Building a culture of strong governance and leadership at Opal Aged Care

This document is in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's request for submissions on policy issues relating to:

**How to build a culture of strong governance and workforce leadership.**

We advocate that the following recommendations be adopted across the sector in Australia:

- A **scaled rating system** for providers, similar to the UK and USA, with quality and verified information that will assist consumers to make informed choices
- **Consumer generated reviews on providers’ websites** to ensure transparency for both consumers and providers
- Providers should engage in the **co-design of services** through structured community and consumer engagement channels

We recognise that we are people caring for people. It is our privilege to share with the Royal Commission some of our initiatives that are helping to build strong governance and leadership and assist in embedding a strong Opal culture, which places our customers at the heart of everything we do.

These initiatives intersect with and support the role of the board and committees which support corporate governance, other Opal policies, procedures and processes which are not discussed here.

We endorse the Aged Care Taskforce Strategy and HESTA’s Transforming Aged Care reports outlining recommendations regarding culture, governance and leadership in aged care. That is, the need to focus on workplace culture including, relevantly, workplace-based feedback measures by, relevantly:

- Reinforcing the central place of feedback on consumer outcomes;
- Supporting consumer, employee and leadership surveys/feedback;
- Ensuring the organisation’s governing bodies review and act on feedback mechanisms and data;
- Recognising the value of a strong corporate culture, with a CEO closely connected to the day-to-day experience of residents; and,
- Supporting the development of current and future employees and line managers.

We believe relationships are as important in the Royal Commission as they are in aged care. We are making this submission in the spirit of transparency, to share the initiatives that we have introduced, or are trialing, in response to these recommendations and that appear to be having a positive impact. We believe these types of initiatives will make a difference for people living in residential aged care now and in the future.
# Table of Contents

| Introduction | 3 |
| Building our Opal culture by design, not by default | 3 |
| Part 1: Strong governance in practice | 4 |
| 1. Purpose, Vision, Values and Strategy | 5 |
| 2. Feedback and Continuous Improvement | 7 |
| 3. Organisational Performance | 10 |
| i) Balanced Scorecard | |
| ii) Transformation program | 11 |
| iii) Key role creation | 12 |
| 4. Engagement | 13 |
| i) Voice of the Customer | |
| ii) Consumer and Community Engagement Framework | 15 |
| Part 2: Enabling workforce leadership through our Opal culture | 17 |
| 1. Purpose and Values promotion | 18 |
| 2. CEO Weekly email | 19 |
| 3. Opal language of dignity and respect | 20 |
| 4. Five tenets of leadership | 21 |
| 5. Recognition and reward | 23 |
| 6. Building our capable and qualified team | 24 |
| 7. Tertiary partnerships | 27 |
| 8. Transformation program | 29 |
| 9. Creating a culture of storytelling - ‘Sharing the gold’ | 30 |
| 10. Listening and responding to our customers – Voice of the Customer | 36 |
| Appendices | 37 |
Introduction

Building our Opal culture by design, not by default

We want our culture at Opal to be anchored in the understanding that we are partners with our residents in their care, and that we are responsible for enabling lives of dignity, respect, autonomy and meaning.

We know that a culture of integrity and continuous improvement can only thrive in a fair, transparent and supportive work environment, where every team member is empowered to speak up, speak out about issues causing them concern.

Our Purpose
We are building our culture by design, where everything we do is inextricably interwoven with the Purpose set in late 2018: To bring joy to those we care for.

Our Values bring our Purpose to life

Compassion – We strive to understand and meet the needs and feelings of those we care for. We act with kindness in everything we do.

Accountability – We take responsibility for our actions, commitments and the wellbeing of those we care for.

Respect – We are honest and transparent. We respect those we care for. We always show respect for each other.

Excellence – We work as a team to provide the highest quality care and the highest standard in everything we do through a focus on continuous improvement.

Our purpose is to bring joy to those we care for.

We are working to place our residents at the center of everything we do, by:

• Developing and modeling our culture
• Living our Purpose and Values
• Encouraging the use of the Opal language and lexicon
• Building strong governance into each facet of our work
• Investing in team training, development and empowerment

We believe that companies don’t succeed, people do. That’s why we are committed to inculcating a deliberate culture that grows future leaders who are capable and confident to lead.

(Appendix 1a – Opal Purpose and Values)
Part 1: How our Opal culture is helping to embed strong governance

For the purpose of this submission we are sharing key initiatives that:

- Articulate our desired culture;
- Demonstrate governance-building in action as our initiatives start to gain traction; and
- Illustrate how our Values of Accountability and Excellence are helping to drive strong governance.

The following initiatives are examples of work in progress to enable strong governance:

1. Clear Purpose, Vision, Values and Strategy
2. Risk Framework – Feedback and Continuous Improvement
3. Organisational Performance:
   a) Balanced Scorecard
   b) Transformation Program
   c) Investing in Talent and Capability
4. Engagement and Feedback:
   a) Voice of Customer Program
   b) Consumer and Community Engagement Framework

As noted on page 1, these initiatives intersect with and support our existing policies and processes, including on corporate governance, which are not set out in this submission.
Initiatives to drive strong governance

**GOAL:**
- Align Opal team around our Purpose, Vision, Values and Strategy
- Build accountability across all levels of leadership
- Improve customer and care outcomes

1. Clear Purpose, Vision, Values and Strategy

September 2018
- We conceived our purpose statement, ‘To bring joy to those we care for’ in a forum comprising team members from across the organisation.
- We added a fourth value – ‘Excellence’ – to reflect our focus on continuous improvement and quality.
(Refer Appendix 1a: Opal Purpose and Values)

July 2019:
- The executive team created a new vision statement for Opal care communities to be first choice for people to live their best life in care.
- We revised and refined Opal’s three-year strategy.
- Our executive team drafted our Strategy on a page articulating our three-year strategic goals, which were endorsed by the Opal Board. These centre around being best in class for our customers, our team and the communities in which we work.

This approach is designed to be tightly aligned to the Aged Care Quality standards, in particular the focus on person-centred care and Standard 1, Consumer Dignity and Choice.

Examples of governance in practice:

i) Our STRATEGY ON A PAGE helps articulate our goals to our team and helps to inspire a shared vision across the organisation.
(Appendix 1b: Opal Strategy on a page)

ii) Our BALANCED SCORECARD will help to make our goals visible and actionable to every team member
- The Balanced Scorecard recasts strategy in terms of measures and drivers that are shared and cascaded throughout the organisation.
- Each care home will have its own monthly Balanced Scorecard.
- We are developing our own, customized, online Balanced Scorecard with metrics to measure performance in Customer, Clinical Care, Quality, Team and Finance.
- As financial measures do not alone gauge the health of a business, our Balanced Scorecard enables us to focus on Key Performance Indicators for our Customers, Clinical Care, Quality and Team Development as well as Financial Performance.
- Please note: this is still in design as we try to improve outcome-based measures we can track.
- Balanced Scorecard will be introduced in 2020.
(Refer Part 1.3: Organisational Performance and Appendix 1c)
GOAL:
• Align Opal team around our Purpose, Vision, Values and Strategy
• Build accountability across all levels of leadership
• Improve customer and care outcomes

