



# ANNUAL REPORT

20  
25

SAWTELL CATHOLIC CARE



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# CHAIRMAN'S *Report*

***I am pleased to present the 2025 Annual Report on behalf of the Board of Sawtell Catholic Care (SCC), showcasing a number of memorable highlights throughout the past year.***

This year has brought major change with the introduction of the new Aged Care Act 2024, the most significant reform in the sector since 1997. The Board has guided Sawtell Catholic Care through this transition, ensuring that our **Vision, Mission, and Values** remain at the heart of all we do while strengthening our systems and technology to support future needs and service provision.

We have continued to shape our Board membership and skills to help address the current and emerging responsibilities and opportunities, and to this end were delighted to welcome Louise Thompson, a retired Pharmacist, to the Board, whose expertise further enhances our clinical governance. At the same time, we farewelled Cate Clark and Paul Crane. Paul's remarkable contribution is worthy of recognition and gratitude, giving more than 30 years of voluntary service to SCC and our Parish.

Strengthening organisational governance has been a priority, with the formation of our new operational CORE Team focusing on Compliance, Operations, Risk and Education. Their work will be central as we welcome in the new Aged Care Standards and additional aged care reforms, which will need education and embedding in solid foundations of quality assurance.

Our residents' voices remain central to our work. The Quality Care Advisory Body and Consumer Advisory

Body continue to provide valuable feedback and input into co-designing our improvement journey. The Board has actioned several initiatives arising from these bodies, demonstrating we are always listening, and ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of our services.

We celebrate the refurbishment of the Chapel and upgrade of recreational facilities and resident amenities, ensuring our facilities are fit for purpose and mission. Our Pastoral Care Services have benefited through allocations of additional hours and resources.

We are deeply proud of our diverse and loyal workforce, representing 25 nations, and of their tireless commitment to care. The Board is focused on supporting our staff and leadership team with the resources they need to deliver high-quality services and remain contemporary and agile in a very dynamic service sector.

We celebrated our long-term volunteer Viv Simpson, whose Order of Australia (OAM) medal was well deserved for his service to the community over many years.

Our Link Gardens were the venue for the Lismore Diocese DACCS conference again this year. We are blessed to have such an inspiring place for the celebration of our joint mission.

Finally, we welcomed Fr Joy D'Souza this year, taking over from Fr Joe DSouza, and we thank them both for their pastoral leadership and encouragement, which continue to guide and inspire us to better support our community, and enter this new era of aged care with confidence, compassion and commitment to those we serve.

Please enjoy this report.

**David Robson - Board Chair, Sawtell Catholic Care**

## OUR *Board*



**Fr Joy D'Souza**  
Parish Administrator



**Gwen Nyhan**



**Dr Bruce Watts**



**David Robson**  
Chair



**Louise Thompson**



**Rob de Groot**



**Michael Darragh**  
Chief Executive Officer

# CEO Report

## A Year of Transformation and Commitment

The past twelve months have marked a profound period of transformation across the Seniors Living and Aged Care sector in Australia. As we reflect on the year, it is clear that our resilience, adaptability, and commitment to person-centred service have kept us on track to progress our mission to build our community of Christian care.

This year saw the introduction of the **Aged Care Bill 2024**, laying the foundation for a new rights-based framework that will reshape how aged care is delivered and governed from November 2025. Sawtell Catholic Care has responded with determination, navigating the complexities of reform while continuing to provide compassionate, high-quality care to the people we serve.

At Sawtell Catholic Care, we have embraced these changes with courage and clarity. Our workforce has grown stronger through strategic appointments and international recruitment, supported by our approval as a visa sponsor. We have deepened our commitment to holistic care, with expanded pastoral and spiritual support remaining central to our mission, even as government funding models continue to overlook these vital services.

Across our village, home care, and residential services, we have strategically actioned innovation and renewal. New technologies have been investigated, tried and tested, those worthy of incorporation, such as Sandwai for our Home Care Services, and the Spectra Link Dect phones in Mater Christi, have been implemented; whilst others that failed to meet our requirements have not. Village refurbishments, expanded client communications and engagement, strengthening cyber security systems, and staff development initiatives, have all contributed to a safe, vibrant and responsive service environment for our community.

**With a year full of highlights**, I want to single out a few that have a major impact. Firstly, the appointment of Fr Joy D'Souza as Parish Administrator has been a milestone for the organisation and the broader Sawtell Catholic Parish that oversees our ministry. We thank the outgoing Fr Joe for his interim pastoral leadership and support and will continue to collaborate closely with him at our neighbouring St Augustine's Parish.

Secondly, the financial strength of the organisation has continued to grow, and this is important as it provides the resource for us to deliver our care and service ministries, support the sustainability of our Mary Help of Christians Parish with all of its spiritual and pastoral ministries, provide benevolence to people in financial difficulties,



**MICHAEL DARRAGH**

Chief Executive Officer

and support the development of new, much needed, services for our community, such as affordable housing, and the expansion of our pastoral care and allied health services to better support our community.

Thirdly, the consolidation of our existing assets with a strong focus on maintenance and renewal, including the refurbishment and expansion of the Village Recreation Centre to create a broader *Village Centre* ambience; the installation of the new generator for Mater Christi to further enhance emergency preparedness and protect power supply for essential services; and, the ongoing and incremental refurbishment of all our accommodation units in both Mater Christi and Marian Grove Village, to ensure they meet the needs of our residents.

