



Lyndoch: champagne at the races, but no sheets and towels

Description



Carol Altmann – The Terrier

If there was ever a picture of how Lyndoch Living is losing touch with its priorities, it is this one.

This is a linen shelf that should be stacked with towels, sheets and face washers that is almost empty half way through a shift.

This is allegedly not unusual, despite Lyndoch – a charity – getting geared up to spend millions of dollars to build a “super clinic” on its Hopkins Rd site as part of a \$100 million masterplan.

Unbelievably, some nursing staff are cutting up old towels to use as flannels for showering and freshening up residents – sorry, they are now called *consumers* – rather than rely on the back-up of wet wipes.

Other staff are hiding linen on Fridays so they have enough towels, sheets and face washers to get through the weekend.

Has it really come to this, you ask? Yes it has, and we need to know about it.

Lyndoch – a charity – has also just signed on to again sponsor the Grand Annual Steeplechase (at a cost of what, \$70,000? \$80,000?), yet a machine used to pulp cardboard urinal bottles has been out of action for months.

This means the cardboard bottles are carried by nurses across a dining room to another machine for disposal.

These are just some of the cracks that start to appear when [a short-staffed system is under rising stress](#), and, my word, we need to know about it.



Lyndoch board member (and Warrnambool City Councillor) Sue Cassidy and Lyndoch CEO Doreen Power in the Lyndoch

corporate tent at the 2019 May Races. Image: Lyndoch Living FB page.

In recent years Lyndoch has somehow lost sight of its core business, which is caring for the aged and infirm both in the nursing home and in-home care.

To most residents, this means tasty, nourishing food, having someone to talk to, and being cared for by nursing staff with the time, support and full resources to do their jobs properly.

This should be the number one and *only* priority for any aged care home, especially Lyndoch.

Lyndoch, we need to remember, is a not-for-profit, benevolent, charitable organisation that was set up more than 60 years ago by the Warrnambool community for the community.

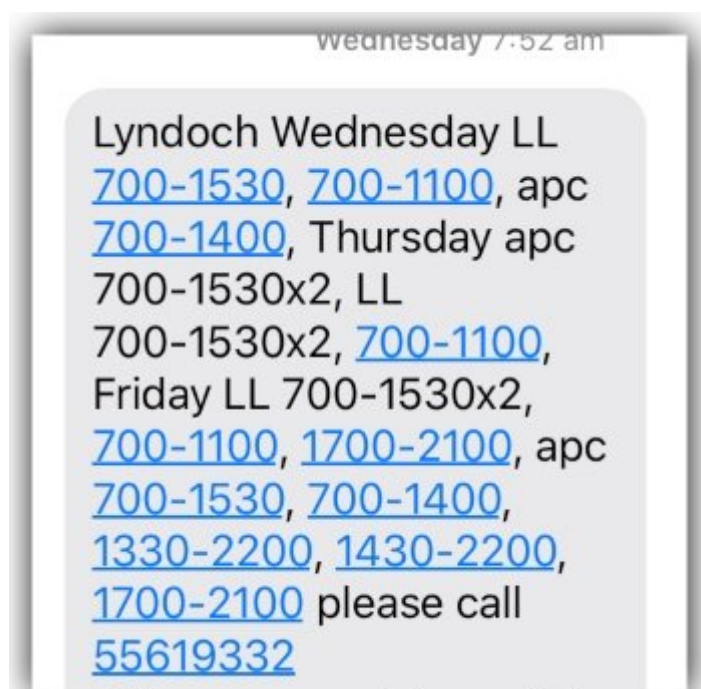
We ultimately own Lyndoch, but it is run by a board on our behalf who, in turn, hire the CEO.

Lyndoch has plenty of money to fulfil its core business, receiving almost \$30 million last year in government funds and another \$6.1 million from client fees, with net assets worth \$51.2 million.

You would think that every dollar would be directed toward the care and comfort of residents, including hiring and keeping quality nursing staff who are paid well, treated well and given all the resources they need to do their jobs well.

But no.

Instead, as I wrote last week, the staff [are run off their feet](#) and even when they do the best they can – like cut up towels for face washers – it is not enough.



Roster shortages inside Lyndoch Living from last week.

At the same time, the Lyndoch board and CEO Doreen Power are pressing on with a \$100 million masterplan, including borrowing money to build a multi-million dollar medical clinic on site for GPs, dental services and a chemist that nobody has proven is wanted or needed.

And at the same time, the number of admin staff at Lyndoch – a charity – has ballooned in the past three years from 37 to 59, with many having titles straight out of an episode of *Utopia*:

Director of People and Resilience; Social Inclusion and Entrepreneurial Manager; Operational Support and Improvement Manager; Project Manager Safety and Wellness.

All of those soapy titles and yet the [culture is turning toxic and staff morale is sliding to rock bottom](#).

And then there is a revolving door of consultants who, between them, cost thousands for their expert advice.

I wish I could tell you exactly how much is being spent on consultants, but Lyndoch is yet to release its full financial figures and, [given its new-found secrecy](#) around such things, I doubt we will find the answers there.



Lyndoch Living CEO Doreen Power and Lyndoch board chair Kerry Nelson in the Lyndoch corporate tent at the 2019 May Races. Image: Lyndoch Living FB page.

Lots of really wonderful people work at Lyndoch and terrific things happen there as a result of their efforts, but I also know that so many are struggling to hold it all together.

We can either hold our head in hands, or we can actually hold the Lyndoch board to account and ask “what is being done about it?”

Chair Kerry Nelson has not responded to my questions. There is silence from all the other board members: Sue Cassidy, Ron Page, Peter Downs, Lorraine Mielnik, Percy Eccles, Kane Grant and Andrew Paton.

Are they so bedazzled by Ms Power’s “big vision” that they are not asking the tough questions? Do any board members or Ms Power ever wander down to chat with nursing staff and ask how they are managing?

As I understand it, some nursing staff have never met the CEO after almost five years.

I have never met the CEO and she will not return my calls or my emails, so – again – I can't tell you Ms Power's response to any of the above.

This silence is familiar territory to me, but just as with the Warrnambool City Council [credit card scandal](#), I am slowly building a picture and the questions will keep coming because the community created Lyndoch, we care for Lyndoch and we have every right to know what is really going on.

More soon.

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

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