1. Clear Purpose, Vision, Values and Strategy (continued)

iii) Share what ‘good’ looks like – SHARING THE GOLD initiative
• Actively sharing examples of team members delivering on our Purpose through a range of internal and external communications channels.
• Weekly Breaker email sharing ideas from different homes illustrated by examples of ideas in action.
• Digital screens in the Team Room at each of our care homes displaying photos, ideas, videos and focus points.
(Refer Part 2: Creating a culture of storytelling – Sharing the gold; and Appendices 1d, 8a, 8c)

iv) Build accountability around our Purpose and the new Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission standards – ‘MORE JOY’ CAMPAIGN – stories of person-centred care
In June 2019 we rolled out an internal campaign called ‘More Joy’ to strengthen awareness among team members of our Purpose and how it aligns with the ACQ standards. This is helping to guide and encourage everyday acts of person-centred care that bring our Purpose to life and give practical effect to the standards.
In particular, our More Joy campaign:
• Helps inform and educate our team members about our Purpose and Values;
• Builds accountability among team members to enable resident choice;
• Encourages team members to act responsibly to deliver person-centred care in accordance with our Values and the ACQ standards;
• Demonstrates how our Purpose gives practical effect to positive care outcomes for our residents; and,
• Is a practical expression of the new ACQ standards (1 July 2019).

The campaign included:
• Storyboard flip charts in every Team Room as an educational tool tied to reinforcing our Purpose and the ACQ standards;
• More Joy messages displayed on Team Room digital screen communications; and
• More Joy mugs given to every team member, and available in every care home Team Room to keep Purpose and the standards front of mind.

Reinforcing purpose and the standards: Our More Joy mugs feature stories of person-centred care, seen here in a slide from our digital screen communications (Appendix 1d: More Joy campaign; Part 2: Purpose and Values Promotion)

We’ve heard that you love our Joy mugs, so we have more on the way! Keep an eye out for them in mid-November and grab a cuppa with your team mates. Remember to leave them in your Team Room for everyone to enjoy.

#BringingJoy
Initiatives to drive strong governance

GOAL:
• Support consumer, team and leadership feedback
• Ensure Opal’s governing bodies review and act on feedback and data
• Build a culture that recognises the value of feedback on consumer outcomes
• Improve customer and care outcomes

2. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Our Feedback and Continuous Improvement system has been developed as part of Opal’s two-year Transformation Program. The program, which launched in January 2019, represents a major organisational change to help develop culture, processes and systems to ensure that we continue to:

• Focus consistently on the needs of our residents, relatives and team members throughout the customer journey;
• Have the tools, technology, training and support to help us manage and deliver a superior customer experience; and,
• Provide safe, high quality care and services in a consistent, repeatable and scalable way across all our homes.

(Refer Part 1: Organisational Performance – Transformation Project)

Feedback and Continuous Improvement

We are investing in building an effective organisation-wide governance system focused on ensuring consumer feedback informs continuous improvement.

It comprises two key components:

• **The inner loop** – where individual consumer feedback, interactions and learnings help drive change and improvement at the consumer and service level.
• **The outer loop** – where aggregated feedback and learnings help drive macro-change at an organisational and systems level.

The Inner Loop - effective customer feedback and complaint resolution

Our feedback and complaints management system is part of our Customer Experience Management Platform. It is designed to **help Opal team members** to:

• Identify customer feedback (positive and negative);
• Learn from the complaint at the level of the individual team member by:
  o Providing coaching or counselling (as per our HR policy) for a team member found at fault or responsible for a negative customer outcome; and,
  o Involving the team member in the investigation of the complaint.
• Learn from the complaint at management level by:
  o Sharing findings with the management team in regular Quality meetings;
  o Recording outcomes in our Customer Experience Management Platform; and,
  o For cases rated High or Extreme, the Regional General Manager is required to ‘approve’ case closure in the system, to ensure it has been properly resolved and learnings are captured/shared appropriately.
• Resolve feedback as quickly and effectively as possible by:
  o Enabling electronic submission of feedback via the Opal website (supplementing less efficient methods eg, hard copy forms in care home, direct conversation with a team member); and,
  o Enabling all team members system access to submit feedback.

This improves time taken for complaints to reach the right person (supplementary methods are less time efficient).

The system is designed to **ensure the person providing the feedback** knows the issue has been resolved by:

• Receiving an electronic resolution update (email) containing findings and next steps;
• Being involved in the resolution meeting, call or conversation to discuss the investigation, conclusions and status of the feedback with the relevant parties;
• Confirming the person providing the feedback is satisfied with the proposed decisions and/or actions, in order for the case to be closed in the system; and,
• Receiving an email confirming resolution. (Refer Case Study p8)
Initiatives to drive strong governance

GOAL:
• Support consumer, team and leadership feedback
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2. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

System notifications ensure:
• Relevant managers are notified in real time;
• Daily reports are distributed to key leaders across the organisation, showing all new cases created, along with priority and category;
• Status of each case is monitored; and,
• Service level standards are in place to ensure timely resolution.

At a service level, Care Home General Managers and Care Managers have access to:
• Feedback Management Dashboard with real-time information to understand:
  o Status of open cases;
  o Nature and category of all feedback received;
  o Any feedback cases requiring their attention;
  and are able to:
    o Create rectification or continuous improvement action plans resulting from individual consumer feedback; and,
    o Track the effective and timely completion of resolution actions.
• Action Plan Dashboards that show:
  o Progress, status and category of all action plan items;
  o Highlight action plans approaching and past the planned completion date; and,
  o When an action plan was created as a result of customer feedback (linking individual customer feedback and improvement actions).

Case study – Effective customer feedback and complaint resolution

A complaint was received at one of our homes from a visiting family member who witnessed an incident in the dining room of a team member providing poor service and not behaving respectfully towards a resident living with a cognitive impairment.

This feedback was received via email by the Care Manager, who entered it into our Customer Experience Management Platform and attached the complaint email. The General Manager then received an email notification that a new case had been raised for their attention. The General Manager investigated the complaint which involved interviewing two team members, the resident involved, and the complainant.

In the resulting action the team member involved was:
• Counselling;
• Assigned more Dementia training; and,
• Provided with immediate education on how to manage busy dining room service whilst attending to the needs of residents living with cognitive impairment.

The General Manager has indicated that the complainant was satisfied with the outcome, and an email was sent to the complainant advising that the matter had been closed.

