 1978; Robert Sellars (Treasurer) Manager Commonwealth Bank, Nambour branch and community representative since 1987; Roderick Bartholomew – semi retired and community representative since 1966; John Kleinschmidt – Chief Health Surveyor Maroochy Shire Council and community representative since 1986; Dr John Scott – medical practitioner and Apex representative since 1976; Michael

Lindsay – Deputy Shire Engineer Maroochy Shire Council and Apex representative since 1974; and Cr Geoffrey Littler MBE – horticulturalist and Rotary representative since 1982. At the 1988 AGM, Rod Bartholomew, who had served on the Committee since 1966 and, along with his wife Colleen, had been involved with Sundale since its inception, stepped down. The length of service given to Sundale by these dedicated people was nothing short of amazing.

Over at Rotary Garden Village, the swimming pool and a shelter area set amongst landscaping were officially opened on 1st October 1988. This project had been supported by the bequest from Roy Charlton, but was also greatly assisted by fundraising from the Recreation Club.



Enjoying the new swimming pool. Pictured (L to R): E. Sewell, J. Watt and E. Neill

That same evening a formal farewell dinner for Sir Clem and Lady Renouf was held. As well as being the first Sundale Treasurer and an original benefactor, Clem and his wife June had served tirelessly and made some very generous donations, which were responsible in no small part for the continued expansion of both Sundale villages.

The last of the independent living units had been built and occupied and the addition of a final single two bedroom cottage in 1988 completed a remarkable transformation in just five short years. It was a marvellous tribute to the voluntary efforts of Rotary members and the Sundale Management Committee. What an outstanding partnership this had proved to be – just like the partnership with Apex that had started off Sundale Garden Village 25 years ago.

Another focus for celebrations was the launch of Ern Stollznow's book celebrating the first 25 years of Sundale history. Many former Committee members and others involved in Sundale attended, including Tom Carter who had been part of the second Pole Sit-in with Ian Hayne, who was the keynote speaker on this special occasion. An Open Day for the 25th anniversary was also held with tours of the grounds, which were in tip top shape.

Thanks to Stuart Napier, a copy of Ern's speech at the book launch was unearthed and some short excerpts give us an insight into this modest man:

“Writing this book has been one of the highlights of my life... bringing new meaning and variety into my life after retirement had closed the door of active service and association with Sundale and its great people... So many thanks, Committee members, for unleashing the flood of happy memories that the writing of this book has brought back to me in such rich measure.”

The book was initially hand written. Ern himself described the first draft as ‘a monstrosity, consisting of a pile of pages written in dreadful handwriting on scrap paper.’ It was duly recorded on a computer at the Sundale office and, as Ern said, ‘I guess I thought that was the end of it, but it was only the beginning. There followed – the standard version, the amended version, the amended standard version, the expanded version and finally the authorised standard amended expanded version.’

Sundale Secretary Stuart Napier had (in his own words) a ‘tremendous interest in getting things just right’ and worked with Ern on the manuscript, and Stuart acknowledged ‘Ern's work has been invaluable. We spent many hours together proof reading the manuscript, but that was only a fraction of the homework he willingly inflicted upon himself so that the end result should be a book where errors were kept to a minimum... this book has enabled me to gain a tremendous appreciation of the ideals of people associated with Sundale at the beginning and carried over the 25 years’⁴⁰



Ern Stollznow, who recorded Sundale's first 25 years, pictured in 1988

Sundale's huge year of celebrations was to end with the official opening of the Chapel. Of course with such a project, builders and tradespeople give their absolute best. The design skills of Rod Voller were put to the test and the result was magnificent. The recycling mantra, still ahead of its time, was again in play as there were some laminated beams originally ordered for the Nursing Home and then not required. These were incorporated into the Chapel design, providing the impressive exposed beams which are a strong feature of the design. The Chapel is intimate without being small and was designed to seat 60 people, with space for 20 wheelchairs.

On 4th December 1988, the Chapel was officially opened with an inter-faith service conducted by Father Philip Robinson. It was a wonderful conclusion to a year of celebration, a fitting mark of honour for Sundale's 25 years and above all else a tribute to the determination of all those involved. A few months later, a posthumous dedication plaque was placed at the Chapel, which honoured and acknowledged Bill Robinson's contribution to realising the vision of a chapel at Sundale. The plaque read 'It was his enthusiasm and initiative that commenced the fundraising to finance the building of the Sundale Chapel.'

The final chapter of Ern's 25 year history of Sundale was aptly titled 'What Lies Ahead?' He wrote:

"When Sundale began in 1963, the population of Australia could be likened to a high mountain peak in the summertime, with a small amount of snow at the summit representing the aged population... Today the position has drastically changed, for the Australian Bureau of Statistics recently predicted that by the end of the twentieth century more than 2,275,000 Australians (one in 7) will be over the age of 65 years. With better care, people are living longer. In fact in our Sundale hostel and nursing home, 15% of residents are over 90 years of age; 80% are 80 (years) or older. It is conceivable that, as this trend to longevity continues, there could be two generations of a family residing concurrently in Sundale Garden Village.

It is sobering to reflect that over the 25 years under review, the Committee had never been able to meet the demand for accommodation in all sections of the village. However, it was a matter of deep satisfaction that at its 25th anniversary, the first great vision for Sundale has been fulfilled. The stated goals of the first Sundale Committee – to build for the honour, pleasure and dignity of aged residents – have been faithfully accomplished.

All who have been part of the Sundale story, with their time, their money and their talents, can be proud of their partnership with the Committee in building a home where in the future others will enjoy the security, shelter and comfort of a caring staff in the homes of the village"⁴¹

In looking ahead to the next 25 years, how many would have been able to predict the new challenges that lay ahead towards the new century and beyond?

End of the 1980s

Nicklin Hostel was 25 years old in 1988 and a decision was taken to undertake substantial upgrades. The proposed work covered extensions to the main lounge and dining areas, improved kitchen facilities, a new covered ambulance bay, ramps, a new hairdressing salon, sundeck, new nurses' station and treatment room. This was estimated to cost around \$600,000 and the Management Committee went to great lengths to meet often with Department of Community Services and Health representatives and to keep them fully apprised. Site meetings and detailed plans were discussed and finally an application for funding was submitted in January 1989. It was always a nervous wait because applications were of course subject to the availability of funds in the budget. Finally, word was received in April that a Commonwealth grant of \$400,000 had been approved.

Extensions to the office area within rooms adjacent to the Nursing Home were also needed to cope with the increasing administration load. There were over 200 staff and Sundale finances now required an operating budget of \$5.2 million a year. Administrator Peter Kennedy was assisted by experienced staff like Director of Nursing and Deputy Administrator Kath Readman, Hostel Supervisor Joan Zander, Day Therapy Nurse Co-ordinator Diane Robinson and Maintenance Officer Phillip Tierney.

As President Graham Chapman mentioned in the 1989 Annual Report to members:

“During the past year the amount of correspondence between the Department of Community Services and Health and our office has grown enormously. There are new agreements to be worked through, new financing arrangements to be observed, new pay structures have been created, new Award superannuation has been introduced and new legal guidelines have been established. Being a member of Voluntary Care Australia of Queensland has been of considerable assistance in coping with all of the changes that are being introduced almost weekly.”

Sundale staff were active on various Committees of this volunteer organisation and hosted a regional meeting of members at Sundale. The National Conference of Voluntary Care Associations was held in Brisbane during August and helped with networking and keeping up to date.

Rotary Garden Village was also an active community of residents. People tended to enter retirement villages earlier in life than they do today, because in-home services

were not then as readily available or widespread. March 1989 saw a contract signed with D.J. & R.M. McKinnon to build Stage Two of the Rod Voller Hostel at Rotary Garden Village to provide for an additional 20 beds. As well as providing continuity of care for residents when they needed it, the Hostel was at the heart of the Village and many residents were also volunteers helping to brighten the lives of those who needed supported living.



Rotary residents supported the extensions to Rod Voller Hostel with fundraisers like this Melbourne Cup luncheon in 1988. Pictured (L to R): Gladys and Alex Robertson, Elsie and John Vickary, Isabel Lyell, Hetty Martin and Fay McCarthy

There was great excitement in the Rotary Village, when resident Myra Blanch received recognition by way of a BEM (Medal of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for Meritorious Service) in the 1989 Queen's Birthday Honours List. As well as a very active and caring resident at the Village, it seems that Myra had been hiding her light under a bushel. She had served overseas in the Australian Army Nursing Service during World War Two, and was a nursing pioneer of outback medical services, the Royal Flying Doctors Service:

“In 1954, the young Queen Elizabeth II flew 750 miles to present Miss Blanch with a Coronation Medal for her services to health. In 1989, Miss Blanch was further decorated by monarchy when she was invested at Government House with the British Empire Medal for community services and contribution to

welfare... Myra was the very first full time flying Sister whose services to the outback people from 1945-1954 were marked by professional skill and outstanding Christian direction.”⁴²

With the approach of winter 1989, the hardy Icebreakers (as those who went for early morning swims in the Rotary pool were called) received a boost when a solar heating blanket was installed to cover the pool overnight. This was the first of several special projects undertaken by the Recreation Club, which raised funds for improvements to recreational facilities. Two residents became involved in designing sliding panels that fitted around the pool to ward off winter winds but could be removed when not needed. Later Sundale installed a gas booster and it was agreed that Sundale would pay half the cost of the gas used by the booster and that the Icebreakers would levy themselves to pay for the other half. That spirit of self help provides its own rewards.

In August 1989, a meeting of residents agreed to elect a formal Liaison Committee consisting of four residents to meet regularly with representatives of the Sundale Management Committee to discuss ways to enhance life at the Rotary Village. They met approximately every two months and there was never any shortage of ideas to discuss. Some of these could be immediately decided upon with the Sundale representatives, whilst others were referred for further consideration by the full Management Committee. It proved to be a good ongoing means of communication.

The first Rotary Garden Village Newsletter came out towards the end of 1989 and is still going strong 24 years later in 2013. It was initially a labour of love by resident John Keenan, assisted by his wife Phyllis and came out 11 times a year following the monthly meetings, keeping everyone up to date with what was happening.

As the decade of the 1980s drew to a close, the Sundale Management Committee was, as usual, looking ahead. The Sunshine Coast was attracting increasing numbers of retirees and this meant that more aged care quotas for the region would be provided by the Department. It had always been part of the Rotary Garden Village plan to include a nursing home and the land had been set aside for this purpose, but with no Government financial assistance forthcoming, it was not looking like a viable option. However, an assessment of the viability of purchasing land adjacent to the Windsor Road complex was being made – with a view to expanding the independent living units at the popular Rotary Garden Village.

In 1989, Maroochy Shire Councillor Robin Dunn became the first woman on the Sundale Management Committee (and would continue as a community representative until 2003). And in a historic move, the Committee was considering their first foray out of the immediate Nambour area. As with Sundale and Rotary Garden Villages, it all began with the land.

The small town of Palmwoods, a 12 minute drive from Nambour, was named after the North Coast Railway arrived, for the groves of Bangalow or Piccabeen palms which were plentiful in the area when the early pioneers arrived. One of those early pioneers, George Fewtrell, had selected 156 acres of land in 1870 and was the first to successfully grow citrus, which subsequently became well established in the area. George Fewtrell also became the first Maroochy Shire Councillor for the area, serving two terms as Chairman. In 1913, a large portion of Fewtrell's original selection was purchased by Ernest Briggs, who expanded into pineapples and strawberries, as well as operating a dairy. The Briggs family were very community minded and donated land for public use. They were receptive to the idea of a retirement village for Palmwoods when approached by local Councillor Geoff Littler who had been on the Sundale Management Committee since 1982.

A seven hectare parcel of land that was part of the Briggs family land was inspected by the Sundale Management Committee and a contract was signed in December 1989 – signalling another exciting era of expansion in the coming new decade by pioneering a brand new community to care for their elders.

Also in December 1989, after 32 years of conservative Government, Wayne Goss led the Australian Labor Party (ALP) into power in Queensland. Once again, the Sundale Management Committee braced themselves for the inevitable policy changes a new State Government might impose.

With an eye on providing for the needs of aged people living on the coast, the Committee was also looking towards the sea. An application was made to the Land Administration Commission to secure an area of land within the redundant DPI Experimental Farm at the northern end of Coolum. At the time the Sunshine Motorway Stage Two was being designed and a carve-up of the remaining Crown land soon followed. There were a number of community groups wanting land and it was part of the Noosa to Coolum wallum conservation corridor, so there were environmental issues to consider as well. It would actually turn out to be quite a community debate, exactly where the Sunshine Motorway would go past Coolum into Noosa. This was to be an extremely long running saga and Sundale's vision of an aged care facility at Coolum would not eventuate for more than a decade.

Full Speed Ahead

The 1990s began with the 'recession Australia had to have', according to Prime Minister Paul Keating. Things were not so good in some parts of Australia, with very high unemployment. The era is best remembered for the fall of some high profile so-called corporate cowboys. A run on Estate Mortgages and the collapse of the Pyramid Building Society in Victoria undermined investor confidence and bankruptcies plagued the financial sector.

But the Sunshine Coast remained a magnet for what was called ‘sunbelt migration’ or ‘sea change’, and continued to attract a growing number of retirees. Tourism and population growth rather than agriculture were driving the economy for the first time. Nambour remained the geographic centre of Maroochy Shire but most of the growth was taking place on the coast. New roads became a symbol of progress. Part of the Sunshine Motorway opened in January 1990, directly linking Kawana Waters and the coast to the main highway. It was a toll road and later protests over another toll at Kawana were to result in a change in State Government. And in October 1990, when the Nambour bypass was opened, for the first time in history the national highway went out of the centre of town in Nambour.

So, once again, although the economy had faltered in the commercial world, it was full speed ahead for Sundale with the establishment of a new village at Palmwoods. The new decade began with working drawings for the new Palmwoods Garden Village that included 80 independent living units, 40 hostel rooms initially and plans for a 50 bed nursing home. A rezoning application was lodged with Maroochy Shire Council and an Expression of Interest attracted 50 firms. Merrin and Cranston were chosen as the architects for the new village.

Sundale President Graham Chapman spent a lot of his time in discussions with the architects to get the best use of the land at Palmwoods, making use of his knowledge from the building trade. His wife Joan recalled how in the design stages, Graham would travel to Brisbane for a working breakfast with the architects, and then come back to the Sunshine Coast to go to work. Graham admits to disagreeing with the architects at times and once took a builder with him to a meeting to explain to the architect that some of the designs were expensive and hard to maintain in future.⁴³ Carrying on a tradition established right at the beginnings of Sundale, the practical knowledge of the Committee provided invaluable assistance during the detailed planning processes.

Sadly, one of the original Sundale visionaries and custodians of knowledge, Noel Parry passed away in 1990. Since his early involvement with Sundale, Noel had established a reputation in aged care, designing many retirement homes across Queensland.

Keeping up with Government departmental changes became increasingly demanding – especially keeping up with their name changes. The Commonwealth Department of Health as it had been called since 1921, experienced four name changes in the first four years of the 1990s, but whatever they called themselves, keeping up with their standards meant that upgrading of buildings was a constant item on the Sundale agenda.

When 77 rooms in Nicklin and McGowan Lodges required bathroom upgrades worth \$120,000, it was a welcome return to the old days, with subsidies of two dollars from the Commonwealth for every one dollar raised by Sundale. And the golden touch, that gold sovereign, must have still been working its magic, as two sizeable donations completely offset the cost of air conditioning in the Day Therapy Centre and the annexe area of the Nursing Home. The major upgrade of recreational facilities, extra dining rooms, ambulance entry and refurbished lounge areas was completed by Trevor Smith of Raadschelders Hannaford Architects.

To give an idea of just how complicated the funding process was, firstly an appraisal of required alterations was made by a firm of architects, then site meetings were held with architects and officers from the Department of Community Services and Health. Preliminary sketch plans of proposed alterations were drawn up and then a detailed plan was discussed with the Department officers. At this stage the Department would give an indication, which was always subject to the availability of funds, that a subsidy would apply. A detailed grant application would then be submitted. With the best of luck, the Department would confirm the approval of the Commonwealth grant within four to six months. Then expressions of interest would be sought from builders, and following approval of tender documents by the Department, formal tenders were invited. Finally a contract would be signed. The whole process could easily take 12 months. In the case of the extensions to Nicklin Lodge, however, it took more than 12 months from the submission of the original application to tender approval, so the tender had to be re-submitted. The good news was that an increase of over \$100,000 was made to a total grant of \$507,255.

During building, Sundale President Graham Chapman along with Dr John Scott from the Management Committee and Lorraine Rook, Supervisor of Nicklin Lodge, conducted regular inspections and met endlessly to discuss the project. Workflow was organised so there was minimal disruption to the residents and staff with temporary arrangements for cooking and dining until the new facilities were completed.

Although the project was completed two days before the 1990 Sundale Annual General Meeting (which was held there), the official opening was deferred until March 1991 to allow the landscaping to mature. Sundale patron Eddie De Vere performed the official opening ceremony with Queensland Senator Gerry Jones representing the Commonwealth. Father Philip Robinson dedicated the facilities and Mrs Rose Woolston, a Sundale resident for 21 years, cut the cake.

McGowan and Bowder Lodges subsequently underwent renovation, again designed by Trevor Smith, who by this time worked for Greenway Architects, at a cost around \$1.3 million. Upgrades to Bowder Lodge to improve the lifestyle of residents as well as conform to Commonwealth standards, included a new and spacious lounge and activities area, glassed sunrooms to capture sun on the northern ends of the building

during winter and overlook the gardens and creek at the cooler ends during summer. A large BBQ area was constructed and in use almost before the builders left and new furnishings enhanced the improvements. At McGowan Lodge, a new kitchen was built and outfitted; the dining room was relocated to a northern extension with views out over lawns; new staff and treatment rooms were added and covered walkways with ramps replaced stairs, connecting all McGowan units to the main activities and dining areas for all weather easy walking access.

As part of an ongoing maintenance program, Nicklin and McGowan Lodge verandahs were progressively replaced. It was a painstaking task and President Graham Chapman later advised 'We are happy to report that we did not lose a single person by disappearing down through the open joists of the verandahs.'⁴⁴

Preliminary plans were drawn up for a 12 bed dementia hostel at Sundale. Although the need for such a facility was certainly there, it was neither a profitable nor even cost effective area to service, but the Management Committee was committed to providing the secure accommodation required for these residents.

The purchase of a new bus for the Day Therapy Centre was appreciated by staff and residents alike as it enabled 19 people sitting and four wheelchairs to be transported at the one time.

In one of life's wonderful ironies, after an extensive refurbishment of Rosemary Cottage (one of the original cottages in the very first stage of Sundale in 1963), the incoming residents were former Sundale Administrator Ern Stollznaw and his wife, Grace.



Above Left: Bowling green supporters including front (L to R) Ern Stollznaw, Sundale President Graham Chapman and Rotary resident George Watt **Above Right:** Construction of the bowling green begins. Pictured is Ben Hingston on the tractor

Over at the Rotary Garden Village, extensions to Voller Hostel were officially opened by the then newly elected Member for Fairfax, Alex Somlyay, on 5th August 1990. On the same day, the ever active Recreation Club also turned the first sod of their next project – a two rink synthetic grass bowling green. It was quite a gala day. A variety of stalls for plants and produce, cakes and jams, even white elephants and fancy goods, did a roaring trade and George Watt sold ‘turf squares’ at \$5 per square to raise funds for the bowling green.

Undaunted by an estimated price tag of \$34,000 for the bowling green, residents embarked upon various fundraising activities. Joyce Watt became known as the Garage Sale Queen after her first highly successful effort raised \$3,325. As you can imagine, her garage was constantly full of donated bits and pieces, but what a great way to recycle odds and ends no longer required. The Recreation Club elected a four person Committee to liaise with Sundale and months of work involving mud maps, plans, quotes, soil tests, meetings and phone calls followed. Although the Management Committee had given permission for the construction, at no stage had financial aid been promised. However, the project was well supported by residents and once the Sundale Management Committee saw how seriously the Village got behind the bowling green project, they agreed to contribute \$12,000. Once again, the business community also weighed in with Blacklaw & Shadforth and Clayton Sand & Gravel making major contributions. The Recreation Club organised a roster to provide meals for the two men from Border Turf and residents assisted with some manual work, including watering and rolling. It all gave the project a huge amount of community ‘ownership’ when it was officially opened on 21st April 1991.



The bowling green at Rotary Garden Village on opening day 1991

Without any funding from Government, it was simply not possible to build a nursing home on the Rotary site, so it was decided instead to construct fifteen 2 bedroom units, providing a total of 80 independent living units at Rotary Village. By July 1991, these were completed, landscaped and fully occupied soon afterwards. An emergency call system was installed throughout the Village to all independent living unit residents as well as Voller Hostel residents. The Rotary Garden Village had a waiting list of five years and had been described as one of the most desirable retirement villages in South Eastern Queensland.

Resident May Ryan enjoyed swimming in the heated pool at the Village and it was there that she met Len Howell, who had hurt his back and was receiving physiotherapy at Sundale. Romance blossomed and Rotary Garden Village had its first wedding bells when they married on 11th August 1991. When the happy couple arrived home to Unit 63, they were given a good old 'tin kettling' welcome and on the following Sunday, a wedding cake was cut at the gazebo and shared with Village residents.



May and Len Howell cutting the wedding cake at Rotary Garden Village. Pictured (L to R in background): Jessie Watt, Estelle Lewis, Mina Blake, Bert Dawson and Don Lewis

No More Puddles

Following the departure of Sundale Administrator Peter Kennedy in October 1991, Kath Readman had stepped in as Acting Administrator. Then, after an Australia-wide recruitment process, John Baird, who had served at Fairhaven Village at Maryborough for ten years, took up the Sundale Administrator appointment in early 1992. Long term staff member Joan Zander, who had been at various times Matron of the Nursing Home, and Administrator and Supervisor of both Bowder Lodge and Voller Hostel, took her well earned retirement.

More Government regulation and legislation than ever before was placing an enormous load on Sundale's administration. More space to bring all administrative staff together and an upgrade of the computer system and provision were needed. The new Retirement Villages Act meant that Sundale now had to produce a Disclosure Statement, which spelled out in detail all aspects of operations. This in turn necessitated a full overhaul of all agreements and charges. There was no extra funding

to cover the many hours of work required and a five hour long monthly meeting was accepted as normal by the Management Committee.

For residents at Rotary Village, a red letter day finally came in June 1992, when Windsor Road was sealed at last. This was a road (originally called Puddles Road) steeped in history. The cane train line used to run along this road from the Moreton Sugar Mill to the entrance of the Nambour TAFE site and the Perwillowen branch-line went across the Rotary Garden Village land and over a bridge above Whalley Creek. The cane train line that ran along Windsor Road then ascended the steep hills to Highworth/Nambour Heights and on to Dulong, which was quite an engineering feat. The line was extended by the Maroochy Shire Council up to Mapleton at the top of the range. Sugarcane, timber, cream, fruit, vegetables, livestock and people were all transported on what became known as the Mapleton Tramway. The line closed at the end of 1944 but unfortunately it took until 1966 for the ratepayers to repay the debt for its construction.

Rotary Village resident Jessie Watt described some of the changes that had occurred in the ten years since Rotary Village was first started out in the ‘wilderness’ of Burnside:

“The schools in Windsor Road, namely Burnside Primary and Burnside High Schools have been added to and there has been the extension of a large wing to the TAFE... Opposite these schools Nambour Special School has been built. Several residents of the Village do voluntary work assisting the children with school work, also assisting in the library at the High School. The road fronting the Village has been widened from a dirt track, through what was once a rail cutting with very high sides, and from which clouds of dust would rise during dry weather, to a bitumen road as far as the allotment above the Village which has just been subdivided with homes being built on it. To widen and bitumen this road, a large rock had to be blasted from which pieces flew, some landed on the top road of the Village, and one piece broke a hole in the front wall of Unit Number One.”

And at the new Palmwoods Village, an ambitious construction program was well underway. Once the overall planning processes were completed, a major ring road was built and water, sewer mains, electricity, telephone and essential services were installed, and sites for the first stage of 22 units were levelled and landscaped. Tenders went out for the construction of 14 independent living units in the form of seven duplex dwellings at a cost of \$1.045 million. It was a significant step for Sundale but was justified in terms of the community demand for what Sundale was offering.

Integration with the general community was always of great importance in terms of Sundale’s community goals. It was pleasing that, as with Apex and Rotary in the Sundale and Rotary Garden Villages, the Lions Club of Woombye approached Sundale

with regard to an establishing an ongoing relationship with the Palmwoods Garden Village community.

The first units were occupied within one week of completion. Jean Hawkshaw moved into her unit in 1992, when there were only three residents. Jean recalled how each new resident would be welcomed with a batch of scones and friendships were easily forged. Jean is still in residence in her unit in 2013.



Jean Hawkshaw (pictured in 2012)

The Sundale Management Committee decided during the early stages of building Palmwoods Garden Village to add a further eight units and all units were spoken for before construction had finished. Landscaping enhanced the first stage and the evolution of a 42 bed hostel began with an estimated price tag of \$2.786 million. President Graham Chapman described how the Palmwoods hostel aimed to create the most home-like environment of any available on Sunshine Coast:

“Gone are the days of building large facilities where residents are living in a family of 30 to 60 people... this new concept will house groups of 12 to 14 with a lounge, dining room and small kitchen to service that number of people. Residents will be able to prepare and eat breakfast at a time to suit themselves and participate in the usual house-keeping activities as if they were in the family home. Staff will still provide services for those who prefer to have all meals prepared. Within the complex, we will still have a large commercial kitchen, main dining room and large activities room for special occasions and gatherings. Each of these smaller satellite families is connected to the other and to the central community area by enclosed walkways as well as shaded external paths for the enjoyment of our sunny days.”⁴⁵

The completed Palmwoods Garden Village was estimated to cost \$12 –14 million over several years. Long term Management Committee member John Kleinschmidt later reflected that at this time:

“There was pretty much a blueprint for aged care facilities which you could pick up and follow and you wouldn’t go too far wrong – a mix of hostel accommodation and independent living units. High care nursing beds were expensive even then, but we always planned for continuity of care for our

residents. Whilst two bedroom units were the norm, it became apparent after the first couple of stages at Palmwoods that we needed to look more closely at what the market wanted. There was a demand for three bedroom units; people wanted two bedrooms plus study space or a computer room, so we started to design three bedroom units... Palmwoods was also the first venture into two level units because of the fall of the land and it was the first village where it was almost mandatory to have a Clubhouse for residents and residents wanted a swimming pool.”⁴⁶

Although the establishment of further care facilities for the Palmwoods complex was always part of the plan, a Government subsidy was not anticipated. At this time, over 80% of Australians aged 65 to 79 years were living at home, as were almost 60% of those aged 80 years and older. This was a trend which would virtually put an end to the construction of new nursing homes in the future, but Sundale had already proved in its three decades of operation that it was providing services which people wanted and that it was prepared to be flexible and innovative.

Milestones

1993 was a year that marked several milestones but which started on a sad note when former Sundale Administrator and later Sundale resident, Ernie Stollznaw, died in January. Ern's valuable recording of the first 25 years of Sundale history has informed the writing of this book about those early days.

On 18th February 1993, it was exactly 30 years since the gold sovereign was cemented into the foundations of the first Sundale building. A fairly relentless construction program had continued over that whole time, master-minded and co-ordinated by the volunteer Management Committee.

The completion of the long awaited hydrotherapy pool, another Sundale 'pioneering' initiative, sited between the J.D. Grimes Nursing Home and the Day Therapy Centre, was a significant milestone. It was a fully enclosed building with a 7.5 metre long pool heated by a modern electric heat pump, completed at a cost of \$120,000. Motivated by their belief in the benefits of this facility, staff of the Nursing Home and Sundale Lodges contributed an amazing \$15,000 by fundraising over several years. Maroochy Shire Council and a grant from the Jupiter's Casino Community Benefits Fund had accelerated the completion of this project. As with the Day Therapy Centre before it, this was a facility for the entire community. The benefits and relative safety of moving in water, where the body weight is supported, have been known since ancient Greek and Roman times, but it took Sundale to take the initiative and build the first hydrotherapy pool for the Nambour region.



Maroochy Shire Councillor Robin Dunn and Chairman Fred Murray at the official opening of the hydrotherapy pool on 23rd June 1993



Sundale President Graham Chapman testing the waters of the new hydrotherapy pool

Les Merrin contributed many hours of work as voluntary architect and for Rod Voller, this was his last project with Sundale after almost 15 years as honorary architect. He had started work by designing extensions to the Nursing Home and continued to design and supervise the entire Rotary Village, Sunvilla Court units, Nicklin Court units, McGowan Court bedsitters, Sundale Chapel, the Day Therapy Centre and Nursing Home annexe. Rod's contribution and dedication saved Sundale hundreds of thousands of dollars, which were passed on in benefits to all residents, making their entry to these facilities more affordable.

The official handover by contractors of the Palmwoods Hostel to Sundale on 12th March 1993 was another significant event. Soon afterwards, residents at the Palmwoods and Rotary Villages enjoyed their first joint adventure by way of a coach trip. There were now 41 units at Palmwoods Garden Village with a further two stages planned. And the official opening of the Palmwoods Hostel on 31st August 1993 marked almost 30 years since the opening of Nicklin Lodge – Sundale’s very first supported living accommodation of 20 beds. Since that time, Sundale had created three aged care communities at Nambour, Burnside and Palmwoods and was still growing.

The Sundale Ladies Auxiliary celebrated 20 years of service and a smorgasbord luncheon was held in the Nursing Home dining room. President Betty Rook and other past and present members of the Auxiliary were honoured for their untiring contributions in providing canteen services and worthy project donations, as well as meeting the needs of residents in all types of situations, but most of all by spending time (that all important commodity) with them.

Residents at the Rotary Garden Village would never let the chance for a celebration pass by, and marked their first ten years of Village life, on 22nd September 1993, with entertainment and high tea in the Rotary Community Centre. This date was chosen to mark when the first resident, Phyllis Lyneham, moved into the Village. Phyllis was living in the J.D. Grimes Nursing Home at this time and the second original resident, Isabelle Cunningham, was still residing in an independent living unit at Rotary Village.

Resident Jessie Watt continues her story about the changes to the area in the first ten years:

“The town of Nambour has changed somewhat. A new highway bypasses the town, taking much of the heavy traffic around instead of through the town. After several fires burned down some buildings, we now have a new Civic Centre where once the Town Hall stood. In Currie Street, we now have a Best & Less store where once a Woolworths store stood. Three local churches were also set alight, the lovely Uniting Church and hall had to be demolished and now replaced with a Government building... The frontage and adjacent roads to the Nambour Railway Station were altered and a new bus terminal made. The electric train came to Nambour and on as far as Rockhampton with many services each day between Nambour and Brisbane.

To the reasonably new Council Chambers a new library building was added and is a decided asset to Nambour. Included in the new Civic Centre is a theatre and a hall which meant the old Nambour Picture Show closed down. On the corner of Arundell Avenue and Lamington Terrace a Kentucky Fried

Chicken outlet was established. Closer to home, the old wooden train bridge was replaced with a new higher one enabling buses and high vehicles to pass through via Arundell Avenue...

Many volunteer bands and artists, led by the Music on Wheels group, have run our monthly dances at the Hall. Unfortunately these dances have finished after so many years of bringing very happy times to the residents, whose pleasure it was to attend them.

A bus from the Uniting Church of Nambour's Old Friends Friendship Club is sent to our Village most months to pick up many of the residents for social outings to various places or morning tea in the Church Hall. Also during these years we have often watched the helicopter fly over our Village on its way to the heliport at the Nambour hospital. Also over these years we have been aware of the two large extensions added to the hospital as they stand out on the horizon.

Of course year by year, the gardens of the Village are continually changing and the trees growing taller, now many are higher than the houses. Some residents have pleasure growing vegetable gardens down near the sports area, beside George Watt's daylily garden. During the years we have worn out several flags flown daily on our flag pole. Custodians of the flag have been Jim Groom, George Davies and Arthur Clyne.

A resident of the Village suggested to the Maroochy Shire Council that the creek below the Village needed a name. It is now named Whalley Creek after an old resident of the area... On the skyline south of the village there was an old farm house, recently removed leaving the Jacaranda tree which grew beside it. In the adjacent paddocks, about 30 black cattle with their calves were brought and left for short times, depending on the amount of feed available. Now we have brown ones instead. Though very nice we miss seeing our friends of so many years – the black cattle.

Now into our 10th year of residency... at Rotary Garden Village, George and I are still quite sure of our decision to make this our home was the right one and I am sure our many friends in the Village agree with us."

Meanwhile the ever increasing administration loads were stretching Sundale resources to the limit. Sundale President Graham Chapman admitted that things were tight and made the following comments in the 1993-94 Annual Report, acknowledging the dedication of staff:

"Extreme caution in budgeting, cost effective deployment of available hours for care and the productivity of our work force has carried our organisation

through a very tight year, with the hope that pressure may ease in the future. Indeed, such is the concern within the industry at present that the Aged Care division of the Uniting Church in Australia has convened a seminar in Melbourne next month to attempt to formulate a strategy, provide a costed model and devise a workable plan for dementia care nationally, and serve this to the Government, hopefully for adoption. What better approach could be found than for the actual care providers to design programs that actually have been working in the past and encourage Government to adopt these methods and direct suitable funding towards that end. I cannot help but wonder just how much better provision of care could be given through a co-operative planning approach by all levels of industry as opposed to the them and us mentality that inevitably prevails where one body is providing the dollars and the other is entirely dependent on those dollars.”