Finally, our staff and volunteer workforce has provided a major highlight yet again, by providing excellent care and service to our people. We have celebrated our diversity with over 25 nationalities represented among staff and have welcomed staff from overseas on international working visas. Our team of volunteers have shone the spotlight of selfless service and kindness across our community, and we celebrated Viv Simpson being awarded an Order of Australia medal by the Governor. The loyalty and commitment of our staff remain a corner stone of our success, with stability and continuity a hallmark of our leaders and key experienced staff, ensuring sound guidance and mentoring to new and developing staff, helping mission success.

This report, in a small way, captures our journey through a year of positive and responsive transformation, celebrating our achievements, acknowledging our challenges, and reaffirming our dedication to the dignity and wellbeing of those we are called to serve. Please enjoy.

Michael Darragh - Chief Executive Officer

“ We have deepened our commitment to holistic care, with expanded pastoral and spiritual support remaining central to our mission. ”



# EXECUTIVE *Leadership Team*



**Matt Digges**  
Director of Mission



**Melanie Lucock**  
Director of People Services



**Brendan Biddle**  
Chief Financial Officer

# SENIOR *Leadership Team*



**Karen Martin**  
Village Manager



**Rob Wilson**  
Home Care Manager



**Mercy Kurinyepa**  
Director of Nursing



**Graham Oliver**  
The Link Operations  
Manager



**OUR**  
*Vision*  
An Inclusive  
Community  
of Christian  
Care.



**OUR**  
*Mission*  
We Care by  
Actively Serving  
Our Community  
with Christian  
Compassion.



**OUR**  
*Values*  
Love  
Respect  
Justice  
Courage.

# STRATEGIC *Focus*

## 1. Mission Empowerment

- Continue to discern and embed our mission and values into every aspect of care and service.
- Continue to define, refine, and promote a positive organisational culture and model behaviours consistent with our vision, mission, and values.
- Promote, recognise, and reward mission and values-based performance and behaviour from staff and volunteers.

## 2. Our People and Culture

- Engage, form, develop, and retain staff, with a mission focus, whilst ensuring appropriate skills and kindness in service and teamwork.
- External promotion on being recognised as an employer of choice to attract new staff as required.
- Invest in staff development, retention strategies, and succession planning.
- Strengthen role clarity and education for our leaders and skilled staff.

## 3. Governance and Communication

- Board and Executive governance skills development and ongoing education.
- Improve internal audit and reporting systems to inform decisions and direction.
- Improve internal and external communication with stakeholders and service participants to inform strategy and governance.
- Develop a comprehensive market strategy that identifies SCC's point of difference, provides strategic surveillance, and keeps the organisation contemporary and attractive to residents, clients and staff.

## 4. Strategic Service Development

- Actively engage with our people, residents, clients and staff in collaborative co-design of new services, and for review and refinement of existing services.
- Retain strategic focus on strengthening Home Care Services, palliative, and dementia care.
- Continue to develop and establish The Link community projects.
- Develop and upgrade facilities (Villa Maria, Marian Grove Recreation Centre, Mater Christi).

## 5. Innovation and Technology

- Remain contemporary and pursue cutting-edge systems and technologies, investigate helpful AI, renew and upgrade IT, explore HRM systems, implement new CRM systems for care and operational improvement.
- Implement new technologies to improve efficiency and service delivery.

## 6. Robust Risk and Financial Management

- Maintain and refine systems for a robust risk management framework.
- Maintain and refine sound financial models to ensure sustainability and growth.
- Regularly review and adapt the financial models, investigate opportunities, including 'user-pay'/'fee for service' and new revenue enterprise.

## 7. Community and Partnerships

- Continue to grow and maintain strategic external service and workforce partnerships.
- Support, protect, and grow SCC's reputation as a leading and valued community member.
- Strategically seek social outreach opportunities and respond to changing community needs.
- Support intergenerational connections and collaborations.

## 8. Asset and Compliance Management

- Maintain and develop our assets to meet community expectations and ensure stewardship.
- Continue to explore, develop and strengthen best asset management systems.
- Ensure visibility and compliance with legislation and adapt to regulatory changes.
- Create and maintain purposeful and safe living spaces for residents and staff.



# OUR *Mission*

Mission integration is the measure by which we gauge our fidelity to our vision of becoming **an inclusive community of Christian care**. The past year has seen the continued maturation of Sawtell Catholic Care as a community that embeds our mission of **actively serving our community with Christian compassion** into everything we embrace. The professionalism of our administrative, clinical, hotel, care, catering, and maintenance services finds its meaning in the fundamentals of Catholic Social Teaching. Our person-centred Pastoral and Spiritual Care give a face to our mission.

The core of our practice is our mission, centred on the person of Jesus Christ understood through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching. This overarching guidance ensures that our practice goes beyond any other standards that we are required to uphold. Our care begins with the **dignity of the human person**,

uniquely created and sustained by God. Recognising our community, our care upholds the **common good** for all humanity. Acknowledging that there are some in society in particular need, our programs include assistance and **solidarity with the suffering**. Finally, the agency and independent decision-making capacity of each person is championed in the principle of **subsidiarity**. We encourage all involved in the Sawtell Catholic Care community to join, be formed, and grow in this mission.

The prayerful face of our mission is lead through the generous ministry of Fr Joy, our Pastoral Team and volunteers. In addition to informal opportunities, five Christian services per week (including two Masses) allow ample opportunity for communal prayer and celebration. The new Parish Pastoral Associate, Margaret Ryan is well known to many people and collaborates in ministry with the SCC team.