The General Manager will follow up with the complainant 14 days after the closure to ensure the customer is still satisfied.
Initiatives to drive strong governance

GOAL:
• Support consumer, team and leadership feedback
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2. Feedback and Continuous Improvement (cont’d)

The Outer Loop – organisational-wide service improvement
Our Service Improvement framework is designed to recognise, prioritise and address opportunities that involve the entire organisation, resulting from the analysis of feedback and trend data from across the organisation.
In practice, it delivers:
a) Feedback and Complaint Reporting
A monthly ‘Closing the Loop’ Feedback report will be submitted to the following Opal governance committees, commencing January 2020:
• Service Improvement Committee
• Executive Leadership Team
• Clinical Governance Committee
• Board of Directors
It is a high-level dashboard showing:
• Breakdown of feedback received in the prior month;
• Complaints by category issues;
• Month-on-month changes in feedback by category;
• Compliments and suggestions;
• Clinical feedback by sub-category, status and priority;
• All High and Extreme priority feedback cases raised in the prior month;
• ‘Hot topics’ based on year-to-date trend data; and,
• A case study on a particular feedback case to highlight a key focus area or high prevalence issue.
(Appendix 2a: Closing the loop – The Big Picture; 2b: Case Study)

b) Service Improvement Committee
Chaired by the Chief Operating Officer and responsible for governing all organisation-wide service improvement initiatives to ensure the desired consumer and organisational outcomes are achieved, and has been designed to improve:
• Reviewing feedback and complaints data;
• Manage organisation-wide service improvement initiatives resulting from customer insights;
• Providing project management support;
• Coordination of program pilots; and,
• Evaluation of service improvement initiatives.
All improvement action plans and initiatives are logged in a single organisation-wide system, enabling the Service Improvement Committee to:
• Have visibility of all initiatives being undertaken by all care homes; and,
• Facilitate shared learning from an initiative in one home across the organisation.

(A) Process Improvement Team
Commenced in 2019 comprising two process improvement specialists, the team is responsible for driving process improvement, including:
• Implementing an Opal Management System that articulates our repeatable care, quality and business processes; and,
• Data analysis, process improvement, project coordination, and reporting.
(Appendix 2d – Feedback and Continuous Improvement at Opal)
Initiatives to drive strong governance

**GOAL:**
- Improve customer and care outcomes
- Ensure appropriate performance categories, indicators and assessments are set for the organisation to achieve its goals
- Build leadership accountability for performance

3. Organisational Performance – i) Balanced Scorecard

Our Values of Accountability and Excellence inform how we govern our organisational performance.

In 2019 we commenced development of a **Balanced Scorecard** using metrics to measure our care home and organisational performance in relevant performance categories.

Performance indicators are:
- Customer
- Clinical Care
- Quality
- Team
- Finance

**Balanced scorecard in practice:**
- Each performance category has a set of five measures against which performance will be tracked and assessed on a monthly basis;
- Each individual care home will have a Balanced Scorecard;
- The Balanced Scorecard will be a tool for the care home leadership team to track and measure performance;
- The Balanced Scorecard will be displayed in the Team Room to make goals visible and encourage accountability; and,
- Cumulative results from across the organisation will be tabled in an Opal Group Balanced Scorecard. This will become a regular agenda item at Opal Executive Team and Board meetings to assist leaders and Directors in having a clear line of sight to operational performance.

**Progress:**
- The Balanced Scorecard is in testing phase
- Piloting in Q1 2020
- Rollout across Opal in Q2 2020

**Expected outcomes:**
- Stronger organisational governance (eg. ability to see and act on high-risk indicators more quickly, ability to determine what’s working well and to act on learnings).
- Stronger leadership capability and accountability for performance
- Improved care outcomes
- Improved customer experience

(Appendix 1c – Balanced Scorecard)
Initiatives to drive strong governance

GOAL:
• Improve customer and care outcomes
• Ensure appropriate performance categories, indicators and assessments are set for the organisation to achieve its goals
• Build leadership accountability for performance

3. Organisational Performance – ii) Transformation program

Our two-year Transformation program commenced in February 2019. It is designed to improve the customer experience from a culture, process and technology perspective. It is rolling out across Opal and will:
• Enable greater focus on our residents and their needs, choices and preferences;
• Align culture, systems and process to our Purpose;
• Update practice in care homes to embed customer-centric process improvements;
• Improve complaints management processes and systems;
• Standardise repeatable processes through an Opal Management System;
• Enable greater consumer choice;
• Release more time to care; and,
• Improve customer and care outcomes.

Key elements of the program are:
• Customer experience design – enabling person-centred experiences for residents and relatives as an integral part of our service and care delivery;
• A bespoke Customer Relationship Management system – enabling a connected resident and relative experience at every stage of the customer journey;
• Voice of the Customer program – giving our customers a seat at the table; and,
• Introduction of the Opal Management System – providing team members with up-to-date process knowledge at their fingertips.

This project is bringing together person-centred service design, technology and systems innovation, and team training to improve the customer experience.

(Appendix 3a: Transformation Project Design Principles; 3b: Project Scope; 3c: Timeline)

Transformation in practice:
• Implementing a customer relationship management system, called GEM;
• Redesigning the admissions process to improve the customer experience;
• Launching a Feedback and continuous improvement system (Refer Part: Feedback and Continuous Improvement, and Appendix 2a, c and d);
• Kindness for Carers published and currently being reprinted (Refer Part 2: Creating a culture of storytelling);
• Welcome Home – a guide for new residents moving into an Opal care home reflecting our desired culture and person-centred approach to care
• ‘Navigating aged care’ and ‘Fees and charges explained’ – animated videos we created to provide consumers with simple, easy to understand information to improve the customer experience and reduce customer effort. Available on our website:
Initiatives to drive strong governance

GOAL:

- Improve customer and care outcomes
- Ensure appropriate performance categories, indicators and assessments are set for the organisation to achieve its goals
- Build leadership accountability for performance


In 2019 we identified a number of new roles in disciplines across the organisation to bolster our existing team. The following new roles will help ensure a greater degree of rigour and supervision in clinical governance, capability and operations:

- Head of Dementia Care, appointed and commencing 2020
  - To lead dementia care capability build across Opal
  - Successful candidate sourced from the UK
- Dementia Care Specialist, commencing 2020
  - To provide specialist support for dementia care capability build.
- Four additional Regional Support Managers to augment the existing Relief General Manager team of seven.
  - One in each State where we operate
  - To ensure every care home has a capable General Manager in charge and that coverage is available during extended sick leave or General Manager turnover periods.
- National Clinical Training Manager, commenced 2019
  - To lead clinical care capability build across Opal
- Regional Quality Advisors x 2, commenced 2019
  - To augment existing Quality team and provide still more robust quality and care practices
- Head of Operational Excellence (2018)
  - To lead the Lifestyle and Hospitality strategy including implementing new technology to improve care and service delivery
- Hospitality Consultants x 2
  - To provide regional oversight of food service, laundry and cleaning systems, introduce new technology and build team capability.
- Innovation and Design Manager, commenced 2019
  - To lead innovation and design for dementia care (built environment) and introduce new technology to support dementia care
- Client Services roles in larger homes (2018)
  - To augment existing team by providing specialist customer service expertise in larger homes
- Care Co-ordinator roles in larger homes (2018)
  - To add additional specialist clinical expertise to support clinical capability building in larger homes
- Trialling Care Coach roles in three homes (trial period of six months to determine effectiveness and care outcomes)
Initiatives to drive strong governance

GOAL:
• Support customer, team and leadership feedback and continuous improvement
• Ensure Opal’s governing bodies review and act on feedback and data
• Build a culture that recognises the value of feedback on consumer outcomes
• Improve customer and care outcomes

4. Engagement – i) Voice of the Customer program

To deliver person-centred care, providers need to be implementing practices that enable them to get real insights and feedback from customers. Listening to our customers’ feedback and deeply understanding their experience and expectations will help us to embed effective and continuous improvement.