Graham Chapman had barely drawn breath since joining the Sundale Management Committee in 1977, and so another milestone was marked when Graham and his wife Joan, also a stalwart volunteer at Sundale, decided to take a six month touring holiday. The reigns were handed over to Vice President, John Kleinschmidt, who confessed that during this time he ‘gained a whole new insight into the organisation and a renewed respect for the considerable contribution that Sundale makes to the care of our older Australians.’⁴⁷

John attended the 7th National Conference on Aged Care Australia and came back with the clear-cut message that for the future Community care is in – residential care is out. He predicted that Sundale would eventually have to embrace the appointment of a Care Director and move into Community Aged Care Packages to provide in-home care, which was increasingly becoming the Government funded alternative to building new nursing homes.

As an experienced Local Government officer, John also recognised the value of sound strategic planning and he determined that Sundale would embark upon its first formal strategic planning process in the near future to guide growth and development. The appointment of Ian Walton as Building and Grounds Manager in September 1994 took a significant workload from the Administrator and resulted in purchasing and preventative maintenance initiatives that also saved money.

As Sundale entered its fourth decade, the Management Committee started looking at whether its corporate structure was the best way to manage the very large organisation that Sundale had become. Graham Chapman recalled that the Committee was much more hands on in the early days and that he had been involved in appointing administration staff and was often interacting with them. ‘Lawyers advised the Committee, mostly on a pro bono basis, and there was no such thing as corporate

governance. The more it was explained to us... well it was scary the requirements due to regulations and when a CEO is appointed, it changes the structure,' he said. ⁴⁸

It was obviously something that Sundale would have to consider as time went on, but for now, there was the celebration of another major milestone in the air. The James Grimes Nursing Home turned 21 years old on 9th September 1994 and 200 guests enjoyed the BBQ and concert put on by staff.

At the Rotary Garden Village, the long anticipated Clubhouse was opened on 29th October 1994 by Rotary District Governor, Doug Biggs. He presented some wonderful Rotary Club memorabilia which was housed in specially built glass cases, providing an enduring acknowledgement of the enormous strength that the two Rotary Clubs had brought to the creation of the Rotary Garden Village. For the residents, all those cake stalls, garage sales, cent auctions and generous donations had raised an incredible \$45,000 which was just over half of the total cost of the building. Merrin and Cranston were the architects and big-hearted Nambour businesses donated equipment for the Clubhouse, which soon became the hub for social activities.

The ladies certainly went to a lot of trouble for the official opening and the Rotary Village November Newsletter described the ceremonies and the trouble that the residents went to:

“For those who could not be present, a brief description. Instead of using the usual straight line square look of the chairs, a crescent-shaped appearance was invoked. The official table was placed in front of the television on an angle and the chairs were set in a half circle down the centre of the Clubhouse. It gave a very effective appearance. Several comments were made as to the beautiful setting and the outlook on three sides to the green grass, the trees along the creek and the hills in the background. The Chairman, Maude Hocking, was superb, introducing the invited guests, the speakers and keeping the whole afternoon moving. The official opening was conducted by the Mayor of Maroochy, Mr Bob King. The Meals on Wheels organisation provided a delectable afternoon tea. It was enjoyed by all.”

The first function at the Clubhouse was a BYO basket Melbourne Cup lunch, complete with sweeps and a good old fashioned sing-a-long. Best of all, according to long time resident Joyce Hall 'No one had to move to watch the Cup on the big screen TV.'

Sir Clem Renouf had been unable to attend the opening of the Clubhouse, but made a special effort to come and see it later on. Nambour Rotary Club was given permission to hold a Dinner Meeting in the Clubhouse on 15th November and residents were invited to hear Sir Clem speak. How proud he must have felt to see the vibrant community with its new hub, seeded by his generosity just over a decade ago.

Plans started for the first Christmas party in the new Clubhouse and so it became a VIP – Very Important Place – in the Village. Jessie Watt and Joyce Hall were active for many years in the Recreation Club and recall that many generous donations of equipment helped to make the Clubhouse a great facility that was popular for indoor bowls, cards, monthly dinners, private parties and festivities. Over the years a bigger urn, additional cutlery and crockery were purchased to cope with the larger numbers attending functions at the Clubhouse. The Clubhouse also included a hairdressing salon, which was made possible by funds raised by residents including Ben Hingston, Jean Warren and others. No more would the Village ladies have to line up on the stage in the Community Centre waiting to get their hair done by Eunice Krome.⁴⁹



Rotary Clubhouse, 20th October 1994

One of the residents, George Watt, had established some of his special hybridised Daylily varieties near the vegetable gardens at Rotary Garden Village. That year (1994) was an exceptionally good year for George, who won 11 awards, including the Champion Flower which was a beautiful pastel pink flower, named Nambour Excellence. Another award was for the Nambour Ballerina and a flower which won two awards was the Nambour Doubloon, a small yellow gold flower. George's flowers provided colourful table displays for Village events and brightened up the Village.

The Palmwoods Hostel had a full complement of residents within 12 months. And it had its own Ladies Auxiliary – a small band of community-minded Palmwoods citizens who ran a canteen and volunteered their time to support residents when

independent living became difficult. The Palmwoods Lions Club made their mark at Palmwoods Garden Village by building a large gazebo, which served originally as the mailing centre for the Village (and which was later moved to near the Clubhouse). Zonta donated plants for a rose garden and the Lions agreed to tend them. Weaving another Sundale village into the social fabric of a town like Palmwoods was a great community bonus for everyone.



Residents enjoy living in the Palmwoods Hostel, 1995

Sundale was now a big business in anyone's books with a balance sheet approaching \$12 million in 1993-94. There were many challenges facing the organisation and in retrospect, the mid 1990s were a time of transition. Big changes were yet to come – some of which were in response to Government policy direction – and some of which involved more fundamental changes to the way that Sundale had operated for the past 30 years.

Sundale was first and foremost a community organisation, well known and supported by the community, but the traditional concept of community was actually becoming quite threatened by the rapid population growth taking place throughout the entire Sunshine Coast region. From being the first provider of aged care accommodation on the Sunshine Coast, to being part of what was now called an aged care industry was an enormous change for Sundale, and facing increasing competition from private providers motivated by profit was a huge challenge for a community based organisation. It was one that would continue in the foreseeable future and a challenge which Sundale would rise to meet.

COAG, CACP and SPACE

The 1994-95 Commonwealth budget cut a massive \$250 million from aged care funding Australia-wide. Sundale Administrator John Baird's report for 1994-95 outlined the enormous changes that the aged care sector was being forced to undergo as a result of Government policy changes:

“Since my introduction into aged care almost 14 years ago, I have experienced continual changes in the way aged care operates. If anything, the pace of change is accelerating as each year goes by and understandably so, as Australia's population of senior citizens increases. The estimated peak in the population aged 70 and over is anticipated to occur in approximately 2025. Changes in aged care are generally promoted by Government, as the policy makers look for more ways to reduce the flow of subsidised care dollars... each year that passes, fewer nursing home and hostel beds are released. In locations like the Sunshine Coast, which is experiencing constant growth, there seems little hope of additional aged care placements forthcoming. The shift from residential care has therefore become a new trend. The Government recognises that (it) is far cheaper to keep elderly folk in their own homes than expand existing facilities or allow the development of new ones.”

A prime mover influencing Government policy reforms is the Council of Australian Governments or COAG, which was originally set up in May 1992. COAG is Australia's peak inter-governmental forum consisting of the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association. Its role is to initiate, develop and monitor the implementation of policy reforms of national significance that require co-operative action by the various levels of Government throughout Australia.

In January 1995, a discussion paper was released outlining a proposal for a new National Health Act, which would condense the existing 40 separate Acts into four Acts. These reforms would take much more than one term of Government to implement and with a Federal election looming the next year, things were likely to change again – all of which made it difficult for Sundale to plan ahead.

The major initiative of the new Commonwealth policy direction was the creation of Community Aged Care Packages (CACP), which were like a licence to an approved operator to take care packages into the community to the person's own home. Only a restricted number of licences were granted and Sundale had to gradually gear up for the inevitability of these changes impacting on operations.

And so the Sundale Private Aged Care Enterprise (SPACE) program began in May 1995. It was essentially an internal training program to equip staff to provide care in

the community – once the demand and Government budgets for home care became a reality. It could be tailored to the needs of either Sundale’s residents or those living in the general community. Muriel Hubbard, with a background in aged care for over 19 years, was appointed as the SPACE Coordinator. She was responsible for designing and implementing the care plans for each client.

Although the new Government direction was designed to assist elderly people to remain in their own homes as long as possible, it was also a cost saver for Government. The statistics driving the policy were compelling and it could even be seen as necessary, because of increased life expectancies due to advances in science, health care and nutrition. In 1900, average life expectancy was only 52 years for men and 55 years for women. By the mid 1990s, these figures had increased to 74 years for men and 81 years for women and many Australians live beyond these averages.

Cost saving for Government usually means extra cost in administration for organisations and for Sundale the employment of Paul McDonald to support finance and administration was a response to the increasing accounting complexities. (Paul is Corporate Services Officer in 2013.)

It was the start of a fairly major restructure for Sundale. To determine how best to meet future challenges, strategic planning became an urgent priority for the Management Committee. President Graham Chapman, in the 1995 Annual Report, described how during their first strategic planning gathering held over a two-day long weekend where ‘Much wheat and chaff was moved around, sifted through, sorted and classified, but by Sunday afternoon, a clearer direction had been formulated to be our basis of planning the next five years.’

The many hours spent in strategic planning for the Management Committee and key staff, resulted in the first Mission Statement, a sense of who they were in a changing world, and a prioritised plan to guide the future of Sundale. Anyone who has taken part in strategic planning will know just how hard it can be to come up with the Mission Statement. So few words to say so much, but that’s the challenge.

The first Sundale Mission Statement in 1995 spoke volumes about how Sundale wanted to offer care to its residents and that this was the organisation’s core business:

Sundale provides quality care villages to make life dignified, positive and interesting for all citizens in its care. We will ensure residents feel secure, earn their respect and enhance their self-esteem and independence.

The by-line of *A lifestyle of dignity and security* was added to the Sundale ‘brand’. Now in its fourth decade, the organisation was well positioned to cope with the future in a quite rapidly changing world, as well as keeping faith with its original charter to serve the elderly members of the community.

A small example of thinking strategically was the fact that laundry services, which were outsourced, were costing \$250,000 annually. Sundale decided to investigate the feasibility of returning to its own central laundry services in the Nambour complex as it had done in the early days. A modern laundry building was subsequently established to cater for Sundale's needs and later enabled the acceptance of external laundry contracts, which considerably offset costs. Although it required a substantial initial investment, over time it would become an asset.



The Sundale laundry is an essential part of services

The Management Committee had remained committed to providing all the services that elders needed, whether they were profitable or not. As part of this commitment, Sundale had recognised for some time that the number of people requiring supported living to assist with dementia was increasing, but convincing Government to come to the party took a while. There were very few secure facilities available on the Sunshine Coast and when Federal Government funds finally became available on a two for one basis, this enabled Sundale to upgrade parts of Bowder Lodge to a secure area for residents with cognitive difficulties. This had been a long term campaign by Sundale, but the amount of funding available was really the tip of the iceberg in terms of need.

The nursing care of frail residents had always been a top priority for Sundale and when a new funding round was announced, an application was lodged to build a nursing home at the Palmwoods Garden Village. It was well supported by statistical data and Sundale was ready to commence building as soon as a permit was issued. The Management Committee was even canvassing the possibility of building a privately financed and operated nursing home – in case Government funding was not forthcoming.

The waiting game would continue a while longer for the nursing home at Palmwoods, but residents now had a beautiful new Village Clubhouse completed at a cost around \$200,000. Construction of 16 more independent living units was underway and providing much needed employment for local tradespeople and

suppliers in a generally depressed building industry. The Village itself was looking good despite the dry weather with the flourishing gardens a delight to residents, team members and visitors.



The official opening of the Palmwoods Clubhouse in 1996

Around 600 residents were now accommodated in the three Sundale campuses and services were being provided to a further 200 external clients through the Day Therapy Centre, short term respite care and outreach packages assisting independence at home. This was made possible by 350 team members across a large number of professional disciplines. The annual wages bill exceeded \$5 million and Sundale's commitment to serve the needs of elderly citizens was as always unwavering, but was about to be tested with some major changes in politics.

A New Act

In Queensland, Wayne Goss's grip on power slipped and voters elected a Borbidge led Coalition Government in February 1996, which governed with support from Independent Liz Cunningham.

Then, in March 1996, 13 years of Federal Labor Government came to an end. With Prime Minister Paul Keating up for re-election, the Australian Labor Party recorded their lowest primary vote since 1934 and John Howard's Coalition Government was resoundingly elected. The incoming Government ordered a National Commission

of Audit and one of their top priorities was to reduce the present and future costs of providing aged care. Subsequently a massive \$1 billion was cut from aged care in the 1996-97 Budget.

On 1st October 1997, when the new Aged Care Act 1997 came into effect, the provisions included higher income-tested daily fees for nursing home residents. The payment of an upfront bond, averaging \$26,000 for those with assets over \$22,500 for the first time, was extremely unpopular. Public criticism by welfare bodies resulted in some changes that removed the bond requirement from high care facilities.

The new Aged Care Act 1997 was specifically designed to open up the hostel sector to private industry and to introduce competition between providers. Although not-for-profit providers still owned half of all private hospitals and nearly 75% of all the nursing homes, the new Government policies demanded more commercially focussed operations. These changes presented a moral dilemma for the not-for-profits and indeed could even threaten the very reasons for their existence, which were philanthropic rather than profit oriented.

There was now effectively no capital funding for building available from any level of Government. The Commonwealth introduced a new resident classification system, which tied funding to the care needs of the individual residents. Accreditation of services and enforcing standards across the board were also primary objectives of the new Commonwealth Government, and for the first time nursing homes and hostels were linked into a single residential care stream. These assessments had been rather ad hoc until 1997, when the Commonwealth Aged Care Agency was set up and some resources were finally allocated.

Under the new Act, funding was derived both from residents and Government fees by means of the Resident Classification Scale, which authorised subsidy payments. The resident daily fee was set at 87.5% of the single pension, which was then \$26.88 per day. Extra services required a private contribution from the resident. The concept of a resident bond was effectively to provide aged care providers with an interest free loan to assist with capital to build facilities.

Other initial impacts of the new Commonwealth Government model included the necessity for more building certification – even though both State and Local Government certification had already been obtained – which would cost Sundale \$1,250 for each residential place. To ensure that the quality of service was meeting required standards, accreditation costing \$8,000-\$10,000 per facility also had to be paid for by service providers.

Sundale's 1996 AGM paid tribute to Ron Garrett's 14 years of service, when he retired from being a Rotary representative on the Board. The Sundale Board recognised

that the time had come to employ a business oriented General Manager. A lengthy recruitment process resulted in the appointment in March 1997 of Glenn Bunney, who was very experienced in management roles in national and international organisations. The expertise of former Administrator John Baird was retained as he moved to the position of Residential Care Manager of Sundale.

Glenn Bunney later recalled what it was like when he first came to Sundale:

“It was a time of massive changes. The funding models changed and Government stopped funding cost increases, so that if Award rates increased, the Government would not guarantee to meet this increase. And this is still the case 15 years later really... When I first arrived, I spoke to elders in Sundale’s facilities. Many had been in one of Sundale’s facilities for a long time, some for 20 years... I found out that they had moved into a hostel because either their home was no longer suitable for them, or because they could not get any support at home. I kept on hearing this and planted it in the back of my brain for a while as I got on with more immediate changes.”⁵⁰

Glenn immediately began working on a five-year strategic plan for Sundale and one thing that was apparent to him was that there was a lack of an actual sense of Sundale as an organisation. Instead each location saw themselves as separate, often referring to Sundale as ‘that mob’ in Nambour, and even at the Nambour campus the different facilities were viewed by workers as separate, not part of a whole. So, with strong leadership from the new General Manager, Sundale began to address this, to bring the organisation together.

Around 50 team members from different positions within the organisation gathered together for a two-day workshop and from that emerged Sundale’s new Vision Statement:

We exist to care, to grow, to support our community.

And the Mission Statement was expanded:

We are a Community based organisation focused on:

Delivering a diverse range of innovative care programmes responsive to customers’ needs;

Striving for excellence in all we do;

Developing the skill and expertise of our people in a positive, caring and supporting environment and

Pro-active involvement in education and community activities;

Thereby maintaining sustainable growth for our future together.

It is easy to read, but so difficult for 50 people to come to that point of agreement and, even more importantly, to consider how to deliver services to reach that vision. For Glenn Bunney, the emphasis on care, as part of the Vision Statement and Mission Statement, told him loud and clear that an 'elder-centric' approach was a fundamental principle for Sundale.

Within his first year, Glenn had initiated the Sundale Links magazine to assist information sharing and create a sense of unity between the three Sundale villages. He went on to conduct a complete review and recommended that to be sustainable, Sundale needed to grow the business, and look at other areas outside of residential care. Government was funding services and not buildings and Glenn saw that the future lay in diversifying Sundale operations and providing services to residents – whether at Sundale or elsewhere in the region – including in-home care.

However, one of Sundale's immediate tasks was the expansion of the Palmwoods Hostel facility to meet the community demand for its services. Already the 42 beds of the Palmwoods Hostel were fully occupied. Stalls and open days were held and a huge demonstration of public support was forthcoming for an expanded facility. A successful application subsequently increased the number of beds to 70, which included expanding the number of beds in the Dementia Unit from 14 to 28 beds. All additional beds would be rapidly filled after completion. Despite the growing demand, there was still no capital funding from the Federal Government for building nursing homes. Sundale also purchased an adjoining 4.2 hectare parcel of former Briggs family land, with a view to the future.

Sundale became the first known nursing home in Queensland to care for an HIV positive resident in respite and was also becoming renowned for its pioneering work in the area of dementia. Sundale staff developed a new co-operative intervention method to assist with behavioural problems in residents suffering the effects of dementia. Around this time the James Grimes Nursing Home became the more inclusive James Grimes Care Centre.

In the second half of the 1990s, technology was rapidly advancing. Faster Pentium processors and cable modems made the internet and email accessible. By dramatically upgrading Sundale's online communications system and centralising administration, considerable savings in costs were realised and plans for a new administration centre were put on hold indefinitely. Sundale also invested in new technology so that individual care plans could be computerised and continuously updated in 'real time' – a win-win for residents and carers. This program was progressively rolled out to cover all Sundale facilities.

Glenn Bunney set about building teams and created a number of Improvements Teams. Their task was to implement changes to better deliver quality care

across a wide spectrum of operations. He was confidently writing in the 1997-98 Annual Report:

“Sundale, like many other large organisations, needs to evolve with the changing demands of its people. It is clearly a fact of life that those closest to an opportunity for improvement are the best qualified to address it. Gone are the days when the Manager was expected to make all the decisions. We have operated Improvement Teams this year that have been highly successful in changing practices for the better... we held strategic planning workshops last year, and rather than just inviting the Management team, we had people involved from right across the organisation. The outcomes reflected the breadth of experience and involvement of the group. We anticipate building on these firm foundations as we take Sundale forward into the next millennium..

Glenn Bunney was now on the Board of Aged Care Queensland and, together with the Management Committee, he encouraged other Sundale team members to become involved in industry working groups, think tanks and delegations to Ministers at both State and Federal levels. Glenn is a skilled lobbyist and expressed the Sundale philosophy succinctly and with conviction in the 1997-98 Annual Report:

“Sundale is quite a sizable supplier of aged care services in Queensland, which provides opportunities and obligations for standing up for our beliefs, in spite of adversity. We hold the following principles and advocate forcefully on behalf of our residents, at every opportunity. Access to services must be based on care need, ensuring the delivery of high quality care to all residents, whatever their capacity to pay or their geographical location.”

From 1997-98, the Sundale Annual Reports, like the entire aged care industry itself, moved into a new dimension of professionalism and presentation, building a sense of Sundale the organisation. President Graham Chapman was writing the Annual Report in October 1998 as Australia was in the grip of election fever after John Howard risked the polls in an early election:

“By the time members are able to read this report, we will be under the control of a new Federal Parliament which will guide us into the next millennium and beyond. However at the time of compiling the report... aged care providers have no access to reliable information from the Department which controls their operations. We at Sundale have worked with all styles of Government since 1963 and it is a case of playing to the rules of the masters of the day. As they say, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

One of the emotional issues of the past year was the proposal for accommodation bonds for nursing homes. Although it was subsequently dropped, extra fees have been introduced to address the issue of a user pays system. The Federal Opposition, in an attempt to gain popularity has promised to remove these fees. The issue that concerns providers is that they have not been offered any replacement funding which is desperately needed to upgrade facilities. This is the type of dilemma that constantly concerns providers of quality care services. In recognising the further turmoil in front of us, thanks to careful planning and focused management, Sundale is well placed to address the challenges that will confront the organisation in the immediate future.”

The Howard Government was re-elected and settled in for several more terms in office and Sundale settled in with Glenn Bunney at the helm – consolidating and guiding the organisation in times of change towards a sustainable future.

End of the Century

For the first time an Executive Management Team was listed in the 1998-99 Annual Report. It included Glenn Bunney as General Manager, Kath Readman as Care Director, Paul McDonald as Finance and Administration Manager, Ian Walton as Projects Manager and John Baird as Residential Care Manager. There was an enormous amount of experience vested in this team along with a strong Management Committee with considerable experience to bring to the table, both in terms of their professional lives and the length of their involvement with Sundale.

In the 1998-99 Annual Report it was noted: ‘When we think back on the vision held in 1963, one can’t help but marvel at the incredible foresight and dedication of those involved. Many of those active in the early stages of Sundale remain involved with the organisation even today – as residents, volunteers, members of the Sundale Board and many other areas of activity.’

For the first time in the annual Sundale statistics, volunteers were counted. There were an amazing 90 people regularly volunteering and helping to support Sundale elders in many different ways. During the 1998-99 year, a major change had taken place among the volunteer force of Sundale. The Ladies Auxiliary, originally formed when the James Grimes Care Centre opened, became the Friends of Sundale, and the way was paved for men to become members as well, which many did. Long serving Rotary representative on the Board and Maroochy Shire Councillor for 12 years, Geoff Littler, resigned after 16 years of service to Sundale.

Sundale was directly serving close to 1,000 people through its James Grimes Care Centre, five assisted living facilities and the Day Therapy Centre. This included 350 residents in independent living units. But Sundale was faced with what was known as 'ageing stock' in terms of its buildings and \$4 million was dedicated in the 1999-2000 financial year for upgrades. Sundale now had to compete with many Over 50s villages that had come on stream in recent years, in order to remain viable in the field of retirement living. People were naturally attracted to new facilities and an ongoing program to modernise older units began at the original Sundale Garden Village and progressively at Rotary Village as units were vacated.

Sundale was dedicated to making sure that financially disadvantaged people were still able to enter Sundale villages and had always demonstrated the commitment to providing continuity of care needs as people aged. The changes in Government policy had a major impact on the James Grimes Care Centre, which looked after the most frail residents with complex care needs. Subsidies had declined in real terms while care needs increased. Instead of moving residents across to a high care facility when they needed it, high care residents were expected to remain in assisted living centres or their own homes longer and to receive extra care services there. This was what would become known as the Howard Government's Ageing in Place policy in action, which has since been adopted by a subsequent Labor Government.

However, there were discrepancies in the amount of subsidies available in the different States of Australia. Sundale was an instrumental part in launching a campaign through Aged Care Queensland calling for a Fair Share for Aged Care asking for subsidy rates to be uniform across the country. Queensland was at the time receiving up to 22% less funding for residents in the same care category as Tasmania.

The upgrades to the James Grimes Care Centre were finally going ahead and some changes were made as a result of new compliance requirements by Government. Interestingly, this added 16% additional floor space without adding one single extra bed. All of the three and four bedrooms were removed and 33 single rooms (some with ensuite) were being built. Unfortunately the work took place during an especially rainy season, when over 2.4 metres of rain (almost 100 inches) was recorded in the first six months of the year. It cost almost \$2 million to complete the upgrade which had a ripple effect on every service – roads, drains, power lines, sewer lines, storm water, phone lines and even clothes lines – involved in the transition.

The close proximity of the Day Therapy Centre has always been a huge boon to residents in the Care Centre, which greatly assisted in improving their mobility and independence. Residents admitted to the Care Centre have an individual plan devised with input from family, friends and carers, which is monitored and changed

as care needs changed. In this way residents could be rehabilitated within their own capabilities and return to assisted living or their own home. The proportion of residents with high care needs being maintained within assisted living centres was increasing and only the extremely frail high care residents were cared for within the James Grimes Care Centre. This was a trend that was clearly here to stay.

At the Palmwoods Garden Village, residents were delighted to have enhanced recreational facilities which included the pool and BBQ gazebo area. The real estate market had been pretty flat and people were having difficulties in selling their homes, so there were actually some empty units at Palmwoods Village. Sundale conducted extensive consultations with their target market, and identified a strong demand for larger three bedroom units, which were non-existent at Palmwoods. A decision was taken to build more units, with approval for 6 units given, and around 24 more planned, with a provision for the first three bedroom units, to cater for that demand.

Meanwhile, lots of consultation with team members, residents, volunteers and the Palmwoods community revealed the most urgent need was for the extension of the residential aged care facility. Following the application process, Government agreed to fund 30 new low care places to be operational by the last quarter of 1999.

Sundale's newest venture into retirement living on the coast at Coolum had been proceeding for a number of years. Glenn Bunney worked with the Coolum Beach and District Aged Care Organisation (CB&DACO), which had secured a Permit to Occupy a parcel of Crown land bordered by Stumers Creek to the north. Due to the fact there was absolutely no capital funding available from any level of Government, CB&DACO had decided to join forces with an established aged care organisation and advertised for expressions of interest. A unanimous decision by their Committee had chosen Sundale to be that provider and after a Heads of Agreement document between the two organisations was negotiated, the process began.

Site plans were drawn up for an aged care development at Coolum, including 85 independent living units and a 50 bed Care Centre. However, the plans were still subject to a feasibility study and required extensive negotiations with the Department of Natural Resources, Maroochy Shire Council and others, and it would be a lengthy process.

As General Manager, Glenn Bunney was keenly aware of the enormous value of Sundale staff and a special event was held to honour long term team members. At a function attended by 129 guests, Sundale paid tribute to 37 team members celebrating 10 years of service, 14 celebrating 15 years and 4 celebrating 20 years with 8 special awards of appreciation. That adds up to 660 years of service between 55 staff! What an outstanding demonstration of staff dedication.

Focusing on what the community wanted and responding to those needs was a core principle of Sundale which had guided the past 36 years. It was time for the organisation to become more actively involved in providing community care services to people in their own homes – not only seniors but also to younger people with specific needs. However, although Sundale started applying for community care packages in 1999, it would be several years into the new century before they were granted the go-ahead from Government. As Glenn Bunney later observed, ‘Interestingly however, when these packages were finally granted, the expertise of Sundale was recognised with the allocation of the first high care community packages on the Sunshine Coast.’

Continuity of care was always a central feature of designing Sundale villages. In the beginning when residents had to leave their independent living unit for a higher level of care, they would move to an assisted living environment and the James Grimes Care Centre was there when needed. It meant that couples could remain close by and not be split up and separated by distance in old age. With the advent of the community care packages, it meant that residents were able to stay longer in their homes and maintain independent living situations. During 1998-99 almost 70% of admissions to the James Grimes Care Centre and 30% of admissions to the assisted living centres were through the Sundale care continuum.

At the close of the financial year 1999, the Sundale balance sheet showed assets valued at \$46.35 million and an operating expenditure of \$10.652 million. Staff training, accreditation and computer system costs were rising, and project teams were made more accountable and involved in improving all aspects of Sundale’s operations. Sundale was once again looking at a major strategic plan review, including a financial strategic plan, to safeguard the long term viability of the organisation and move confidently into the new century.

Historically, Sundale had invested in term deposits because they provided a safe haven for funds, although at the lower end of investment returns. With changes to the Trusts Act, Sundale was able to seek investments that offered higher returns and an Investment Committee was formed to examine the available options. It was only during the mid to late 1990s that the concept of the share market as a place to invest funds became more common for what are called ‘mum and dad’ investors – after the Howard Government privatised and publicly listed Telstra. In 1997, the Government sold one third of its shares in Telstra for \$14 billion and in 1999 the second stage of Telstra privatisation proceeded. By this time, the phenomenon of share market investment had become much more widespread and Sundale acquired an investment portfolio to grow the surplus.

As the century drew to a close, on 6th November 1999, Australians said NO in a referendum to make Australia a Republic, with a President appointed by Parliament. A second question about a Preamble to the Constitution was included and also failed. The word millennium was becoming popular in conversations and in the media. Although it happens every hundred years, it was a pretty exciting time to be alive at the actual turn of the century. Of course there was argument about whether the new millennium began in 2000 or 2001 and a lot of hype about the ominously named Y2K or the Millennium Bug, but more about that as the clock ticks over.

Brand New Millennium

As the new millennium dawned, Nambour was still a sugar town dominated by the mill chimney chugging away in the centre of town. But sugar prices had begun to decline and changes were rustling through the cane stalks. In contrast, in the new century, Sundale would branch out, like limbs on a tree, expanding into new communities, and introducing innovative community services. This would all be achieved against a backdrop of ever-changing State and Commonwealth Government regulations and a shift in relationship with Local Government.



Aerial shot of Moreton Sugar Mill, looking west, 2004 (Courtesy of Sunshine Coast Libraries)

First however, Sundale and the rest of the world had to survive the disastrous forecasts of worldwide chaos from the Y2K. Due to the unpredictability of what might happen Sundale President, Graham Chapman, knew that Sundale had to be prepared for the Y2K and any emergencies, while still supporting and caring for their elders. There were doomsday type forecasts of mass power blackouts if the computer systems that maintained the power grids failed. Sundale needed the security of back-up generator power in case the mains power was disrupted or stopped. Graham Chapman recalled how he and Paul McDonald, at the time Acting CEO while Glenn Bunney was away, had to commit to hiring back-up generators for three months, despite the fact the generators were really only needed for the night of 31st December 1999 and that crucial moment when the clocked ticked over from midnight into the year 2000. However the uncertainties of what the Millennium Bug might cause were too great to ignore, so the generators were hired.

Fortunately, as history attests, humankind was not plunged into darkness or disaster and on the 1st January 2000, the world and Sundale greeted the first sunrise of a new century. Contingency costs for the new millennium cost Sundale around \$50,000, but as the old saying goes, it is certainly better to be safe than sorry, and with the care of their elders always the primary concern, Sundale made sure they were prepared for all worst case scenarios.⁵¹

In 2000, Sundale was the largest small operator of aged care in Queensland and contributed a total of just under \$11 million in recurrent expenditure to the district, including wages and services. Sundale's Nambour, Burnside and Palmwoods villages housed a total of 731 elders, with 115 residents in the care centres, 266 residents in assisted living, 350 residents in independent living and over 250 clients in day therapy, all serviced by 350 employees and 140 volunteers. The special care units for memory care residents, which maintained an average occupancy of 98%, accounted for almost 20% of the total assisted living places.⁵²

The Howard-led Government continued to provide practically no Commonwealth capital assistance for aged care facilities. Instead, in a bid to get private investment into the aged care industry, the Commonwealth introduced a user pays system for accommodation bonds, which were paid for a person's entry into a residential or flexible care service. It was not a set amount but negotiated with the care provider. Every resident had to be left with a minimum asset value, calculated to be 2.5 times the pension at the time the resident entered the aged care facility.⁵³ Sundale has never refused people who cannot raise a bond, unlike private enterprise which does not always give the same consideration.⁵⁴ The aged care provider was entitled to the interest from the bond, and a small retention amount, but this had to be used for specific purposes such as building new infrastructure, purchasing equipment or extending services. The accommodation bond was guaranteed by the Commonwealth Government.

A date of 1st January 2001 had been set for all aged care facilities to be accredited or else face sanctions which including funding being withdrawn. And so, much effort was being devoted to not only meeting the standards but also operating the completely new system that applied. Sundale was fully supportive of the accreditation process despite the cost to the organisation, and was ahead of schedule in meeting accreditation requirements. As Site Manager for Sundale Garden Village, Pamela Fox, explained 'Accreditation has been a good thing, but there is definitely a lot more administration and documentation these days.'⁵⁵ A voluntary industry accreditation scheme was also being implemented for retirement villages, and was put into practice by Sundale. As part of the audit process residents and relatives are interviewed about their experience of care and services.

Accreditation is granted by the Commonwealth for a specified period ranging from 6 months to 3 years and administered, through the Department of Health and Ageing, by the Government owned regulator, the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency.

Residential aged care facilities are assessed for their quality of care, under the Quality of Care Principles Act 1997, against four Accreditation Standards.

(1): Management Systems, Staffing and Organisational Development, (2): Health and Personal Care, (3): Resident Lifestyle (4): Physical Environment and Safe Systems. Each standard listed a number of Expected Outcomes, with 44 Expected Outcomes across the four Accreditation Standards.⁵⁶ Accreditation audits are administered through the 44 Expected Outcomes, and nursing homes are required to achieve a score of 100%.

In an article in the British Medical Journal (in 1999), the quality of care in private and not-for-profit nursing homes across Australia was noted to be significantly lower in private 'profit making' nursing homes, largely due to pressure on private directors to reach financial goals by cutting corners in the quality of care. This was not so at Sundale.⁵⁷

And a Productivity Commission Report, released in 2000, had highlighted the fact that Queensland aged care providers received \$7,000 a year per resident less in funding than the other States. This was only slightly less than in 1997-98, when a Sundale deputation to the Health & Family Services Minister, as part of a Fair Share for Queensland campaign had highlighted a shortfall of \$7,391 per resident received by Queensland, compared to the other States. Two busloads of Sundale residents attended rallies in Brisbane's Roma Street Forum. A State-wide petition containing 32,000 signatures was sent to Canberra and presented to the Australian Parliament to highlight the continuing disparate funding.

