



Inside Lyndoch Living and why we need to be worried

Description



Just weeks after the resignation of then Seymour Health CEO Doreen Power, a record crowd of more than 300 people turned out to a public meeting held in Seymour to address the many troubles of the hospital.

Carol Altmann – The Terrier

This Lyndoch Living story has gone to places that I never expected it to go and that includes wading into the work history of CEO Doreen Power which, to be frank, is why I am so troubled by what is unfolding here.

I will write more about Ms Power's back story in the near future, but for now I just want to lay out the context for my concern and why I am latching on to this story for the long haul.

In the seven years before Ms Power became CEO of Lyndoch in December 2014, she held three senior positions:

First as CEO of Seymour Health for almost five years before [resigning in May 2012 in the face of a virtual uprising](#) by the small town of 7000 people.

Then as CEO of Plenty Valley Community Health for less than two years, before an interim CEO was appointed in December 2013.

And, lastly, working briefly as Director of Nursing at Tweddle Child and Family Health Service until that role was taken over by another person in February 2014.

I have spent many hours researching and talking to people about Ms Power's time at Seymour and Plenty in particular and a disturbing pattern has emerged, one which I believe is being replicated at Lyndoch:

- a culture of bullying and dismissal**
- extremely low staff morale**
- a compliant board or attempts to create one**
- an impact on residential care and services**
- a culture of secrecy and a lack of transparency**

Journalists, I can tell you, don't have either the time or inclination to go digging into people's work history unless it is relevant to a story unfolding now.

Ms Power's back story is absolutely relevant and it is why I am committed to writing all that I know – based on a huge amount of research and dozens of interviews – because *you* need to know.

We need to know because Seymour Health and Plenty Valley Community Health, in particular, are the red flags.

Both took years to recover.



The opening sentence of the chair's annual report to Plenty Valley Community Health, the year after Ms Power left the organisation. Ms Power was less than two years in the position.

Thanks to your help, I am going to pick apart what is happening at Lyndoch – all of it – because Lyndoch was set up by the community, to care for some of the most vulnerable in our community. Full stop, end of story.

Over the coming weeks, I am going to write about:

where Lyndoch is heading, its priorities, the breaking down of resident care, its venture into building and running a commercial medical clinic, who is paying for what, who is running what, who is in charge of what, whether Lyndoch is still primarily a charity and public benevolent institution, how the board is handling complaints, the change of the Lyndoch constitution, how the board is chosen, how the public can become members, the lack of transparency around its full financials, its support for gambling via a horse race, other sponsorship deals, potential conflicts of interest, who is involved in the new company Lyndoch HealthCare, and anything else worthy of forensic examination.

I will also be telling you much more about Ms Power's time at Seymour Health, and Plenty Valley Community Health, and explore how she became employed by Lyndoch.



Lyndoch CEO Doreen Power having won the inaugural Aged Care CEO of the Year by Australian Healthcare Week awards in 2019. Lyndoch chair Kerry Nelson and Director of

Nursing Julie Baillie also attended the Sydney event. Image: Lyndoch Living.

It's going to be a long, slow haul, but it is an essential one.

It's going to be tiring work, but we have done this before, you and I – the terriers and The Terrier – and we know we can make a difference.

We can be a voice for the workers (past and present) and the residents and for the Lyndoch we know and love, and together we can step up to where the majority of the board seemingly refuses to go.

If there is one thing I have learnt from my research around Seymour and Plenty Valley, it is that we need to start now.

Strap yourselves in and on we go.

More soon.

If you would like to support the work of The Terrier, please consider throwing something small in the tip jar.

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