We have invested in a Voice of the Customer (VoC) program to:
• Collecting relevant customer feedback and data to measure performance and outcomes;
• Establish customer KPIs to feed into the Customer metrics in our Balanced Scorecard (Refer Part 1: 3. Organisational Performance - Balanced scorecard, and Appendix 1c);
• Listen to our customers across a range of channels; and,
• Publish online reviews on Opal’s website (Refer to our recommendations to the Royal Commission, page 1)
• Inform co-design activities with consumers and community (Refer to our recommendations to the Royal Commission, page 1, and page 15 Engagement – Consumer and Community Engagement Framework - Co-Design)

Insights from that process will be managed through our continuous improvement governance system using a four-step process – Listen, Analyse, Report, Act - to inform the way we continually improve our services.
(Refer Part 1: 2. Feedback and continuous improvement)
(Appendix 4a: Our Four Step Process)

Voice of the Customer will aggregate insights from a number of sources:
• Resident pulse surveys that can be available to residents 24/7 and provide ‘real time’ data that captures resident sentiment across key quality of life indicators;
• Relative and representative pulse surveys that can be available anytime relatives or representatives visit the care home, and provide ‘real time’ data to capture relative and representative sentiment;
• Online customer reviews from the Opal website, Facebook, Google and third-party aged care review sites;
• Opal’s purpose-built feedback and complaints system capturing complaints, compliments and suggestions;
• Customer Effort survey results collected at point of complaint closure and billing query closure;
• Customer Effort survey results collected at point of visitor sign-out at each care home; and,
• Team Member Engagement pulse surveying.
(Appendix 4b: Voice of Customer - Data sources)
Initiatives to drive strong governance

GOAL:
• Support customer, team and leadership feedback and continuous improvement
• Ensure Opal’s governing bodies review and act on feedback and data
• Build a culture that recognises the value of feedback on consumer outcomes
• Improve customer and care outcomes

4. Engagement – i) Voice of the Customer program (continued)

It is hoped that
• Opal residents and their families will:
  o feel safe, encouraged and supported to give feedback about the care and services they are receiving; and,
  o be provided with additional mechanisms for providing feedback and the ability to remain anonymous or be identified.
• Customer-generated reviews will provide increased transparency for consumers. We believe this is essential to enabling transparency and choice for customers, as per our recommendations to the Royal Commission (Refer page 1)
• Feedback received will be used to:
  o improve the quality of care and services delivered to our residents and their families/representatives;
  o inform co-design activities with consumers and community; and,
  o drive our continuous improvement initiatives.
• Residents and their representatives will gain greater confidence that Opal uses feedback to improve the quality of their care and services.

Progress:
• The program was initiated in late 2018
• Customer generated reviews on the Opal website will commence in H1 2020
• The full Voice of the Customer platform will be implemented in H2

Know our customer better: Our Voice of the Customer program will provide insights from a number of sources. (Appendix 4b: Voice of Customer - Data sources)
Initiatives to drive strong governance

GOAL:
• Enable co-design with community to continually improve our care and services
• Ensure Opal’s governing bodies review and act on feedback and data
• Support customer, team and leadership feedback and continuous improvement
• Improve customer and care outcomes


We recognise the value of co-designing aspects of our care and services with consumers and community, to support the continual improvement of care delivery and customer experience. (Refer to our recommendations to the Royal Commission, page 1)

In 2019 we commenced development of our Consumer and Community Engagement Framework. It will be finalised and rolled out in 2020. The Framework is designed to assist us to:
• Create structured channels to enable co-design with consumers and community to improve our services and customer experience;
• Ensure consumers are supported in their engagement with us and have clear expectations around the purpose and intended outcomes of engagement;
• Support us to deliver our strategic goals: Customers First and Engage our Communities (Appendix 1b. Strategy on a page);
• Support delivery of the ACQ Standards on consumer and community engagement (Standard 8 – Organisational Governance); and,
• Improve care delivery

Our framework sets out guidelines around how co-design activities will work in practice. It includes the adoption of the Council for the Ageing (COTA) Pathways to Consumer Participation tool to help inform degrees of participation by consumers in service design and improvement. (Appendix 4c – COTA Pathways to Consumer Participation)

Some of the initiatives contained in our Framework are already in practice in some care homes. New initiatives are in development. Examples of those already underway in some homes are:
• Including residents in care home team recruitment;
• Forming resident committees within care homes, eg, Social and Welcome committees;
• Including resident representatives in care home operations committees, eg Workplace health and safety; and,
• Monthly resident and relative forums that enable engagement and participation in care home service planning, delivery and environment. (Appendix 4d: Engaging residents in Opal recruitment – case studies)

Our Framework includes the establishment in 2020 of an Opal Consumer Advisory Committee. The Consumer Advisory Committee will:
• Comprise consumers with lived-experience and a small number of Opal team
• Include Terms of Reference by which the Consumer Advisory Committee is appointed and governed
• Report to the Opal Board on a regular basis
• Support and enable co-design opportunities for consumers and community
Initiatives to drive strong governance

GOAL:
• Enable co-design with community to continually improve our care and services
• Ensure Opal's governing bodies review and act on feedback and data

• Support customer, team and leadership feedback and continuous improvement
• Improve customer and care outcomes


Progress:
• Some initiatives within the Consumer and Community Engagement framework are already in practice in some Opal homes, eg Engaging residents in Opal recruitment, and resident committees within care homes.
• These practices will be shared across all Opal homes for implementation in 2020.
• New initiatives developed as part of the Consumer and Community Engagement Framework will roll out in 2020. This includes the establishment of the Opal Consumer Advisory Committee.
• Terms of Reference for the Consumer Advisory Committee have been developed and the Committee will be established in 2020.
• The Consumer and Community Engagement framework will be published on our website and available to residents and community in 2020.

Embedding in practice: Including residents in care home recruitment

This has been successfully implemented in a number of Opal care homes in NSW, QLD, VIC and WA. Based on feedback and the methodology being used in these homes, we are developing a standard process for all Opal homes to include residents in the recruitment of all care roles.

Recruitment: Residents interview a candidate for a position at an Opal care home.
Part 2: Enabling workforce leadership through our Opal culture

For the purpose of this submission we are sharing key initiatives we have put into practice, or commenced, that:
• articulate our desired culture;
• demonstrate culture building in action; and
• are helping us to build strong current and future workforce leadership:

These ten initiatives demonstrate how we are building our culture by design to enable workforce leadership:
1. Purpose and Values promotion
2. CEO Weekly email
3. Opal language of respect and dignity
5. Reward and recognition
6. Building our qualified and capable team
7. Tertiary partnerships
8. Transformation program
9. Building a culture of storytelling – Sharing the gold
10. Listening and responding to our customers – Voice of the Customer

Again, these initiatives are designed to intersect with and support existing Opal policies and procedures.
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
• Promote our Purpose and Values
• Demonstrate our Purpose and Values in action

1. Purpose and Values Promotion

Our purpose statement, ‘To bring joy to those we care for’, was created internally in August 2018. At the same time, a fourth value – ‘Excellence’ – was added to the existing three to reflect our focus on continuous improvement. (Appendix 1a – Opal Purpose and Values)

Our Purpose and Values underpin everything we do.