Big overseas players, who had first shown interest in the market after the Aged Care Act 1997, made the industry a lucrative target for corporate entry. By 2000, according to media reports, American based corporations were ‘moving into Australia to capitalise on a growth industry protected by an assured flow of Government funds’ and one American corporation’s Managing Director stated ‘once you are in the business you have a guaranteed Government income ...it’s very good business... it’s been a cottage industry in Australia and some have milked the cow’.⁵⁸ In 2000, 55% of funding received Australia-wide for new nursing home beds went to the private sector, up from 27% historically. Of the private providers 12% of funding went to one provider, the Moran owned health care group.⁵⁹

Although corporate entry into aged care had resulted in increased competition, the largest employer in aged care was not a corporate giant, but the Catholic Church which operate a very large number of hospitals, aged care facilities, social services and community care services. The entry of corporate entities had basically forced not-for-profit organisations, like Sundale and the Catholic Church, to operate in a more corporate way to survive. As Sundale CEO Glenn Bunney is fond of saying ‘While you may have a mission, with no margin there’s no mission’.⁶⁰

A new Queensland Retirement Villages Act was introduced from 1st July 2000, which included some changes that Sundale believed would reduce flexibility for residents. One was the State’s decision to require village operators to continue charging service fees on vacant units, which was a process Sundale had abolished. In its normal manner Sundale advocated on behalf of its residents, but the legislative requirements were ultimately brought in by the State Government.

At the beginning of the new century, a major impact for Sundale was the introduction of the 10% Goods & Services Tax (GST), which came into effect on 1st July 2000 to replace the wholesale sales tax and some other taxes. Like many other organisations, Sundale had to invest in new computer systems and learn to negotiate a more complex tax system. The GST especially impacted Sundale both administratively and financially because charitable institutions were previously exempt from paying wholesale sales tax, but were now required to pay GST on some items. The initial impacts of the GST were also bewildering, as Sundale were self-sufficient (with support from some long-standing contractors) in so many areas including their own meal production, laundry services, administration and maintenance, which meant that it was difficult to sort out exactly what goods and services attracted the GST.

Sadly, Sundale lost a valued Patron and long term supporter when Eddie De Vere passed away in 2000. Sir Clem Renouf became the third Sundale patron. He was one of Sundale’s own ‘three wise men’ from Enterprise Estates who gave the land on which the original Sundale Garden Village at Nambour and Rotary Garden Village

at Burnside were developed. Also, Sir Clem was instrumental in starting the Rotary Garden Village and had already been a great champion for Sundale for 40 years when he became Patron.

Bob Sellars, who had replaced Sir Clem as Treasure on the Sundale Board, retired after an amazing 13 years in this position. Bob would later move into the Sundale Garden Village and he remains an active member of the Sundale family, often present at Sundale AGM's, always keen to ask questions and stay involved.

In the new century, Sundale continued to introduce innovative methods to care for their elders, with a multi-sensory room (Snoezelen room) incorporated into the James Grimes Care Centre. From the Dutch words 'sniffelen', meaning to smell and 'doozelen', meaning to sleep or doze, the room provides sensory therapies which stimulate the senses in a relaxing and positive environment, which is especially useful as part of the dementia-specific care regime. As always, these facilities were also available for the wider community to use.

The newest Sundale Village at Palmwoods reflected a growing market for larger independent living units, and Sundale was busy building the first three bedroom units with ensuites, to cater for the market demand. And to cater for the growing 'grey nomad' spirit, caravan and boat parking areas for residents were created. Extensions were also carried out to the Hostel at Palmwoods Garden Village, which included a doubling in size of the secure memory care wing for elders with dementia, which quickly reached 100% occupancy.

The new century was about to usher in something which would be seen by some as 'a bit unconventional' on those winds of change, but it would be a very welcome breeze that was set to enliven all aspects of Sundale.

Introducing a Garden of Eden

Sundale were always looking for ways to enhance the care of their elders and began the new century by evaluating a concept called The Eden Alternative™ which was being touted as a radical new caring model for aged care. The previous year, at an aged care conference in Hawaii, Dr William (Bill) Thomas, an international authority on geriatric medicine from New York, had discussed The Eden Alternative™ concept and many were inspired by the concept. Dr Thomas was subsequently invited to address an aged care conference in Australia in 2000 to enable Australian aged care operators to learn more about this exciting new innovation.⁶¹

The Eden Alternative™ was conceived by Dr Thomas after he visited a resident in a nursing home in 1991. The elderly resident was lying in bed. She had a rash on her arm and after Dr Thomas prescribed treatment, he asked her if there was anything else

he could do. He was surprised when she pulled him close, looked up at him with huge blue eyes and said in a soft, sad voice 'Doctor, I'm so lonely.' Dr Thomas was flustered and at the time could only smile, pat her arm gently and leave. But the memory of what she said would not go away. That night he searched in vain through all his medical textbooks for a treatment for loneliness, to no avail. He also began to question why, even though he gave his elderly residents the best medical treatment, so many of them were still dying before their time. Could they be dying from loneliness?

This started Dr Thomas on an incredible journey. First he began to visit nursing homes, sitting and observing the elderly. From this he concluded that the bulk of elders in nursing homes were suffering from what he coined the Three Plagues. These were loneliness, helplessness and boredom. With his wife Judith, Dr Thomas visualised a concept to address the Three Plagues by transforming the surroundings of nursing homes into an environment which harked back to the biblical story of the Garden of Eden. He said:

"Humans beings were not meant to live in a cold, sterile environment. They were meant to live in a garden. That is a true human habitat. We must create a balance for our elders that is much more like a garden – the Garden of Eden."⁶²

At the very heart of The Eden Alternative™ is finding antidotes to the Three Plagues of loneliness, boredom and helplessness by creating an elder-centred community, or what Dr Thomas called a human habitat, where life revolves around close and continuing contact with plants, animals and children. It is these relationships that provide young and old alike with a pathway to a life worth living. Elders deserve easy access to human and animal companionship. This loving companionship is the antidote to loneliness. An elder-centred community also creates opportunities to give as well as receive care. This is the antidote to helplessness. An elder-centred community furthermore imbues daily life with variety and spontaneity by creating an environment in which unexpected and unpredictable interactions and events can take place. This is the antidote to boredom.⁶³

Applying The Eden Alternative™ means that aged care organisations have to adopt a whole new way of thinking and change the physical and social environment of the aged care home. This involves a change in management style to a 'whole of facility' model, which includes team members and residents in the decision making process. Because The Eden Alternative™ addresses the fundamental elements of human nature. the need to be active and involved, the need for companionship and the need to be able to not only accept, but to give care – this involves a change in mindset to make aged care of the future a different, exciting world for all.⁶⁴ As well as introducing pets, children and gardens into aged care facilities and bringing growth and laughter into elders' lives, much more fundamental changes in relationships between team members, management and elders are essential elements in creating a Garden of Eden.

Other central underpinnings of The Eden Alternative™ are the ideas that medical treatment should be the servant of genuine human caring, never its master, and that meaningless activity corrodes the human spirit. The opportunity to do things that are meaningful is essential to human health. An elder-centred community honours its elders by de-emphasising top down bureaucratic authority, seeking instead to place the maximum possible decision-making authority into the hands of the elders or into the hands of those closest to them. And perhaps most importantly, creating an elder-centred community is a never-ending process. Human growth must never be separated from human life.⁶⁵

The treatment and clinical side of aged care takes only around two hours a day and so a primary focus must be on enriching the other 22 hours. As Dr Thomas has stated 'Medicine and medication can trick the body, but it can't trick the human spirit.'⁶⁶ Research has demonstrated that people give up their independence in about two weeks if everything is done for them. Recognising and encouraging elders to do what they can, instead of having everything done for them, is another core part of the Eden philosophy.

Dr Thomas and his wife originally founded The Eden Alternative™ as a not-for-profit organisation in the USA in 1994 and in 1999, had never considered 'letting the baby go' by opening up an Eden facility outside of the USA. However after many discussions at the Australian conference between Bill Thomas, Michael Isaac and Glenn Bunney, over countless cups of coffee, the Eden in Oz organisation (now EiON - Eden in Oz & NZ Ltd) was conceived.

EiON formally began in 2001 when an agreement was struck in terms of intellectual capital, accessing and sharing information in Australia and later New Zealand. This agreement was and still is unique as The Eden Alternative™ became a company in the USA soon afterwards and has spread to Canada, Alaska, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Japan.

The Founding visionaries of EiON were: Dr William Thomas and Judith Thomas founders Eden Alternative (USA); Glenn Bunney, CEO, Sundale (Qld); Petra Neeleman, CEO, DutchCare Ltd (Vic); Rhonda Peplow, CEO, Continuing Healthcare (WA); Michael Issac, then CEO of Aged Care Queensland Inc; Peter MacKenzie, Chair, MacKenzie Aged Care (Qld/Vic) and June Heinrich, CEO, Baptist Community Services (NSW/ACT).⁶⁷

During 2000, the first Eden training in Australia was conducted at Sundale, by Dr Bill Thomas. Graham Chapman recalled that the concept was well-received as 'staff at Sundale took it on wholeheartedly and (remain) really keen on it.'⁶⁸ New Sundale employees undertake a day of orientation with CEO Glenn Bunney, who impresses upon new team members that a key philosophy in the care provided by Sundale is

flexibility when working with residents, instead of expecting residents to fit into a regimental agenda. This philosophy is aptly demonstrated with the statement that ‘Our elders do not live in our workplace... we work in their home’, which can be seen in all Sundale facilities.

The change has not always been easy, and there have been some differences of opinion at times because some carers have been trained with a traditional task-orientated approach. Also some family members, who have high expectations of hospital-like environments regardless of the time of day or night, have struggled to understand the Eden philosophy. But at the end of the day, Sundale believes in doing what gets the best care outcomes. The results speak for themselves through the words and smiles of Sundale elders.⁶⁹ And as Glenn Bunney explains ‘A lot of people come (to Sundale) because of what we are about.’⁷⁰

For Sundale, operating aged care facilities with an elder-centric focus, including having pets visit nursing homes, was something the organisation always indirectly applied. In the 1987-88 Annual Report, there is a picture inside the front cover of Miss Bessie Moore and the Nursing Home Dog ‘Honey’. So finding this model which provided so many different ways to build on Sundale’s core philosophy was an exciting step for the organisation. The health benefits of having pets have been identified in many studies which demonstrate that senior citizens who interact with pets require less medical attention, are more mobile and feel younger, and have increased feelings of self-worth and independence. Other studies have shown the positive effects pets have on relieving stress, loneliness and depression.⁷¹

Some other examples of Sundale applying the Eden philosophy included holding childcare sessions in some of their aged care facilities, which was something Sundale would later get an unexpected opportunity to build upon. As well as a program of regular and varied activities and spontaneous happenings encourage a sense of fun, embracing the unexpected. This is a feature of Sundale life. Celebrations of special days such as Anzac Day, Australia Day, St Patrick’s Day, Christmas and Boxing Day are truly legendary in Sundale care centres, as well as theme days, sometimes held with notice and sometimes without, all bringing surprise and spontaneity into the day.

Sundale are proud of their involvement in bringing Eden to Oz and implementing the Eden philosophy in Australia from its foundation. Sundale also acknowledge that ‘Edenising’ is an exciting ongoing journey for residents, their relatives and team members. It is very much about introducing a profound cultural challenge to the current treatment-centred and clinical focus of nursing homes to a more holistic elder-centric philosophy. As we progress through the first century of the new millennium we will see just a sprinkle of the countless ways that Sundale, their team members and elders are bringing a Garden of Eden to residents, clients and the community.

International Year of the Volunteer

When 2001 was declared the 'International Year of the Volunteer' by the United Nations General Assembly, a busload of Sundale volunteers celebrated by attending a huge parade held in Brisbane, which honoured the invaluable contribution volunteers make to all layers of communities all over the world. Sundale also held a special awards ceremony to honour volunteers, recognising their enormous contributions to Sundale from the initial pole sit-ins in the 1960s, to the members of the Management Committee, some of whom had served as volunteers for more than 20 years continuously. In particular, the ongoing work of 'visiting angels of all descriptions' was acknowledged. Some of these 'angels' were formally known as the Friends of Sundale, which had formed in 1998 by members of the previous Ladies Auxiliary. Operating under their own constitution, these 'angels' supply a canteen service to the elders in the Nambour and Palmwoods villages, as well as a weekly 'goodies' trolley service which sells extra treats. They also help out with many activities in the centres, including reading to and providing companionship for the elderly. All funds raised go back into improving the lives of the residents, with purchases in 2001 including knee rugs, small furniture items and television sets.⁷²



The Sundale Canteen, run by volunteers (2013)

Sundale would be one of only a few local community organisations started by volunteers, initially managed at operational level by volunteers, and then continuously supported by volunteers for 50 years. In 2001, there were over 50 regular volunteers at the James Grimes Care Centre alone, with a further 80 volunteers at the assisted living centres. These priceless people provided a multitude of essential services, from

musical entertainment, massages, manicures and make-up, to helping with outings, bingo, bowls and assistance to attend appointments.

For many years, when he was President of Sundale, Graham Chapman would end the Annual Report by recording his thanks for the opportunity to be of service. This is typical of the humbleness of so many people who willingly give their time to make life more comfortable and enjoyable for Sundale residents, perhaps not fully realising what a big difference they are making to people's lives.

At the 2001 AGM, Rotary representative, Doug Clarke, retired after 19 years of service to Sundale and community representative Keith Thomson after 11 years.

For the first time, Sundale carried out extensive consultation with focus groups of people aged 55 years and over to identify current and emerging needs and trends. And a positive response was received from a first time survey of residents, as well as their families and friends, to keep up with changing views.

To maintain strong financial viability, Sundale implemented a new Investment Policy in March 2001, and put their banking business out to tender, choosing the ANZ Bank (Australia & New Zealand).

In 2001, Sir Clem Renouf was awarded the prestigious Rotary 'Centenary Medal for Distinguished Service to the Community' and in April, the Nambour Rotary Club honoured Sir Clem for his 80th birthday, for his contributions to Sundale and especially the Rotary Garden Village. Instead of birthday gifts, Sir Clem requested that Rotary present the Village with something of significance. Subsequently a gazebo was built in Sir Clem's honour, adjacent to the swimming pool. Memorabilia from Sir Clem Renouf's service with Rotary to local, national and international communities were also presented to the Village Clubhouse.

The Rotary Garden Village Newsletter in July 2001 reported that, for the first time, nominations for the Residents Association Committee were not all immediately filled at the Annual General Meeting. The Residents Association Committee is not only a requirement of the Retirement Villages Act, but is also an important avenue for Rotary Garden Village residents to communicate with Sundale Management Committee. It is responsible for managing association funds from fundraising and settling any rare disputes between residents. An Extraordinary General Meeting was called, residents rallied to the cause and all Committee positions were soon filled.

By December, the Rotary Garden Village Newsletter was commenting that the age of residents coming to live at Rotary Village was creeping up, and this was why the nominations were not at first filled. The advancing age of residents was also becoming an increasing problem when the various, and sometimes exhausting, fundraising events, such as garage sales/market days, required resident volunteers.

A motion was therefore passed to collect a voluntary levy of \$5 per resident to cover the expected future decrease in the funds of the residents' association from declining fundraising activities.

Sundale were also concerned about the advancing age of their oldest facilities, such as the James Grimes Care Centre. Although it complied with new building certifications, the facility would need replacing. A cost of \$23.4 million was estimated, in addition to possible replacement costs for McGowan and Nicklin Lodges. This was certainly not about to happen in a hurry and we shall pick up Sundale's plans for the redevelopment of the James Grimes Care Centre and the rest of the Sundale Garden Village later in our story.

Like their volunteers, Sundale team members always put in an amazing effort. Some remarkable statistics⁷³ demonstrate that in the first year of the new century, team members handled over 81,384 administrative transactions. The upkeep and maintenance of the villages involved regular mowing, trimming and edging of 110 hectares of land surfaces. The Sundale laundry team processed an astonishing 300,000 kg (300 tonnes) of laundry, which was equivalent to the weight of 50 African elephants. The kitchens washed up over 100,000 racks of tableware and almost 1,000 cubic metres of pots and pans. This washing up was the result of 315,000 meals cooked for residents which included 18,300 kg of meat, 45,000 litres of milk (almost 2 tankers of milk) and 22,000 loaves of bread. Also 128,244 eggs were consumed, which meant around 400 chickens provided this annual egg-stravaganza (the average commercial chicken lays about 325 eggs per year).

A decision by the Maroochy Shire Council to drastically reduce the previous discount on rates paid by Sundale meant an extra annual cost of around \$60,000 in rates. Recognition and support for Sundale from the local Maroochy Shire Council had been of invaluable assistance to Sundale from its inception and it was disappointing that there were hints of a change in the relationship between Sundale and Council into the new century. Reflecting on these changes, John Kleinschmidt (Sundale President in 2013) recalled that in the 1980s and 1990s, when he was Maroochy Shire Council Chief Health Surveyor and a Committee Member of Sundale, every senior member of Council staff had belonged to a local service organisation or community group. But, John reflected, as the population grew, more Council staff have increasingly come from outside the area, and subsequently do not have that previous connection with the local community.⁷⁴ Population growth has indeed created whole new communities, with many thousands of new residents, who are not so connected to the past.

Sundale were about to expand their community service in a totally new direction because of the decline of yet another pioneering industry on the Sunshine Coast.

Sundale Branches Out

In 2000, the township of Cooroy had lost two important icons. Firstly, Fenwick's Sawmill, a steam operated mill, which began on the outskirts of Cooroy township in 1908, closed its doors, marking the end of an era for the town, which began life as a timber camp in the 1800s.⁷⁵ The last cloud of white had drifted across the blue skies from the steam chimney, fed by bagasse, the fibre left after the juice is extracted from sugarcane. It was another part of a continuing pattern of decline in the pioneering industries of the Sunshine Coast.

The second Cooroy icon proved much more significant to our Sundale story. Cooroy lost a great community service in 2000, when the Cooroy Hospital went into liquidation and was offered for sale by tender. Originally established as a 10-bed hospital called St Margaret's in 1919, it was renamed the Noosa District Hospital in 1959 and later became the Cooroy Private Hospital.

Sundale knew nothing about operating a steam powered mill, but certainly knew about providing health and rehabilitation services to communities. On the day the Cooroy hospital tender process was announced, Glenn Bunney rang President Graham Chapman, and Vice-President John Kleinschmidt, and they immediately decided to inspect the facility. Through operating the Sundale Rehabilitation Centre (previously Sundale Day Therapy Centre) Sundale had long identified a strong demand for, and a lack of, proper rehabilitation facilities on the Sunshine Coast. So, Sundale were looking for ways to expand their rehabilitation services, and it seemed a logical step to investigate the Cooroy facility.

Working with the receivers, by September 2000 Sundale was able to purchase the hospital and land with plans to re-open the facility as a rehabilitation hospital. After 12 months of refurbishments the new Cooroy facility, called the Eden Healthcare Centre, was opened in October 2001. The hospital continued to provide some medical and specialist endoscopy services and rehabilitation, which were initially provided under the auspices of local GPs. Sundale then commenced the search for a rehabilitation specialist. However, it was not a specialist field widely practised in Queensland, unlike other States, and so Sundale were fortunate in locating Dr Vernon Hill, a semi-retired rehabilitation specialist from Brisbane, who helped to set up this essential and unique service.

Sundale quickly developed a rehabilitation centre of excellence which proved the sceptics, who suggested that the hospital would go broke within 18 months, absolutely wrong. We will hear more about the amazing success of the Eden Healthcare Centre as the century progresses.

In November 2001, another election returned John Howard's Coalition Government, which of course resulted in another departmental name change. The Department of Health and Aged Care became the Department of Health and Ageing, and also incorporated the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services section which was previously part of the Department of Family and Community Services.

Sundale, used to departmental name changes, instead concentrated on other matters. In 2001 Sundale was having its own sea change, when the development application for an aged care facility at Coolum was finally submitted. Sundale had achieved a Federal allocation for 50 places which meant the Coolum site had to be built and occupied by 2003. The name chosen for the new development, Coolum Waters Retirement Resort, reflected the sea-changing desires of potential residents, who instead wanted a 'resort' experience by the sea.

Delays and the perceived attitude of Maroochy Shire Council soon hindered the process in some quite unexpected ways.⁷⁶ The then local Maroochy Shire Councillor Bruce Dunne referred to Sundale as 'just another developer' and suggested that Sundale was 'simply trying to achieve maximum return benefits of using what would otherwise be publicly accessible land.'⁷⁷ This claim was firmly rejected by Sundale. As Glenn Bunney asserted, Sundale were only trying 'to give the community something that was absolutely essential, which was to allow older people, who were a very important part of the community, to have facilities to enable them to stay near family and friends and the community.'⁷⁸

Sundale designed the Coolum Waters Retirement Resort with an 'ageing-in-place' viewpoint, meaning that in most cases there was no need for residents to move into a nursing home⁷⁹ and also included the Eden philosophy at its heart. The first stage of the plans included the 50 bed residential aged care facility (named Coolum Waters Care Centre), which included two respite beds and ten dementia beds in a secure memory care unit, with plans for more such beds to be brought on line as and when needed. The care centre rooms were built as single rooms with ensuites, but were grouped in pods of ten to simulate group housing.⁸⁰ The aged care facility was designed with a particular emphasis on open areas and individual patios, reflecting the Sunshine Coast lifestyle. The Coolum Waters Retirement Resort was also designed with the beautiful coastal environment in mind, with over one third of the site retained in its natural state.

The first stage comprised plans for 19 independent living units as well as a swimming pool, Clubhouse and associated facilities. Before designing the Coolum development, Sundale had sought public input on the demand for styles of units. This, John Kleinschmidt recalled, was a worthwhile exercise as it confirmed that many retirees now wanted three bedroom units, so an increasing number of units at Coolum would be built with three bedrooms.⁸¹

Before submitting the development application, Sundale had held exhaustive consultations with numerous Government departments, including the Department of Natural Resources & Mines, Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Health & Aged Care, as well as local conservation groups, indigenous groups, neighbouring property owners and the Maroochy Shire Council Planning Committee.

Despite all of this, the Maroochy Shire Council rejected the initial application. Negotiations began with the Council, but soon stalled. One delay was caused by a condition that Council placed on the development, which required Sundale to construct a 650 metre long public footpath along the back boundary of the site, which ran along Stumers Creek.⁸² It seemed that Council regarded the Coolum development as akin to building on waterfront blocks and which should therefore include public access, but in reality it was a small creek that drained nearby low lying land. Sundale disputed the 'waterfront living' portrayal. All units would actually back onto the creek and furthermore Sundale were extremely concerned that public access, along the back of residents' units, would be unsafe. This concern was supported by two reports which stated the construction of the public pathway could result in opportunistic break-ins and prowlers.⁸³

By November 2001, Pat Tiley, an instrumental force (with his wife Edna) in getting the aged care facilities established in Coolum, commented in the local media on the delay. He pointed out the delay threatened this vital community project, which would provide accommodation, services and a focal point for community activities for around 200 people, an estimated 25 jobs and injecting \$1 million annually into the local economy. Pat Tiley rebuffed Cr Dunne's allegation that Sundale was just another developer, highlighting Sundale's proven record of commitment to communities, and stated that Sundale would 'remain an active member of the (Coolum) community throughout the life of the facility (and) you don't see developers with that kind of commitment.'⁸⁴

Finally, literally on the steps of the Land & Environment Court and just in time for Christmas, Council agreed to let the development go ahead without the public access footpath.⁸⁵ However, a condition remained that, upon completion of all stages of the Coolum development, Sundale must build a pedestrian bridge across Stumers Creek at a mutually agreed location. After ten months of delays, the \$20 million low impact project was finally underway, with strong market demand shown from prospective residents.⁸⁶



Coolum Waters Retirement Resort under construction

Meanwhile, Sundale had identified a pressing need for aged care services in another nearby community. The Noosa area had limited aged care facilities yet featured the second highest concentration of people aged over 85 years in Australia, behind Nudgee in Brisbane. Sundale had initially begun dealing with the Noosa Shire Council, with Cr June Colley, Mayor Bob Abbot and others in Noosa Council very supportive.

Sundale then looked at a number of sites, before committing to a site on McKinnon Drive, Tewantin, which was another 'pioneer settlement'. From the 1860s, the tall trees had drawn settlers to the Tewantin area, the hills ringing with the cries of 'timber' before a tree was felled, and whip cracking and curses from the bullock drivers echoed through the hills.⁸⁷ Tewantin over time became a 'sea change' community that attracted a growing number of retirees. For Sundale however, the process of trying to establish aged care facilities in Tewantin was to be an arduous and testing process.

But for the time being, there were some celebrations in the air at Sundale.

40th Anniversary

In 2003 Sundale celebrated a significant milestone, commemorating its 40th anniversary of creating caring communities. This was a great achievement for an organisation which began caring for only 24 residents in one facility in 1963. Sundale now supported an amazing 743 elders, consisting of 117 residents in the care centres, 266 residents in assisted living and 360 residents in independent living. In addition, there were over 300 attendees for day therapy - all serviced each year by 400 employees and 210 volunteers.⁸⁸

Sundale was still the largest residential care provider on the Sunshine Coast. Despite a few continuing negative reports about other operators in the aged care industry, Australia was considered a global leader in aged care services and Sundale ranked in the 'top echelon of care providers throughout Australia.'⁸⁹

Sundale were now contributing almost \$18 million in recurrent expenditure to the region, including wages and supplies⁹⁰ and were expanding services across the Sunshine Coast region, which was a wonderful achievement for the Nambour-born organisation. And as part of the ongoing commitment, Sundale acknowledged their social responsibility in finding ways to help the one in two people who were financially or socially disadvantaged when entering Sundale facilities.⁹¹

Sundale also celebrated another anniversary in 2003, when the Rotary Garden Village on Windsor Road, Burnside, commemorated 20 years. On the 20th September 2003 an Open Day was held to commemorate the arrival of the first residents. Entertainment, including the North Arm State School marimba band, Island dancers and bagpipes got all toes tapping. The day ended with the harmonious melodies of a barbershop quartet, before cake cutting and speeches. An article in the *Sunshine Coast Seniors* in September 2003 commented that Windsor Road was notable for its collection of facilities for the younger generation, including the early childhood centre, the Nambour Special School, the primary and high schools and the Rotary Garden Village, part of the 'younger generation' set on Windsor Road.

As the Boy Scout's motto states, Be Prepared, and Sundale were indeed prepared when it became one of the first retirement organisations to develop an Emergency Response Plan for its villages, detailing how to deal with disasters, whether manmade or natural. Rotary Garden Village was the first Sundale Village to instigate the Emergency Response Plan. The Village was divided into five zones and a resident, called a warden, was given responsibility for each zone. As the Rotary Garden Village Newsletter reported, the wardens were reminiscent of the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) wardens in Britain (and Australia) during World War Two, responsible (in Britain) for seeing that no lights breached the blackout and looking after buckets of water, stirrup pumps and sandbags, which were the first means for dealing with fires caused by incendiary bombs.⁹²

Sundale purchased a house and land at 16 Carter Road Nambour, adjacent to their existing site at 18 Carter Road, as part of the long term plan for redevelopment of the Sundale Garden Village site. Sundale's original heartland, the town of Nambour, and the surrounding region were facing major changes in 2003, when the Moreton Sugar Company Limited Mill, which had started on 2nd August 1897, ceased operating after running for 106 years and five months. Bundaberg Sugar had purchased the mill in 1988, which was subsequently taken over in 1989-90 by Tate and Lyle, the largest sweetener manufacturer in the world. Then in 2003 they declared the Moreton Sugar Mill no longer profitable and closed its doors.⁹³

On 3rd December 2003, the last cane trains clickety-clacked into Nambour township. The *Bli Bli* locomotive led a loaded cane train down Howard Street, with the *Coolum* locomotive at the rear and *Moreton* and *Petrie* locomotives behind, all blowing their whistles continuously up the street until they entered the mill yard for the very last time.⁹⁴ The iridescent sparkle of the annual Christmas lights would shine like twinkling stars from the chimney one last time, and the mill chimney would no longer look like a ship's funnel in the centre of town with its white smoke chugging away, turning stalks of cane into sugar. The mill whistle, so familiar to any Nambour town resident or visitor, had whistled one last burst and stopped marking time.

The closure of the Mill left over 100 sugarcane farmers in limbo and nearly 10,000 hectares of former sugarcane land lying fallow.⁹⁵ A further blow to the local sugar industry would come later, with deregulation of the industry in January 2006. Fortunately, Robin Dunn had co-authored a book called 'Moreton Sugar Mill; sweet heart of Nambour', with historian Berenis Alcorn, to commemorate 100 years of the Mill's operations in 1997. Robin Dunn had also been the first female member of the Sundale Board and pioneered community consultation as a Maroochy Shire Councillor. Sadly for Sundale, the time had come for Robin to resign in December 2003.

Sundale as always, continued to innovate and add more training courses for their aged care team members. As well as Workplace Health & Safety, new electives included Providing Assistance with Medication, Interpersonal Skills and Therapeutic Massage courses.

Sundale had built up a great reputation for high levels of educational training and if or when team members did leave for other employment, Sundale often received compliments from new employers about the high level of training. As CEO Glenn Bunney explained, Sundale always train team members with the knowledge that they might leave Sundale at some point, but hoped that team members not only leave with good thoughts, but if the opportunity arises they will come back to work for Sundale enriched by the experiences of working elsewhere. In his own words, Glenn commented: 'at the end of the day, if we are truly a community organisation, with the community interest at heart, we should not mind training someone to go and work

somewhere else, because that should raise the level of care in the community and should also come back to us at some point in time.⁹⁶

An important issue for Sundale was getting team members with the right qualities, especially for memory care, which was a rapidly growing sector. Although over 100 different illnesses and conditions can cause dementia,⁹⁷ all involve cognition, or memory, hence the term memory care is generally used in modern usage. With the emphasis shifting towards positive care, instead of naming a unit after a diagnosis, the former Sundale dementia (or ‘special care’) units were renamed Memory Care Units.

From a staffing point of view, memory care is very demanding work and often carers have to be rotated through different work areas, to get a break. In 2003, Sundale introduced the Saint Anywhere’s program which has proven to be a great tool in assessing whether people are suitable to work in memory care. The Saint Anywhere’s program includes team members experiencing sensory deprivation in a simulated environment to see what it feels like to have cognitive difficulties. Glenn Bunney explains if some prospective team members could not deal with the simulated environment, it meant that they could be more suited to working in other areas, outside of the Memory Care Units.

In 2003 the Eden philosophy continued to be embraced in many different ways throughout the Sundale families of Nambour, Burnside and Palmwoods Villages. Raised garden beds were becoming a common sight in all the villages, with elders selling or giving away the plants and produce, and pet birds and animals were introduced to all Sundale centres. One resident from Nicklin Lodge, who had always ‘wanted to do something in the gardens’, was taken under the wing of the maintenance team. They helped him undergo training and assessment to achieve competency in gardening and related duties and, suitably decked out in safety gear, he then became a proud member of the maintenance team and was also leading a much improved life.



The raised garden beds at Nicklin Lodge bring much pleasure

The use of aromatherapy in the Palmwoods Hostel, in conjunction with conventional medicine, was introduced and had measurable degrees of success in assisting with pain and promoting a calming atmosphere. The use of aroma-therapeutic blends in the administration office also sent calming and refreshing aromas throughout the building.⁹⁸ And Palmwoods Village residents were excited when ‘the age of the computer’ finally arrived at the Village. A computer, donated by the Palmwoods Village Computer group, was eagerly embraced ‘so residents could enter the computer age and communicate with family and friends through the great email system, when they (had) mastered the great IT giant.’⁹⁹

Still at the Palmwoods Garden Village, a sensory garden was established and members of the Palmwoods Book Club met with elders to listen to and share their memories. A collection of recipes, from residents and team members in the Village, were collected and published. And a project was undertaken by, and about, Palmwoods Village residents, resulting in the first of three booklets called ‘Across Wide Horizons: Life Histories from the Twentieth Century’. Project coordinator Joan Lilly credits Allan Boag as the motivating force behind the collection of these sketches of life, with Viv Blowers and Mary Fitzgerald assisting and Nina Uebergang proofreading the final drafts – a truly cooperative effort. The introduction reminds us that:

“In these stories... we are reviewing almost an entire century. We are looking at men and women who were affected in their lives by two World Wars, the Great Depression and the post World War Two mass migration from Europe. Such was the rigour of the times, there were many challenges. To leave school at 13, sometimes even 12 years of age, was not uncommon. Employment opportunities were extremely limited – perhaps working on the family farm... Ambitions varied but hard work did not. Some sought a better education; others, undeterred by failure, moved from one occupation to another, honing their skills on the way. Through their endeavours they progressed in the world, making a vital contribution to the community. Nor was the softer side of life ignored – music, knowledge of fine china, sporting activities, interest in gardening were all part of the patterns. Loyalty is a clear attribute in all. There is a commitment to life-long responsibility for marriage partner and care of family. There is unquestioning response to volunteering for war service. It is hoped these stories illustrate the warm and human side of events of the twentieth century.”

The 'village feel' of Palmwoods can be seen in the following poem, written by resident Pam Wheeler.

Palmwoods Garden Village

*We're a multicultural lot
And we feel we've found our spot
Here at Palmwoods Garden Village*

*There are friendly people 'round us
Flowers and trees surround us
It really is a garden village*

*If you feel you have some vim
Table tennis or a swim
Can help keep you fit at our village*

*Maybe cards or bowls
May appeal to other souls
Who live in this friendly village*

*If music is your 'thing'
You may like to help us sing
On our monthly dinner night at our village*

*Do computers baffle you?
There are folks who'll guide you through
And help you understand-at our village*

*We've come from far and near
And have found our Eden here
At this friendly garden village*

*So let's all give a cheer
For the luck that brought us here
To lovely Palmwoods Garden Village*

Meanwhile, at the Rotary Garden Village, fun was also the order of the day, after Voller Hostel purchased a golf buggy, which was in great demand by residents for touring the whole Rotary Village site. One Voller Hostel resident exclaimed it was the first time she had seen the whole site despite living there for 16 years. Another elder, cheekily grinning, grabbed an orange off someone's tree while parked alongside in the golf buggy. Also at Voller Hostel, the Sunshine Club was formed for memory care residents, and a Men's Club was started by a volunteer that included a special area for memory care elders. Lanhams Timber & Hardware (became Melco-Lanhams Mitre 10 in 2008) provided materials for construction of the shed and also donations of wood off cuts, for the elders to make toys for charities or their own grandchildren, which were greatly appreciated.