“ The care and consideration we experience daily cannot be faulted. The pastoral care reminds us that we are a part of this big family. ”

Jim & Barbara Cross, Marian Grove & Mater Christi Residents

# HEART & HOPE OF *Connection*

The provision of high quality holistic and person-centred care is fundamental to the mission of Sawtell Catholic Care. Central to this is the focus on spiritual care, defined as the source of meaning, hope, and connection for each person. This pastoral care is not funded by any external body, instead it is benevolently provided by SCC.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care recommended the embedding of high-quality care. The Progress Report of the Inspector-General of Aged Care, released in September, laments that:

*The promotion of wellbeing, community connection and a recognition of the importance of pastoral care and spirituality, which are vital parts of the notion of high quality, person-centred care, are not supported as funded functions within the aged care system. Despite defining these concepts as pivotal to high quality care, they are not aspects of care that are supported by the funding models for residential care or Support at Home. In practice, this makes them aspirational and suggests the system 'hopes' the functions will be achieved pro bono by both commercial and non-profit providers.*

Despite this lack of funding, the clarity of our mission remains resolute. Our response to needs among residents, families, and staff, has been to add a part-time

position in the past year. This allows for increased personal visits and to provide support initiatives to our residents and their families such as Seasons of Growth (for those entering Residential Care and their families), and New Shoots (for those experiencing loss and grief). The opportunity to share experiences of loss, grief, and transition has cemented and strengthened our community. Our staff form strong bonds with residents and their families. The Acts of Random Kindness (ARK) group has been initiated to assist staff with resident transitions.

Our dedicated team of volunteers have continued to devote many hours to the care of our community. As the need for pastoral presence has grown, so has the growth of volunteers to walk beside our resident community and provide transport to crucial medical appointments.

**Matt Digges - Director of Mission**



**54** Dedicated Pastoral Team support visits each week

**500** Volunteer Village Medical Transportation Trips

**5,280** Hours of Pastoral visits by volunteers

**180** Attendees at Mass / Christian Services each week



## REAL PEOPLE REAL STORIES



## SERVICE RECOGNISED - *Viv Simpson*

Viv Simpson became a frequent visitor to Sawtell Catholic Care when his mother, Valerie moved into Mater Christi in 2014. His kindness, generosity, and habit of noticing and caring for those in need was known from the days when he ran Viv's Fish and Chips in Sawtell.

After the death of his Mum, Viv began visiting other residents, cooking weekly BBQs and resident luncheons. Always looking for ways to contribute, he visits those living in Mater Christi who do not receive regular visitors, accompanies residents to appointments, calls in to greet the housebound in Marian Grove Village, and listens to the concerns of families and staff. Viv and his wife Jenny have also reached out to staff who have no family in Australia to make them welcome.

A longtime volunteer with the Red Cross, Salvation Army Emergency Services Team, and Community Visitor Scheme, his contribution to our local community was recognised in the King's Birthday honours this year with an OAM.



# EMBRACING *Connection, Growth and Care*

It has been another busy and rewarding year at Sawtell Catholic Care, filled with staff events, celebrations, learning opportunities, and people coming and going. At the heart of it all, our values of **Love, Respect, Justice**, and **Courage** continue to guide how we care for one another and our community.

We welcomed new team members who have brought fresh energy and expertise. A highlight was securing visa sponsorship approval and welcoming our first overseas Registered Nurse. In addition, we are exploring opportunities to engage care workers through the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme.

Staff turnover remained consistently low, an average of just 6% per quarter, well below sector averages.

Our workforce stability remains a key strength. The leadership team averages 7.4 years of tenure, 16% of staff have been with SCC for over 10 years, and eight have reached more than 20 years of service. We also have five second-generation staff, reflecting the pride and trust families place in SCC.

We launched Ausmed, our new online learning platform offering flexible and role-specific training. Partnerships with Southern Cross University and TAFE continue to grow, with SCC hosting nursing and occupational therapy students on placement.

Staff wellbeing remains central to our culture. The

Black Dog Institute delivered training on managing psychosocial hazards and Mental Health First Aid. Events such as R U OK? Day, reminded us to check in on one another. Ongoing initiatives like our Employee Assistance Program and gym membership discounts ensure holistic support.

With staff from over 25 nations, SCC is proud of its diversity. Our Cultural Awareness Day was a highlight, filled with traditional dress, performances, and shared meals. Coinciding with a Nepali festival, it was particularly meaningful for our Nepalese colleagues and celebrated our shared sense of belonging.

Our *Embrace* Reward and Recognition Program continues to celebrate achievements, with hundreds of acknowledgments shared this year. It also provides cost-of-living and wellbeing resources, supporting staff both at work and at home.

Community connections remain strong through our volunteers reflecting our Mission: **We care by actively serving our community with Christian compassion.**

The past year has shown that SCC is more than a workplace, it is a community where people belong, grow, and make a difference. As we look ahead, we remain committed to inclusivity, empowerment, and compassionate care for all.

Melanie Lucock - Director of People Services



## REAL PEOPLE REAL STORIES



## TRAILBLAZING *Sheetal*

It all began at the Board Christmas party last year when Fr Joe casually mentioned that he had a family member who was a Registered Nurse in India. The immediate response was, "Fantastic! When can she start?"

That simple conversation set the wheels in motion for SCC's visa sponsorship application. Sheetal DSouza became our trailblazer, the first to join our team through this process. The journey was far from simple. The paperwork was extensive and the requirements demanding but after six months Sheetal arrived in Australia from India.