Embedding in practice:
• Consistent promotion of our Purpose and Values across Opal through:
  o Leadership and team meeting discussions
  o Digital screens in every Team Room with visual messages suitable for team members who do not have English as a first language (Refer Part 2: 9 Storytelling)
  o Opal computer screensaver banners
  o Performance conversations
  o CEO Weekly Email (Refer Part 2: 2 CEO Weekly email)
  o Opal ‘Joy’ mugs, flip boards and posters (Refer Part 1: Purpose and Values) to reinforce our Purpose and the ACQ standards
  o Care home newsletters for residents, relatives and community
  o Resident and relative meetings
  o Opal intranet and website
  o Purpose and Values posters displayed in common areas of every care home
  o Event communications
  o Opal communications including Opal Moments, collateral, recruitment, resident and relative communications, supplier and strategic partner communications
  o Board meeting discussions

Impact on workforce leadership:
• Board and executive leadership team use Purpose and Values to make decisions and set strategy
• Builds awareness, understanding and accountability for individual team members around a set of desired behaviours
• Powers alignment of 8,500+ team members around a common goal ‘To bring joy to those we care for’.
• Enables shared learning around delivering our Purpose. Eg. A Maintenance Officer built an ice-cream cart to wheel through the home and give out ice-creams to residents. The team received very positive feedback from residents and the story was shared around Opal. Now a number of other Opal homes have built ice-cream carts that residents can manage and enjoy handing out ice-creams.

Example joy mugs and flip boards
(Refer Part 1: Clear Purpose, Values, Vision and Strategy; Appendix 1d – More Joy campaign)
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
• Articulate and model our desired culture
• Provide guidance around what 'good' looks like

• Inspire a shared vision around our Opal Purpose, Values and goals
• Enable direct communication between our CEO and team members

2. CEO Weekly Email

Direct and transparent communication from the CEO is powerful in creating a shared vision and delivering meaningful outcomes.
• Written by our CEO to all team members
• A reflection from the CEO on what she has observed and experienced that week across our Opal homes and in Home Office.

(Appendix 5a: a sample of CEO weekly emails)
The message shares stories of:
• Individuals, teams and teamwork
• Moments of joy created by our teams for residents and families
• Our aspirations and challenges as an organisation
• Celebrating things that go well
• Sharing learnings from things that don’t go well
• Encouraging and supporting our team

How it is helping to build workforce leadership:
• Provides a direct line of communication between CEO and ~2,000 team members with an Opal email address, with a further ~6,500 team accessing it via hard copy in Team Rooms
• Enables feedback directly from team member to CEO
• Transparent and consistent messaging to guide culture and leadership, and values
• Inspires team members around what’s working well, new ideas from our homes, and where improvements can be made
• Helps to build a culture of inclusion and continuous learning

An example of messaging in the CEO Weekly Email

“The number one thing that impacts happiness, no matter which research you look at, is loving relationships. To love and be loved. That’s why praise and encouragement are the best gifts you can give anyone. People need to have their contribution acknowledged, to know that they are making a difference.”
- Rachel Argaman, CEO Opal Aged Care
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
- Articulate and model our desired culture
- Provide guidance around what ‘good’ looks like at Opal
- Keep our residents at the centre of everything we do
- Provide positive experiences for our customers

3. Our Opal Language of Respect and Dignity

We know that the language we use at Opal is an expression of our culture and our customer service. It is the golden thread that weaves through the fabric of our culture and “the way we do things around here”. It is person-centred, representing what we believe in, what we stand for, and how we work.

Embedding in practice:
- We have created language guidelines: ‘Our Opal language of respect and dignity’ identifying key words and phrases that we should and should not use. For example we say: ‘Care home’ not facility; ‘Team’ not staff; ‘General Manager’ not Facility Manager.
- The guidelines are available on our intranet and shared among teams by care home leaders, with new team members and strategic partners.
- Individuals at all levels of the organisation are respectfully encouraged to be mindful of their language.

Impact on culture, governance and leadership:
- Team members and residents have observed that using person-centred language:
  o positively informs our mindset;
  o keeps our residents at the heart of what we do; and,
  o has a positive impact on customers.
- We recognise that the use of clinical language in aged care is deeply embedded, particularly in people who have worked in the sector for a long time. We believe constant demonstration of our language and consistently leading by example, will over time, help us to make our language of respect and dignity ‘the norm’ at Opal.

(Appendix 5b - Opal language of dignity and respect)
Building workforce leadership

**GOAL:**
- Articulate and model our desired culture
- Provide guidance around what ‘good’ looks like at Opal

4. Five Tenets of Leadership

We have introduced the Kouzes and Posner model of leadership (described in their book, *The Leadership Challenge*) across Opal, with leadership training and development for our teams based on five tenets:
- **Model the way** – clarify values and set the example
- **Inspire a shared vision** – enlist others in a vision that appeals to shared aspirations
- **Challenge the process** – experiment by generating small wins and learning from experience
- **Enable others to act** – strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence
- **Encourage the heart** – recognise contributions and create a spirit of community

Using language phrases such as: “How are we challenging the process? How are you enabling others to act?” is becoming more common across our homes. With consistent focus we believe keeping our desired leadership behaviours top of mind this will help build the capability of our team.

(Appendix 6a - The Leadership Challenge, Kouzes and Posner)

**Transcend leadership theory into daily practice**
- Build leadership capability across all levels of our organisation

Ledership in practice:
- **Leadership Foundations program** – based on *The Leadership Challenge* and is being delivered to all new and frontline leaders across Opal.
  - To date this training has been conducted across 77% of care homes.
- **Making goals visible** - demonstrated through tangible actions to create shared accountability in the team, eg leadership focus written up on white boards in Team Rooms, and promotion of the five tenets on Team Room screens
- **Modeling good governance** – ensuring clear lines of sight and transparency across leadership levels to operational performance and risk.
  - Eg. sharing clinical indicator data with team and executives through Leadership team meetings
- **Personal accountability** – every people leader has a personal ‘leadership stand’ whereby they articulate a commitment to improving aspects of their own leadership style.
  - It is discussed with their manager, shared and discussed with team and executives at care home Leadership team meetings.
- **Team engagement** – team culture surveys were traditionally conducted every second year since 2012 by Best Practice Australia
  - Most recently (Nov 2018) Opal’s engagement score was 62%, representing a Culture of Success in the Best Practice Australia measure of culture.
  - More regular team engagement pulse surveys are planned to commence in early 2020 with the rollout of Opal’s Voice of the Customer program (Refer Part 1: Engagement – Voice of the Customer)
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
- Articulate and model our desired culture
- Provide guidance around what ‘good’ looks like at Opal

4. Five Tenets of Leadership (continued)

Example of making goals visible using team whiteboards

Team whiteboards – One of our Opal homes created a whiteboard dashboard that is updated weekly to track and measure performance against key goals. This idea has now been implemented across all Opal homes.