The Sundale Garden Village was alive with the sounds of elders squelching clay and turning it into pottery (with Petrie Park Potters), operating woodworking tools (with Flaxton Woodworking Club), learning about lapidary (with Nambour Lapidary Club), and also elders teaching each other special skills.

By 2003 the first stage of the Coolum Waters Retirement Resort was nearing completion and the second stage was in planning, to commence early 2004. The Coolum Beach and District Aged Care Organisation received a grant from the Queensland Government's Gambling Community Benefits Fund of \$21,305 to help equip the Clubhouse.¹⁰⁰



Working together to get the right cut

The Eden Healthcare Centre at Cooroy had from its inception, hosted placements for graduate physiotherapists, occupational therapists and other allied health sector graduates from around the globe, including Europe, UK and USA. Sundale were prepared for the graduates to use Eden as a stepping stone in their career, but were instead pleasantly surprised when most of the team chose to stay at Eden after their placements finished. Soon a sensational, young team of professionals with a strong allied health focus was working at the leading Cooroy facility.

In their continuing commitment to plan for the future, Sundale held a strategic planning weekend in its 40th anniversary year. Many issues were discussed and the outcomes saw a commitment over the next five years to improve understanding of newer service and accommodation models, to embrace integrated health care approaches that incorporated more flexible and individual options, and to take advantage of relevant technological initiatives. Sundale also committed to being more involved in aged care research, and to strengthen its constitution and leadership.

As part of its environmental responsibilities in 2003, Sundale was taking into consideration future design concepts for buildings with environmentally friendly floor plans, passive solar orientation, landscaping to reflect the natural environment, utilising bore water and other environmentally sustainable practices.

And in looking to future concepts in care, Sundale was examining emerging computer based technologies including e-business, e-commerce, e-health and even the potential future use of smart fabrics to monitor elders' temperature, pulse and other vital signs also remote medical diagnosis and monitoring.

In their 40th Anniversary year in 2003, Sundale were imagining concepts which would have been unthinkable to the founders and first residents of Sundale. The idea of robot elderly companion models was also investigated. The idea has been trialled overseas, like PARO, a robot seal, who featured big eyes and sat on the elders' laps and gently whistled when happy.¹⁰¹ Sundale even considered the possibility of purchasing some 'Furreal' toy pets, for residents who loved animals but were allergic or experienced difficulty holding pets.

There were also the possible therapeutic benefits, especially for those suffering the effects of dementia, as Glenn Bunney observed: 'The human condition makes us want not only to receive care, but to give care as well.' Technological advances would have to improve and be more cost effective for Sundale to initiate ideas, but the organisation always remains aware of technological innovations.

The Aloaka 'Experiment'

In 2003, Sundale had written to not-for-profit organisations on the Sunshine Coast to suggest they get together and talk about their common interests and how they could support each other in serving the aged care needs in their communities. Sundale believed that as a combined strength, together the not-for-profit organisations could benefit in many ways, including sharing recruitment, training, even staff. Sundale invited the not-for-profit organisations to a meeting, but unfortunately, while some organisations were receptive, others thought wrongly Sundale were trying to take them over – so the vision for combining strength instead of competing did not eventuate.

However, the meeting went ahead and one of the organisations which attended was very receptive, the Somerset Senior Citizens Centre, which operated the Aloaka Lodge aged care facility and other services at Kilcoy. President Paul Alcorn and Aloaka Manager Ms. Joey Walker were at the meeting and were impressed with Sundale. The Somerset Senior Citizens Centre Board subsequently invited Sundale to conduct a review, to look at ways that the Aloaka operations could be improved, with recommendations from Sundale.



Welcome to Aloaka Lodge

The town of Kilcoy was another pioneering area, originally settled by Scottish immigrants in the early 1840s. They were attracted to the area by the large stands of timber, as well as the rich grazing for beef and dairy cattle. From around 1897, the area was known as Hopetown or Hopetoun. However after mail was repeatedly misrouted, the area was renamed in 1913. The name Kilcoy was chosen, after the first station in the area 'Kilcoy Station'. It had been selected in 1841 by Sir Evan McKenzie and Colin McKenzie, who had named the station in honour of the 'Kilcoy' family estate in Scotland.¹⁰² The name Kilcoy means 'nook of the wood' in Gaelic. Kilcoy is also famous for sightings of the Yowie, a hairy man-like creature that some people believe lives in various forests of Australia, including around Kilcoy. The Kilcoy townspeople celebrate the Yowie with a statue in the local park.

Sundale entered into a partnership with Somerset Senior Citizens Centre to provide management services, training, accreditation advice and general support for their Aloaka facility at Kilcoy. Somerset Senior Citizens had been formed in 1973, and the founding President, M.H. 'Bill' McAulay OBE, was the father of one of the Board members in 2003, John McAulay. Bill McAulay had also been involved in Sundale in its early years. The Aloaka facility consisted of 20 beds and, in 2003, some sections were 23 years old. The first section, consisting of nine beds, had been opened by his Excellency Sir James Ramsay, Governor General of Queensland, on 24th May 1980. The second stage of Aloaka had been officially opened on the 28th September 1985, with extension and upgrades to the facility subsequently taking place in 1996.

In a pleasant coincidence, the design and building consultant for the first stage was Noel Parry who had a strong connection to Sundale in its early days. Noel was an Apex

Club of Nambour representative on the foundation Committee and had also designed the first buildings at Sundale Garden Village.

However, by 2003, the facilities needed more renovations to meet the terms of a grant for 20 additional beds. The Somerset Senior Citizens Centre Board decided that, as well as the required rebuilding program, complying with the increasingly complicated regulations was getting too difficult for their small organisation. And so Sundale was approached to see if they were interested in stepping in to operate the facility. Sundale undertook a management oversight and then agreed. The official transition to Sundale would have to wait until all the 20 required beds were built, as the grant had been awarded to the Somerset Senior Citizens Centre, but Sundale were an instrumental part of redesigning, rebuilding and extending the facility.

A wonderful outcome, in 'adopting' Aloaka, would be the growth of a unique and Australian first concept. As part of the operations at Kilcoy, an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) was soon operating out of the aged care facility. Alison Ham (Aloaka Site Manager in 2013) established the first Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) in Kilcoy by 2005. With a background in childcare, Alison had moved to the country in 2005 to farm and home-school her two young children. Alison had enquired at the local Kilcoy school about OSHC, so her daughter could 'take a break' from mum. However, when she discovered there were no OSHC services operating, Alison found herself establishing the first OSHC for Kilcoy, and initially operated the centre from the Aloaka Lodge premises.



Alison Ham started the first childcare out of Aloaka and is Site Manager in 2013

This intergenerational set-up between elders and children at Aloaka appealed to Sundale. It was also an opportunity to test a hypothesis that providing childcare would help attract and retain team members who had children. Sundale therefore planned for a 'Children's Long Day Care' centre, as well as OSHC, to be co-located in the same building as the aged care facility, with the children on the bottom floor and the elders on the floor above. The childcare centre would take advantage of the lie of the land and viewing areas were provided for the elders and their families to sit

and listen to the sounds of children playing. This was unique, a first in Australia – integrating childcare and ‘elder care’ into the same building, although other aged care service providers had childcare services on the same site or nearby. And as we shall see soon in our story, the ‘experiment’ has proven wonderfully successful.



View from upstairs at Aloaka, looking down over the childcare centre in 2012

A community care service was also already operating out of Aloaka, providing in-home care, which was something Sundale, for a number of years, had been trying to obtain funding for. One Aloaka team member was caring for her own grandmother in Aloaka, while her mother received Aloaka community care at home and her daughter attended the childcare and OSHC. This was a great example of the success of the multi-generational care at Aloaka. Many Aloaka team members also refer their own family members for childcare or community care, and all elders who receive community care receive priority for entry into the care centre if or when it is required and a bed is available. Respite care is also available for elders and their in-home carers, to enable them to take a well-deserved break.

As Alison Ham is fond of saying ‘They say it takes a village to raise a child. Well we are creating a village here, the village of Aloaka.’¹⁰³

Taking Care into the Community

In 2004, one year after Sundale celebrated 40 years of service, the organisation embarked upon a new image and marketing program. Deciding to keep the name Sundale, to remain true to their traditions and heritage, Sundale at the same time stepped into the future with a new logo. The new logo design embodied the sun, to

reflect the Sunshine Coast lifestyle, and featured coloured bands representing blue for the sea, green for the agricultural lands and ochre for the backbone of the Blackall Range. The logo celebrated where Sundale was born and the rich and vast tapestry of its history.

In a landmark achievement, in February 2004, the first residents were finally welcomed into the Coolum Waters Care Centre, the newest addition to the Sundale family. All 19 independent living units in Stage One were fully occupied, having been made available from November 2003. Among the first occupants were Pat and Edna Tiley, who had been instrumental in achieving the aged care facility at Coolum.¹⁰⁴ In total, over 30 residents moved into the long awaited development, including the new 50 bed Care Centre. When finished the resort would include 83 units and the 50 bed care centre, providing homes for over 200 residents.¹⁰⁵



Pat Tiley (above left), pictured with his WW2 medals, and wife Edna Tiley in 2012 (above right), were instrumental in helping Sundale establish the first aged care facility in Coolum
(Courtesy of Edna Tiley)



Brand new Coolum Waters Retirement Resort units, 2004

At Bowder Lodge in Sundale Garden Village, the Eden concept could be seen and heard in action daily, as the rooms rang with the laughter of residents and visiting children. The children were in turn visited by the elders for activities such as storytelling, painting and playing with building blocks. Local high school students also visited to listen to the elders' stories. Two free-range resident chickens were enjoying and being enjoyed by the elders, even visiting their units, and along with two budgies, provided much entertainment. To enable Lodge residents to have more of an input in the decision making process, samples were left for residents to help choose colours and styles of new furniture. Tea and coffee making facilities for residents to 'self serve' were also installed.

At McGowan Lodge a regular jumble sale was held, with everything from 50c to \$2, and a greenhouse was built for residents. At Nicklin Lodge, a fruit van called regularly and a mini orchard had been planted. Activities, including 'Beer & Barby for the Blokes', regular movie nights, armchair travelling sessions and fishing and beach visits were popular.

A policy which allowed residents to keep pets was also proving very beneficial for elders, and an anonymous vet's donation of free Frontline for the elders' cats was much appreciated. And a 'Key Carer Program', which matched team members who wished to volunteer with elders who had no family, was launched. Also all Sundale facilities received a digital camera, from an Eden Alternative™ fund, to record and preserve events.

The February 2004 Rotary Village Newsletter lamented that the bowling green, initially constructed and enjoyed by 20 fit, enthusiastic and younger bowlers was now falling into disuse. The newsletter writer, Len Thomas, made an interesting observation that when the bowling green was created, in 1991, there were no computers in the village and 20 bowlers, whereas 13 years later, there were 20 computers and no bowlers.

The Sundale Board approved the appointment of a Human Resources (HR) Manager to review and update HR systems. A new position was also created, Sundale's first Community Care Manager, to develop Community Care packages and assist with a review and expansion of therapy services. An important step forward for Sundale into the future of aged care occurred when an application for Community Care places, which Sundale had been submitting since 1999, was finally successful in 2004.

The newest introduction to the Sundale family, Suncoast Community Care, would service a rapidly growing demand for in-home care. Suncoast Community Care initially received 22 low care Community Aged Care Packages (CACP) to provide services in-home, which were equivalent to hostel home care, and 20 High Care Extended Aged Care in the Home (EACH) packages to provide high levels of in-home care, which were equivalent to the provision of nursing home services. In spite of being a newcomer to Community Care services, in a clear acknowledgement of Sundale's reputation as an experienced quality provider of high care services, the first EACH packages on the Sunshine Coast were awarded to Suncoast Community Care, in preference to other providers with considerable experience in the area.

Home and Community Care (HACC) funding were also granted to Suncoast Community Care, for providing in-home care services such as house cleaning, shopping and basic care through to allied health services. The service would initially operate from the Sundale Garden Village site in Doolan Street, Nambour.

The Commonwealth Government emphasis on encouraging people to receive care in their own homes longer, dubbed 'ageing in place', suited Sundale's philosophy of integrated care. Under this policy shift the terms 'hostel' and 'nursing home' were progressively replaced with the term 'aged care homes'. This removes the distinction between a hostel, which had previously provided low care, and a nursing home, which had previously provided high care, because many facilities at this time began to offer both low and high care in the same facility, to allow for continuity of care when care needs changed.

The demand for Community Care (also called in-home or home care), was rapidly growing and would only increase when the first Baby Boomers turned 70 years old in 2015. An Access Economics report revealed that in the event they were unable to care for themselves, over 60% of Australians aged 70 years and over preferred to receive

formal care in their own home, with 38% preferring to receive residential care and the remainder informal care from family. But higher divorce rates and smaller family size has reduced this available pool of informal care. Living alone was also a primary reason an elder might need to access residential aged care services. The type of aged care demanded in the future would also be profoundly influenced by changing social attitudes towards caring for the elderly, with some evidence suggesting the post Baby Boomer generations felt less obliged to give informal care to their elderly relatives. With the crest of the Baby Boomer wave still ahead, a continuation of existing trends predicted a 90% rise in single person households, containing people aged 65 years and over, between 1996 and 2021.¹⁰⁶

After 29 years, on 26th April 2005, Dr John Scott resigned from the Sundale Board. His expertise and service to Sundale would be missed.

The Commonwealth Government finally acknowledged the growing numbers of Australians suffering from dementia, and included in the 2005 Commonwealth Budget a world first commitment to make dementia a national health care priority. Dementia was indeed a rapidly growing problem, and was more common than cancer in Australia. Importantly, additional funding was to be provided to address the crisis.

Forecasts for an Australian ageing population were staggering. One in ten people aged over 65 years have some form of dementia. With over 1500 new cases diagnosed each week, over 1.1 million people were projected to have dementia by 2050. Dementia, costing \$5.4 billion a year, was predicted to become the third greatest source of health and residential aged care spending within the next two decades, costing 1% of GDP. Through to 2060, spending on dementia was estimated to outstrip money spent on any other health condition, and cost \$83 billion, which represented 11% of all funding for health and aged care.¹⁰⁷ Into the future, with numbers rising, including a predicted increase in people suffering from drug-related dementia, dementia care was likely to demand higher levels of specialised care. However, while never cost effective, Sundale was committed to, and had always recognised the need to care for elders suffering the effects of dementia.

Sundale were also investigating more innovative uses of technology, such as embracing smart technology to remind people to take medication, or enable families to tele-video with residents. Sundale also looked at the possible use of robots in the future to perform duties like floor cleaning. There were other examples for the future use of robots, such as the CareBot. Standing 4 feet tall with a screen for a face and wheels, the CareBot could remind people to take their medication, call emergency services and came fitted with a webcam with video chatting capabilities.¹⁰⁸

By 2013 the technology would be even more advanced, with an android called Baxter released in January 2013, which could adapt to different environments and ‘see, feel and understand’. However, at a cost of \$22,000 each, robot prototypes such as this still had a long way to go to be affordable. Sundale however, always at the forefront of technology and always thinking ahead, would continue to monitor the possible uses of robots within the care environment into the future.

Back from imagining the future of aged care, in its first full year in 2005 Suncoast Community Care was already providing in-home care, the ‘care of the future’, to over 120 clients, although not by robots but by people. Suncoast Community Care rapidly outgrew their original rooms in Sundale Garden Village. When the Maroochy Shire Council had stopped supplying large print books in late 2004, the Library in the Rotary Village Community Centre had ceased and the original Library room was then converted into a training room for Suncoast Community Care by June 2005. The stage and part of the floor space were also converted into office space, with the remaining space and kitchen still accessible for community use.



Sunshine Coast Community Care moves into Rotary Village Community Centre

Suncoast Community Care HACC, CACP and EACH packages were providing services to over 150 people from Pomona to Caloundra and west to the Blackall Range. However, Sundale still needed to expand its services to remain viable and lamented the fact that it believed it had been refused packages in favour of larger Brisbane based providers. This would be addressed in an innovative way soon in our story.

Further Growth Sundale Style

By 2006 Sundale operated four sites (Nambour, Burnside, Palmwoods and Coolum) which included a total of 256 independent living units and 5 rental units. There were 13 more independent living units under construction at Palmwoods, which would be the final stage. From the initial Stage One to completion at Palmwoods had taken 14 years. When completed, the Palmwoods Garden Village would contain 107 units

and 71 residential aged care places. Extensions to the Clubhouse were also being undertaken to meet changing needs.

Acquiring land for new facilities has always been an essential part of Sundale and 'land banking', to secure parcels of land in new and occupied locations for future long term development was vital for the future. Sundale were in negotiations for land in the Noosa hinterland, and two parcels of land in Noosa Shire at Boreen Point and another block at Tewanin were purchased. Boreen Point is a small community north of Tewanin, on the banks of Lake Cootharaba, the largest lake in the Noosa River system, and like Tewanin does not have adequate aged care services to cater for the growing community of retirees who have been attracted to the area.

At Aloaka Lodge in Kilcoy, rebuilding plans were close to realisation, with Somerset Senior Citizens and Sundale Board working together to remodel the original buildings into a modern 40 bed care centre. By 2006, land adjacent to the Aloaka facility in Kilcoy had also been purchased to enable future expansion and provide the first retirement village in the Kilcoy area.



The land adjoining Aloaka has been purchased for future Independent Living Units

Planning for Stage Three of Coolum Waters Retirement Resort was also underway. When this was completed, the resort would comprise 66 units, with more units planned for Stage Four. And a successful application was made by Sundale for the freehold of the Coolum site, converting from leasehold under agreement with the Queensland Government. Sundale continued to satisfy client demand for changes in

the style and size of units. New three bedroom stand alone and duplex style units were becoming the norm, instead of the two bedroom unit style accommodation of the past, although a combination continued to be constructed to satisfy demand.

In 2006, new Federal aged care legislation was introduced when allegations of shocking abuse of a resident in a Victorian nursing home burst into the public arena. The Commonwealth held an emergency summit on Australia's aged care system. The result was the introduction of Elder Protection Legislation which required every person working with aged care to have a police check, not more than three years old, and prohibited anyone with a record of physical or sexual abuse from working in aged care.

The Federal Government allocated \$8.6 million over the ensuing four years to increase the number of spot checks on nursing homes, from 563 checks across Australia in 2004-05 to around 3,000 per year. Another \$1.8 million was allocated for police checks on volunteers.¹⁰⁹ Mandatory reporting was introduced for any suspected abuse, with substantial penalties for providers who failed to report abuse. Although the additional requirements for police checks were legislated, there was no funding made available to meet these costs.

Funding, as always, continued to be an issue. By 2006, on the Sunshine Coast, there were 46 aged care homes providing care for 1,158 high care and 1,510 low care elders. Residents provided up to 85% of their pension towards their care, and although cost of care was supplemented by the Commonwealth, according to local media reports this was not enough for organisations to remain viable, let alone be profitable.¹¹⁰

More changes to the Retirement Villages Act occurred in 2006. One change was the voting system, from one vote per independent living unit to one vote per person. Whilst this may have saved a few household arguments between couples, it also required changes to the constitutions of residents' associations.

Another change reflected the way State Government viewed relationships between residents and Management, both onsite and organisational. In the future, Management would have to obtain permission to attend any Residents' Committee meetings and, unless invited to stay, had to leave the room after addressing the meeting or when voting took place. At the Rotary Garden Village, a special resolution was passed overwhelmingly, as reported in the Rotary Garden Village Newsletter, with 95% of voters agreeing that a special invitation to allow Management to stay during residents meetings be given at the Annual General Meeting. Although this would have to be voted for at each subsequent Annual General Meeting, it was a reflection of the high esteem which Rotary Village residents held, and indeed had always held, for Sundale Management.

Sundale carer Lyn Sullivan came up with a novel way to raise funds for the Queensland Cancer Fund in 2006, taking her inspiration from the movie *Calendar Girls* and one of the residents, who had jokingly struck a pose on the way to the shower one morning. Lyn organised 12 female residents, from the Charlton wing in the James Grimes Care Centre, to participate in a 'glamour' calendar which was named *The Charlton Girls*. The calendar was well received and was instrumental in helping Lyn become the region's Charity Nurse of the Year finalist. The participants also thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and as one of the residents, 'Miss November' Hilda Cullen, commented, she 'felt like a movie star.'¹¹¹



Hilda Cullen, 'Miss November', in the 2006 Charlton Girls calendar

'Edenising' Sundale continued. In the James Grimes Care Centre a large TV screen was installed and sandwich and tea making facilities were made available for elders who may have trouble sleeping. This 'non-medicated' approach was found to be much more effective and enjoyable, both for residents and team members than simply relying on medication. A Sundale Choir was started, with research showing that choir singers suffer less depression.

In Bowder Lodge, a cat had kittens in a resident's bed and although a delightful surprise, the kittens were promptly moved to a safer place upon discovery. Other pets in Bowder enjoyed being taken around in a laundry trolley to visit residents, and elders enjoyed helping to round up the chickens and tending to the guinea pig and bird cages. For the first time, elders in Bowder Lodge were given two computers in the recreation room. As well as enabling residents to keep in touch with family and use online

services, the computers helped hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills, and so provided multiple benefits. A decision to move breakfast and dinner to smaller groups was well received. Residents could choose when they wanted breakfast, could stay as long as they wanted and even help clean up afterwards if they wished. Over at Nicklin Lodge a grand opening of a new kitchenette was held. Elders could use the kitchenette to bake treats, with weekend cooking classes and recipe swapping very popular. There were also special cooking classes for male elders who took to the opportunity with gusto – long before cooking shows on television became so popular.



Residents embrace the new 'computer age'

As part of what had become a Sundale tradition for Lodge elders who could not make it to the Sunshine Coast Agricultural Show (known as the Nambour Show), McGowan Lodge elders held their own Show Day. Games such as shoot the duck, hoop-la, knock-ums, ball through the hoop and roll the ball into the clowns' mouths were thoroughly enjoyed by all. Every elder received a show bag, fairy floss and prizes from the garden, which included passionfruit and mandarins. A highlight of the day was a free ride – whizzing around the dining room in a decorated wheelchair – for those who dared.

The Sundale Laundry Service, demonstrating the success of diversifying Sundale's services, had built up their commercial contracts and was consistently in the top 5% of commercial laundries in Queensland.

Choosing to devote more time to his retirement, Graham Chapman decided not to nominate for President in 2006, but remained on the Board. Vice President John Kleinschmidt was welcomed as the new President. He had already served on the Sundale Board for 20 years, including as Vice President for the previous 15 years.¹¹² Ross Jackson, Rotary representative on the Board since 2000, was ably suited to move into the position of Vice President.

In 2006, Sundale made a historical move, and investigated major changes in its formal Corporate Governance, by reviewing a new model of operating to replace the 'Organisation Incorporated under Letters Patent' that they had been operating under since inception. Sundale considered more suitable models such as operating as a 'Public Company Limited by Guarantee. This would be a big change historically for Sundale, from a Management Committee run organisation to one run by a Board of Directors, although Sundale had effectively been operating as a Board since Glenn Bunney had come on board, initially as the General Manager and then CEO.

The original composition of the Management Committee also reflected the place in Sundale history of Apex and Rotary members, and so it was proposed that the new Board structure would consist of 7 instead of the previous 11 members.¹¹³ All Board members would be elected instead of a required quota of Apex and Rotary members elected through a Club nomination process. It was essential for Sundale to find people with the diverse skills to serve on the Board and keep pace with the changing nature of the aged care industry. The focus on filling future Board positions would be to provide a blend of experience in areas of finance and accounting, project development, corporate and other areas of legal compliance and governance, as well as business management, health, medical and aged care experience.

Sundale embarked upon a formal process to compile a Corporate Governance Plan with the first such draft plan being adopted by the Board in 2006. A draft Constitution, using the Illawarra Retirement Trust as a model, suggested changes that would maintain the special interest of local Apex and Rotary Clubs and the community membership base, and expand membership to include Life Members and Honorary members.¹¹⁴ The continuing growth and diversity of Sundale was also a key driver for change in the corporate structure. It was clearly recognised by the Board that the size and complexity of Sundale had become such that having the same corporate structure as a small club, such as a local sports club, had become inappropriate.

The growth of Sundale was embraced by many, but unfortunately was also being criticised by some, as the February Links newsletter explained:

“Some people have been critical of (Sundale’s) growth, and indeed it is most ironic that most of those who do so are precisely those who have gained from such growth. It seems in the minds of some, Sundale should have stopped growing services as soon as they arrived, and concentrated our efforts on them alone. As a community organisation, it is our duty to provide the services to our community in general need, and the nature of those needs is constantly changing.”¹¹⁵

Sundale acknowledged the importance of growth because ‘Sundale was no longer a small organisation operating in one town (and) if it were, it may not have survived all of the changes wrought upon it by the three levels of Government in the last two decades.’¹¹⁶ Such changes included Local Government losing its former regard for Sundale as a ‘special’ community asset, as well as changes in State Government legislation to provide warranted protection for residents, which had imposed new responsibilities on Sundale, and yet again increased administration costs.

A myriad of Commonwealth policy changes had also occurred in how care and facilities were being provided to the elderly. This included a lack of distinction between not-for-profit and private sector providers, removing subsidies for the construction of new facilities and other capital works, as well as increasing building standards. This had all resulted in greatly increased costs, at a time when subsidies for all levels of care had been (and continued to be) reduced in real terms. Sundale’s crucial challenge in the future would be to explore new ways to responsibly finance all proposed development works, because the Nambour site would soon be due for redevelopment and there was still so much more to do!

In Transition

In April 2007, the new draft Constitution as a Company Limited by Guarantee was adopted by the Board to present to members. In conjunction with the changes to the legal corporate structure of the organisation, the Corporate Governance Plan clearly articulated the roles, responsibilities, authority and accountability of the CEO, Chairman and Directors. Sundale had sought advice regarding the new corporate structure from McCullough Robertson Lawyers. Lawyer Di Lohrisch, had a long standing connection with Sundale. Her parents John and Rhyll Lohrisch were members of the Sundale organisation and additionally had supported Sundale through providing pharmacy services for many years, so Di had been involved in Sundale since she was a child. Di now helped Sundale take their next steps into the future.¹¹⁷

As described in the 2006-07 Annual Report:

“A crucially important historical event happened on the night of 9th August 2007 delivering the preface to a new chapter in the fabulous history of Sundale. The members of Sundale, a large majority being residents of our villages voted unanimously to change the Corporate Structure of Sundale from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee. This unprecedented show of faith by our members will have no direct impact on our residents or very dedicated team members, but will have a profound effect on the way in which Sundale is managed in the future.”¹¹⁸

The change to a Board structure ‘recognised the development and growth of Sundale (and enabled a) Board of Directors (to be) properly empowered to guide the operation of Sundale and plan its future without compromise to the ‘community’ status of the organisation.’¹¹⁹

Changing the corporate structure also meant Sundale would have to transfer its assets from one legal entity to another, which would be subject to stamp duty, as well as a range of other potential taxes and costs, which was estimated to cost millions of dollars.¹²⁰ Sundale had previously lobbied the State Government to amend the legislation to reduce costs, but in a now familiar theme, Sundale would wait many years for Government to act, before the transition to the new corporate model could be finalised.

Sundale’s commitment to helping the wider community continued in 2007, with a joint initiative between Sundale and the Commonwealth Government, through the Employment Innovation Fund. This pre-employment program enabled jobseekers to experience working in the aged care industry. The program ran for three days a week, with one day work placement and two days of theory, for a total of 12 weeks. Sundale employed 17 people at the end of the program.¹²¹

New technological innovations in caring for elders were embraced. The We Care system was introduced which provided team members with handheld computers into which they entered information on the spot about elders’ needs and care plans. The information could then be accessed later by other team members in-situ, which allowed for greater efficiencies. Clinical professionals could also update care plans, and even provide updated information to carers via their hand-held devices almost instantaneously.

Sundale’s implementation of Emergency Response Plans for all sites continued. In May 2007, at Rotary Garden Village, two generators were installed, one for Voller Hostel and one for the Rotary Community Centre, which was designated the emergency refuge in the event of a disaster.

The Sundale Rehabilitation Centre, which was servicing over 300 community clients, as well as Sundale’s internal clients, celebrated a milestone in 2007, with their 20th anniversary. And as part of the Eden philosophy, new therapies were added, including Bowen Therapy and Tai Chi. These therapies would have been unimaginable when the centre was first established, but were part of the changing nature in client services, which recognised the benefits of natural therapies. For instance, Bowen Therapy massage has been proven to help with back pain, especially lower back pain. Massage also improves the immune system, reduces stress and decreases substances which can cause inflammation and trigger allergies and asthma.¹²² The benefits of Tai Chi

include improved posture, flexibility and strength, and general health and well-being, as well as assisting with a range of disorders including anxiety, arthritis, fatigue, joint stiffness and stress.¹²³



The Sundale Rehabilitation Centre has made a huge contribution to the quality of life for many Sundale residents and the general community

As an organisation, Sundale spends a lot of time thinking about the future, looking not to the next 2-3 years but to the next 20-30 years. Looking at what other aged care organisations were doing in Australia, the USA and other global facilities, Sundale saw that the trend was to build bigger and bigger aged care facilities. However, obtaining another large site of 18 acres like the Sundale Garden Village site was becoming too expensive and difficult and, as Glenn Bunney explained, Sundale saw that building bigger is not necessarily better:

“Our 117 bed facility at Sundale Nambour is difficult enough to operate, being spread out and expansive... and studies have shown once a facility reaches over 80 beds it is difficult to operate effectively (so) for aged care (building) bigger is not (always) better.”¹²⁴

Sundale instead decided to look at the other end of the spectrum, going smaller rather than bigger, by designing a concept model for a small-scale serviced building for elders. The building could fit on any residential block and harked back to communal living ‘the old house sharing days... with small nucleus accommodation where people could have their own space but also share common space and live together’¹²⁵

The Commonwealth Government’s Transition Care Program (TCP) gave Sundale the opportunity to test their ‘communal living’ concept. The TCP provided

accommodation and support for elders who have experienced a hospital stay and no longer required the high level of care provided by a hospital, but were not ready to go home. Thus the idea of Transition House was born. The Sundale Board was enthusiastic about testing the idea, especially Graham Chapman who spurred it on and encouraged Sundale. In due course, building work was started on Transition House, which was named 'Nunyara', an indigenous name meaning 'house of wellbeing/healing'.

An application for six residential places and 16 community based places was successful, with Sundale receiving a contract with Queensland Health to provide Transitional Care from September 2007. The TCP consisted of a 12 week program, which included a combination of time spent in 'Nunyara' House, as well as rehabilitation services and in-home care, which was provided by Suncoast Community Care.

Glenn Bunney explained that Sundale's move into Transition Care was also a lot about seeing whether the concept of a small scale service delivery would work, not only as a home away from home but as a 'pathway in the homeward bound journey to recovery.'¹²⁶



'Nunyara' House, a home away from home in 2013

'Nunyara' provided a relaxing and supportive environment where residents had their own rooms with queen sized bed and ensuite and clients were encouraged to care for themselves, with services provided as required. They were encouraged to have an active participation in choosing and deciding upon their menu and food preferences. Food services were available, but many of the clients cooked for themselves. Clients would meet with the catering manager each week to decide what food they required,

which was then purchased and stocked in the house. The care model was one of 'supported self care' where team members were only on site as and when required, with the balance of clients time being spent with family, friends or fellow house mates. 'Nunyara' was a secure facility with all possible safety measures in place, including an emergency fire system with sprinklers and non-intrusive CCTV remote support, activated through an emergency call system installed in the house.

Philosophically and in terms of care it worked extremely well, but ultimately the funding was not adequate and the costs of providing Transition Care proved uneconomical for Sundale. Unfortunately the program was discontinued after one year, and Sundale began looking at what other community services 'Nunyara' House could best provide.

Sundale residents continued embracing the Eden philosophy in many different ways. Voller Hostel gardener Skip Cameron won awards for his condiments and jams at the Sunshine Coast Show in 2007, while flowers grown by Bowder Lodge resident James Englart provided lovely centrepieces for tables in Bowder Lodge. Other Bowder elders, James and Tom, set up a rain gauge and kept a rain record in the sun room for everyone to see. Bowder Lodge also began a men's fishing club, with a stowaway – Audrey (yes, a non-male) – who cheerfully fetched hot chips for afternoon tea for the happy fishermen. Various multicultural activities were all enjoyed by Bowder Lodge residents, including a Japanese Day with a Japanese team member wearing a kimono and featuring foods such as sushi, prawn crackers and dips, as well as a Fiji Day and of course Saint Patrick's Day was celebrated, with Guinness and Irish Cream.



Residents and staff always enjoy celebrating St. Patrick's Day, as this later 2010 photo shows.

Laughter sessions were held for elders and team members at Palmwoods, with much mirth and merriment.

At Coolum Waters a Spring Fair, with camel rides, was held. One elder fondly recalled the first and only time she had previously ridden a camel when she was three years old. At 85 years young, she thoroughly enjoyed it a second time after so many years. A gazebo which had been built over Stumers Creek was being enjoyed by residents, with glimpses of a family of quail especially delightful. And a Gentlemen's (men only) BBQ Club held each month was proving popular. Resident chickens were well cared for and their eggs eagerly anticipated by residents. A chicken was donated by the grandson of an elder when he could no longer keep it, and all elders enjoyed it when the grandson visited and the chook ran up for a cuddle. Residents were also holding their own movie nights in the Clubhouse, playing indoor bowls, and enjoying shopping trips, as the Coolum Waters Retirement Resort community continued to grow.