Her farewell was a special moment with her entire family, including Fr Joe's parents, gathering at the train station near their home to see her off.

Today, Sheetal is an integral part of the SCC team. She has settled in beautifully and regularly catches up with Fr Joe. Of course, his visits aren't just about family ties. He admits a real drawcard is her amazing Indian cooking!



“ I am very grateful for what you do. I know that your work can be rewarding, taxing, and very difficult. You have to be there for older people as we find them. The love of Christ reaches out to them as they are. We make no demands of them, but we are here to provide for them. That’s what you do. It is thankless in many times but know that I support you. I encourage you and thank you for the great work that you do. ”

Greg Homeming OCD, Bishop of Lismore,  
Message for Aged Care Worker Day.



## Voices FROM OUR COMMUNITY

“ It’s a safe place,  
absolutely, a safe place. ”

Joy Hull-Moody, Mater Christi  
Resident





# BUILDING OUR *Community*

The ongoing development and maintenance of our infrastructure supports and nurtures our mission and community.

To the delight of Marian Grove residents, the last year has seen the first stage redevelopment of the Recreation Hall. A new site location map has been erected inside the Village entrance, including a QR code to enable the map to be seen instantly on mobile devices. This augments the new street signs throughout the Village.

Our ancient paling fences on Sawtell Road have been replaced by contemporary Colourbond, ensuring our boundaries are well defined and aesthetically pleasing. Consistent with the growing need for rest stops, ten extra bench seats have been installed throughout the campus, encouraging walking and communal connection.

The increased number of visitors to The Link have benefitted from the development of an additional car park, providing greater access to this community space.

A concerted effort to optimise our outdoor areas has given birth to a new sensory garden in Mater Christi. Alongside this, the internal courtyard gardens were developed, allowing access for all residents and encouraging visits from birds.

A fresh new look to the outside of Mater Christi and the Chapel has been achieved by recent upgrades including deep cleaning and a repaint. The gallery of saints beside the Chapel is now spectacular.

To enhance safety and ensure compliance, the fire indicator panel in Mater Christi has been replaced and upgraded.



## REAL PEOPLE REAL STORIES



## VALE *Steve Laidley*

With deep gratitude we acknowledge the life and legacy of our own Steve Laidley.

A long-time senior leader of SCC, Steve oversaw all parish construction projects of the last ten years. This included the renovation of Mary Help of Christians Church, Boronia St Units, Parish Office, the Marian Grove Apartments, and The Link. With prodigious skill and elephantine knowledge of construction history and requirements, Steve allowed our mission to flourish and be seen through the buildings that accompany our outreaches. His skill was sought by Coffs, Nambucca and Bellingen Parishes as well. Steve sadly died early in 2025 after a long illness, being predeceased by his wife Lyn and survived by his four sons. *May he rest in peace.*

# HEART OF OUR *Village*



At the heart of our village is a shared commitment to inclusion, connection, and mutual support. Our community values friendship, encourages active participation, and respects the importance of independence for every individual. Our ongoing program of activities, including regular concerts, monthly luncheons, new resident welcome events, and neighbourhood morning teas bring people together in ways that are meaningful and enjoyable. This year we have welcomed the Coffs Harbour City Orchestra, Mei Wei Lim Concerts, Opera Queensland, and the Feel-Good Fashion Parade. We know how important it is to feel seen, heard, and valued.

The insurance repair and restoration work after the 2021 hailstorm is finally complete. The final fresher, cleaner,

and more cohesive look of the Village is the reward of much patience.

To ensure greater efficiency, accountability, and quality of work in the upkeep of our Village, our grounds and maintenance team has been restructured. The updated structure including clearer roles, improved scheduling, and streamlined communication allows for more consistent delivery of high-quality maintenance. Alongside this, the care of our meticulously manicured lawns, gardens, and green belts has been placed in the care of a local professional landscaping and horticultural firm. Their expertise and attention to detail have greatly enhanced the overall appearance and vibrancy of our green spaces.

**Karen Martin - Village Manager**



**20** New Residents Welcomed into our community

**1,000+** Residents on bus outings

**2,425** Welfare Support Visits ensuring comfort and safety





### GREAT LIFE, GREAT LEGACY

## Mary Thompson

Mary Thompson grew up on the Clarence where she and her husband Ron owned a sugar cane farm and raised four beautiful children.

Mary and Ron were active in social welfare work in the area and ran a Saint Vincent de Paul crisis centre in Grafton for many years.

After Ron died, Mary moved to Marian Grove in order to be closer to her Coffs Harbour offspring and her sister, Agnes, a resident of Mater Christi.

In Sawtell, she was able to join with the mission work of the parish and just loved being part of the Baptism team and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) team. She made new friends at Marian Grove and loved attending the street parties, having a cuppa in the cafe and other village activities.

After many happy years in her Marian Grove Villa, Mary moved into Mater Christi where she continued to receive visitors, visit the cafe, attend Mass at the chapel and share a bit of wisdom with everyone she encountered.

Mary left our earthly home in July, her sister Agnes dying exactly one month later. How blessed we all are to have known such a special lady.

### RESILIENCE OVER DECADES

## Betty Wilson

My husband and I moved from Melbourne to a property near Coolah with our young children. I had a stroke not long after, so became used to not being able to do all that I wanted. Moving to Coffs after Rob died, I loved living in Marian Grove, doing my art and being in a loving community. My mobility declined and I transitioned to Mater Christi where the support I receive helps me to live well. My beautiful friend Wendy left me her electric wheelchair, so I am able to move around independently, especially out in the gardens around the chapel.