(Appendix 6b: Examples of Team Room whiteboard)

- Transcend leadership theory into daily practice
- Build leadership capability across all levels of our organisation

Progress:
- Training in the Leadership Foundation program has been rolled out across 77% of our care homes
- Our Future Leaders program will roll out in 2020
- Both programs are based on the philosophy of The Leadership Challenge

(Appendix 6a: The Leadership Challenge; and refer to Part 2: Building our capable and qualified team)
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
- Articulate and model our desired culture
- Provide guidance around what ‘good’ looks like at Opal
- Build a culture where success is recognised and learnings are shared
- Build leadership capability across all levels of our organisation

5. Recognition and Reward

The way we recognise and reward our team is a demonstration of one of our five leadership tenets: Encourage the heart (Kouzes and Posner).

Encouraging the heart challenges us to care about our people while focusing on our organisational goals. It means that as leaders we strive to pay attention, personalise recognition, relate stories about success and values, celebrate together, and build a spirit of community.

Recognition in practice:
In addition to sharing moments of joy via Team Room screens and the CEO Weekly email (refer Part 2.2 Sample of CEO Weekly Emails, and Part 2.9 Creating a culture of storytelling):
- In 2019 new leadership awards introduced at annual Night to Shine event
  - Five new awards presented, each based on one of the five tenets
    - Modelling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act, and Encouraging the Heart
  - Recognising care home team members who actively live our values and lead by example among our teams, residents and families.

(Appendix 6c – Leadership awards 2019)
- Team Member of the Month awards linked to our Values
  - Nominated by team members and awarded in our care homes and Home Office
- Service Awards recognise length of service in five year increments from five years onwards.
  - Given the number of long serving team at Opal, feedback from team members is that service recognition is highly valued
  - A total of 1,142 team received service awards in 2019
  - 5 team members for 40 years, 3 for 35 years, 13 for 30 years, 19 for 25 years, 40 for 20 years, 105 for 15 years, 267 for 10 years, 690 for 5 years
- Opal Scholarships offer financial support for tertiary education in recognition of good performance and service to Opal residents and team

• Focusing on internal promotion
  - GROW program, that supports career progression and promotion, implemented (2019) to identify and coach high potential registered nurses
  - 108 registered nurses have a GROW plan in place
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
• Enable training and development pathways for existing and future team
• Develop training curriculum specific to aged care

• Build capability in dementia care across the organisation
• Build leadership capability across all levels of our organisation

6. Building our Qualified and Capable Team

The aged care workforce needs to grow from 336,000 to 980,000 by 2050 to meet demand. (Ref: The Aged Care Workforce Report, Australian Department of Health)

We endorse the Aged Care Taskforce Strategy and HESTA’s Transforming Aged Care reports outlining recommendations regarding the development of the current and future workforce in aged care.

We seek to employ and promote people who are capable, qualified and aligned with our Values through a number of initiatives described below.

This is reflected in:
• how we attract, recruit and onboard new team members
• The extent to which our Purpose and Values underpin our recruitment efforts
• the way we advertise new roles, recruit and select team members anchored in our firm belief that ‘companies don’t succeed, people do.’
• how we conduct reference checks, police checks and drug testing (clinical care team)
• the content of our letters of offer
• our Code of Conduct
• our induction program
• our defined career and qualification pathways

The following initiatives are outlined in detail in our submission to the Royal Commission titled ‘Preparing our future workforce’.

### Capability building in practice:

**Training and developing our team:**
- **Opal Scholarships program**
  - 55 scholarships awarded in 2019 across a range of aged care sector disciplines. (Appendix 7a - Opal Scholarships 2019)
- **Graduate Registered Nurse Program** (intake of 34 in 2019)
- **Future Leaders Program**
  - The structured 12-month program launching in 2020 will focus on developing our future leaders to build skills and confidence as they progress through the program.
  - Participants will learn how to develop their own personal leadership capabilities, as outlined in Kouzes & Posner’s Leadership Challenge, and focus on areas that are critical to their development in leading high-performing teams.
- **GROW plan**
  - Individual personal development plans were developed in 2019 for a number of team members identified as high potential future leaders
  - 108 RNs now have a GROW plan in place
- **Leadership Transition Program** for clinical nurse leaders who are being promoted into senior leadership positions. The aim of the program is to support Care Managers to make successful transitions into Care Home General Manager roles and to support our leadership pipeline with qualified leaders. The program will commence in 2020.
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
- Enable training and development pathways for existing and future team
- Develop training curriculum specific to aged care
- Build capability in dementia care across the organisation
- Build leadership capability across all levels of our organisation

6. Building our Qualified and Capable Team - continued

- Leadership Foundations Program – for all new leaders, based on The Leadership Challenge, Kouzes and Posner (rolled out in 77% of care homes)

- General Manager and Care Manager Leadership Forums (May 2019, Oct 2019)
  - GM Forum training and development topics:
    - Opal vision and strategy; The Leadership Challenge; communication skills; Accidental Counsellor (Relationships NSW); customer experience; model of care; Aged Care Quality Standards; best practice, storytelling, and idea sharing
  - CM Forum training and development topics:
    - Opal vision and strategy; The Leadership Challenge; clinical leadership and decision making; wound care; consumer engagement; person-centred care

- Registered Nurse Leadership Training (190 RNs completed CPD training 2017, 100 completed follow up training 2018)
- Online learning programs across a range of disciplines (including Dementia Awareness – 6,089 team members completed 2019, ACQ Standards – 5,959 team members completed 2019)
- Clinical and dementia care training and development programs (in partnership with Montessori Consulting and other clinical subject matter experts)

Strategic partnerships in education:

(i) Western Sydney University (WSU), Torrens University, University of Tasmania (UTAS)
  - Co-created Graduate Certificate in Aged Care with WSU
    - Approx 30 enrolments since course commenced in 2017
    - 8 graduates to date in the Grad Certificate course
    - 1 graduate in the Diploma course
  - Torrens University partnership includes:
    - Student placements for Enrolled nurses
    - Discounted course fees for Opal team members
    - Participation in Opal Scholarships program – 13 Lifestyle Coordinators are participating in Diploma of Health & Wellbeing (Ageing) through the Opal Scholarship Program
    - Collaboration with Design faculty for student projects in place
  - UTAS partnership to help build capability in dementia care across Opal, includes:
    - HECS free Diploma of Dementia Care course for all Opal team members
    - 55 team members applied and approved for Oct 2019 intake
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
- Enable training and development pathways for existing and future team
- Develop training curriculum specific to aged care
- Build capability in dementia care across the organisation
- Build leadership capability across all levels of our organisation

6. Building our qualified and capable team (continued)

(ii) Montessori Consulting partnership to build capability in dementia care through:
- training in techniques to better manage the needs of people living with dementia
- piloting Montessori environments in Memory Support areas in two homes for a period of six months (from March 2020).
- Montessori pilots in planning, homes selected and care home team training underway.
- two-day, face-to-face Dementia Care Training launched to train all Opal team members (28 sessions held to-date, covering 626 team members, additional 300 team members scheduled to be trained by Feb 2020.)
- Opal has purchased licencing training rights to enable ongoing training throughout the organisation
- 40 master trainers within Opal have completed a Train the Trainer course to date (more planned), to enable continuous training roll out, which will exceed our target of 10% of all 8500+ Opal team members trained by Feb 2020.

