Lyndoch: red spots, black spots, cold walls and lights out

Description

Carol Altmann – The Terrier

As the year comes to a close, I wish I could do more for those who contact me about Lyndoch Living.

Whenever I write about Lyndoch aged care, I get a stream of messages from readers, most of whom thank me for just listening, even if I can't help.

People care about Lyndoch and its residents, including the staff who have to go to extraordinary lengths just to get a message to me, for fear of being "caught" talking to The Terrier, but also the families of residents, and friends of residents.

I find so many of these messages heartbreaking and I feel powerless, because I can't fix it.

All I can do is tell *you* – the wider community – what I have learnt and what I have investigated and hope that you, like me, won't look away.

Like this message from a reader about the new $13 million Swinton Wing extension:

"..residents from (Tomlinson) have now been moved to the second floor of the new "dementia building" (my words). This means that all ambulant dementia residents are now "trapped" upstairs with no free access to an outside area where they can feel the breeze or sun on their face, walk on a "return" path through an enclosed garden area, and see birds hopping around.

"They now have no chickens to care for and secured outside areas for unsupervised activities are now nonexistent. ….. the new building is very impressive and state of the art, but soulless and clinical.

"Whoever thought that this was an improvement to the quality of residents' lives has no understanding

of the ageing and their needs. My alarm bells are going off and I feel this needs further investigation. Please."

Please.

This is the new Lyndoch, I have learned, where pictures are not allowed on the new walls of the new rooms and the new TV that comes with the new room is the one a resident MUST use, even if they don't know how to work the freakin' new remote control.

And then there are the messages about "the rash".

I have had so many messages about a "rash" that has been coming and going through the Audrey Prider Centre at Lyndoch for six months and I can – at last – write about it because the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) has taken up the issue on behalf of their members – the nursing staff on the front line.

In a letter to Lyndoch last week, the ANMF has asked the question up front: is this rash scabies? And if it is, what is being done about it, and what has been done to support residents and staff?

The union has asked for a response by tomorrow (Dec 4).

If this rash is not scabies – I have since heard that it ISN'T – then what is it?

It is enough to have staff and family of some residents demanding more answers.

Another worry that has filtered through to The Terrier these past weeks is the mobile "black spots" within Lyndoch that means families calling after-hours to check on sick loved ones are finding the phones are either not answered (because nursing staff are in a black spot) or the call drops out.

All of those millions spent on expanding Lyndoch – and adding an IT specialist to the executive team – and the phone system is unreliable.

Perhaps instead of worrying about awards and nominations and getting its name up in fairy lights, Lyndoch needs to make sure it responds to these concerns – and I am only able to share a few of them here.

Speaking of lights, the big, new, illuminated, illegal corporate logo on Swinton Wing will be approved retrospectively by the WCC, but will not be lit up.

The lighting breaks the planning laws, but it took neighbours to tell them that.

Given the WCC head of planning is on the Lyndoch board, we can only assume that he had no idea this sign was going ahead.

I really hope Lyndoch receives a refund on the LED.

And I really hope that those who have concerns and fears and worries about Lyndoch will keep speaking up and find the strength to stand up, to light up, knowing that we – the community – has their back.

On we go.

[This is my last post for 2020. Thankyou so much to all of the terriers who have helped The Terrier to keep going in more ways than one. You are the voices behind this voice and I couldn't do any of it without you.]

Category

1. Opinion

Tags

1. annual general meeting
2. appointment
3. assets
4. budget
5. building
6. Cassign
7. chair.
8. charity
9. commission.
10. council
11. executives
12. figures
13. Lyndoch Living
14. medical clinic
15. new signs.
16. permits
17. potential conflicts of interest
18. signage
19. Sue Cassidy
20. Swinton Wing

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