Stumers Creek provides a peaceful backdrop to Coolum Waters Retirement Resort

Sundale again honoured their champion volunteers and team members, holding a Queensland Champion of Champions night on the 13th October 2007, featuring an Inaugural Champions Awards.

Awards for years of service were: ¹²⁷

10 years service to 28 team members and 2 volunteers

15 years service to 14 team members and 3 volunteers

20 years service to 3 team members and 4 volunteers

25 years service to 1 team member and 3 volunteers

30 years service to 3 volunteers

John Howard, Prime Minister since 1996, became the second longest serving Australian Prime Minister, after Sir Robert Menzies. But surpassing Menzies record would prove hard, as a Federal election loomed in November 2007, with the Coalition seeking their fifth term in office. The Kevin '07 campaign, run by the Australian Labor Party and led by then Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd, ultimately saw the Coalition lose to the ALP. John Howard also lost his own seat – the first sitting Prime Minister to lose his seat since 1929.

Kevin Rudd had a connection to the original home of Sundale, the town of Nambour. Three members of the new ALP Federal Ministry, including the Prime Minister and Treasurer, came from Nambour and had attended Nambour High School. As University of the Sunshine Coast lecturer in politics, Bronwyn Stevens, commented at the time, that she could not recall another period in Australian politics when three Federal Members came from the same school, reflecting that from Nambour came great things.

Of course a new Federal Government meant another raft of changes to the ever evolving aged care system, but Sundale was used to that and well prepared for any changes.

The year was to end with the annual Sundale Christmas Carols, which had been held on the first Friday of December for many years. In 2007 the traditional Carols morphed into a whole day of entertainment and enjoyment for all, starting with a BBQ breakfast for the night shift team, who had to sing for their supper. The BBQ was then kept busy all day long, thanks to the special efforts of volunteer cooks from every Sundale facility, who took it in turns to feed the hungry hoards. In the very first Sundale Idol competition Sundale team members, residents and (Aloaka) Kilcoy childcare children sang, danced and generally entertained an appreciative audience of other team members, elders and visitors.

The Sundale Christmas Carols were subsequently awarded the 2008 Nambour Australia Day Community Event Award for the best event, proving how popular the annual tradition had become for the whole community.

2008 – A Big Year

The year 2008 began with the long awaited transition of official ownership of Aloaka Lodge from Somerset Senior Citizens to Sundale, taking effect on 1st January. It heralded the beginning of a busy year.



New entrance to Aloaka Lodge

The redevelopment of Aloaka, including construction of 26 new beds was complete. We Rock! Childcare centre was swiftly moving towards full capacity. The name We Rock! was chosen by the children, with Sundale CEO Glenn Bunney contributing the by-line: 'Promoting a solid foundation for your child's future!' The centre could provides childcare from 6am to 6pm for children from birth to 6 years. The design incorporated 4 rooms, the Blue Room (birth-18 months), Green Room (18 months-2½ years), Yellow Room (2½-4 years) and the Red Room (4-6 years).¹²⁸

The Eden concept was embraced wholeheartedly at the Aloaka facility. Children at We Rock! interacted with grandparents if they were in the Aloaka facility, and the development of surrogate grandchild-grandparent relationships was encouraged. The theory that providing childcare attracted team members with children to work there was also proving very successful.¹²⁹



Inside We Rock childcare centre 2012

Aloaka Site Manager Alison Ham explained that several of the Aloaka team work between the two care areas, with all childcare workers also receiving basic aged care training. Sharing administration and maintenance also cut down on costs. A lifestyle co-ordinator in Aloaka Lodge worked closely with the childcare teacher, and as Alison described:

“The children from the childcare centre, supervised by childcare members, regularly visit elders, including those in the secure wing (memory care unit)... The children talk to elders one-to-one, sing, and celebrate their birthdays, which are a great cause for celebration. It never ceases to amuse me when a child looks up at one of the elders and asks *What did your mummy give you for your birthday?*”¹³⁰



Reading to the We Rock! children 2012

(In 2012, there was a ratio of four pre-school age children to one team member, which is above the industry average of eleven children to one team member.)¹³¹ A maximum of eight children at one time are allowed to visit the elders upstairs. Alison described many wonderful stories of the inter-generational contact, as the children have no fear of any elder and indeed all eagerly seek to be chosen to visit. One single father family with two children adopted one elder, visiting her on her birthday, Mother's Day and other special days. Alison described how some elders, who might initially have appeared grumpy, opened up and blossomed like flowers, basking in the laughter of the children. And, because the elders give 100% attention to each child and they are the centre of attention, the children also bloom in return.

Glenn Bunney described the interaction between elders and children as 'just absolutely fabulous (with) some elders who did not (usually) talk speaking to the kids, and others who were not interactive at all responding to a two year old standing at the bottom of their wheelchair... the inter-generational connection was priceless.'¹³²

The children even visit Wattle Wing, the secure Memory Care wing. Memory carers are careful not to be seen to demean their memory care elders by giving them 'childlike' activities to do, but when the children visit there is no hesitation from elders to play with the children's Play Doh and other activities which might otherwise be seen as 'childlike'. These activities actually help elders to fine-tune motor skills and muscle coordination, and as Alison explains, 'once the children are there everybody's into it, no matter what it is, so it's fantastic.'¹³³

According to a study (2012), the happiest ages in life are nine years old and 68 years old, with both ages claiming fun was one of the most important driving forces in their lives, 'the results cement the idea of a special bond... so often seen between grandparents and grandchildren.'¹³⁴ Indeed this special bond is evident at Aloaka, with all Aloaka elders affectionately referred to by the childcare children as their Aloaka Nannies and Pops.

The Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program continued, with dance classes, softball coaching, swimming, lifesaving and Tae Kwon Do offered through participation in the Active After Schools Program.¹³⁵ The OSHC cares for children aged from Prep to 13 years from 6-9am in the mornings, and from 3-6pm in the afternoons, with Vacation Care available from 6am-6pm during school holidays. As outlined on the Sundale website:¹³⁶

"The programs are designed in conjunction with children and families to ensure that the students' nutritional needs, life skills, homework and entertainment are being met. School age children are provided with a healthy nutritious snack after school and have a great deal of input into food and

program choices, often preparing food themselves. We understand that homework is best done before children become too tired, so children have access to the school library and our computers during homework time. Our team members and older children also assist the younger children with reading and basic homework—it's a real family atmosphere! Our team has been trained as Active After School Coaches and visiting coaches teach students various sports throughout the year with gymnastics, T-ball, dance and aerobics being a few such programs. Vacation Care is chock full with activities, excursions, sports and fun!"

Alison noted in the 2007-08 Annual Report that it was also a very personal journey:

"We have watched the children who started at the We Rock! Childcare Centre in November 2006, don their school uniforms and head off to Prep, knowing that in our role as child carers, we helped to get them there. We have watched these same Prep children, come out of school, run over to greet the Outside School Hours Care team and tell them all about their day as they walk down to the OSHC building for afternoon tea. We have celebrated with families the news of a pregnancy and then celebrated the birth of a child. We have been entrusted with the care of these tiny bundles, whose parents, knowing that we have provided quality care to their older children, have felt secure handing us this additional responsibility.... As a centre, we have learned and grown, we cut our first teeth, taken our first tentative steps and now are up and running. We went from a three room centre, with a fourth just opening up, to a busy centre with a waiting list for certain days. We look forward to continuing to grow and thrive in this next year, as we prepare to extend our reach and activities across our Sundale group."

Volunteer input is always vital in all Sundale facilities and in the new Sundale community at Aloaka this was proving no different, as the 2007-08 Annual Report described:

"Every day is a celebration at Aloaka. We have great volunteers, both local and through the Caboolture Community Volunteer Scheme, who come and give freely of their time in support of our elders. These volunteers work in our grounds and gardens, provide activities such as library exchange, reading, knitting, craft, card making, general chat and socialisation. They join in the various functions that occur throughout the calendar program and are an integral part of the Aloaka family..."

A wonderful poem in 'The Bridge' (Aloaka and We Rock Community Newsletter) says it all:

Friendship is ageless

Let's go see the Grannies
Say the children with a shout
Gathering their treasures and
running all about

The silence of the living room is
broken by little voices
Who will they visit first
There are so many choices....

Oh look it's someone's birthday
There's a great big cake
We all sing happy birthday
What a happy noise we make!

We go to visit Wattle
To bask there in the sun
Talking to our friends in there
It always is great fun

The children say thank you
For the friendship that they share
The residents say thank you
For the laughter and the care

Sundale's unique childcare/aged care integration model was proving very successful and, as we shall see later in our story, it would become a 'trend setter' and bring other aged care service providers to investigate the unique concept. The Eden Healthcare Centre website experienced great success in January 2008, with 13,500 hits recorded, an average of 450 hits/day, showing the interest in this pioneering facility.¹³⁷

Sundale also farewelled long-serving team member, Care Director Kath Readman, after 28 years of working at Sundale. Kath had held a whole host of positions within Sundale, including Director of Nursing and Deputy Administrator, Acting Administrator and Care Director. As far as the industry was concerned, Kath had become synonymous with Sundale and had always maintained an active community connection through multiple activities. She was always well-known and respected for her contribution and commitment.

An important change in Local Government occurred in 2008, when amalgamations across Queensland reduced the number of Local Councils from 156 to 72.

The amalgamation of Noosa, Maroochy and Caloundra Councils into the Sunshine Coast Regional Council did not unfortunately immediately improve relations between Sundale and Local Government. Sundale's Tewanin development application was still ongoing at the time of Council amalgamation. The initial plans, submitted in 2003, had been embraced by the Noosa Shire Council, but Sundale were to experience many delays after amalgamation, as they sought to establish a fresh relationship with the new Council.

Sundale's Tewanin development application had to comply with a multitude of assessments including a development density study, vegetation preservation study, biodiversity/sustainability review and flood mitigation modelling. A social needs study was also required, which was the first time such a requirement was placed on a community organisation, to the best of Sundale's knowledge.

The Noosa Shire Council had already agreed that the Tewanin development was consistent with a need in community, as the first co-located facility in Tewanin, featuring 'ageing in place'.¹³⁸ However the original \$90 million dollar development proposal which featured 314 units had by this time been scaled back to a final figure of 180 units. Also plans for a day respite centre, and unfortunately a plan for integrated childcare on site, like We Rock! at Kilcoy, had to be removed to satisfy Council planners.

As Glenn Bunney noted with disappointment "It was clear that we were on a hiding to nothing when Council planners could just not grasp the concept of intergenerational connection, making it impossible to proceed with an application inclusive of the childcare centre. Consequently the childcare centre was removed from the application on the mistaken assumption that it would expedite the approvals process. Be assured however that the concept will like a phoenix arise from the proverbial ashes, and it will return at some future point to bring this unique service to the Noosa community."¹³⁹

In keeping with Sundale's commitment to provide for the varying needs of the community, a dedicated number of the independent living units were planned for low rent accommodation in the Tewanin development. After a number of plan revisions, Sundale were still waiting for final approval from Sunshine Coast Regional Council.¹⁴⁰

Sadly in 2008 Pat Tiley, a champion of the Coolum Waters Retirement Resort, who had been instrumental in getting Coolum its first aged care facility, passed away. Pat was also Chairman of the Coolum Waters Residents' Committee and continued to help put up the flag at Coolum Waters every day until he became too ill. Like many of Sundale's residents, Pat's story was that of an unassuming community minded gentleman, which hid the reality of a sensational life. Just one amazing fact about Pat's life, was that he was the Bombadier who released one of the bombs which helped sink

the Bismark in World War Two. Pat's wife Edna Tiley resides contentedly in 2013 in the Coolum Care Centre.

Another Sundale resident, George Watt, who will always be remembered for his contributions to the Rotary Garden Village, and especially for his daylilies, also passed away. George's memory is kept alive as the daylilies continue to flower each year, adorning the village in a colourful array.

It was pleasing to see in May 2008, the Sunshine Coast Regional Council developed a set of 'Residential Complex Emergency Evacuation Procedures' which were very similar to the Emergency Response Plans Sundale had instigated, beginning with the Rotary Village in 2002. Sundale was always happy to be providing leadership in innovative ways, which, like ripples in a pond, flow out to benefit the wider community.

The Sundale carers were again actively helping community in 2008. A Sundale team, 'The Golden Oldies' participated in The Big Wrap, which had become an annual event. And for the first time, a team consisting of nurses and allied health professionals from Sundale's Eden Healthcare Centre also participated. The Annual Golden Bed Pan Race was a riotous chaotic race, which started with entrants running to grab a full bed pan to put onto a hospital bed. One team member (the 'patient') had to crouch over the bedpan as they were pushed to the first stop. There the 'patient' was wrapped up in toilet paper like an Egyptian mummy, and put back onto the bed. The bed, 'mummy', and bedpan were then raced over to an African lion for a photo, then under three flags which had to be grabbed, all while avoiding a ball swinging beneath a replica Eiffel Tower! ¹⁴¹ What a crazy sight.

The nurses at Sundale were not only happy to race beds around for charity, but were also coming up with innovative ways to care for elders. Helen Petersen, EEN (Endorsed Enrolled Nurse) and No-Lift trainer at Eden invented a device which won the 2008 Aged Care Channel Idea of the Year Award for the Environment, Safety Systems and OH&S category. The device, called a MUMA (Multi Use Multi Ability) strap, as the name suggested had many uses, which included helping elders to safely pull themselves up to a sitting position, and was tested and manufactured to comply with safety standards and regulations. ¹⁴²

The Rotary Garden Village celebrated their 25th anniversary on 19th September 2008. Some of the original residents were in attendance and 103 year old Mrs Faye McCarthy, the oldest resident, cut the anniversary cake. ¹⁴³ An official opening by MP Peter Wellington and some words of wisdom from Glenn Bunney and John Kleinschmidt started off a great day filled with entertainment, which ended with the colourful display of bursting balloons.



Sundale 'Golden Oldies' team at the Big Wrap

The 2007-08 Annual Report reported Sundale had become the first Queensland Eden Registered Home, a great achievement for the organisation and a tribute to the whole Sundale community for embracing the Eden philosophy. In Bowder Lodge, a garden of Eden was in bloom. High garden beds were producing bountiful harvests of strawberries, tomatoes, carrots, cabbage, bok choy, lettuce, herbs and flowers. And a new garden at the entrance to Bowder Lodge, created by the Sundale garden team, was well received, even being described as 'bloomin' marvellous! Also photographs and karaoke were put onto a computer, and this was proving especially popular with the memory care residents, who loved to sing-along, Karaoke Bowder style.

At Aloaka Lodge a new coffee shop Chezloaka was opened, while a cooking program was very popular and creating delicious aromas throughout the facility. Carers put bread makers on overnight and residents were greeted with the delicious smell of fresh bread in the morning. As a testament to Sundale's excellent care of their elders, accreditation teams visiting Sundale facilities were always amazed that residents rarely had any complaints or problems.

The Nicklin Lodge was also full of activity in early 2008, when new vinyl flooring was laid throughout the communal areas. Although it was a major upheaval to elders and carers an article called 'Just look at us now!' by the Nicklin Team, in the May 2008 Sundale Links, commented that elders and 'the Nicklin team were fantastic...some people came in their own time to help (others) stayed way after their knock off time to get the job done... meals menus were adjusted and challenges were met with 'outside the square' thinking. Everybody enjoyed the sausage sizzles, ice cream in a cone, fish and chips in paper bags and finger food.' The article also remarked that very few elders went on holidays during the process, because they didn't want to miss out on what was happening. The local business community also pitched in, with Air-Rite donating the use of a free cold-room.



The gardens continue to bloom and provide a bountiful harvest, as resident Don Tyson shows in 2009

In 2008 Sundale was providing Government approved care packages to over 180 people from Pomona to Caloundra, as well as in Kilcoy, and providing residential care to another 473 people. Preparing meals three times a day actually added up to 517,935 meals annually!

Sundale's Cooroy rehabilitation facility adopted the trading name of the 'Eden Rehabilitation Centre' in 2008. Sundale had certainly created a niche – it was the only locally owned private rehabilitation hospital between the northside of Brisbane and Cairns, offering the intimacy of a country hospital combined with a unique, dedicated focus on rehabilitation. The Eden Rehabilitation Centre experienced a very busy year. New services were initiated, bed capacity was expanded by 50%, staffing increased by 30% and, after the expansion, the centre experienced 80% occupancy every month.¹⁴⁴

The Eden Rehabilitation Centre was recognised for its contribution to the health and wellbeing of people across the Sunshine Coast and beyond at the 2008 Excellence in Business awards on Saturday 8th November. The Eden Rehabilitation Centre took out the Macro Award in the Rural Enterprise category.¹⁴⁵

The cost for Sundale to build a single new residential place, excluding land, interest and professional fees had risen to in excess of \$200,000. This cost had nearly doubled in only 8 years.¹⁴⁶ In 2008, aged care providers in Australia declined to take up over one third of the new bed licences issued by the Commonwealth because they could not afford the costs of building and staffing facilities.

David Fingleton retired from the Board after serving as an Apex representative for 12 years. Meanwhile, after the first full year of operating as a seven member Board, the organisation was still waiting for full transition to the new Corporate Structure. This was something that would be several years away.

Meanwhile the world was reeling from the initial effects from what became known as the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). Extreme volatility in shares and property, rising unemployment and economic uncertainty began to take effect around the world, impacting on all sectors of the community, including not-for-profit organisations, like Sundale.

To combat this, Sundale's Corporate Governance model of operating had been complemented by the introduction of the Sundale Risk Management Framework, which guided the Board on how best to minimise risk to the organisation and its people. Board members held a portfolio in one of three Committees - Finance and Audit, Infrastructure Development, and Director and Senior Officers - meeting as it was deemed necessary during the economically tumultuous year.

A review of the Sundale Investment Strategy was carried out to ensure minimal impacts of any short and long term effects of the GFC. Sundale's strategies paid off, as the year ended with a modest surplus, while many other organisations were reporting substantial financial losses. Indeed the review of the Sundale Investment Policy along with moving many investments to cash meant that while the average investment losses on equities was just less than 60%, Sundale's investment portfolio loss stood at just 16%. And this small loss was recovered in a relatively short time span as the equity markets improved.

At the end of a busy year, Eden Rehabilitation Centre participated in the Christmas in Cooroy parade, which saw Santa on the back of a ute, sitting on an exercise bike to promote good health. The ute stalled twice in the paddock, but when it finally got going and headed down a packed Maple Street, Cooroy, it was greeted with joy by people lining the street, although it never got out of first gear.



Above Left: Christmas in Cooroy parade with Eden's Santa promoting good health **Above Right:** As shown in this photo from 2010, the Sundale Idol competition is enjoyed by everyone

The ever popular Sundale Christmas Carols included the annual Sundale Idol, which was broadcast for the first time on YouTube, showcasing Sundale's community involvement to the whole world.

Back to the Heartlands

The shift in Commonwealth Government policy to 'ageing in place' instead of institutional care, changes in accommodation preferences and the Baby Boomer demographic have all transformed the future of aged care. During more than a decade as CEO of Sundale, in his capacity as member and chair of many aged care groups and also in his private life, Glenn Bunney has travelled to numerous overseas countries and always brought back his observations on overseas aged care trends to the Sundale Board. Such insights have contributed to the strategic direction of Sundale, and initiated some innovative ways of caring to take Sundale into the future. In one such report on visits to facilities in other countries, Glenn noted:

"There is a strong potential for us (Sundale) to develop a whole new concept of accommodation for older Australians... that is to create more appropriate homes that are affordable, supplemented by others that are focused on the upper-middle market. As we undertake our rebuilding program, and indeed Greenfields developments, we need to consider whether we wish to pursue the traditional model of residential aged care there will still be a need for this area albeit in my view probably more specialised in the future or do we move to multi-level development and deliver services to our clients." ¹⁴⁷

Sundale's founders could hardly have imagined a time when redevelopment of its original village would be being considered, but after nearly 50 years, the time was nigh. The redevelopment of the Sundale Garden Village on the Doolan Street, Nambour site was an enormous task logistically and financially and it was estimated to take 15-20 years to complete. The wellbeing of existing residents was of course the primary concern guiding re-development.

Environmental sustainability was also important. Future developments would be designed to suit the climate, featuring low water demand landscaping, including use of grey water, rainwater storage and water efficient fixtures and fittings. Energy efficient lighting and appliances, solar hot water and the use of solar energy or alternative energy, with an aim to feed any excess power back to the grid, were also planned as an integral part of future developments.

As part of their Environmental, Social and Governance Responsibilities, the Sundale Board was concerned with the future impacts of yet another regulatory requirement. Under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007, from July 2008 larger corporations had been required to report their greenhouse gas emissions. This requirement was likely to eventually filter down to smaller organisations like Sundale, with unknown effects.

It was indeed a landmark for the organisation when Sundale developed preliminary concept plans for the redevelopment of Sundale Garden Village and held initial discussions with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council. A number of adjoining buildings and a commercial building opposite the site had already been purchased to facilitate the redevelopment. Discussions with Council planners identified a number of issues which required more work before a final concept plan could be designed. One such issue was the desire to include a commercial component to better service clients, and which would also help offset the significant costs of redevelopment. The changing demand in accommodation styles influenced the redevelopment, with plans for increased population density to enable better service delivery, and a possible future link with the projected development of the old Moreton Sugar Mill site across Petrie Creek.

A new site had been purchased at Henebery Road, Burnside to cater for the growing demand for residential aged care services in the area, and also as a possible location for Sundale Garden Village elders to occupy when the Village was being redeveloped. Extensive planning was undertaken for this new Henebery Road site. The original environmentally friendly design, planned to be built over 6-7 stages, consisted of 122 detached two and three bedroom units, a 60 bed care centre and a Clubhouse. The first stage was proposed to include 20 units, the care centre, and Clubhouse with heated pool, media room and community gardens. The site would have dual access from both Henebery Road and Burnside Road.

Although traffic concerns were raised by some residents of Henebery Road, Sundale were confident the new development would result in little traffic increase and also advised that an addition to the fleet of three Sundale buses, to service residents in the new facility, would be undertaken if required. Sundale committed to minimal disruption to existing Henebery Road residents, including the use of a water truck to suppress any dust raised by trucks during the construction phase. There were further conditions from the Council to be fulfilled for a traffic management plan, upgrading of telecommunication services, hooded external lighting during construction and sustainable water harvesting for potable water for the Sundale residents. Whilst this was all well and good, it caused delays and, in the now familiar theme, we will have to wait a while to see an outcome for the Henebery Road development.

Preliminary plans for another new development on land adjacent to the Palmwoods Garden Village had also been completed, with a new focus on the upper end of the market due to the desirability of the site. The planning for Stage Four of Coolum Waters Retirement Resort was now completed, and at the Aloaka site at Kilcoy, preliminary planning for new independent living units was undertaken. The Tewantin approval process was still stalled after more than five years. These were like the threads of the great Sundale tapestry waiting to be drawn together. The financial environment after the GFC however was still sluggish and if people could not sell their homes then they would not be buying a new one or moving into a retirement village.

To build brand awareness and general interest in Sundale, all promotional material was completely revamped. The handbook for prospective residents was revised and an updated website launched. The website traffic, when the Sundale website was re-launched in February 2009, increased to over 1,500 hits in June 2009, with more than 4,000 pages viewed. And to increase their prospective resident base, for the first time radio and television advertisements were made, greatly enhancing Sundale's profile.

Sundale Catering introduced special themed monthly meals. Sundale Catering provided around 1,488 meals daily, with more than half a million meals provided in one year. All meals were overseen by a nutritionist who provided expert advice on their nutritional value, as well as taking into account variety, aroma, flavour, presentation and also catering for any special dietary needs.¹⁴⁸ Continuing to implement technological advances, new software was introduced in the James Grimes Care Centre kitchen to streamline the work process. The software provided a stock ordering system, recipes, preparation and cooking methods and information on nutritional value of recipes, and would form the basis for eventual implementation in all Sundale kitchens.

In another example of innovation, Sundale had become one of the first aged care organisations to introduce paperless record keeping for care delivery. This had

required an upgrade of infrastructure to wireless networks and fibre optic cables to all Sundale facilities. A computer based record-keeping program for Suncoast Community Care was developed. There were now 136 HACC clients, 20 CACP clients and 30 EACH clients, with approval for 10 more EACH and 10 EACHD (Extended Aged Care in Home Dementia) packages, all serviced by 30 team members.¹⁴⁹ The Suncoast Community Care services were growing but, Sundale believed, 'albeit at a slower pace than anticipated due to the discriminatory nature of Government allocations.'¹⁵⁰

Sundale Rehabilitation Centre in the first half of 2009 provided 46% of services to high care residential clients, with 645 low care and community based clients. Hydrotherapy accounted for just over 18% of services provided and Physiotherapy and Massage Therapy for around 9% of total services. Exercise and Tai Chi classes were held in all five of Sundale's residential care facilities and four retirement villages. Aqua Aerobics were so popular that classes were being run twice a day, three times a week, and Pilates classes were planned. Podiatry Services increased to around 20 clients every Thursday, treating elders' feet, which have, in an average lifetime, travelled around 190,000 km. Due to requests from residents, complementary services for elders were also expanded to include hairdressing and beauty therapy. Gift vouchers became available for the Sundale Rehabilitation Centre in December, just in time for people to purchase as Christmas gifts.



Benefitting from using the hydrotherapy pool

Residents and team members fundraised to purchase musical equipment for group exercises such as Aqua Aerobics. A donation of a Nintendo Wii, by the Duffield family, enabled the development of therapeutic exercise programs to enhance the range of upper limb movement for people with chronic problems such as arthritis, stroke and acquired brain injury. The therapies also assisted with social interaction and nourished the brain through learning new technologies. Research indicated that physical exercise could help prevent the onset of dementia or potentially slows advancement, so using the Wii was good for both the body and the mind.

The Occupational Therapy team within the rehabilitation unit purchased tools to better assess cognitive and functional ability. Assessment and return to work programs were provided for the community, including physiotherapy and occupational therapy for people with work related injuries. The return to work program even enabled some Sundale employees to return to work more quickly.

An improved working relationship with the University of the Sunshine Coast was established. Two health students assisted in conducting health promotion activities relating to falls, continence, exercise programs and bowel cancer screening. Publications were developed to raise awareness about health, and talks were conducted on subjects such as fall prevention and continence management. Twenty-four University of the Sunshine Coast Occupational Therapy students spent two days with residents learning their life stories and practising interview techniques. At Cooroy, the Eden Rehabilitation Centre in conjunction with the University of the Sunshine Coast began running a Shape Up program for people living with weight related challenges impacting fitness levels. The six week program consisted of three groups of over 25 people, focussing on nutrition, psychology and exercise. Group education feedback sessions were also held. A range of healthcare professionals participated including a Rehabilitation Medicine Specialist, Exercise Physiotherapist, Dietician, Psychologist, Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist.

The Eden Rehabilitation Centre installed a fully equipped kitchen, partially funded by a grant from the Cooroy branch of the Bendigo Bank. The Eden Rehabilitation Centre had supported the establishment of the Bendigo Bank in Cooroy as another community based initiative. Deposits from Eden Rehabilitation Centre had enabled the bank to provide loans and support to the shared community. The kitchen simulated a home environment and was used to assess patients' cognitive skills and ability to perform functional tasks. It was of great assistance to patients who had experienced a stroke, or lived with a neurological disease, as well as people recovering from amputation, neurosurgery, joint replacement surgery, musculoskeletal conditions and general debilitation, enabling them to return to an independent life.

Sundale team members continued to be recognised for their outstanding care, with Bowder Lodge team leader, Kim Richmond, named Nambour Citizen of the Year. Bowder team member Cathy Daveson was awarded The Pride of Workmanship Award from Rotary for her service to Sundale.

Almost at the end of the first decade of the new century, those branches of the Sundale tree were bursting with new growth. Sundale was making a difference to many people's lives in ways that could barely have been imagined in 1963.

Innovating

Sundale recognised that part of their future direction lay in developing appropriate and affordable housing for the whole community – not only for the aged. This was a major outcome of a regional planning study undertaken to identify local geographical and anthropological needs to better service the wider community. It was clear that the health and wellbeing of older Australians was made all the more challenging if they did not enjoy the benefit of a suitable roof over their heads.

Sundale looked at the issue of providing affordable housing in several ways, exploring the possibility of buying a mobile home park on Bribie Island. While he was at the mobile home park, Glenn Bunney described how he had an ‘ah ha moment’¹⁵¹ when he realised that most of the people using the two very popular Clubhouses (with a third one under construction) were Sundale’s client demographic, in spite of the park being marketed as an Over 55’s Village. Sundale recognised there was a growing need to help ‘retired renters’ to access suitable housing.¹⁵² Data showed that over 17% of people aged 65 years or older were renters. These ideal clients were all people aged in their 80s who were either renters, or who owned a home but could not necessarily afford to move into a standard retirement village because the value of their homes did not meet the required value, or they did not have sufficient equity in their homes.

To address these issues an application was made under a new Australian Government program, the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS), which provided financial incentives for ten years to the business sector and community organisations to build and rent dwellings. Tenants who passed eligibility requirements received the benefit of these lower rental costs of at least 20% below the market rate.

Entering into the NRAS program was a natural extension of Sundale’s commitment to serve the community by providing affordable accommodation to all people, not only the aged. And for the aged, NRAS enabled Sundale to provide supportive flexible help through community and rehabilitative care, thus helping keep people out of residential care for as long as possible.

As Glenn Bunney explained, ‘It may sound perverse.... talking about keeping (people) out of residential care, because residential care is a large part of we are all about, but a far greater number of people will need (community care) services than will require residential care services (in the future) so Sundale are looking after all sides of the community.’¹⁵³ Glenn described how NRAS ‘other than the money to build it, ticked all the boxes...and it is our first venture into pure housing.’¹⁵⁴ Glenn also hoped it would not be the last, as he predicted the future of aged care was more about housing and care than about traditional residential care, stating ‘You need to create a path for the client or nothing else matters.’¹⁵⁵

In 2010, Sundale's NRAS application was successful for first-time entry into the affordable housing market. The site chosen, at the old Squash Courts adjacent to Sundale Garden Village, already had planning approval for 44 units. Out of the 44 units, 29 units would be offered for 20% under the market rate, with the balance available for general rental to provide complementary accommodation options for Sundale clients, team members and the broader community. Having nearby accommodation available would also help to attract other allied health professionals, who could rent the non-NRAS units, and provide Sundale employees, who fitted the NRAS criteria, with accommodation. And a prime objective of the development was to achieve a multi generational community, because '...we want that life going on around it', which families would provide, Glenn Bunney explained.¹⁵⁶

However, Sunshine Coast Regional Council conditions for approval of the development were in excess of what Sundale believed reasonable and this proved to be a stumbling block, resulting in the project experiencing delays. It has to be said that whilst regrettable, such excessive conditions (most or all of which ultimately would be withdrawn) had become for Sundale an all too familiar part of doing business with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, adding substantially to the cost of development and therefore impacting on eventual affordability to the community.

Meanwhile, Council approval for the Henebery Road development had finally been received, but in a familiar theme, the approval was subject to more than 100 conditions, some of which Sundale believed were unreasonable and irrelevant to the project. Back to the negotiation table...

Sundale's commitment to sustainability continued with the introduction of initiatives including Water Efficiency Management Plans (WEMPs) to investigate how water could be captured, and water use minimised and reused, for the Palmwoods, Nambour, and Coolum campuses, while working towards WEMPs for all sites. A review of the Sundale motor vehicle fleet was undertaken, which resulted in a recommendation to increase the use of bio-fuel in vehicles. And, at Palmwoods Garden Village, with the full support of Sundale, the residents took advantage of a State Government solar scheme and installed solar panels on 84 out of the 107 independent living units, bringing a 'green power' revolution to the Village.

In May, the Sundale Grounds and Maintenance team, with Sundale ITC, began to implement an online service desk system, for inputting all the maintenance works required around all Sundale grounds and buildings. The service would eventually allow residents and team members with computer access to log jobs, and touch screens were to be installed in all Sundale clubhouses for those residents without computer access.

'Edenising' Sundale continued with the children from We Rock! Childcare at Kilcoy enjoying visiting the elders upstairs three times a week for show and tell, cooking classes and to play games, which were enjoyed by all ages. In Aloaka Lodge the resident 'green thumb' Jack planted vegetable seedlings on a full moon night, according to the practice of 'moon planting' which is said to achieve maximum energy and growth, with full support from team members. At the Rotary Garden Village, six community garden plots were created for residents to grow vegetables.

Although employee turnover at Sundale continued to be significantly below the industry average, existing and projected shortages in nurses and allied health professionals was becoming a global problem. In 2010, for the first time Sundale commenced overseas recruiting for nurses. Sundale constantly liaise with team members to improve relations, including undertaking surveys in the previous two years to measure cultural views of the organisation and employee perceptions. Sundale had joined a benchmarking group specialising in cultural surveys of the health and aged care sector, consultancy firm Best Practice Australia, which collects data from over 148,000 respondents. Based on survey results and feedback from employees, Sundale formed a Liaison Committee to improve communications between the Board, Management team and team members. This committee is made up of employees from across the organisation, in various locations and job types, and works directly with CEO Glenn Bunney.

Service awards and recognition events are an established feature of the Sundale calendar to acknowledge outstanding service by team members and volunteers to the organisation and its elders. Along with the service awards, peer nominations are called for outstanding performance across a range of categories which are judged by an independent panel.

School based and vocational traineeships were enhanced in 2008, but it was becoming increasingly difficult for volunteers to comply with Workplace Health & Safety Regulations, Public Liability Insurance, Blue Cards and police checks. To overcome this, Sundale assumed responsibility for these requirements on behalf of the treasured volunteers, in an attempt to remove bureaucratic impediments to their ongoing involvement.