(iii) Australian College of Nursing, TAFE and select registered training organisations
- ACN is the official partner of our Graduate Nurse Program and Platinum Affiliate partner, which gives Opal team members:
  - Access to leadership and clinical training opportunities
  - Discounted membership and training fees
  - National nursing forum registrations
  - Graduate Nurse Program launched in 2019 with 34 participants
  - 2020 program in planning phase with ACN

Career Trackers and Career Seekers partnership
- to help build cultural competency in our organisation
- to forge and support career pathways into aged care for Indigenous university students and skilled refugees
- to support our ability to deliver person-centred care
- four Indigenous university student interns and two Career Seekers interns commenced in Home Office in 2019

(Refer Part 2.5: Recognition and Reward)
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
- Enable strong training and development pathways for existing and future team
- Create opportunities for innovation in education and training
- Build capability in dementia care across the organisation
- Build leadership capability across all levels of our organisation

7. Tertiary Education Partnerships

Tertiary partnerships are essential to a workplace where lifelong learning is valued and encouraged.
We have built, and continue to build, strategic partnerships with universities and colleges that are aligned to our Purpose and Values to:
- help build the capability of our team;
- attract new people into a career in aged care;
- enable innovation in education; and,
- offer professional development opportunities that help our teams to do their best work.

Embedding in practice:
- **Western Sydney University** partnership established in 2016 to create new pathways for students into aged care. Opal led a co-creation project with WSU to create new qualifications, the Graduate Diploma in Aged Care
- **Torrens University partnership** established in 2018, making tertiary education more accessible to Opal team members by offering discounted course fees and student placements for enrolled nurses.
  - We are co-authoring a research paper on empathy testing to create a tool to test empathy in the recruitment process, with a view towards bringing people with the right attributes to work in aged care.
- **University of Tasmania** partnership established in 2019 to build capability in dementia care across Opal through its world renowned Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, which offers Opal team diploma studies in dementia that are HECS free
- **Australian College of Nursing** Platinum affiliate, ACN has conducted leadership training and is our partner in the Registered Grad Nurse program
- **Career Trackers and Career Seekers** we are exposing young Indigenous students and skilled refugees to a career in aged care
- **Other major universities** for student placements
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
- Enable strong training and development pathways for existing and future team
- Create opportunities for innovation in education and training
- Build capability in dementia care across the organisation
- Build leadership capability across all levels of our organisation

7. Tertiary Education Partnerships (continued)

Examples of Opal-led innovation through tertiary partnerships

1. Western Sydney University
We partnered with WSU to develop post graduate qualifications in aged care, the Graduate Certificate and Diploma of Aged Care Management. This course was developed and launched for current and future Opal care home leaders under the Opal Scholarships Program. Approximately 30 team members have enrolled since the course commenced in 2017, with eight graduates to date in the Graduate Certificate course and one in the Diploma course. Opal has now shared this program with other aged care providers to build capability across the sector.

UWS: Opal’s Chairman congratulates three team members graduating in the Diploma of Aged Care program

2. Torrens University Scholarships
Team members in Lifestyle roles accessing the Opal Scholarship program in 2019 applied for and were awarded places in Torrens’ Diploma of Health and Wellbeing (Ageing). This program will help to build Lifestyle team capability.

3. Torrens University research
Opal and Torrens are co-authoring a research paper on empathy testing for recruitment purposes. The aim is to develop a tool for testing empathy in the recruitment process to bring people with the right attributes into the aged care sector
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
• Amplify our purpose to bring joy to those we care for
• Ensure that our culture and practices are more customer-centric, consistent and repeatable across all our care homes

• Build leadership capability across Opal
• Improve care outcomes for our customers

8. Transformation Program

Our two-year Transformation Program is being rolled out across Opal and is integral to building our workforce leadership. It is outlined in more detail in Part 1: Organisational Performance – ii) Transformation Program.

Building workforce leadership through the Transformation program

Our Transformation Program is integral to building workforce leadership. That leadership enables and drives:
• Delivery of our Purpose for the benefit of our residents, families and communities
• Individual and leadership accountability for consumer outcomes
• Excellence in service delivery and continual improvement
• An engaged and capable Opal team

Examples of how the Transformation program is building workforce leadership:

i) Customer experience design – INCREASING OUR FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER
Stage 1 of the program launched in 2019 with the rollout of a new Admissions process to ease the pathway into care for residents and relatives. This requires care home leadership teams to focus more intently on customer service, resident induction and the ways in which they learn, track and act on customer insights.

ii) Customer Relationship Management system – BUILDING ACCOUNTABILITY
Our new Customer Relationship Management system requires care home leaders to be accountable, proactive and transparent both internally (to executive and Board level) and with customers with all actions and interactions now tracked and recorded electronically.

iii) Voice of the Customer – FOSTERING RESPONSIVENESS
Our Voice of the Customer program will commence in early 2020 and will enable customers to review our care and services, including leaving reviews on the Opal website. Care home General Managers will be required to respond to customer reviews within 24 hours and take necessary action to address feedback. This direct feedback mechanism is designed to improve accountability and responsiveness for leaders and transparency for customers.

iv) Opal Management System – COMMITTING TO CLARITY AND RELIABILITY
In preparation for the new Opal Management System leaders are required to update any business processes they own to ensure the processes are fit for purpose and can be easily followed. This work is in progress across Opal and is designed to build greater accountability, risk-awareness and ownership of the processes that govern our work practices.
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
- Demonstrate our Purpose and Values in action
- Align our team around our Purpose and Values

9. Creating a Culture of Storytelling – ‘Sharing the gold’

We work best as a team when we respect and learn from each other. We are building a culture of storytelling within Opal, and sharing stories across multiple communication channels, so that the many wonderful examples of excellent care that take place in our care homes every day are amplified, and our teams feel recognised, valued and supported across Opal. We call it ‘sharing the gold’.

We held a Storytelling Workshop at our Leadership Forum with all GMs in May 2019 to teach storytelling skills as a leadership capability. We are Sharing the Gold by identifying best practices and sharing these across all our homes.

1) Engaging team and consumers through digital and social media
We are creating and sharing stories that demonstrate our Purpose and provide consumers with a transparent view of how we live our culture and deliver person-centred care:
- Stories submitted by team members are shared daily on social media
- Video stories of residents living with meaning, joy and purpose are shared on social and via our website, e.g. Jim’s Story
- Our contributions, likes and shares are growing
- Residents and families are engaged when featuring in stories
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
• Demonstrate our Purpose and Values in action
• Align our team around our Purpose and Values

• Engage our communities
• Connect our Purpose and Values to customer outcomes

9. Creating a Culture of Storytelling – ‘Sharing the gold’ (continued)

ii) Digital screens in Team Rooms
Over 6,200 members of our Team members do not use a computer to perform their role and therefore do not have an Opal email address. In addition, a significant proportion of team members do not have English as a first language. To help overcome these challenges, we have installed digital screens in every Team Room to:
• Improve the reach, quality and timeliness of our internal communications
Content is bespoke and:
• Features short, visual messages for people without English as a first language
• Created and managed centrally through Home Office; and,
• Intended to raise awareness about and advance:
  o our Opal culture;
  o leadership messages;
  o good work practices;
  o desired behaviours;
  o stories of joy from around our homes;
  o safety alerts; and,
  o events and other information.
Content is updated on demand and customised for specific groups of team members based on need, eg. by region, clinical need (for example local health alerts) or at an individual care home level.
Screens are on for 20 hours per day, seven days per week, to cover all shifts. They are updated two to three times weekly.
(Appendix 8a – Examples of digital team room screen messaging)

Story sharing in practice:
Screens are an effective means to communicate real-time updates around care, hospitality, development and governance, as well as sharing inspiring Opal stories with team members, and supporting delivery of ACQ Standards including: 1 - Consumer Dignity and Choice, 6 - Feedback and Complaints, 7 - Human Resources, 8 - Organisational Governance.