### A SAFE HOME

## John Fitzgerald

I was born in Lidcombe and spent my adult life teaching in Catholic schools between Sydney and Cairns with 17 years spent with the Marist Brothers. I retired as principal of Saint Marys Bellingen in 2007 and lived in Coffs Harbour. The care of the Marian Grove community is well known, so when I needed the support that Mater Christi can provide, it was an easy decision. I am very happy to be an active member of this vibrant community and parish.

# SUPPORT IN YOUR *Home*

Standing at the critical space between complete independence and residential care, the Sawtell Home Care Team has given over 9,000 hours of care and driven 10,000km for over 90 clients. Each person has unique needs, so we take time to know them, their family, and their preferences, resulting in the slow but inexorable growth of Sawtell Home Care. Over forty service partners assist us to arrange meals, equipment, transport, Allied Health and a host of other supports to try and help our clients live happy, safe lives.

In the background, we are preparing for Support at Home, the Strengthened Aged Care Standards, and the new Aged Care Act. Central to this is the implementation of Sandwai, a new software system that is facilitating delivery of high quality, person-centred care. Our steadily growing team is looking forward to the next year and continuing to serve all our clients.

Originally launched to serve Marian Grove Village and Sawtell Parish, Sawtell Home Care has grown through reputation and now includes participants from Coffs Harbour to Urunga. Mindful of the lengthy delays involved in securing aged and community care services, our Early Package Implementation Commencement (EPIC) benevolence continues to provide support to those most in need.

Robert Wilson - Sawtell Home Care Manager



*Voices*  
FROM OUR  
COMMUNITY

“ We are very grateful for the care given to us by the Home Care staff... and feel very blessed to live at Marian Grove. ”

Jim and Dawn Reid

## REAL PEOPLE REAL STORIES



### TOGETHER EACH DAY - *Jim and Barbara Cross*

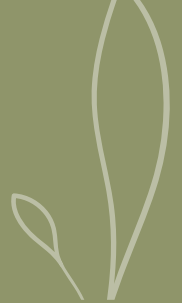
After our children left home and we retired, we tossed up between becoming grey nomads or moving to Marian Grove. After 25 years I can say we made the right choice. We have had the best things that SCC can offer. I drove buses, worked in the Men's Shed, played pool with the boys; we ran monthly concerts, hosted orphans Christmases, enjoyed movies, art, and the library. We have loved this life. Only in the last 18 months have we needed Sawtell Home Care, and because they are onsite, they react quickly to our changing needs. Now Barbara has the wonderful care of Mater Christi, and I am there with her every day.

As we slow down, the care and consideration we experience daily cannot be faulted. The pastoral care reminds us that we are a part of this big family.





# MATER CHRISTI *Care*



The dedication and commitment of our staff and volunteers as they support our Mater Christi residents is humbling. Our staff continue to be our greatest strength, living our vision and mission through the values of **Love, Respect, Justice, and Courage** during every interaction with our residents, families, and each other. Their compassion and professionalism are the heart of our care and the foundation of the trust we build each day. The dedication and commitment of our Leadership Team empowers the Mater Christi Team to collaboratively rise above our constant challenges.

To enhance effective communication, we have introduced the Brenna app, designed specifically for aged care. It allows us to provide clear and timely social, recreational, clinical, and administrative updates to families, which is also captured in our LeeCare software system. The app allows us to communicate with multiple family members at the same time, regardless of the time or their location. So far, over one thousand updates have been sent to families.

Crucial for overall health, oral health is especially important for our residents. Our partnership with Dental-on-Demand Mobile Dentistry has improved the oral health of our residents, minimising painful and difficult

dental issues that often require offsite treatment. Mater Christi organises and pays for the initial examinations, giving residents the information needed to make informed choices in oral health.

In line with the new strengthened Aged Care Standards, which emphasise quality, safety, and genuine partnership in care, we have taken deliberate steps to enhance our clinical leadership and support. A new Registered Nurse shift has been introduced that supports the lunch period through to the busy afternoon and evening period. This initiative ensures stronger clinical oversight during peak times, and the positive impact is already being felt and acknowledged by residents and families alike.

To further strengthen our service continuity, we are also implementing a Clinical Lead role to support weekend teams. This new position provides onsite senior clinical expertise and guidance, mirroring the leadership and support available during the week.

These initiatives demonstrate our continued commitment to safe, high-quality, and person-centred care delivered with compassion, guided by our values, and aligned with the evolving expectations of the aged care sector.

**Mercy Kurinyepa - Director of Nursing**



# Catering

Our catering services have been designed in collaboration with our residents and families. The Catering Team is comprised of 32 staff members, whose loyalty, experience, and passion underpin our high standards. Five of our senior team members have a combined experience of 65 years at SCC. Guided by over 200 resident surveys and informal feedback, our team successfully completed an external Meal and Dining Review conducted by Plena, a governing organisation recommended by the Aged Care Commission. The NSW Food Authority audit confirmed our full compliance with standards. The meals reviewed were found to be excellent in presentation and flavour, using a combination of cooked-fresh and outsourced products. Minimal repetition in the menu was observed, with a variety of different flavours, ingredients and dishes.