And, always working in the background, the Sundale Laundry Services continued to provide quality service, with two new dryers installed to improve turnaround times. The number of external clients had increased to 13, up from four clients only two years previously. Recognised for exceptional service of high quality and reliability, prospective clients were making contact spurred on by the positive recommendations of their industry colleagues – the ultimate in referral based growth. What a great success story!

Soft Eggs Please

The regulatory nature of the aged care industry was again in the spotlight in 2010, this time regarding restrictions (from an industry and client point of view) on the types of foods allowed to be served in nursing homes and hospitals. As Glenn Bunney explained, “Suddenly with a stroke of a bureaucratic pen, elders and patients who had made choices and decisions all of their lives, were suddenly dubbed as ‘vulnerable persons’, with ‘Big Brother in Canberra’ deciding what was best for them and dictating what providers like Sundale could and could not provide to clients. In the quintessential touch of irony, the very same bureaucrats denying choice for older Australians were the very same who preached a concept of ‘consumer directed care’ to the aged care industry.”

At a dementia conference in Sydney in June, Stephen Judd, Chief Executive of HammondCare, blasted undue regulatory restrictions on serving foods such as seafood, soft cheeses, some fresh cut fruit and vegetables and soft eggs, stating ‘What have we come to when an older person in a nursing home can’t have lettuce and rockmelon, but their relative in the community can.’¹⁵⁷ As an example of the ridiculousness of the restrictions, Mr Judd pointed to a rule which required eggs to be poached for at least 17 minutes, commenting that the result was ‘not a poached egg (but like) an organic piece of pottery that’s been fired and come out of the kiln.’¹⁵⁸

Glenn Bunney, in his capacity as Sundale CEO, as well as Director of Aged Care Queensland and Chair of the International Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing, commented ‘People get to 85 having soft eggs the way they’ve always wanted and they come to residential care and some bureaucrat decides the risk is too great... why can’t we let people have what they want (such regulations) can make things impossible, it’s just insane.’¹⁵⁹

Glenn recalled how, soon after joining Sundale, he had an argument with a nurse, because she had admonished a resident for putting too much salt on his food.¹⁶⁰ Glenn explained Sundale facilities focused as much as possible on individuals having choices, such as being able to eat breakfast at any time of the morning instead of at a set time, a range of options at meal times, as well as providing kitchenettes, so residents could help themselves and be as self-sufficient as possible.

Operating from the main kitchen at James Grimes Care Centre, Sundale Catering now provided meals to James Grimes Care Centre, McGowan, Bowder and Nicklin Lodges and Rod Voller Hostel, as well as support and expertise for other catering services located at Palmwoods, Coolum and Kilcoy. In total, Sundale Catering prepared and delivered 1,450 meals per day and another 985 meals were prepared and served by Coolum, Palmwoods and Kilcoy facilities. A total of almost 900,000 meals were served annually, plus snacks and theme day catering.¹⁶¹ It is interesting to note that

this was almost equivalent to providing breakfast, lunch and dinner to everybody living on the Sunshine Coast for one day, based on a Sunshine Coast population (2011 Census) of 306,909 people.¹⁶²

For just the services operating from the Sundale Garden Village campus, food products consumed (in 2010-11 financial year) included 5,110 loaves of bread, 1,370 kg cooked chips, 1,022 kg fish, 974 kg cheese, 86,172 fresh eggs at a rate of around 1,657 per week, 3,912 bananas (with banana prices very high due to cyclone damage to banana crops that season), 15,566 kg of meat products and 21,734 litres milk.¹⁶³ That's a lot of food prepared with great care, which was enjoyed by Sundale elders, and a hefty component of the 50 tonnes of food and 45,000 litres of water that an average person will consume in their lifetime.

From the James Grimes Care Centre kitchen, a Sundale Catering service was also established for residents. Sundale Catering provides platters for every occasion, including seasonal fruit platters, gourmet antipasto and hot savoury platters, all made from local produce and available to be ordered on the Sundale portal or at the James Grimes Care Centre.

The 2010 Budget, for the first time, committed the Commonwealth to take full policy and funding responsibility for all aged care services. This would however be Kevin Rudd's first and last budget, as a dramatic leadership confrontation occurred in June. In an event which happened with startling swiftness, Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard challenged for the ALP leadership. Kevin Rudd stepped down from his leadership position on 24th June and Julia Gillard became Australia's first female Prime Minister.¹⁶⁴ Julia Gillard would subsequently win the election the same year, and claim the honour of being the first elected female Australian Prime Minister.

The Commonwealth were considering more major changes to the aged care industry, including talk of rationalising to a smaller number of large national providers, which presented a serious threat to Sundale's long term survival under their current size and demographic. Sundale also acknowledged concerns over the future of high care beds and that nothing was likely to change unless funding for high care beds was increased.¹⁶⁵ Operating costs were also on a seemingly never-ending upwards spiral.

In 2010 the Sundale Board mourned the passing of Betty Rook, who was the first President of the Ladies Auxiliary. And Sundale lost an important community voice when Sunshine Coast Regional Councillor, Jenny McKay, resigned from the Sundale Board in August 2010 after nine years of service.¹⁶⁶ New Local Government rules, as interpreted by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, restricted Councillors from being members of community groups because of a perceived conflict of interest. Sundale voiced their concerns that Councillors were no longer able to be members of community organisations and thus important advocates for such groups, but to

no avail. This sadly brought to an end the direct involvement of Local Government representatives in the Sundale Board which had been an integral part of almost fifty years of the Sundale story.

Over at the Palmwoods Garden Village, residents were excited when the Village experienced a unique first (and a first for Sundale) on the 18th September 2010. Heavily pregnant visitor, Jaymie Broad, visited her nanna, Jean McLean, in the Palmwoods Hostel while waiting to go to hospital that afternoon to give birth. Jaymie however then experienced a very large contraction and the ambulance was called. At first, the ambulance station thought it was a prank call, because births were the last thing they expected to attend at a Sundale facility. While waiting for the ambulance, Jaymie jumped into the shower and, with the aid of her friend, gave birth to a bouncing baby boy Aden, within 13 minutes. The ambulance arrived only 5 minutes later. The Site Manager at the time, Julie King, said the birth caused a lot of excitement in the Village, and in the Hostel the 'halls were blocked with elderly people in walking frames straining to catch a glimpse of Sundale's little miracle.'¹⁶⁷

Care-ful Collaboration

To help Sundale keep abreast of the changing aged care industry and care models, the Board had encouraged CEO Glenn Bunney's involvement in industry bodies. Glenn had joined the Aged Care Queensland Board in 1997 becoming President from 2000-03 and resigning only to take up the Presidency of Aged & Community Services Australia, a position he held until 2007. He has also served as a Director of the international industry representative group, International Association of Homes and Services for the Ageing (IAHSA), since 2003. Glenn was also elected, from 1st January 2010, as the Chair of IAHSA and served his two-year term. He was a founding Director of Eden in Oz, and has served as a Director of the HESTA Superannuation Fund and some other industry superannuation investment funds. Glenn also represented the aged care industry and Sundale in various delegations to State and Federal Governments as well as taking part in delegations all over the world. All this has enabled Sundale to create a strong voice and keep ahead of changes in the aged care industry and associated support services, such as rehabilitation.

Through Glenn's extensive networking, Sundale was about to create a collaboration that was absolutely unique in Australia.

Suncoast Community Care in 2010, provided in-home care to more than 230 people from Pomona to Caloundra and up into the Blackall Range. However, Sundale were of the opinion that the number of packages Suncoast Community Care needed to be viable was still insufficient and were instead being awarded to larger Brisbane based providers.

The CEOs of Sundale, Bromilow Home Support Services and Gilbert Care (later became St Mary's Aged Care) were all acquainted through their involvement with community care. Sitting together one afternoon after a regional meeting, they were discussing their united belief that large Brisbane-based providers, instead of local providers, were being awarded community care packages for the Sunshine Coast. Examples included local providers being awarded around five community care packages whereas larger Brisbane based providers, with no history in the local area, were awarded 100-150 community care packages. The three CEOs decided to address this shortfall, by putting a joint submission together, to create a collaborative care arrangement. They believed there were a lot of advantages as a combined entity, and also there was the capacity for each organisation to provide complimentary services which the others did not provide. A service profile of the combined organisations would therefore be very effective at delivering a wide range of services.

Glenn Bunney explained that the collaboration was also a response to the large regional area covered by the community carers. Funding has to cover everything from administration and travel time, as well as care. By collaborating, each organisation would be able to reduce travel time, which was sometimes over a very long distance. The three organisations would also share resources to deliver a better level of service and better value for money for the taxpayer, by allocating more of the funding to providing services, instead of money being spent on associated costs such as travel and administration.

The joint submission for the collaboration, called Community Care Solutions, was prepared to the amazement of Australian Government and program managers of the Department of Health and Ageing, who could not initially grasp the concept because it was so unique – it just did not fit into the standard definitional boxes. This unusual arrangement however received the majority of packages allocated to the region in 2010. The Community Care Solutions collaborative partnership applied for packages in first quarter of 2010, and received approval for additional high care packages in the Aged Care Allocations Rounds (ACAR), which were formally announced in January 2011. The EACH packages increased from 40 to 75 and EACHD packages from 10 to 35.

Sundale is the lead party, so the places are allocated to Sundale which is also responsible for regulatory reporting and quality control. A formal agreement is in place with Bromilow Home Support Services and St Mary's Aged Care, with the managers of all three organisations meeting regularly. To date this type of community care collaboration is still unique, with no other arrangement like it in Australia. After their initial reaction both the Department of Health and Ageing and the local Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) appear very happy with the collaboration, as are the clients. It is another example of Sundale innovating and pioneering community service delivery.

Sundale was preparing for the changing nature of the aged care industry and the future direction by including more focus on community care, changes to accommodation styles to feature inbuilt adaptability and age friendly designs, and a new direction with the first NRAS housing to be built at 25 Doolan Street. A focus on moving towards Client Directed Care (CDC) with greater emphasis on choice for the client was also being implemented through Government policy. Although no formal CDC was in place, tailored client packages to individuals were already provided by Suncoast Community Care, as simply the most appropriate customer-focused approach to providing services, so implementing a formal CDC program was the next step.



The Sundale Rehabilitation Centre (in 2012)

The Sundale Rehabilitation Centre was now providing physiotherapy to over 1,180 community and low care clients. Hydrotherapy classes, held Monday to Friday by 12 instructors, taught over 4,600 attendees, and more than 400 people enjoyed group aqua aerobics sessions. Four massage therapists gave almost 600 massages to clients, and podiatry services had increased from one to three days a week. A total of 18,500 ‘episodes of care’ were provided in one year by 20 therapists.

Providing therapy was an integral part of Sundale’s past and also the future, as the trend to a higher reliance on community care continued and the demand for rehabilitation, both in facility (inpatient) and as part of in-home care (outpatient) continued to rise. Therapy services also increased, and expanded to provide services

for clients eligible for help from Medicare, Department of Veterans Affairs, Disability Services, Workcover and private health insurance claims. A new computerised gym was installed to measure improvements in the physical strength of patients, another 'first' for Sundale.

In the James Grimes Care Centre, a new fully equipped Moroccan style hairdressing salon was opened. The salon was made possible by donations from Friends of Sundale and Barb Bollinger's substantial donation, in addition to Sundale funding, and was supported by the provision of Barb's hairdressing services for several months.¹⁶⁸ This was another example of the wonderful work of volunteers brightening the lives of Sundale elders.

The Sundale Board continued to implement best practice methods, and adopted Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) Corporate Governance Guidelines, which would be used to frame further Corporate Governance Plans and Policies. Times had certainly changed since 1963. Unlike the volunteers serving in past, it was expected that a Board member, now called a Director, would be suitably qualified and trained to undertake their duties. Director duties included meeting legislative requirements, understanding their fiduciary duties and responsibilities, having or acquiring a sound knowledge of the Health and Aged Care Industry and participating in education and training programs. The Sundale Board acknowledged that due to changes in responsibilities and increased liabilities, Director remuneration would most likely be required in the near future to attract people with the right abilities.¹⁶⁹

The AGM approved the remuneration concept in principle. However, adopting the practice would have to wait until State Government legislative amendments were in place and Sundale could finalise their new Corporate Structure and Constitution. Each individual Board member could choose whether to take the remuneration or not.

In December, Graham 'Chappy' Chapman (also affectionately known as 'Mr Sundale') resigned from the Board after serving for an amazing 33 years, since 1977. His devotion and time in Board positions included Secretary from 1977, Vice President from 1983, President/Chairman from 1986 until 2007, and a Director until 31st December 2010. 'Mr Sundale', as one of the stalwart 'volunteer Directors', had contributed to Sundale in countless ways. He laughingly reflected after he resigned, 'I always said that as soon as I leave they'll pay them (Board members).' ¹⁷⁰ Graham and Joan Chapman however remain proud members of Sundale.

'Mr Sundale', was given a special presentation for his valued service over more than three decades. As well as a three night romantic getaway to Springbrook, he was presented with a framed metal mesh safety glove with an inscription which read:

(Before Emergency Break Glass, Sir Chappy of Sundale, Knight of the Mitre and Saw, Celebrating 33 years of service.) As a self described mad woodworker, Graham was enjoying his retirement from the Board. A wonderful description from the night has him holding the framed glove with his fingers all bandaged up from taking his fingertips off with a wood planer – hence the appropriateness of the presentation pack.



Graham and Joan Chapman in 2012, Graham is holding the glove he received from Sundale for his amazing 33 years of service

The aged care industry in Australia was providing residential aged care to more than 170,000 people and in-home care for over 900,000 people. Australia-wide there were almost 3 million Australians aged over 65 years, with around half accessing some level of assistance with daily activities. Between 1998 and 2010 the number of people accessing subsidised care had increased by 50%. There were over 182,850 residential care places (in June 2010), compared to around 178,300 places the previous year. Of these, over 83,500 permanent residents had some form of dementia, and 70% of residential care places were for higher care. ¹⁷¹

A Productivity Commission into aged care had begun the year 2000 and a call for submissions to yet another Productivity Commission completed the first decade of the new century. This was to have far reaching consequences.

And Then the Rains Came

The end of the first and beginning of the second decade of the new century was heralded in Queensland, with a massive deluge of rain from December 2010 into January 2011. The period from July to December 2010 was the wettest on record for Australia, and December 2010 was the wettest on record for Queensland. The Bureau of Meteorology registered record flood peaks at over 100 Queensland river height measuring stations and in many locations the floods were the most severe in living memory, with tragic losses of life.¹⁷²

On the 11th January 2011, the Caboolture River broke its banks, inundating 300 houses, damaging roads and infrastructure and isolating the towns of Woodford, Kilcoy and Moore.¹⁷³ At approximately 3am, on the morning of 13th January 2011, the Brisbane River experienced a major flood peak of 4.46 metres – the highest since 1974. Great chunks of debris floated down the river. Everything from logs and trees which had toppled into the water, to private and public jetties ripped from the banks, floated down the Brisbane River into and through the city. A large section of Brisbane's floating 'River Walk' added to the mish-mash of wood, steel and other material, all of which then washed into Moreton Bay.

Fortunately Sundale facilities did not to experience any major problems from the floods, although the town of Kilcoy, and consequently Aloaka Lodge, was cut off for a few days – a story which will feature soon. In a new use of technology, Sundale's ICT (Information Computer and Technology) team kept all Sundale users informed with 'real time' Twitter and Facebook updates, which were linked into the Queensland Emergency Services and Queensland Police Service networks. The Sundale maintenance team did an immense job coping with the effects of the rain, including fixing roof leaks, blocked drains, and even tending to some impromptu water features which sprung up due to the constant downpour. They sloshed around in the pouring rain, shovels in hand, redirecting water flows away from buildings and generally did a magnificent job.

Due to the nearby creek, Jubilee Drive in Palmwoods was temporarily flooded, so at Palmwoods Garden Village some team members were stranded at work, some could not get in to work, and others trekked in 'over the hill' to circumvent the flooded road. Team members and elders in the Hostel however did not let a little rain dampen their spirits however, and held a pyjama party.

The town of Kilcoy was completely cut off, when the bridge went under water for three days. Alison Ham, after running the childcare within Aloaka for five years, had become the new Site Manager for Aloaka Lodge, but had barely settled into her new role for 40 days and 40 nights, before she was faced with a major unexpected challenge, as the skies opened and the rain fell in biblical proportions.



Flooded Kilcoy Creek Bridge with emergency services

Thanks to Alison, for the following wonderful story about how Aloaka Lodge weathered the rains:

“Our adventure began on Sunday afternoon when the Kilcoy bridge went underwater and remained that way until Wednesday afternoon. By Monday morning we were completely cut off from the world, and still the rain came down. Many of us found ourselves flooded in at our homes and were unable to get to work. Others found themselves stranded in town, unable to return to their homes.

Out came the camp beds and the... (Aloaka) team members made the best of the situation. Our elders, many of whom had been through this many times, simply settled in and made the best of things... As the rain continued to pound down, the water started to creep closer and closer to the Banksia units’ back doors. Thanks to the Kilcoy Fire Brigade, the water was pumped out and we breathed a sigh of relief. However within hours, we were again faced with water lapping the doorway. Once more the fire brigade came to our rescue and pumped out the water.

We had members of the R.S.L. helping to keep our temporary drains open... (and put up sandbags) but it was Clive, our mild mannered volunteer and his son, who were outside after 10pm with a long pipe, unclogging the debris

that had been washed into the drain. Our super-saturated heroes came in and announced that they had unblocked the drain and that we should have no more problems and they were true to their word.

We were all patting ourselves on the back and feeling quite good... and were heading towards (another) dawn, when the power went out. Suddenly everyone was not nearly as cocky. Bev got up out of her camp bed, fired up the gas stove and with the help of a torch, got breakfast on the go.

Everyone got up and busy. The show must go on... showers, getting dressed and getting ready for the day. What were we going to do for entertainment? Our elders have always been used to making their own entertainment and a bit of an impromptu show was put on, with Bev rallying round to get some entertainment happening. Even without power, the day continued with little drama. Bev, Kay, Julia and Steph kept the home fires burning, food was on the table on time and in plentiful supply, even though our menu had to be adjusted as certain supplies were not able to get through.

Let there be light! And thanks to Energex the electricity came back on after 18 hours. A cheer went through the lounge room and we were feeling OK again. However some of our team members were starting to feel the strain of working long hours to cover those who could not get in. Enter the ladies in red. Most of the children from the childcare centre could not get in, so we diverted the childcare team members up to the aged care facility as reinforcements for our team members. Again we breathed a sigh of relief that we could relieve some team members. The following day, a group of us managed to get through, travelling down the highway by boat, catching a bus and then getting through.

It was the most amazing community effort. Our team members, volunteers, police, SES, Energex, the local pharmacy, fire brigade, hospital and businesses were amazing. Our support team at Nambour was fabulous and kept us in the loop, supporting us every way they could.

We are no longer an island, and are very happy to have rejoined the mainland. It was an amazing adventure, but not one we want to repeat any time soon.”¹⁷⁴

As a supplementary story, a helicopter which was due to fly in medicine for the Aloaka residents from Brisbane during the flood did not experience smooth sailing (or flying). The helicopter was unfortunately hit by lightning, as it waited to take off from the tarmac. The local Kilcoy chemist was quick to help, bagging up and labelling medicines individually for Aloaka residents, to comply with strict rules and regulations. This was all the more remarkable because Aloaka did not buy their

medicines from the local chemist. It was yet another example of the community rallying together to help in times of need, and confirmed the special place that Aloaka holds in the Kilcoy community.

Sundale Firsts

New Director Simone Pearce, a partner in local law firm Butler McDermott was welcomed to her first Board meeting in February 2011. Simone provided the type of valuable professional experience Sundale now required in Directors.

Sundale's marketing and promotions stepped up a notch in the new decade, with fresh television, electronic and print advertising campaigns. And for the first time, individually focused marketing for the Palmwoods and Coolum sites were launched, with furnished units on display for potential residents. The results were very positive, with a marked increase in enquires and sales. Residents of Palmwoods Garden Village and Coolum Waters Retirement Resort participated happily in shots taken in the pool, and general shots of the village, and everyone enjoyed being stars in the publicity campaign. As Glenn Bunney explained:

“Who needs to employ retired professional actors when you have the ‘real thing’ with real residents telling their stories. None of the stories told by the village residents were scripted – every word was their own and that made the imagery all the more compelling.”

The issue of food and residential living was again highlighted in 2011, due to soaring food costs driven ever higher through adverse weather conditions. Accessing affordable healthy food for elders was exacerbated by food hygiene restrictions on being able to buy some seasonal foods, such as rockmelons, due to concerns they might have contained traces of dirt and salmonella.¹⁷⁵ Operational costs for Sundale had continued to rise far in excess of the modest increases in Government subsidies, particularly as grocery, energy and government imposed costs escalated. The food costs for Sundale Garden Village rose by 15% in the first three months of 2011, with catering teams preparing three main meals and two snacks daily for the 500 residents.¹⁷⁶

Sundale were always innovating in the way they served food to elders, and began to investigate options such as moulds, which could be used for pureed food. The idea was to design moulds that would present food more like its original form, so elders with swallowing difficulties who needed vitamised (pureed) sustenance could enjoy a plate of food which looked like a ‘real’ meal, instead of just pureed mounds of colour.¹⁷⁷

Sundale were very aware that finding the right aged care services was like navigating a bewildering maze, especially for the non computer literate. An exciting Sundale innovation was the creation of a Customer Service Team, with a ‘Concierge style

approach', to provide a personalised single entry point for all Sundale inquiries. Dedicated phone numbers were to be established for each village, and all calls were directed through to the Concierge. Initially focused on the Coolum and Palmwoods sites, it was planned to ultimately expand the approach to include all Sundale sites and services.

The 'Concierge style' was chosen specifically to make people think differently about the service, and to give it an upmarket feel. The idea was to provide prospective residents with a very personal service, one focused on helping people choose the most appropriate accommodation, with the same person following an inquiry from beginning to end. As Glenn Bunney emphasised:

"The service is embryonic at this stage, but is really about getting ready for the new more competitive phase (in aged care) we need to change not just what we do, but how we do (it) and how we present it to the community... by using a different language (this) is part of breaking that nexus of traditional thought about aged care nursing homes... we need to break it and rebuild it." ¹⁷⁸

Even if they did not choose a Sundale facility at the end of the inquiry, Sundale were happy to help people navigate the confusing 'minefield' of deciding which aged care services were best for them. As Glenn Bunney explained, 'people go to people they know for advice and Sundale want to be one of those people in the new competitive environment' ¹⁷⁹ of delivering aged care services. Initial feedback was very positive, even from those who ultimately decided not to choose a Sundale facility.

Following a review of tenure options, Sundale became the first Queensland retirement village operator to offer five options to suit a variety of circumstances and preferences for prospective residents, and was working to 'break the mould' of traditional village structures. In a growing and increasingly competitive retirement village industry, it was essential that what was offered (physical units and villages as well as an appropriate tenure structure) focused on the customer and provided flexibility to suit different circumstances.

In April 2011, the Aloaka Lodge said thank you to the community who had helped them out when the mighty rains fell by hosting the Kilcoy and Combined Churches Palm Sunday Procession to commemorate Jesus entering Jerusalem. The Palm Sunday Procession began at one of the Kilcoy churches then marched up to the Aloaka facility with 'much palm swaying' to the delight of Aloaka residents, team members and the rest of the community.

Sundale's ongoing commitment to their employees was recognised with a nomination, by Mission Australia, for the National Employment Services Association Champion

Employer of the Year Award. Sundale became one of three national finalists, from a field of 59 organisations, and although ultimately a runner-up, Sundale were very proud to have been recognised in this manner, and nominated by such a high profile organisation as Mission Australia.

Glenn Bunny was recognised for his extensive commitment to the aged care industry in March 2011, with a special Aged Care Queensland Excellence in Care award in the Aged Care Hall of Fame, during a ‘millionaire beach party-theme’ event.

The Sundale Quality Risk and Safety team purchased a Bullex Fire Demonstration System in 2011 to conduct practical fire demonstrations and provide fire safety education for Sundale team members. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) had previously conducted training sessions to provide all Sundale team members with their mandatory annual competency on how to respond in a fire emergency and to effectively use a fire extinguisher. The Bullex system enables such training to be completed internally, especially given that the resources of the QFRS are constantly stretched. The satisfaction ratings on this training remain exceptionally and consistently high.

Fun and Games

Carers and volunteers in all Sundale facilities always make a real effort to celebrate life and bring joy into the lives of the elders in many ways. From being at the forefront in embracing the Eden Alternative™ concepts in Australia in 2000, Sundale continues to seek out and employ the most up to date, innovative and exciting ways to care for their elders.



A residents' group outing

Sundale bus trips are always popular, and just one of the drivers who make it fun is Allen Krome. After a diverse career, which included driving semi-trailers, working for Telstra, and then for SunAir as a tour bus driver, when the opportunity arose for a Sundale driver Allen was a natural fit. His wife Eunice (Sundale hairdresser) says he drives for all the facilities and ‘He’s just fitted in, he is awesome, they just love him, ask any of the Lodges...he spoils them rotten.’¹⁸⁰ Bus trips included themed trips such as the Bushwhackers Bus.

At Sundale Garden Village, in McGowan Lodge, the variety and fun happens all year round, with visits from churches, schools, singers, the Salvation Army band, as well as volunteer village residents, ex-team members and families, all contributing to the wellbeing of residents. The McGowan elders also enjoy celebrating, and at the same time raising money, for the Biggest Morning Tea and RSPCA Cupcake Day. Other more obscure days, such as International Liquorice Day, World Chocolate Day and National Porridge Day, and the more well-known special days, such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day, are also observed. A week of fun ensued in 2011, when Mary Poppins Week was celebrated with a morning tea, movie and first attempt at scarecrow making, which involved much laughter.¹⁸¹

In keeping with the Eden concept, and adding to the life of the Lodge, resident animals included a cat and two budgies, as well as Oscar, Sundale Garden Village Site Manager Pamela Fox’s dog, who enjoys visiting the elders. Oscar takes ‘his duty of ensuring that the dining room floor was thoroughly cleaned very seriously and (he also) loves to be cuddled by all.’¹⁸² ‘The residents take a lot of pleasure in patting the dog. It makes it more like a home than a hospital,’ Pamela said.

Pamela Fox has seen a lot of changes since she started as a nurse at Sundale in 1974, and in 2012 was the Site Manager of the Doolan Street, Nambour complex, having at various times also managed the Palmwoods Garden Village and



Sundale Site Manager Pam Fox’s dog, Oscar, getting into the spirit of Christmas

the Coolum Waters Retirement Resort. She understands that the process of giving up your own home and your independence is a massive life change which can be akin to loss and grief for some people. As she explains, 'We work hard to counter loneliness for each individual. The Eden philosophy gives residents choices, whether it is simply when to have a cup of tea, or going out on trips and joining in a schedule of activities such as weekly concerts, Bingo or Happy Hour with magnetic darts and special days that are organised.'¹⁸³

A multitude of games such as indoor bowls, quoits and table games every Friday afternoon, as well as spinning, knitting, craft and painting keep everyone busy. Exercise classes, including the introduction of Chair Dancing and Chair Tai Chi, keep the elders moving and active. And, keeping up with the most up to date innovations for care, Brain Training was introduced for elders. Brain Training was a relatively new phenomenon which recognised the neuro-plasticity of the brain, and the brain's amazing ability to learn, and even change, through brain exercises. Brain Training involves cognitive exercises to strengthen and improve cognitive function.¹⁸⁴

Trials of iPads, where no computer literacy was required, were also undertaken to assess the ability of the iPad to support emotional health and wellbeing. By providing access to media content, such as YouTube, and varied website content, the hoped for benefits included an alleviation of loneliness, depression and boredom, as well as helping re-engage some elders who tended to self-isolate.¹⁸⁵ These are all key components of the Eden principle, and indeed all activities for Sundale elders are designed with a purpose, such as encouraging feelings of self-worth, providing stimulation, encouraging social interaction and assisting with maintaining cognitive function through comprehension, concentration, logic and planning.¹⁸⁶

In the James Grimes Care Centre, special theme days included a Royal Gala Day with elders dressing up like royalty, including crowns. Most afternoons in the memory care unit, elders enjoy one on one hand massages, pampering and grooming of fingernails from the carers. Folk dancers from many different countries visit regularly, as well as the St. John's Choir, to sing and dance with the elders in the Chapel. To thank their wonderful volunteers, who assist with many tasks including helping elders to and from the Chapel, a BBQ was held in their honour.

In Bowder Lodge, elders enjoyed Talk like a Pirate Day, with sheets containing pirate lingo words placed on dining room tables. All the elders embraced the 'pirate spirit', calling each other 'landlubbers', and even suggested a kitchen team member walk the plank, when she forgot teaspoons for one of the tables. A school-based student came dressed up for the occasion (not sure if that included the obligatory parrot on the shoulder?) and the day of swashbuckling fun included a swordfight demonstration. As a grand finale, the movie 'Pirates of the Caribbean' was enjoyed by all.

The annual Bowder Show Day was attended by other elders from Nicklin and McGowan Lodges and everyone enjoyed the visit from the entertaining Coastal Caring Clowns, which has become an annual part of Show Day. And most afternoons, Millicent the dog visits, and enjoys riding on the elders wheelie walkers and dancing for treats.

At the Coolum Waters Retirement Resort, trials of a Poolside Bistro Dinner proved very popular. An expected crowd of around 30 people quickly ballooned to 64, so the meal was held in the Clubhouse due to the large numbers. The next monthly dinner saw 96 people wanting to attend, so two sittings were held to cater for the huge demand. Weekly snooker games every Friday at the Clubhouse were very popular and also a great way for the residents to interact, with men from both the Care Centre and independent living units participating.



Coastal Caring Clowns and residents clowning around

At the Rotary Garden Village in Burnside, Voller Hostel hallways were always full of the sounds of music and laughter, especially when Harry the Golden Labrador, the new mascot, came to visit, ‘bringing warmth and joy to the hearts of many elders’¹⁸⁷ The village elders were very pleased with the addition of a new bus to take them shopping, to appointments and on trips.

Palmwoods Garden Village residents celebrated Melbourne Cup Day, Palmwoods style, with their own Palmwoods Cup, including morning races and a BBQ lunch. Residents then took part in a bizarre footwear fashion parade, where gumboots, sandals and thongs were the order of the day. Then it was down to the serious business of sipping champagne, wine and beer and enjoying some nibblies while watching the Melbourne Cup race.¹⁸⁸

Also a Sunday Soiree held every month, featuring Opera, Ballet and popular musicals brought ‘a little nostalgia back, to those wonderful days of live theatre.’¹⁸⁹ and was proved very popular. The activities certainly summed up the Palmwoods Village life, as described in the 2011-12 Annual Report ‘Village life at Palmwoods is an active and

enjoyable one. As the wide open driveways and pathways meander around the village, the green lawns and flowering shrubs beckon one to share in the tranquillity of our friendly village.’¹⁹⁰



Melbourne Cup merriment at Palmwoods Village

To assist Sundale Rehabilitation Centre clients who were unable to access transport to the centre, the addition of two new small buses, one of which was a 12 seater with a wheelchair lift, enabled clients to readily access rehabilitation services. A donation by the Friends of Sundale made possible the purchase of a new wheelchair, to enable carers to collect and return residents from their hostels, as well as the purchase of a Hydrotherapy plinth, to allow clients to lie unaided in the Hydrotherapy pool.

This is only a snapshot of so many wonderful examples of fun and caring – Sundale style.

Growing Pains

By 2011 the Eden Rehabilitation Centre at Cooroy had become one of Queensland’s leading private rehabilitation facilities. That same year, the lengthy process to choose a hospital provider for the Kawana Sunshine Coast University Private Hospital began. Ramsay Health Care had seemed the preferred choice of provider, but the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) then appeared to indicate that Ramsay Health Care would not be able to operate the new Kawana Sunshine Coast University Private Hospital as well as their other facilities on the coast, because this would make their market share too large. This was to have unintended, but good, results for Sundale, as we will see.

Other hospital operators then came to the Sunshine Coast to investigate acquiring some of the Ramsay Health Care assets. Many of the operators kept hearing about ‘this place called Eden at Cooroy’ and they contacted Sundale, to inquire whether the Eden Rehabilitation Centre was also for sale. Sundale’s initial reaction was that the

Eden Rehabilitation Centre was not on the market, but subsequently decided to at least investigate what the operators were offering. Whether to sell the Cooroy facility was considered in the context of Sundale's long term strategic objectives, as Sundale had always been aware that owning only one hospital was not really sustainable, with a 'sister hospital' at the southern end of the coast considered essential for long term viability.

The reliance on other hospitals for referrals was also getting more difficult, and the Eden Rehabilitation Centre had lost its major referral provider, the Sunshine Coast Private Hospital at Buderim, when it opened its own 27 room rehabilitation ward. Although the Eden Rehabilitation Centre survived this new competition very well and even grew with Noosa Hospital continuing to be a supportive referral service, the ability to self-refer was getting harder. And as a stand-alone small hospital, dealing with some health funds was also proving difficult.

Those hospital operators who inspected Sundale's Eden Rehabilitation Centre were most impressed with the facility. The General Manager of Westmead (a Sydney rehabilitation hospital), who had been involved in rehabilitation for many years, commented that Eden was doing some brilliant stuff.

The ACCC then appeared to amend its stance and Ramsay Health Care did not have to sell any of their facilities, but instead the ACCC accepted a change in the focus offered at their various facilities. Ramsay Health realigned the focus of their Caloundra facility to mental health and the Selangor facility to rehabilitation, and so these assets were 'off the table'. This made Sundale's Eden Rehabilitation Centre even more attractive and soon, approaches from around five hospital operators who wanted to buy Eden, were on the table for Sundale's consideration.

Thinking ahead as always, Sundale had also commissioned an independent Business Diagnostic Review to guide decision making into the future. The scope of this review was extensive and examined everything from the Strategic Plan, to management and governance. The review conducted a benchmarking comparison with other organisations in community care, residential aged care and retirement living and also identified potential suitable sources of business finance to enable the organisation to realise strategic growth objectives. The Business Diagnostic Review was received by the Board in August 2011.

