

Lyndoch in lockdown, but CEO still takes to the road



Carol Altmann – The Terrier

It's two weeks tomorrow since Lyndoch Living went into lockdown in the face of the Covid-19 virus.

At the same time, as we know, Victoria has strict rules regarding leaving home, travelling or spending time with others, with a bottom line that if it's not *essential*, don't do it.

But where has the Lyndoch CEO, Doreen Power, been these past two weekends since the lockdown began?

Not in Warrnambool, but – according to sources – travelling back to Melbourne, which is where Ms Power has her family home.

This came as a shock to me: that the CEO was not here, seven days a week, standing side-by-side with the staff as they faced a health challenge that could devastate a nursing home if it took hold.

Why, as their leader, would you not be here? If there is a logical explanation, we should be able to hear it.

It's well known in certain circles that Ms Power travels home most weekends – usually leaving Friday afternoon and returning Monday morning – having never relocated her family to Warrnambool as she planned to do, according to a local newspaper report, after becoming CEO in 2015.

In normal times, we might shrug our shoulders and say “who cares?”

But these are far from normal times.

Lyndoch Living is an aged care facility in full lockdown and Ms Power is the CEO of this facility.

Is travelling anywhere out of Warrnambool right now and then returning to Lyndoch the best thing to be doing? Is it essential?

Does the board know about this and does it accept it as being okay?

This is why CEO's are paid the big dollars, because the expectations on their time are so much greater and especially so during a crisis.



Signs like this have popped up all over the world as part of the message to “stay home” during the c19 virus. Image: The Straits Times.

I have checked the fine print for the Victorian travel restrictions and people who have two dwellings can travel between them (such as a parent who works in the city, but commutes home at weekends), but the overarching message is to do so only if absolutely necessary.

Lyndoch Living [says as much on its own website](#): it tells us there are only four reasons for us to be leaving home – food, work, exercise and medical reasons.

We know the mantra and we are all doing our bit, despite all of us missing family and friends and wishing we could just jump in the car and drive.

We can't.

But the CEO of Lyndoch can, even with Lyndoch in lockdown, and my question is why?

I put three questions about this to the CEO and the board chair Kerry Nelson this morning. I have not yet had a reply and will run it in full if I do, although I suspect the questions, as in the past, will be met with silence.

Speaking of silence, it's also a fortnight since the Lyndoch Living board met to talk, among other things, about how to respond to explosive allegations against the CEO that were contained in a confidential staff survey.

We have heard nothing official since.

This is despite South West MP Roma Britnell saying that the allegations and concerns in the survey [mirrored those from people who had contacted her directly](#) over the past months.

And it's despite the last two places where Ms Power worked as a CEO before being hired by Lyndoch Living – Seymour Health and Plenty Valley Health – both reporting low staff morale during her tenure: that is on the public record.

And yet the Lyndoch board has done nothing and continues to do nothing.

Maybe they just don't believe it.

Or maybe Lyndoch has seen [so many staff leave](#) over the past five years that they no longer care whether good, hard-working people stay, or they leave because they have had enough or felt they had no choice.

That must be terrific for staff morale.

And yet the Lyndoch staff, all of them, are now rolling up their sleeves, battening down the hatches and devoting themselves to caring and protecting the frail and infirm residents against one of the greatest health challenges of our

time in the Covid-19 virus.

The staff continue to show their professionalism and concern: they continue to show up because they care – first and foremost – about the residents who have perhaps never been more vulnerable.

For this, I send gratitude and thanks to all of the Lyndoch staff and I know you do too.

I am suspending the Tip Jar for the time being and encouraging readers to make a donation to Warrnambool Food Share which you can do below.



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