High quality meals are delivered for both regular and texture modified diets. This means that 'steak' and other

alternatives which rarely appear on other residential facility menus are able to be regularly available to our residents with swallowing difficulties. Alongside a continental breakfast, hot breakfast is served daily. Each day there are two hot options at lunch and dinner (for regular diets), and multiple alternatives available for specialised diets. Catering staff take menu orders the day before. The menu is rotated every six weeks, with seasonal variation twice a year. To cater to the needs of residents and families outside mealtimes, an extensive range of snacks and drinks are available 24/7 in well-stocked kitchenette fridges and pantries.

Enhancements have been made to improve the dining experience for our residents. This has included suitably coloured and textured crockery, utensils, and linen tablecloths that create a more welcoming and homelike atmosphere for our residents.

**Sandy Maggs-Bendall - Chef and Catering Manager**



**Mater Christi menu renewed every six weeks**



**The Grove Café extending trading to six days a week**

**40**

**Meals to MG residents per week**

**250**

**Events catered**

**65**

**Meal options per week (not including specific diets)**



# Home Services **THE HEART OF OUR HOME**

Our commitment to exceptional service for Mater Christi residents has led to significant changes to our routines and practices. The Home Services Team has undergone changes with maintenance and refurbishments being brought in-house, providing the ability to respond quickly to needs and facilitating consistent and homely furnishings, designs, and colour schemes. This is evident in our newly refurbished rooms across the facility.

The interior courtyard gardens have been renovated and

are now accessible to all residents, with new plantings encouraging bird life and providing shade. The Sensory Garden allows residents and visitors to smell and touch plants in raised beds.

As the need for Palliative and End-of-Life care increases, Cedar House is in the process of refurbishment to include palliative care suites. This will provide better care and comfort for our residents and their families.

**Ali Dickings - Home Services Manager**



# Maggie Beer FOUNDATION

## FOUNDATION TRAINER MENTOR PROGRAM



Our successful bid to join the Maggie Beer Foundation Trainer Mentor Program commenced in April. With this twelve-month engagement with the Maggie Beer Foundation, Matt Roman, one of their chef trainers, has worked closely with our team to elevate the dining experience for residents, focussing on quality and enjoyment of meals. This partnership has enhanced the skill of our chef and cooks to create delicious, nutritious meals that bring joy and goodness to every bite.

Resident direction and feedback have guided this process. The Food and Dining Forum now provides a dedicated platform for residents, families, and friends to share feedback, trial new recipes, and collaborate on continuing to improve the overall dining experience.

## RECREATION *and Activities*

Resident collaboration and engagement continues to drive the expansion and diversity of our activities programs. Karen Bryant has joined the Mater Christi Recreation Team, increasing small group activities and the frequency of bus outings for all houses, allowing greater participation.

With High Teas always being popular, our collection of heirloom crockery often makes an appearance to complement cakes and slices. Along with the existing Pet Therapy, Doll Therapy has been introduced in the

Memory Support Unit, providing comfort to residents. Our incubation of chicks has made a return, with an ongoing process developed for hatchings, care of chicks, and eventual rehoming of pullets. Happy Hour is always well attended, with a variety of entertainers providing an afternoon of social engagement and fun.

Our team is constantly responding to the needs and suggestions of residents, working with families to provide meaningful and reabling recreation.

Recreation Officers - Karen Bryant and Bec Graham



# Allied Health

## A HEART FOR REABLEMENT

Comprising four staff, the Allied Health Team has had a positive and productive year across SCC.

Above and beyond the daily restorative and reablement programs, we were pleased to implement several other initiatives.

Occupational Therapy placement students from Southern Cross University successfully facilitated a range of programs, including arts and crafts, wellbeing, meditation sessions, gardening, and the popular Falls Program. The Falls Program supports residents who have experienced one or more falls within the past twelve months. Program components include: strength and balance classes; environmental safety assessments; access to expert advice and education; emotional support and peer connection through shared participation. The success and popularity of the program highlight its value, leading to the decision to embed it as an ongoing program at Mater Christi.

The Allied Health Team maintains a strong focus on reablement. Exercise classes remain highly valued by residents, while mobility programs developed by our physiotherapist continue to promote safety, confidence, and independence. Going forward, the establishment of a permanent physiotherapy position, along with our long-term occupational therapist, now ensures a continuum of multi-disciplinary therapy across all services of Sawtell Catholic Care.

Charlotte Rodgers - Occupational Therapist



*Voices*  
FROM OUR  
COMMUNITY



*We are so thankful that Mum was cared for by such dedicated people who have clearly found their vocation in life.*



Family of Lynette Besnard



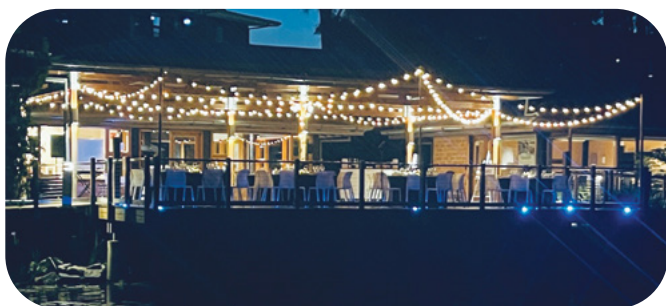
# LINKING OUR *Community*

Our community gardens have provided a vibrant and inclusive sanctuary where families, caregivers, mother's groups, and local residents have regularly come together to relax, connect, and enjoy the natural surroundings. Thoughtfully designed to blend beauty with functionality, the gardens offer a serene and engaging environment that promotes wellbeing, reflection, and community connection for people of all ages and backgrounds. It is our spirituality in action.