Also in August 2011, the Commonwealth Productivity Commission Report on 'Caring for Older Australians' was officially launched by Prime Minister Julia Gillard, and acclaimed as a blueprint for future aged care. The Report found that over one million Australians were receiving aged care services and, although the range and quality of these services had improved, more needed to be done. Government subsidies for supported residents were grossly inadequate. Three-quarters of the

200,000 people in residential care in Australia needed full nursing home care. Yet the highest-funded person, who required complete care at Sundale, only received \$180 a day, compared with \$800 a day for a patient with similar needs in the Nambour General Hospital.

The 'Caring for Older Australians' Report signified a change to a more competitive aged care industry environment, using the argument that it would drive down costs and create more innovative and creative industry practices. However, Sundale CEO Glenn Bunney voiced an opinion that this had not worked for dairy, textile, and electricity generation privatisations, but instead resulted in either the loss of the industry or substantial increases in costs, especially in the case of electricity privatisation. Aged care operators were already struggling to manage because 70-80% of aged-care income was absorbed in wages, with another 8% going to overheads. Glenn Bunney also commented that superannuation funds would still not touch aged care as an investment, because of the low rates of return, but he was confident that social infrastructure funds could eventually fill the gap if appropriate reforms were instituted.

Glenn remarked that over-regulation had stifled industry innovation and creativity for years, and 'the reality of the aged care industry so far has been one of a constant threat of unannounced visits, expectations of an unreal world of 24/7/365 perfection and excellence without error, (or face) consequential and substantial penalties that threaten the very existence of the organisation.'¹⁹¹ Glenn predicted that the future for aged care 'will be a very different world.'¹⁹² He pointed out that much of the accommodation built two decades ago was increasingly being seen as undesirable by potential residents due to the age of many facilities, and cited as an example a reported practice by a New Zealand aged care business of building new aged care facilities opposite established aged care developments. This could potentially bleed the older facilities dry over time. New Zealand, Singaporean and Chinese interests were starting to enter the market, which greatly increased competitiveness. And finally, Glenn noted there was a growing shift away from the hospital 'bigger-is-better' model on which aged care was originally built, which is an important theme to be explored further as our Sundale story continues to unfold.

Sundale's environmental initiatives, called 'Sundale Green', were part of an ongoing process of sustainability. To reduce the water and energy consumption in the Sundale Laundry a 're-trencher tank' was installed. This reduced overall water consumption per machine, by saving the last two rinses of each wash cycle, which were then used as pre-flushes for the next washing cycle. Old machines had been gradually replaced, and with the last of the original 16 year old washing machines finally replaced in September 2011, all equipment in the laundry was no more than four years old, except for the Flat-work Sheet Ironer. The new washing machines

were certainly more efficient, reducing drying times in the dryers from 30-40 minutes to just 10 minutes.¹⁹³

The laundry washed an astounding record amount of 40,000 kg of washing in one month in October 2011, and this record was again achieved in January 2012. Over 20,000 kg of the record-breaking washing came from external sources, which was a testament to the success in obtaining external clients for the laundry.



Laundry staff taking a well-earned break

To reduce maintenance costs, as well as saving water, the fountains at the front entrance of Coolum Waters Retirement Resort were removed, and the area converted into an attractive rockery with a focus on native vegetation.

Continuing a commitment to embrace innovative technology, the Sundale Information and Communication Technology (ICT) team consolidated and virtualised the organisation's computer structure, and implemented a 'cloud computing' infrastructure platform. This resulted in a power saving of 66% for the computer systems, which saved \$40,000 per year at the electricity prices of the time. Sundale ICT also implemented over 147 improvement programs to help develop Sundale teams, systems and infrastructure into the 2011-12 financial year.

Sundale ICT was acknowledged and received accolades, nationally and internationally, as an innovative leader of ICT services. In a first for an aged care related organisation, Sundale ICT was used as a case study for a Disaster Recovery/ Business Continuity Planning and Wide Area Network Optimisation by an international IT company, Riverbed.¹⁹⁴ And in October 2011, Riverbed visited Australia to shoot a short video of Sundale ICT Senior Systems Officer, Lance Knight,

talking about the introduction of the Riverbed systems. Sundale ICT was responsible for 28 lines of business and 228 business applications which encompassed the Sundale organisation. Before employing IT optimisation, the Sundale ICT network had been likened to trying to 'push a tsunami through a straw', as 12 terabytes of data flowed daily through a much smaller 100Mbs link, which caused numerous network delays.

Sundale ICT was also among the finalists for the International Atlassian competition for deployment of JIRA, Confluence and Crowd products, which were software solutions to monitor and track performance in a project management environment. Sundale ICT was also a national winner and finalist across 4 categories, which was more than any other organisation nominated, in the national Information Technology in Aged Care awards (ITAC) and won the Best Implementation of the Year 150 to 650 Places/ Clients Award. Sundale was nationally recognised when Telstra used the organisation as a case study for a Telstra state conference. Sundale ICT received \$150,000 from a Telstra R&D (Research & Development) technology fund to help develop ICT solutions for Sundale elders, team members and clients.

Identified by their crisp blue Sundale volunteer shirts, the volunteers are an invaluable part of Sundale. The wonderful Sundale volunteers and team members were again honoured at an awards night attended by 208 people, with the following service awards: ¹⁹⁵ 55 people for 10 years of service; 23 people for 15 years of service; 11 people for 20 years of service; 6 people for 25 years of service; and 5 people for an outstanding 30 years of service.

Stuart Napier was one of the volunteers recognised for over 30 years of service. Stuart was a Sundale Board member for 33 years from 1978, Secretary for 28 years from 1983 and he remained an Apex representative for his entire period of service. Although Stuart resigned from the Board effective from the end of 2011, he remains an active and valued office bearer and member of the Friends of Sundale volunteer group.

Other recipients recognised for their service to Sundale over 30 years included Sundale hairdresser Eunice Krome, Sundale Nambour Site Manager Pamela Fox, and Sundale bus driver Jim Rook. These people are great examples of the community involvement and commitment that Sundale inspires in people.



Stuart Napier receiving an award for over 30 years of service to Sundale



Above Left: Eunice Krome, awarded for over 30 years of service to Sundale, with CEO Glenn Bunney

Above Right: Sundale bus driver Jim Rook awarded for the extra special ways he served Sundale for over 30 years

Suncoast Community Care had been the first to provide high care services for the Sunshine Coast community and the first to provide those services specifically for people suffering the effects of dementia. It was constantly growing and innovating with more than 320 locals from Noosa to Caloundra and into the Blackall Range hinterland receiving community care packages. Keeping up with technological advances in care, a specific ‘Community Care Software Package’ was sourced. The software had to be developed with, and tested by, the carers. As with any innovative system Sundale introduced, the software would take some time to be embedded into the daily processes, but would ultimately be of great benefit in enhancing care, as well as being able to integrate with the Sundale financial reporting software.

Another benefit to introducing the software, was empowering team members to use computers, as over 50% of the Suncoast Community Care carers (due to their age) were initially computer illiterate. The immediate results were very positive, with improvements to communication flow through the use of electronic means such as email. The use of iPads for recording client care information also continued, with all team members able to utilise basic tools. The use of iPads and the possibilities for other applications would increase in the future, perhaps even in ways current teams members could not yet imagine.



Above Left: Mobile Care using iPads **Above Right:** Suncoast Community Care moves back into the newly renovated former Rotary Village Community Centre, 2012

By mid-2011, Suncoast Community Care had doubled in size and outgrown using their allocated part of the Rotary Community Centre. Services were temporarily moved to Nunyara while renovations to Rotary Community Centre were completed. The Suncoast Community Care team moved back in on 12th December 2011. The refurbishments were the first part of the growth and expansion of Suncoast Community Care, with eventual plans for a Social Support and Functional Independence Centre, where clients and the community could drop in for a cuppa, watch movies or meet with friends. Suncoast Community Care also completed a snake-proofing program for all buildings, because although Sundale were creating a ‘Garden of Eden’, that was no reason to let the snakes in.



Above Left: Raised garden beds at Aloaka Lodge, 2012 **Above Right:** The popular Sundale Christmas Carols always get a crowd (picture from 2009)

The volunteers at Aloaka, Kilcoy, were busy during 2011, adding raised garden beds to Wattle Wing and the childcare centre, as well as giving the area behind the Banksia Wing a facelift. The Aloaka family of elders, children, volunteers, carers and families were together 'an eclectic mix which together made Kilcoy a unique service structure'.¹⁹⁶ They celebrated Christmas in style with a party for elders and their families. Aloaka off-duty carers, like all Sundale team members, were always willing to go that extra mile to pitch in with a special event and came to help at the celebrations with the set-up, serving, sharing and clean up. The party was a great success and everyone was looking forward to the next shindig.¹⁹⁷ Then just when they 'thought they could not party anymore.'¹⁹⁸ the Aloaka team members held the Aloaka Team Christmas Party downstairs in the We Rock! Childcare Centre, and a fun-filled time was had by all.

The popular Sundale Carols by Candlelight were again well attended by Sundale residents, team members, volunteers, families and members of the community. The 'arrival of Santa brought many cheers and lots of screaming – some from the children (and) glow sticks made lovely candles all glowing and being waved in the air.'¹⁹⁹



A colourful Christmas display inside McGowan Lodge, prepared by ex-team members Veronica and Lorraine, adds to the festive cheer. (Photo from 2012 display)

A colourful Christmas display in McGowan Lodge, which had become an annual tradition, was a highlight for everyone and added to the festive cheer. The display was set up by ex-team members Veronica and her helper Lorraine Stevens. Veronica had worked at Sundale for 27 years, including as a supervisor for around 20 years. Lorraine had also worked for Sundale for around 20 years, and had always helped Veronica with the displays. What had begun as a small effort to bring Christmas cheer to McGowan Lodge by putting three animatronics Christmas dolls in Veronica's office window, had grown over the years to involve a very colourful Christmas display which initially encompassed the lounge area, then grew into several other rooms. Even the hairdresser's window contained a colourful Christmas display. The decorations take a whole month to set up and another month to take down after Christmas, and are arranged differently each year. After being taken down, the decorations are stored

at Veronica's house and take up a whole room, as well as more space in the garage. This is another example of the enthusiasm and affection that Sundale team members have for the organisation and the elders, and demonstrates how, even after leaving Sundale many ex-team members, like Veronica and Lorraine, continue to serve in voluntary capacities.

The Sundale Administration team began a new tradition, by 'adopting a family' for Christmas. The first family chosen was a single mother with six children- two boys aged five and two years, and four girls aged six, 16 and twins aged 14 years.²⁰⁰ A basket of goodies for the family, made up from generous donations from many Sundale team members, was greatly appreciated by the family.

Living Longer, Living Better?

From 1st January 2012, nationally harmonised Workplace Health & Safety laws had replaced existing State Government Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) legislation. Under the new laws, Directors had legislated responsibility for ensuring that Workplace Health & Safety, including operational policies and procedures, were followed at all times. This substantially increased liability for all not-for-profit Directors, including of course the Sundale Directors.

By 2012, Government funding for residential care had fallen since 1997 to 40% behind the CPI.²⁰¹ The Living Longer Living Better Aged Care Reform Package (based on recommendations from the 'Caring for Older Australians' Report in 2011) was launched by the Commonwealth Government on 20th April 2012. The Commonwealth announced a ten year plan, calling it the most sweeping reform to aged care in 30 years.

The Living Longer, Living Better package announcement included \$1.2 billion over five years to address the critical shortage of aged care workers, \$1.9 billion to deliver better access to aged care services, \$80.2 million to improve links between aged care and the health system and \$192 million to support diverse care. Another \$268.4 million was committed to tackle dementia, with a new Dementia Supplement to provide \$164.4 million in financial assistance for people with dementia receiving home or residential care. Another element of the package was a program to encourage doctors to make earlier diagnosis of dementia, to assist with better treatment outcomes.

However, as Sundale President John Kleinschmidt noted, while funding for Living Longer, Living Better was announced at \$3.7 billion, this actually only included around \$577 million of new investment, and indeed fell short of the 'Caring for Older Australians' Report recommendations for a greater financial input by the Commonwealth Government. Instead a shift to a different approach to residential

aged care funding appeared to put a further onus on the aged care recipients, by requiring them to pay a larger share of the cost of their care.²⁰² As John commented, the announcement was really a lot of ‘smoke and mirrors’ because, instead of making the financial injections recommended by the Productivity Commission, the package actually managed to take money out of the aged care sector. He commented that ‘the spin doctors have yet again prevailed where policy matters more than substance’²⁰³ and that it was effectively little more than an exercise in shifting deck chairs on the Titanic, leaving real reform to another possible review in five years time.²⁰⁴ John also expressed concern that newly created draft legislation for a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) would overtake aged care reform as a key priority for the Federal Government. Although acknowledging the importance of the NDIS, he stressed it should not be at the expense of the aged care sector.

In a major bureaucratic shuffling exercise, the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for basic funding of Home and Community Care (HACC) services in all States and Territories except Victoria and Western Australia, from July 2012. A budget allocation of \$955.4 million was provided with \$75.3 million going towards an Integrated Home Support Program, coming into effect in July 2015. This would bring under one banner the previously fragmented home support services, which included the HACC program, the National Respite for Carers program, the Day Therapy Centres program and the Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged program.

The Commonwealth Government committed to increasing the number of community care packages nationwide, from 59,876 packages to 99,669 packages, within five years. Consumer Directed Care Community and Respite packages were also created, which allowed care recipients and carers to better tailor packages to suit individual needs, within guidelines established by the Department of Health and Ageing.

Means testing and contributions for care were to be changed, with a cap in costs for pensioners. Means testing would apply to assets, except the family home. Income testing would also apply, with pensioners continuing to pay only the basic fee. The Commonwealth capped the amount charged for nursing home care, regardless of financial circumstances, to a maximum of \$25,000 per year. A maximum of no more than \$60,000 was to be charged for a ‘lifetime’ of care.²⁰⁵

For the payment of accommodation bonds, ‘cooling off’ periods were introduced and payment methods for residents to pay accommodation bonds became available. A variety of options included paying with a fully-refundable lump sum, or rental style periodic payments, or a combination of both. This was part of the long-term Government policy to remove the distinction between high care and low care in aged care facilities. The number of residential aged care places was increased from 191,522 to 221,103.

And in a bid to encourage the building of new facilities, the supplement paid to organisations for each nursing home resident would increase from \$32.58 per resident per day to \$52.84 per resident per day from July 2014, provided the facility met a range of stringent criteria. However, it should be noted that an independent survey by Grant Thornton in 2011 had established that the level of capital payment required to meet the reasonable costs of construction was around \$72 per day, far greater than what was being offered by the Australian Government more than three years later.

As part of an Aged Care Gateway initiative, a 'My Aged Care' website and call centre to help people choose suitable aged care support services was to be launched by the end of the 2012-13 financial year,²⁰⁶ rather like the 'Concierge' service initiated by Sundale. Like the 'My Schools' website, it was controversial. Some aged care operators believed the proposal to include quality service indicators and to rate providers online was contentious, but Sundale welcomed the proposal.

The reforms would be implemented through the newly established Aged Care Reform Implementation Council, an independent body appointed by Government responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the progress of the reforms to the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing. An Aged Care Financing Authority was created to provide independent advice on pricing and financing and to protect aged care recipients from being exploited financially. A Strategic Workforce Advisory Group was tasked with the process of improving the aged care industry's ability to attract and retain carers.

Sundale CEO Glenn Bunney summed up the implementation of the Living Longer, Living Better reforms from an industry point of view:

“Rather than provide a sense of stability and confidence to the aged care industry the ‘small print’ associated with the regulations and legislative structure has left the industry stunned and bewildered. Whilst not announced in the reforms, which already included a transfer of \$1.2bn over five years of existing care subsidy funding to wage rates (effectively reducing the hours of care available to elders), the Minister also announced a further reduction of \$2.9 billion over four years in the overall Government subsidy levels. The political illusion of creating an industry environment in which providers would invest for the benefit of the increasing number of older Australians was rapidly dissipating. Aged care policy remained far too complex in substance, and headline grabbers by experienced spin doctors create the illusion of increased government spending and care for all – when nothing could be further from the truth.”

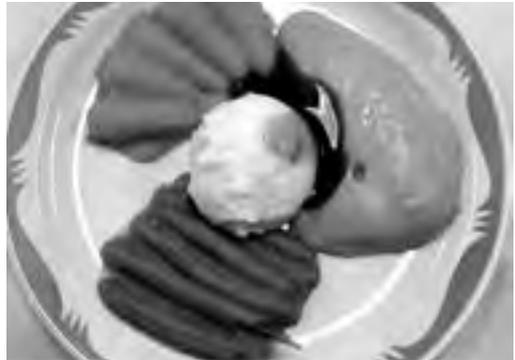
There was still a long way to go for these reforms to take effect. With an election due in 2013, the Living Longer, Living Better package implementation would come to naught if a Coalition Government were elected and decided to change these commitments.

On the State political scene, a stunning election victory with a massive majority by Campbell Newman and the Coalition had swept aside an unpopular Labor Government in March 2012. Many were predicting the same fate for the Commonwealth Labor Government, in the 2013 elections. (Indeed the 'election race' went into full swing by February 2013, after an election date was announced for September in an unusual political manoeuvre.

Setting Trends

One year after Sundale began investigating the concept, moulds for reconstituting pureed food were introduced to their elders. The moulds were based on those used at Perth's Osbourne Park Hospital, which demonstrated success in reducing food waste and improving customer satisfaction. Sundale elders certainly agreed.

In March 2012, Site Manager Trent Kelly moved from Coolum Waters Retirement Resort, where he had been Site Manager for 12 months, to the Rotary Garden Village. Trent had begun his career at Sundale, working in Sundale ICT. The new Site Manager for Coolum Waters Retirement Resort was Michelle Lutz, who was welcomed back by residents, as she had initially begun her career at Coolum as a carer, before working in administration and then management.²⁰⁷



Food moulds to make food look 'real' and inviting to eat were a 'real' hit with residents!

In June, an Eden Lifestyle Officer was introduced at the Coolum Waters Retirement Resort, to further enhance the quality of life for residents. A revamped program was launched, geared up to maximise events and happenings both at the resort and also in the community, including revolving displays and revised activities, with lots of impromptu fun.

The residents at Palmwoods Garden Village celebrated their 20th anniversary on 23rd June 2012 with a fun-filled Open Day, including a BBQ. Jean Hawkshaw, who had lived at Palmwoods the longest (since the opening 20 years ago) cut the anniversary cake, which was enjoyed by all. Jean Hawkshaw is active in many activities in the Village, including teaching aqua aerobics, and is described in the Wide Horizons publication as '...optimistic, resourceful, cheerful... still with a Yorkshire accent... (and even) taking up painting at the age of 67.'

July proved to be a very busy month for Sundale. The Board welcomed John Woodward, a consultant pharmacist, to his first meeting. Elizabeth Henley, a respected community advocate, allied health professional and member of Eden Rehabilitation Centre Board would also join the Sundale Board by September. Both of the new Directors demonstrated the type of expertise Sundale now looked for in taking Sundale into the future.

Sundale farewelled two of their long-serving bus drivers, who together had been driving Sundale elders for a combined period of 46.5 years – Jim Rook for 31 years and Peter Vanderpool for over 15 years. They were given a great send off with a party at Twin Waters Resort, featuring a cake with an icing drawing of a bus and the words ‘Happy Retirement’.



Above Left: Manning the BBQ for the Palmwoods 20th Anniversary Open Day on 23rd June 2012

Top Right: Long time resident Jean Hawkshaw cuts the Anniversary cake

Bottom Right: Farewelling great bus drivers with a night of fun

During 2012, around 16% of all Queensland’s private inpatient rehabilitation care was conducted at the Eden Rehabilitation Centre in Cooroy. This facility was licensed to operate 36 beds, and provided the full spectrum of inpatient, outpatient

and day therapy rehabilitation programs in specialities including Orthopaedics, Stroke, Musculoskeletal, Neurology, Reconditioning and Pain Management. As a not-for-profit organisation focused on helping people in the community reach their full life potential, all profits generated by Eden Rehabilitation Centre were reinvested back into enhancing the facilities and upgrading equipment for patient care.²⁰⁸

Ultimately, after investigating the offers from several hospital operators who had approached Sundale in 2011, a decision to sell the Eden Rehabilitation Centre business was reached. As Glenn Bunney had originally stated in 2008:

“Sundale acquired the Cooroy hospital in 2000 with a view to continuing to operate the hospital so long as it was viable. The initial business plan for Eden identified the opportunity, amongst other uses, to establish a first class rehabilitation facility. Eden has now, in my opinion, achieved that status. One need only read the regular stories in local papers telling of the sensational results for its patients to know that Eden is meeting a real community need, and a quick glance at its annual financial report confirms that it has indeed been a very sound financial investment for Sundale.”²⁰⁹

The Eden Rehabilitation Centre business was sold to Pulse Health Limited, with the sale going through on 12th July 2012.²¹⁰ Sundale however retained ownership of the land and buildings, which ensured a continuous income stream for Sundale, without any day to day operational costs. This was also an historic event, being the first time Sundale had sold an operating entity. Through the Sundale Rehabilitation Centre at the Sundale Garden Village, Sundale remained committed to offering rehabilitation services. In fact there were plans for an updated and expanded service to be built as part of the future redevelopment of the Nambour site. And so rehabilitation would continue to be an essential long-term component of Sundale’s commitment to providing essential services to the entire community, as indeed it had been from inception.

To celebrate the Olympic Games in London, Sundale held their own Olympics on 24th August 2012 at Sundale Garden Village - featuring clowns, karaoke, an animal farm, bungee trampolines, a giant slide and even a rock climbing wall. Games, including spin the chocolate wheel, knocking ducks off cans with a nerf gun, and a face painter, contributed to the fun atmosphere. A ‘dunk-tank’ was very popular, with people lining up for the chance to dunk Sundale team and Board members, including CEO Glenn Bunney and Corporate Services Officer Paul McDonald, all in good fun of course. The ‘Olympic’ games included three-legged races, ‘captain ball’, ‘backwards ball’, egg toss and catch, a tug-of-war as well as bed races. Free food and drinks on offer delighted the crowd and a stunning fireworks display rounded off a great day. The ‘Olympic’ winners were the team from Coolum Waters Retirement Resort.

On Wednesday 26th September the first sod was turned at the site of the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital, due to open in 2016. The project was Queensland's first public-private partnership in a public hospital. Queensland Health had entered into a contract with Exemplar Health to design, construct, finance and maintain the hospital buildings for the first 25 years. This would become a major hospital precinct with the addition of other health services including Ramsey Health's Kawana Sunshine Coast University Private Hospital. It was hoped that these new medical facilities would provide a significant economic stimulus to the region, given the decline of tourism and retail as economic generators since the GFC.

The Aloaka 'concept' of collocating aged and child care together at Kilcoy had been investigated by other aged care facilities, including Strathearn Aged Care from Scone, NSW, and aged care developers from Victoria and Tasmania. Glenn Bunney was delighted to confirm in 2012, that other aged care organisations would be following the Sundale model. The integration of childcare and aged care at Aloaka had proved to be a great success story for both children and elders and Sundale were very happy to share this trend-setting concept with others.²¹¹



Above Left: We Rock! Childcare 'goes back to wood' **Above Right:** We Rock! Childcare, a 'path to learning'

Aloaka Site Manager Alison Ham described how, in 2012, We Rock! Childcare had a lovely natural feel, and that. 'childcare, I'm very excited to say, is moving away from the plastic and artificial to a shift towards (being) more natural... eventually it had to happen as they realised you know the way we were bought up wasn't so bad after all.'²¹² Inside the centre were timber shelves and cane baskets. 'Going back to wood' Alison believed has had a wonderfully positive effect and seemed to calm the children. New soft artificial grass was also laid along a winding concrete path, with the children's toys kept on the 'grass' and people feeling 'morally compelled to stay on the path'²¹³

Alison purchased a porcelain jug and cups (from the local Op Shop) to encourage the children to handle delicate things with care and respect, and therefore ‘grow’ a generation which cares and respects.

We Rock! Childcare was an accredited kindergarten provider for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks per year, with a qualified teacher preparing children for their Prep school year. A regular column in the local Kilcoy newspaper provided updates on happenings at the centre, as well as giving tips for parents, which was also great way of giving back to the community.

Aloaka Lodge, with full occupancy in 2012, was the only aged care facility west of Caboolture, but a new facility was due to open at Woodford.

Exceeding Expectations

With dramatic reforms underway in the community care sector, Suncoast Community Care had to cope with a myriad of changes that included the Common Community Care Standards becoming the new body for Quality Reporting. Other HACC reforms resulted in divided funding between Commonwealth and State, with separate funding agreements for over and under 65 year old HACC clients. As outlined in Sundale’s 2011-12 Annual Report ‘all these influences have impacted at every level of our operations from the direct care to policy level. These are uncertain times which are full of hope and promise of new systems and mechanisms, to assist in our primary goal of caring for our elders in the community of their choice.’²¹⁴

The multiple strengths of the Sundale care community were under pressure from competition in the local area with the growing number of service providers. Sundale recognised that to continue to stand out as a leader in care, their delivery of care must be provided at a level which not only met, but exceeded people’s expectations. To ensure Sundale’s reputation in delivering excellent care was at the forefront of all care provisions, the use of Clinical Governance was adopted.²¹⁵

Clinical Governance was a concept which had originated in hospitals, and involved the allocation of specific clinical responsibilities to a person or team, to ensure what is done in a clinical sense reflected the latest evidence-based contemporary practice. Clinical Governance was a new form of governance for the aged care industry, and one in which Sundale was at the forefront. A Sundale Clinical Governance Team, headed up by the Care Director and supported by the Clinical Nurse Resource, worked with all Sundale team members to achieve the best possible practice in clinical service delivery.²¹⁶

In the 2011-12 financial year the team focused their attention on improving clinical documentation, through the implementation of software and hand held devices, and also education. Periodic assessments were implemented to identify areas which required additional support or education. Regular reviews of policy and procedure are a key part of delivering an effective and educational audit program for Clinical Governance, as well as ensuring the currency of the clinical practice.²¹⁷

Clinical documentation was also an essential part of the claiming process for care subsidy funding through the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI). In comparison with other aged care organisations, Sundale identified that their funding claims were significantly below the industry average. This meant that the delivery of care, without the essential appropriate funding, was stretching less and less funds to cover more and more services. Improved clinical documentation would help Sundale to optimise funding claims.²¹⁸

The Clinical Governance Team strengthened relationships with pharmacy suppliers, local medical practitioners and other clinical and age service providers, as well as the Nambour General Hospital. Bi-monthly meetings with elders and families, which enabled views to be expressed freely, were well received and attended. A Feedback Service to express views was also proving successful, with all suggestions, compliments and complaints followed up and responded to.

The 2011-12 Annual Report again acknowledged the tremendous value of team members who worked in Sundale facilities, saying 'It is much more than a cliché that our people are our greatest assets. Without the dedication and commitment of the members of our team, we would not be able to meet the needs of our elders and clients.'²¹⁹ The ability to attract and retain suitably qualified and experienced team members was a key part of Sundale's success, and although across the aged care industry there was a shortage of Registered Nurses (RNs) in 2011-12, Sundale were able to fill all their RN vacancies, and even increased the level of clinical support throughout the organisation. Within the context of an industry average staff turnover of 25%, Sundale maintained an average turnover of around 18%, which fell to less than 15% when employees who had worked less than one year and casual workers were excluded.²²⁰

Training continued to be an important part of Sundale's operations, with skills shortages an industry wide issue. A significant effort was placed on developing online educational opportunities, and with initial trials of e-learning receiving favourable feedback, the roll-out to all employees was planned for the 2012-13 financial year. Sundale had also worked with Jobs Network providers for several years to provide traineeships and on the job training opportunities for the unemployed, many of whom were long-term unemployed, and this had led to meaningful employment for many.

Sundale also encouraged their team members to ‘upskill’, with 151 employees (31.9% of Sundale employees) undergoing some form of training in the 2011-12 financial year. Ten team members completed a Diploma of Nursing in 2012, and another nine were due for completion in 2013. Team members undertaking Bachelor of Nursing degrees were supported by Sundale with relevant on the job experience, as well as flexibility with rosters to help them meet study obligations. There were 21 employees undertaking a Certificate IV in Aged Care, Community Care or Lifestyle and Leisure, and seven team members studying for a Diploma of Community Services. Another 24 were undertaking skill set training which focused on palliative care and dementia care; a further 39 team members completed Certificate III traineeships and six completed Certificate IV or Diploma-level programs. Traineeships in Aged Care, Childcare and other disciplines that provided related support were being undertaken by 22 team members. In recognising the need to have employees skilled not only in delivering care, but also possessing the expertise to manage the business into the future, five employees began a Frontline Management Program, and another seven began a Diploma of Management program.²²¹

The Sundale administration team handled an amazing 20,000 creditor invoices, received 6,000 reception inquiries and processed 50,000 items of mail during the 2011-12 financial year.²²² The implementation of the new Concierge service had proven popular, with over 250 new enquires received on units in all four villages.

Sundale Catering underwent major transformations with the redesign and implementation of a Food Safety Program across all sites, to comply with amendments to the Food Safety Act which took effect on 1st July 2012.²²³ The merging of all the catering teams in the Doolan Street campus into one resource also represented exciting opportunities and challenges.²²⁴

Following on from the impacts of storms and flooding rains, including during the Big Wet of January 2011, Sundale introduced emergency food kits for all campuses. The kits were equipped with seven days of food and water supplies, and contained recipes, ingredients and food preparation methods. This meant food could be prepared without the need for qualified chefs, using readily available prepared components.²²⁵ And still on the theme of being ready for any emergency that nature (or power failure) could dish out, the Sundale maintenance team in 2012 completed the installation of generators to all sites when the last generator was installed at Aloaka Lodge. Fuel sheds for storing diesel were built for each site, to enable fuel supplies to be housed as close as possible to the generators. The introduction of a Mobile Maintenance Team also proved a wise decision, with people skilled in carpentry, painting, glass and aluminium work and general handyman abilities working across a number of sites to complete renovations, including Bowder Lodge.



Just some of the wonderful, amazing volunteers within the Sundale family; the volunteers from Voller Hostel, Rotary Garden Village, Burnside (pictured 2011)

Sundale volunteers have been such an invaluable part of the Sundale family right from inception and as the numbers of residents continued to increase, so did the need for more volunteers. Volunteering Australia is the national peak body committed to advancing volunteering in Australia and promoting the activity of volunteering as one of enduring social, cultural and economic value.²²⁶ They released a State of Volunteering in Australia report in 2012, which showed an increasing expectation for regulatory workplace health and safety practices for volunteers. New National Standards for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-Profit organisations provided another layer of regulations for Sundale to deal with.

Sundale has a proud history of ensuring that everything possible is done to assist their valued volunteers but as President, John Kleinschmidt, summed up, the increasing emphasis on safety and workplace protection meant that volunteering in any capacity was: ‘No longer a simple matter, rather it has the appearance of moving toward constantly increasing regulation, (which is) simply a disaster in the making for organisations which welcome and place some reliance on volunteers. Notwithstanding, Sundale will continue to do all that can be done to ensure volunteering for the wellbeing of our elders and team members is no more onerous than it absolutely has to be under such changing regulatory standards.’²²⁷

The dynamic not-for-profit sector in 2011-12 contributed \$43 billion to Australian Gross Domestic Product and employed over 8% of the Australian workforce. And 4.4 million volunteers contributed a wage equivalent to \$15 billion.²²⁸

In December 2012, the Commonwealth Government set up a dedicated independent regulator, the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC), to more effectively regulate and audit the extremely large Australian not-for-profit sector. The ACNC aimed to provide a national approach to Not-for-Profit regulation, including cutting red tape and introducing greater transparency. In Glenn Bunney's words: 'Whilst lauded as a process to streamline administration in the not-for-profit sector, especially through a 'report once' principle, it has become obvious that this is most probably yet another layer of bureaucracy with which the sector is required to deal.'

Also in December, to promote the recognition of sexual and cultural diversity Australia-wide, the Commonwealth introduced the National Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Ageing and Age Care Strategy and a National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. It was certainly a sign of how much Australia had changed since 1963 when Sundale began.

As Sundale prepared to enter their 50th Anniversary year, the annual Christmas Carols were held on the 7th December, recording one of the largest turn outs and demonstrating the high regard the community holds for Sundale. The Carols were declared as one of the best ever, as 'fireworks wrapped up a wonderful evening with a beautiful display and light spectacular which seemed to go on for ages.'²²⁹

Meanwhile Sundale were again looking to the future and ways to enhance care of their elders, visualising technological innovations which would have seemed unbelievable to the first elders in 1963.

To Boldly Go

Embarking in Star Trek parlance to 'boldly go where no one has gone before'²³⁰ and following the idea that 'if it can be imagined it can be done',²³¹ Sundale was investigating ways to incorporate new technology, such as remote monitoring, into Nunyara House. The use of remote monitoring technology had become more affordable and could be easily retrofitted into existing buildings.