Intergenerational engagement is at the heart of The Link. Marian Grove and Mater Christi residents as well as many from the local community are increasingly using the accessible walking paths and boardwalks,

manicured gardens, lawns, and picnic spots. Along with the safe play areas, these have supported family connection among diverse age groups in a tranquil, natural environment where children can explore while other generations unwind. Sensory gardens spark curiosity and appreciation through touch, sight, and scent, creating a lasting connection with nature.

This year The Link Café welcomed a partnership with the Donovan family. Our Pavilion, Lakeside, and Reflections venues have become increasingly popular engagement spaces for business meetings, conferences, weddings, celebrations, retreats, and community gatherings.



## REAL PEOPLE REAL STORIES



## ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE - *Connor Bryant*

Every part of The Link is open to me in my wheelchair, which makes it truly welcoming. Donovan's Café is also fully accessible, and the friendly café staff and grounds team always greet me by name and say hello whenever I visit.

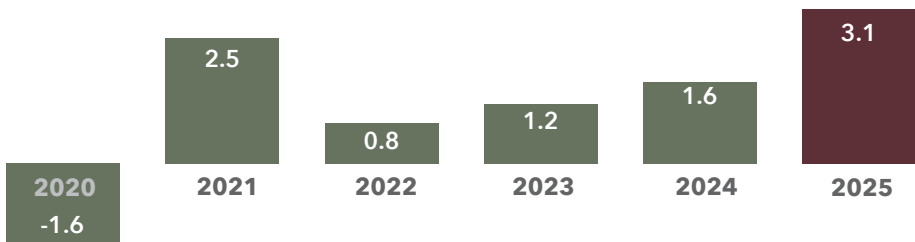
For me, The Link is more than just an accessible space; it's a genuine community hub for all of Toormina. I also have a personal history with it: back when it was a nursery, it was my very first job to tend to the grounds and care for the plants.

Thank you for the work you do to keep this place so special.

# FINANCIAL *Stewardship*

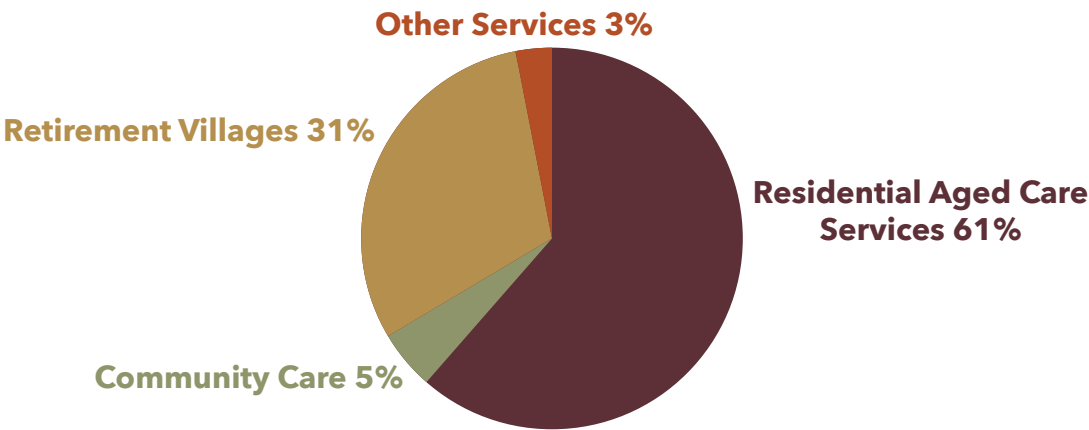
Sawtell Catholic Care has continued to thrive as a financially sustainable, mission-driven organisation of the Sawtell Parish community. Providing a seamless continuum of care through our core services, Independent Retirement lifestyle living at Marian Grove, in-home support and Community Care via Sawtell Home Care, and Residential Aged Care at Mater Christi. In addition, The Link, a beautifully landscaped garden and event space, continues to serve as a shared place of connection and wellbeing for both SCC residents and the wider community. Our commitment is to meet the evolving service needs and expectations of the community, now and into the future.

## SCC Earnings Before Interest, Tax, and Depreciation A\$ Millions



Residential Aged Care services accounted for almost \$16M of the \$26.1M total revenue generated by SCC in FY2025.

## SCC Revenue and Income Sources 2025



Sawtell Catholic Care is a major contributor to the Coffs Coast regional economy through local employment, procurement, infrastructure investment and community activation.

**206** valued Employees

**75** Home Care Participants

**\$15.3** million paid in staff salaries, supporting families and our local economy

**129** Permanent Care Residents during 2025

**280** Retirees in **231** Independent Living Units

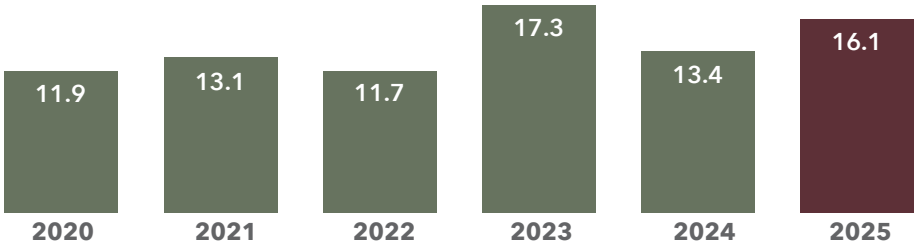
**300** Functions and Events at The Link





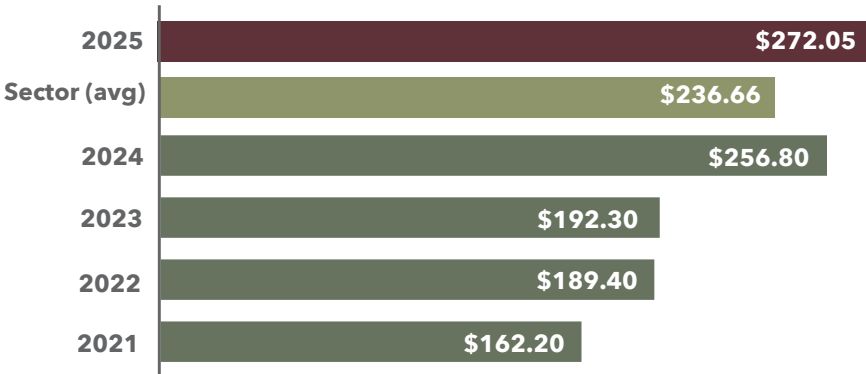
SCC continues to maintain a strong financial position, with cash and cash equivalent reserves above \$16.1 million. This solid financial foundation enables us to plan confidently for future development, asset management and stewardship of our facilities and services, ensuring we remain aligned with our strategic objectives and continue to deliver on the service-focused commitments of our Vision.

### SCC Total Cash and Cash Equivalents A\$ Millions



SCC remains committed to enhancing the quality of life for all residents by providing holistic care that includes lifestyle opportunities, spiritual and emotional support. Delivered through the dedication and compassion of our passionate team of staff and volunteers, this level of resident-focused care continues to exceed sector standards and reflects our deep commitment to our Mission.

### Direct Care Expenditure per Resident per Day



### Resident Food and Catering Expenses per Resident per Day



We remain committed to developing trust and meaningful engagement within our community. Our achievements over the past year reflect not only a focus on responsible financial stewardship, but also a continued dedication to living our core Values.

Brendan Biddle - Chief Financial Officer

# CULTIVATING *Partnerships*

Recognising the benefits of intergenerational, diocesan, and international partnerships, SCC actively cultivates collaboration in the service of our Mission.

We continue to enjoy a longstanding partnership with Southern Cross University including the placement of occupational and nursing students. This has been further enhanced with the appointment of our CEO Michael Darragh to the Health Sciences Advisory Board. A four-year partnership, investigating movement and dance as therapy towards positive ageing, has been completed by doctoral candidate Blake Toohey.

Students from St John Paul College, Mary Help of Christians School, and Goodstart Early Learning Centre continue our tradition of intergenerational collaboration.

Over several years, our Link Gardens has hosted the Diocesan Aged and Community Care Services Conference. This annual event gathers representatives from the Mid and North Coast Catholic outreaches to celebrate and encourage our joint mission to the vulnerable of our society. With the encouragement and guidance of Bishop Greg, we continue to seek ways to demonstrate the Gospel in our communities through using our gifts independently and collaboratively.

Our newest partnership opportunity provides a gateway to the world. Prospective staff from Pacific Island nations are supporting our workforce by providing a pool of potential candidates to ensure continuity of caring staff.

We look forward to encouraging new opportunities to further our partnerships.



*Voices*  
FROM OUR  
COMMUNITY



***We are ever so grateful for giving us the opportunity to learn and work with your wonderful staff and residents. It has been a wonderful learning experience.***



Mater Christi Nursing Students on placement



# CONTACTS & *Resources*



## **Sawtell Parish**

1/44 Boronia Street,  
Sawtell NSW 2452  
(02) 6658 3544  
[www.sawtellcatholicchurch.com.au](http://www.sawtellcatholicchurch.com.au)



## **Sawtell Catholic Care**

1 Marian Place,  
Toormina NSW 2452  
(02) 6653 1241  
[www.scca.net.au](http://www.scca.net.au)



## **Marian Grove**

3 Marian Place,  
Toormina NSW 2452  
(02) 6653 1241  
[www.scca.net.au](http://www.scca.net.au)



## **Sawtell Home Care**

3 Marian Place,  
Toormina NSW 2452  
(02) 6659 6621  
[www.scca.net.au](http://www.scca.net.au)



## **Mater Christi**

3 Marian Place,  
Toormina NSW 2452  
(02) 6658 6133  
[www.scca.net.au](http://www.scca.net.au)



## **The Link**

631 Hogbin Drive,  
Toormina NSW 2452  
(02) 6638 9911  
[www.thelinkevents.com.au](http://www.thelinkevents.com.au)





# Welcome GIINAGAY...



**MARIAN GROVE: 02 6653 1241**  
**MATER CHRISTI: 02 6658 6133**  
**THE LINK: 02 6638 9911**



## LEGEND

(A) SCC Administration and Boardroom	(K) Mater Christi Production Kitchen	(U) Café & Terrace
(B) Main Gate Entry	(L) Mater Christi Reception	(V) Potting Shed & Gardens
(C) Marian Grove Reception	(M) Staff Parking / Contractor Parking	(W) Car Park 1
(D) Marian Grove Reception Visitor Parking	(N) Anzac Memorial	(X) Amphitheatre & Playground
(E) Sawtell Home Care	(O) Columbarium	(Y) Pedestrian Entry
(F) Recreation Centre	(P) Hairdressing Salon	
(G) Gordon Turner Workshop	(Q) Entry Gate to Car Park	
(H) Our Lady of the Way Chapel	(R) The Link Reception	
(I) Main Visitor Parking	(S) Pavilion	
(J) The Grove Café	(T) Lakeside & Reflections	