Rather than in a Big Brother type of way, integrated hi-tech monitoring can help to provide care without intruding on privacy. Advances in technology meant that (in 2013) it was possible for people to be greeted by a computer, which would then securely lock the door behind them. Other products available in their homes included the CloseBy Network, which uses sensors and software to send alerts to carers, whenever the elderly wearer gets into or out of bed, when they open the refrigerator or medicine cabinet, and when and where they move around the house. Alerts are sent if no activity is experienced for a specified period, or when a 'contact me' button is pushed by the wearer.²³² In Australia, another system, called the Quiet Care system,

performs much the same function as CloseBy Network, but emphasises being pre-emptive by learning the elderly wearer's everyday habits and sending alerts if the routine changes.²³³

Other possible applications for remote monitoring include the ability to help elders at risk of falling, due to poor mobility. A staggering 30% of people aged over 65 years are affected by falls.²³⁴ In tests, people wore sensors which monitored their gait and walking, detecting changes in movement which could predict the likelihood of a fall and subsequently alert carers if a fall was experienced. And the use of remote monitoring sensors for elderly people with dementia can utilise GPS technology to prevent or locate wandering elders.²³⁵

The uses for smart technology were definitely becoming more widespread. Products such as new hi-tech refrigerators could actually write a grocery list, shop online, and even suggest meals (which included the health benefits) and then cook the meal at a pre-set time. Some refrigerators even knew when food inside it was out of date. And there was the added ability to watch TV, surf the internet, and even leave text or voice messages on the fridge.^{236 237 238}

In 2012, in Osaka Japan, a trial began on the world's first high-tech nursing home, which featured robot teddy bears. Simply called Teddy, their purpose was to watch over elderly residents, monitoring response times by asking questions, as well as recording how long residents took to perform tasks. Teddy relayed information and alerted carers to any unexpected changes. Teddy and other trials of robot cats, and even a wombat, were well received by the Japanese residents.²³⁹

Financial constraints were still the only restrictions to implementing some of the above ideas, The future after an amazing half a century, the future for Sundale is an exciting and imaginative one. As Abraham Lincoln aptly stated, 'The best way to predict your future is to create it' and this has been Sundale's directive over the past 50 years,²⁴⁰ creating a rich history of innovation in caring for the needs of elders, against an ever changing backdrop of Government policy and regulation over five decades.

Sundale is indeed a unique and very successful community-run organisation that has survived and indeed innovated to earn its place in history as a leader in the national aged care sector. From the first stage of Nicklin Lodge in 1963, when 20 units and 3 cottages provided local aged care in Nambour, Sundale has adopted an ambitious expansion program on the Sunshine Coast and into nearby Kilcoy. Sundale teams and Directors are dealing with many irons in the fire at the same time – planning, building, modernising and looking ahead to future needs – whilst all the time making a great organisation even better in terms of enhancing day to day operations.

In moving towards the end of the story of Sundale's first fifty years and the celebration of a well earned Golden Jubilee in 2013, let us now review the state of play of the multiple Sundale projects that were underway as we enter the Golden Jubilee year. In so doing, we will light the path for the next fifty years, although, as we have seen, changes in Governments often usher in new policy directions. Also, both nature and the economy can throw some curved balls our way on that path of life.

Stocktaking

A review of statistics in 2012 is impressive in anyone's books. Sundale was providing 380 community care packages from Pomona to Caloundra and the Blackall Range. Over 473 employees were caring for 428 elders within 476 residential aged care places/beds in five unique sites.²⁴¹ More than 393 residents were living in four separate retirement villages. Occupancy remained high, with all facilities experiencing over 95% occupancy, except for the original Sundale Garden Village, where it all began fifty years ago, due to the age of the site.

From the old to the brand new, and proof that Sundale as an organisation responds to the needs of its community, was the new unit complex at 25 Doolan Street, which had been completed and was ready for rental by November 2012. The first tenants moved in and enjoyed their first Christmas in their new homes. It was an historic foray in the range of community services offered by Sundale. The complex consisted of 44 modern units featuring 38 two bedroom and 6 three bedroom units. Of these 44 units, 29 units were available under the National Rental Affordability Scheme. By Christmas 2012, of the 29 NRAS units available, 28 were rented, as were most of the general rental units, with a strong demand shown for the remainder. Units feature air-conditioning, as well as private open space, with terraces on the ground level and balconies on the upper units. There is a communal open space, with a pool, BBQ and outdoor shelter. Ample car parking spots are provided with carports, garages, a basement car park and 11 visitor car parks. And to encourage the use of bicycles, due to the close location to Nambour township, facilities for lock-up bicycle parking are provided, either in carports, garages or open private space.²⁴²

As part of Sundale's future direction in designing new accommodation options, it was proposed that the new development at Henebery Road, Burnside, could include designs for low cost units, possibly in a mobile-home style configuration. Sundale had finally received Council approval in June 2012, and proceeded towards a detailed planning design. Market consideration would ultimately guide when and how the project would proceed, with one major consideration that Henebery Road may need to temporarily house residents from the original Sundale Garden Village as that redevelopment proceeded. This would indeed be a remarkable and symbolic collaboration between the newest and the oldest Sundale facilities.

Like the original Sundale Garden Village, the second Sundale venture, Rotary Garden Village, built at nearby Burnside from 1983 onwards was also starting to show its age. Rotary Garden Village in 2012 consisted of 50 single bedrooms in the aged care facility and 80 units, comprising 22 single bed units, 56 two bedroom units and 2 three bedroom units. There were also 130 community care places, and approximately 200 HACC clients. Even at 96.6% occupancy, this was a historic low for the popular Rotary Garden Village, but with extensive renovations and major works in the pipeline, six units sold in one quarter and occupancies improved markedly within three months of the renovation work.



Sundale's latest housing NRAS project caters for the whole community, young and old (2012)

The Palmwoods Garden Village was now complete and housed Sundale's largest memory care unit (28 beds across two wings). There were 71 single low care beds in the aged care facility and 107 independent living units, made up of 79 two bedroom units and 28 three bedroom units. The average occupancy at Palmwoods was a high 97%. However, it was twenty years since the original residents moved into the first units and based on prospective resident feedback, an upgrade of some of the older units and the Clubhouse and pool area was on the agenda.

Due to Sundale's sound land banking philosophy over all of its years of operation, there were plans on the drawing board to build a separate (and as previously mentioned more 'upmarket') complex on land adjoining the Palmwoods Village. As Sundale President John Kleinschmidt explained, 'There are good reasons not to connect the two sites, traffic considerations, and the separation of pricing points (plus the fact that the) market has changed and is continuing to change.'²⁴³

A development application for the new Palmwoods development was lodged with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in July 2012, and a Development Approval Decision Notice was received a few months later. Final planning was scheduled to commence following finalisation of the Henebery Road, Burnside development.

With the hinterland area of the Sunshine Coast proving another desirable location for retirees, Sundale continued their land-banking philosophy, purchasing land at Montville. The long term plan is to provide continuity of aged care, for the hinterland communities.

In 2012, Aloaka Lodge at Kilcoy consisted of 40 beds, including a 10 bed secure memory care unit, with 28 community care places and the childcare facility. The average occupancy was an amazing 98.5%. Site Manager Alison Ham was very enthusiastic about the future developments for the Kilcoy complex. Concept plans had been developed and the Board commenced detailed planning for the first independent living units at Aloaka Lodge, to be built on the adjoining 1.2 hectares of land Sundale had purchased. A mix of two and three bedroom units was proposed to meet the market demand and changes to the Aloaka Lodge were also planned, not only to cater for the increasing demand for memory care, but also to provide larger rooms for mobility and manoeuvring hoists and other aids. A secure courtyard for alfresco dining and a sensory trail for memory care residents, the great Aussie BBQ facilities and a children's playground were also among the planned changes, making Aloaka a very special village in quiet rural Kilcoy.

Meanwhile, the drawn out process of obtaining development approval for Sundale's Tewanin site continued. Council elections had been held on Saturday 28th April, 2012. When the amended application was finally put to a meeting of the new Councillors in the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in September 2012, Sundale believed they had addressed and complied with all regulations regarding two remaining issues – flooding and the distance units were to be set back from the creek and road. Council unfortunately rejected the application.²⁴⁴ The rejection cited a 'high risk' of flooding from the nearby creek and argued that a proposal to use fill, to raise the site above the Q100 flood levels, was not consistent with the planning code of the former Noosa Council. This was perhaps ironic, considering another approval for an aged care facility on another flood plain, at Pacific Paradise was granted just weeks before.

During the Council debate, Councillor Jenny Mackay had sought to have Sundale's Tewanin development approved with a 75 metre buffer zone to the creek and provision for a flood emergency management plan. Councillor Tony Wellington stated that there was not enough demonstrated need for such a facility, despite Sundale previously identifying that the Noosa community had the second highest concentration of people aged over 85 years in Australia. However, Councillor Steve

Robinson pointed out that there was a demand for aged care in the area, and the fact that no other large parcels of land were available close to Tewanin. But it was all to no avail.

As Glenn Bunney commented:

“It has been said that the politics of de-amalgamation of Noosa from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council pervaded the consideration of the Sundale application, which is ironic given the extremely high level of support that the previous Noosa Shire Council had given to the concept and proposal. Sundale’s interest is in the establishment of social infrastructure for the Noosa community, and given that Council’s own independent study showed that the service offering was indeed required in the region, consideration on planning grounds will once again be determined through an appeals process ultimately if necessary to the Land and Environment Court. In reflecting upon a similar battle for Coolum, the more things change – the more they stay the same”

It was now ten years since the process had begun, but for Sundale it was another step along the way and strengthened the determination to press on and bring much needed aged care services to this part of the Sunshine Coast. Negotiations with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council continue, but a vote to decide de-amalgamation of Noosa, scheduled for 9th March 2013, was further complicating matters.

In 2012 the Coolum Waters Retirement Resort consisted of 50 single low care beds (including a 10 bed special care unit) and 64 independent living units, with 25 two bedroom and 39 three bedroom units. The average occupancy was 95.4%. Sundale had been the first to bring co-located aged care/retirement living to the local Coolum community when it opened its doors in 2003. Like the Tewanin development, it had not been without a protracted approval process. Now there was one final stage of the Coolum development remaining to be built but, as it had begun, so it continued, with many delays.

This final stage had faced more challenges when an application to extend onto the Coolum Touch Football Association grounds was rejected in 2010, by the newly amalgamated Sunshine Coast Regional Council, despite support from the former Maroochy Shire Council. The Coolum Touch Football Association was landlocked behind houses and when the final stage of Coolum Waters Retirement Resort was built, access to the Touch Football grounds would be cut off, although Sundale had allowed them access over almost a decade until the final stage was built.

There had been almost ten years of countless discussions between Department of Natural Resources, Coolum Touch Football Association, Maroochy Shire Council

and the Coolum Beach-Peregian R.S.L. Club. Sundale had believed that an agreement had been reached to relocate the Coolum Touch Football Association. A new million dollar Clubhouse, four football fields, an amenities block, drainage and irrigation to fields, with 80 parking spaces were to be built by Sundale for the club.²⁴⁵ Two years later however, in 2012, Sundale continued to try to resolve these issues, which were delaying the last stage of Coolum Waters Retirement Resort, in the same way they had persisted to get the first stage up and running. Deferring options for costly appeals and other legal options for the time being, Sundale concentrated on negotiating with the newly elected Council and relevant Ministers of the new State Government.

Looking towards the sunny north, at the invitation of the Gladstone Regional Council, Sundale had submitted an expression of interest and met with Board members of aged care service provider Bindaree, with a view to establishing aged care and related services in the Gladstone area. The concept did not eventuate, as Glenn Bunney explains:

“The Gladstone area has suffered the pangs of substantial and rapid growth... however the focus of Queensland Government investment has been centred upon the infrastructure associated with the pipelines and port installations, with no regard for the social infrastructure associated with such growth and dislocation. The Gladstone Regional Council continues to seek support and assistance from Queensland and Australian Governments to help in funding essential social infrastructure for its population. Sundale continues to work in the interests of that local community to ensure that appropriate resources and services can be made available into the future.”

An exciting project, and one that will take Sundale back to its heartlands at the same time that its fiftieth anniversary is marked, is the pending re-development of the original Sundale Garden Village in Doolan Street, Nambour. The application remained a matter of discussion with Council in December 2012, though with any luck the outcome should be known by the time Sundale celebrates its Golden Jubilee.

As President John Kleinschmidt explained, the Sundale design concepts for the new Nambour development are quite different, after investigating emerging trends in neighbouring New Zealand and considering other overseas trends. The developments in New Zealand featured three, five and seven storey buildings. People were buying apartments, rather than homes, hostels or independent living units and then buying in any required care services. The Doolan Street Nambour site, developed from 1963-88 was originally all single level construction, and if the re-development replaced like with like, it would cost Sundale up to \$50 million. This would make the project financially unviable. Instead Sundale were looking at opportunities to increase occupancies on the site, with modern three or five storey purpose designed buildings.

It was a sensible use for such a central location, close to hospitals and all facilities and one designed with the future in mind.

In 2012, average occupancy at Sundale Garden Village was only 80.9% due to age of the facilities, consisting of 264 beds with 166 single bedrooms, 49 high and low care double bedrooms and 44 independent living units with 14 bedsitters, 7 single bed units and 23 two bedroom units. In a truly historic event, as Sundale stepped towards their 50th anniversary year, the very first building constructed in 1963, the Nicklin Lodge, was closed in September 2012 to facilitate planning and re-development. Nicklin Lodge residents were welcomed into the McGowan and Bowder Lodges, as well as Voller Hostel over at the Rotary Garden Village.



A sign of the times in 2012, as the very first building constructed at Sundale Nambour, Nicklin Lodge, is closed to facilitate the exciting redevelopment of the site

After 35 years of service as a hairdresser at Sundale, Eunice Krome and her husband Allen took a well-earned break and travelled around Australia. While they were away, the planned closure of Nicklin Lodge took place, and Eunice recalled taking one last look around the Nicklin Lodge, which she described as very emotional ‘I was in tears....I spent a lifetime there...It was like a second home for me – so many beautiful memories’²⁴⁶ Sundale team members Eunice and Allen Krome have deep roots in the local area, both being part of the pioneer stock that established agriculture on the Sunshine Coast. Eunice works three days a week with two days based in the Sundale Rehabilitation Centre at Sundale Garden Village and one at Rotary Garden Village. She summed up what makes working at Sundale so special for her and Allen, saying ‘I love what I do, I love the job (and) you feel as though you have done something to help... I’ve met so many beautiful people... they get under your skin...they’re wonderful, their stories, their lives... you go home and the smile is still on your face.’²⁴⁷

The full circle had turned for Sundale as it prepared to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary by realising plans to re-develop the very first Sundale Village and progressively bring it into a brand new era. As always Sundale was moving with the times and doing its level best to meet community needs. It is interesting to recall the words of Ern Stollznow, (Sundale Administrator 1977-87, Sundale resident 1990-93 who wrote the first 25 year history of Sundale) at the book launch in 1988:

“I would like to make one confident forecast and it is this. When the next 25th anniversary book is written, and the next and the next, names will change, work practices and buildings will change, but the theme of this first book Sundale, the living tribute of a caring community – is something that will never change.”

Sundale Unlimited

Members and guests gathered at 6:30pm, on 23rd October, for the 2012 Annual General Meeting at the Sundale Garden Village. It was held in the Chapel – a venue that had been at the heart of Sundale’s important ceremonial occasions since 1988, marking transitions in life and celebrating multi-denominational faith.



Above Left: Sundale Chapel lit up for 2012 AGM
Above Right: Residents gather in the Chapel for the 2012 AGM

John Kleinschmidt, President since 2006 and Board member for 26 years, welcomed those assembled and outlined the important business of the evening, which included several resolutions requiring members' approval to finalise changes to Sundale's Corporate Structure. This process had been moving along like a glacier for more than five years, but an end was now firmly within sight. The delay had largely involved waiting for the Queensland Government to enact legislation so the Sundale organisation would not be financially penalised by the proposed change to their legal structure. The legislation was finally introduced to the Queensland Parliament on 24th August 2011. When presenting the Bill, Deputy Premier, The Hon Paul Lucas had '...noted the limitations and unnecessary expenditure caused to organisations through the lack of these changes.'²⁴⁸

When Sundale Garden Village had originally sought a legal structure in the early 1960s, it became incorporated under the now old-fashioned Letters Patent within the auspices of the Religious Educational and Charitable Institutions Act 1958. From an organisation founded on the generosity of the community and dependent on fundraising, Sundale had become a multi-million dollar enterprise. Sundale had committed to moving forward with the times and members had previously agreed to the transition to a not-for-profit company structure in 2007. However, the commitment to remain community based and returning surplus back into new and improved facilities, rather than dividends to shareholders, remained strong after half a century.

At the AGM, all the elements were in place to complete the transition to a Company Limited by Guarantee. Because it had taken several years, Sundale had operated in the interim period, by consent from Apex and Rotary, with a reduced number of Board Members. Although the previous Constitution, adopted in 2007, was basically sound, it required some minor amendments because of ensuing changes in other legislation.

The AGM passed all the resolutions unanimously, including a proposal to limit the number of Sundale members to a combined total of 150 Ordinary and Life members. Another amendment allowed Sundale AGMs to take place within five months after the end of the financial year, instead of being constrained to holding the AGM in October each year. Perhaps the most important and final resolution that members embraced was the name of the new Public Company Limited by Guarantee.

Whilst the name Sundale Garden Village had very much reflected the vision of the founding fathers in 1963, the name chosen to take the greatly expanded organisation into the next fifty years was Sundale Ltd. Some suggested that it really should become Sundale Unlimited – as indeed the caring for community now embraced aged care, child care, rehabilitation, in-home care and affordable housing, and who could image what new and innovative directions Sundale might take in the next fifty years. It was indeed unlimited!

The goal of the Board was to fully implement the new corporate structure by 30th June 2013 and symbolically the new legal name would take effect in Sundale's Golden Jubilee year, from 1st July 2013. From this time onwards, Sundale Directors would also receive payment for the first time in Sundale's history, reflecting the enormous level of responsibility and liability of Board members, and acknowledging their expertise, in making an immeasurable contribution to the organisation and the community.

A clear principle of Corporate Governance is that the Board sets policy and budgets and monitors compliance and performance. Sundale had in fact been operating within the framework of good corporate governance, having developed its first Strategic Plan and Corporate Governance Plan more than a decade ago. The Strategic Plan sets the direction for the next five years, with both documents reviewed annually by the CEO and the Board and amended or updated as required. Interestingly, the time period of the updated Strategic Plan developed in 2011-12 covers the period up until 2016-17, which corresponds to the time period outlined by the Commonwealth Government in their response to the Productivity Commission report.

In his President's Report, John Kleinschmidt painted a picture of the difficult economic times, saying that:

“The boom times leading up to the GFC and subsequent devaluation of equity markets and real estate are now a distant memory, but the impacts live on. Indeed some commentators speak of the continuing post GFC struggle for sustainable recovery and ongoing future economic uncertainty. Our industry, like most others, is operating in a very competitive market place with every aspect of survival and growth a struggle.”²⁴⁹

In reviewing the 2011-12 financial year, CEO Glenn Bunney reflected that although Sundale produced a \$1.92 million surplus for the year, it was not as significant in terms of a return on income and money spent in comparison with previous years. This was due to a combination of circumstances, including reduced occupancy rates in the retirement villages, lower than anticipated Government care subsidy levels and the increased costs of staffing, insurances and utilities (water, gas, electricity). By the 2011-12 financial year, staffing costs had reached \$20 million. The investment in the new software for the Suncoast Community Care had been another major cost, demonstrating that although technology can provide amazing benefits, the expense is also significant. The development of the apartment complex at 25 Doolan Street had also involved considerable financial outlay for construction, but with most apartments rented out, it would start to return an income.

Sundale's debt free philosophy had stood the organisation in good stead but with interest and dividend income declining both domestically and internationally, it was

becoming more challenging to retain a significant buffer against another financial downturn. Glenn Bunney explained, in his CEO's Report, that Sundale finances are operational (the day to day activities) and non-operational (investment and interest income), saying.

“It is critically important that we are able to perform fiscally at both levels, otherwise we would end up with an unsustainable cross-subsidisation process. It is also necessary to ensure that should another GFC strike, we would be able to continue to produce a financially responsible and sustainable outcome excluding investment income. This is but one element of what is monitored by the Board.”²⁵⁰

It is by now well known that Sundale CEO Glenn Bunney is no fan of what he describes as ‘multiple bureaucratic silos impacting across our business – each of them isolated from the next and creating duplication and contradiction in much of their reporting and accountability requirements, absorbing an increasing proportion of care funding.’²⁵¹ But after more than 15 years as Sundale CEO, Glenn agreed that ‘one thing which is always gratifying about this job is that my customers are never far away and you get to meet some amazing people... it is always challenging.’²⁵²

Glenn further suggested that “anyone within our industry who waits for politicians and bureaucrats to come up with the answers deserve the outcome they get. Politicians and bureaucrats will always be looking in the rear-view mirror; trying to work out how they best cover their respective derrières with their next decision. It is up to us as providers of accommodation and care services for older Australians to be close enough to our customers and our community to understand and in many ways, pre-empt, future service profiles, and deliver them. It is unreasonable for us to expect anything different – innovation and vision is an anathema to the very definition of bureaucracy.”

Beginning the Next Fifty Years

A statement from the 1990-91 Annual Report, fittingly describes the future for Sundale:

“Sundale, over the years, has been like the great oceans of the world with all their associated tidal surges and their ebbing and flowing. At this very time, we must be in the Christmas period of Sundale's tidal year for one can't help but sense the nearness of a “king” tide.”

Albert Einstein once said that the definition of insanity is continuing to do the same thing in the same manner and expecting a different result. In launching Sundale Ltd for the next 50 years, the Board took the opportunity to re-brand. This was a major

transformation for the organisation and one that would symbolically carry it into the next fifty years. Sundale sought direction and conducted focus groups with residents, industry and community.

Sundale was literally a household name in the 1970s when the Nambour area had a population less than 10,000 and community fundraising was underway to build the first Sundale Garden Village. Moving into the second decade of the next century – well, things had changed – so how did people perceive Sundale in 2012.

Sundale now operated retirement villages, residential care hostels/lodges and care centres in five separate locations at Nambour, Burnside, Palmwoods, Kilcoy and Coolum Beach and in-home care services from Kilcoy and across the Sunshine Coast. Sundale was well known for its rehabilitation services through the grand success of the Eden Rehabilitation Centre at Cooroy and the Sundale Rehabilitation Centre at Nambour. Sundale even operated a child care centre and had branched into affordable housing. The family had grown so large and spread out – was it still seen as a family?

The results of the focus groups and market research showed resoundingly that the Sundale name was identified as a stable organisation with high credibility and financial integrity. There was a 'strong sense of place' and the residents and others associated with the various Sundale campuses did indeed identify themselves as part of the Sundale family, which coined a new word 'Sundaleans'. Sundale was indeed a brand to be proud of and was therefore an important part of any new re-branding.

The real community ethic of Sundale that shines through in its fifty year history sets it apart from purely commercial operators, keeping its volunteer heart and lungs strong and connected to community through service to others.

The Board commissioned advertising and marketing consultants *dtb*, which subsequently identified a number of options for re-branding. The Board decided to re-image the Sundale brand by strengthening the name Sundale and adopting a 'branded house' marketing approach. This would mean that, in the future, the name 'Sundale' would be prominent on all Sundale facilities and services. This would also allow Sundale to promote the breadth of their services to the public, including Suncoast Community Care, which some members of the community were unaware was a Sundale entity.

Precise details of an exciting new marketing approach, including a new logo, were planned to be finalised in time for the 50th Anniversary. Whatever the outcome, it was certain that the name 'Sundale' would be enhanced and live on well into the future. The special place Sundale once held as a community benefactor would be revived and emphasis placed on the community basis of the organisation. Building communities had been Sundale's core business for fifty years and would conceivably be its future for the next fifty years.

Sundale Patron, Sir Clem Renouf, had turned ninety-one on 19th April, 2012 and was living on the Gold Coast. It was fitting, due to his extensive involvement in Sundale from its very beginnings that Sir Clem Renouf would be the third and last Patron for Sundale, because the new corporate structure of the Sundale organisation no longer required a Patron.

In 2012, there were approximately 1,850 retirement villages in Australia, with 13% of these in Queensland. And 40% of those aged care facilities were operating at a loss. The 'ageing in place' Government policy direction had certainly contributed to the fact that fewer than 5% of Australians aged 65 years and over were living in a retirement village, with 73 years being the average age for moving into a retirement village. Yet the ageing of the actual care facilities across Australia was also a growing problem, with 40% of facilities over 20 years old, 30% between 10-20 years old and only 26% less than 10 years old.²⁵³

Further evidence of the effects of ageing infrastructure of some nursing homes had come in November 2012, when several nursing homes operated by the Queensland Government faced a shake-up. Of the 30,000 people in residential aged care in Queensland, around 5%, or 1500 people, were in State run nursing homes.²⁵⁴ The announcement of some closures of State nursing homes was met with public outcry. The reasons given for the closures were that State nursing homes contained ageing infrastructure and the 'impractical' financial outlay required to comply with regulations for fire, safety and aged care accreditation standards. The new State Government defended the closure decisions, stating it was in line with a previous Labor State Government policy, from a 2005-06 report, which recommended the State Government exit aged care, given the small percentage of State nursing homes compared to the private and not-for-profit sector.²⁵⁵

The long talked about crest of the Baby Boomer wave is also still ahead for Australia and the magnitude of the impacts of this future ageing population is huge. In 2012, there were 5 million Australians aged over 55 years. This is predicted to rise in the ensuing 40 years to 11.5 million people when one third of Australians will be aged over 55 years, and close to one quarter will be aged 65 years and over.

An article in the Courier Mail highlighted the issue, stating that an extra 90,000 new age appropriate dwellings would have to be built every year to provide appropriate 'age-friendly' accommodation to cope with the demand. However a more realistic target was considered to be only 15,000 new dwellings each year, because some people could not move into more appropriate accommodation (due to financial constraints and other reasons) and many more were choosing to stay at home and receive in-home support. But looking at the Baby Boomer wave ahead, analysts believed that in 2012, the market was grossly undersupplied with only 3,500 to 4,250 new retirement dwellings built on average each year during the previous decade.²⁵⁶

The need is clear, just as it was in 1963 when Sundale was formed to meet the demand for aged care facilities in the Nambour area which was then the centre of the embryonic Sunshine Coast. Through five decades of relentless change and through the dedication of more people that could possibly be mentioned in this book, Sundale has responded to community need and has invested to meet the future needs of a much more diverse community. President John Kleinschmidt aptly sums up the commitment that continues to drive everyone associated with Sundale.

“Sundale will continue to do what we can to provide facilities for the community, (because after all) it’s the community need that drives us... the aged care industry has tightened so much in the past ten years and is continuing to tighten... we have to do things smarter to survive. We’re here to make sure that Sundale survives and regrettably there are costs to that...but Sundale will never lose sight of its most important element, the elders.”²⁵⁷

As Sundale celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, it is time to reflect on the past – the changes Sundale have seen to the Sunshine Coast and beyond, the technological advances and the ageing population across Australia. The need for Sundale is greater than it was in 1963. The organisation is strong and well positioned to carry on for another fifty years. But more than that, Sundale is dedicated to creating caring communities and importantly providing that continuum of aged care that other more profit-motivated operators avoid. Sundale today is a diverse organisation that provides services literally from child care to aged care with a mission to remain affordable and community driven.

Congratulations to all who have been involved with Sundale from 1963 to 2013 and in celebrating a well earned Golden Anniversary, let us look towards the next fifty years of creating caring Sundale communities.



Sundale Board in 2012-13

Sundale Board

John Kleinschmidt, President	Local Government Management / Small Business
Ross Jackson, Vice President	Real Estate / Small Business
Brenden Brial, Treasurer	Banking - Owner / Manager
Dennis Donovan	Accountancy
Simone Pearce	Solicitor
Elizabeth Henley	Physiotherapy / Practitioner & Educator
John Woodward	Pharmacist

Executive Management Team

Glenn Bunney	Chief Executive Officer
Paul McDonald	Corporate Services Officer
Matt Sierp	Chief Operations Officer
Morag Oakley	Care Director

Sundale - Service in Office

Patron

1961-78	Sir F. Nicklin K.C.M.G., M.M., LL.D.
1978-2000	E.O. De Vere O.B.E.
2000-2013	Sir C.W.B. Renouf A.M.

President

1960-78	J.D. Grimes M.B.E.
1978-85	W.H. Robinson
1986-2006	G.H. Chapman
2006-	J.K. Kleinschmidt

Vice President

1960-73	N. Parry M.B.E.
1973-78	W.H. Robinson
1978-83	R.S. Grace
1983-86	G.H. Chapman
1986-90	G. Robertson
1990-2006	J.K. Kleinschmidt
2006-	R. Jackson

Treasurer

1964-87	Sir C. W. B. Renouf A.M.
1987-2000	R. Sellars
2000-2001	K. Thomson
2001-2006	A. Hocking
2006-2008	L. Ash
2008-	B. Brial

Secretary

1961-63	C.A. Day
1963-64	R. Sherwell
1964-66	R. Wilson
1966-68	G. Ralph
1968-71	R. Bartholomew
1971-77	G. Baker
1977-83	G.H. Chapman
1983-2011	S.D. Napier

Sundale Committee/Board Members

Pre 1963 J.D. Grimes, R. Charlton, Sir C.W.B. Renouf A.M., I. Hayne, P. Richardson, N. Parry, C. Day, K. Saunders

Years served	Name	Representative:
1963-78	J.D. Grimes	Community
1963-65	R. Charlton	Community
1963-87	Sir C.W.B. Renouf A.M.	Community
1963-66	R. Wilson	Apex Club of Nambour
1963-64	B. Sherwell	Apex Club of Nambour
1963-65	I. Hayne	Apex Club of Nambour
1963-73	N. Parry M.B.E.	Apex Club of Nambour
1964-68	G. Ralph	Apex Club of Nambour
1965-78	D. Corbett	Apex Club of Nambour
1966-85	W.H. Robinson	Community
1966-88	R. Bartholomew	Community
1968-77	G. Baker	Apex Club of Nambour
1971-75	S. Scott	Apex Club of Nambour
1974-75	M. Lindsay	Apex Club of Nambour
1975-83	R.S. Grace	Community
1976-2005	J. Scott	Apex Club of Nambour
1978-2011	S.D. Napier	Apex Club of Nambour
1982-2001	D. Clarke	Rotary Club of Nambour
1982-83	C. Grimes	Rotary Club of Nambour 76
1982-99	G. Littler	Rotary Club of Nambour
1982-96	R. Garrett	Rotary Club of Nambour 76
1983-96	M. Lindsay	Apex Club of Nambour
1983-90	G. Robinson	Rotary Club of Nambour 76
1986-	J.K. Kleinschmidt	Community
1989-2003	R. Dunn	Community
1990-2001	K. Thomson	Community
1996-2008	D. Fingleton	Apex Club of Nambour
1996-97	L. Mallett	Rotary Club of Nambour 76
1998-2000	P. Crosby	Rotary Club of Nambour 76
1999-2006	A. Hocking	Rotary Club of Nambour
2000-	R. Jackson	Rotary Club of Nambour 76
2000-02	H. King	Community
2001-08	L. Ash	Rotary Club of Nambour
2002-05	H. McVean	Rotary Club of Nambour 76
2002-04	D. Whittington	Community
2004-05	J. Moussa	Community
2005-10	J. McKay	Community
2006-07	J. Harris	Rotary Club of Nambour 76
2008-	D. Donovan	Rotary Club of Nambour
2008-	B. Brial	Community
2011-	S. Pearce	Community
2012-	E. Henley	Board appointment
2012-	J. Woodward	Board appointment

About the Authors

Elaine and Inga Green are a mother and daughter team sharing a love of history and the written word.

Elaine Green (Bachelor of Arts, Sydney University) is the author of: *Green Legends: People Power on the Sunshine Coast*; *Maleny: an Alternative History*; and *Maleny Credit Union: Making Money Count* She has also written chapters in *The Blackall Range Landholders Guide*, published by Barung Landcare and *Walking on the Wilder Side... in the Conondales*, published by the Conondale Range Committee and edited *Perfect Parents: Perfect Children* by Dr Bob Jacobs and *Earth Dreams Magic: a Journey through the Blackall Range region*.

Elaine has lived in the Sunshine Coast region since 1979 and enjoys bringing contemporary history to publication for future generations. She served as a Maroochy Shire Councillor from 1991-94.

Inga Green has a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Historical Studies and Creative Writing from the University of the Sunshine Coast. Inga grew up in Yandina, so Nambour was 'her town' and she has always considered Sundale Garden Village to be an integral part of the fabric of Nambour. Inga was Editorial Assistant and also wrote creative historical stories for *Earth Dreams Magic: a Journey through the Blackall Range Region*. She has participated in and supervised projects training participants in oral history to record some of Maleny's pioneer history. With Timeline Heritage consultancy, Inga has also prepared the *Deception Bay Heritage Trail Brochure* and the *Maroochy River Foreshore Historical Survey Report*.

Together, Inga and Elaine have created historical displays for Maleny Wood Expo, worked on Centenary of Federation community celebration projects and produced a Cultural Survey of the Noosa, Maroochy and Mooloolah Rivers which included oral histories, cultural mapping and a history of the three rivers (with historian Berenis Alcorn).

Thank you Sundale for the opportunity to work on this great project to honour a special community organisation and celebrate an important fifty years of local history.

Elaine and Inga Green

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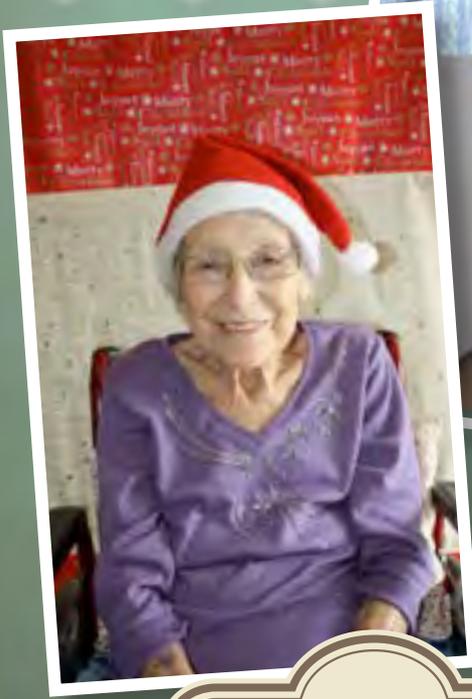
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