Progress
• Screens introduced in October 2019
• Feedback to date has been positive
• Every care home has contributed content to date
• Team pulse surveys seeking feedback on screen content will be conducted when our Voice of Customer program is introduced in early 2020 and will enable further continuous improvement in Team communication.

Improving communication
Since Team Room digital screens rolled out in Oct 2019, we have received a range of suggestions and ideas from care teams across Opal. This is helping us to refine and improve internal communications. Eg. an RN advised that many Team members did not know where all our care homes are located. All care homes featured in stories now include suburb and state, and we have developed regional maps identifying each home to help educate our team about our wider Opal network, particularly for those who have English as a second language where visual communications are more effective than written.
GOAL:
• Demonstrate our Purpose and Values in action
• Align our team around our Purpose and Values
• Engage our communities
• Connect our Purpose and Values to customer outcomes

9. Creating a culture of storytelling – ‘Sharing the gold’ (continued)

iii) Kindness for Carers
A Team member at Opal Glenmere identified the need for a resource to support families admitting loved ones living with dementia into care. She hand made a paper booklet containing words of comfort and advice, which she gave to families. Based on the positive feedback, we reproduced and published the book as an official Opal resource and have made it available to families at all of our care homes.
(Appendix 8b – Kindness for Carers)

Acting on feedback to improve customer service
Due to its popularity with families, Kindness for Carers is now going into a second print run and will be distributed to all Opal care homes and available to the public via the Opal website as a free e-book. It will incorporate feedback from residents and team to include other conditions of ageing as well as dementia.

Image: The original support booklet created by a team member (left) and the version it inspired - Kindness for Carers.
GOAL:
- Demonstrate our Purpose and Values in action
- Align our team around our Purpose and Values

9. Creating a Culture of Storytelling – ‘Sharing the gold’ (continued)

iv) Meaningful Mates
Delivering on our Purpose, and providing person-centred care, means finding ways to prevent loneliness, disconnection and isolation among our residents. Meaningful Mates is an organisation-wide ‘buddy system’ that is based on existing initiatives in Opal homes in Queensland and New South Wales.

In June 2019, we rolled out our Meaningful Mates initiative to help:
- build trusting and genuine relationships between our team and our residents; and,
- gain a deeper understanding of residents’ personal preferences and the things that bring them joy.

How it works:
- Every Team member is paired with a resident to be their Meaningful Mate and commits to spend time with them to forge deeper personal connections and to ‘get to know them’ better.
- Team members spend at least 15 minutes per shift in a meaningful interaction with the resident.
- We ensure every resident has a Meaningful Mate
- Team members record new insights and information about their Meaningful Mate in their care plan to help customise care and services for the resident and transfer knowledge to the care team.

Progress:
Team members have observed that:
- Team are having increasing quality one-on-one engagement with residents;
- Their own sense of fulfilment and connection to their work is enhanced; and,
- Residents enjoy having specific personal interest in them from a team member.

Meaningful Mates in practice
There are countless examples of friendship and kindness demonstrated daily through our Meaningful Mates program. We believe that it is not one story alone, but the hundreds of small stories of desired behaviour happening throughout an organisation that help to define its culture. The program also helps to reinforce Standard 1 – Consumer Dignity and Choice.

Enabling meaningful work:
Our General Manager is a Meaningful Mate to a resident who is a former local dignitary. Since becoming his Mate, our General Manager introduced this resident to a governance committee in his local shire and he has now become a Committee Member. He is delighted to continue to contribute to his community in this way.
GOAL:
- Demonstrate our Purpose and Values in action
- Align our team around our Purpose and Values

• Engage our communities
• Connect our Purpose and Values to customer outcomes

9. Creating a Culture of Storytelling – ‘Sharing the gold’ (continued)

Contributing at home:
We have a resident who has always loved flowers. Her Meaningful Mate works in our laundry. She takes our resident out into the garden everyday and they pick flowers together, then arrange them in vases to place around the home for everyone to enjoy. This gives our resident a sense of purpose and an opportunity to pursue a favourite pastime at home.

Building personal friendships:
A resident, Ms W, has not been able to leave her room easily for many months. Her Meaningful Mate, an Assistant in Nursing, pops in each day to spend quality time with her. In a recent conversation, Ms W mentioned how much she loves and misses cats. Our AIN borrowed a cat from another resident, Mrs G, and took it to visit Ms W, who was thrilled. The next day, our AIN asked Mrs G if she would like to bring the cat to visit the lady herself, which she did. Mrs G and her cat now visit Ms W regularly and they have formed a deep friendship.

Enabling personal connections: We have created ‘thank you’ cards featuring our More Joy characters and made them available for our Meaningful Mates to use.
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:
- Demonstrate our Purpose and Values in action
- Align our team around our Purpose and Values

9. Creating a Culture of Storytelling – ‘Sharing the gold’ (continued)

v) Wishing Well
Inspired to find ways to live our Purpose and get to know our residents more deeply, one of our Sydney homes created the Opal Wishing Well.
- Residents and family put their wishes into a Wishing Well in the home and wishes are drawn so the team can arrange for each to be fulfilled.
- Feedback from residents and team members was so positive that it was rolled out to every Opal home in June 2019.
- Opal provided every care home with a Wishing Well that could be painted and decorated to create their own bespoke well.
- Wishing Well stories are shared across Opal care homes and communities through our communications channels

Progress:
All homes have a wishing well and teams have reported very positive outcomes for residents and families who have had their wishes fulfilled.

Governance and leadership:
- Helps to bring practical effect to our Purpose;
- Demonstrates and recognises desired behaviours;
- Enables shared learning about an individual’s preferences;
- Empowers team members to act to bring residents’ wishes to life (Refer Part 1: Leadership tenets - Enable others to act); and,
- Helps deliver the ACQ standards (Standard 1 – Dignity and Choice).

Wishing Well in practice
Examples of resident feedback from wishes that have been granted include:
- A resident who had not been to an NRL Grand Final since he was a child was thrilled to attend this year’s Grand Final with his Meaningful Mate. (Refer to p33 Meaningful Mates)
- A resident who wanted budgerigars was delighted to be given two budgies to keep as pets in the home.
- A resident requested dinner at a restaurant with his family, culminating in a special family outing to the local steakhouse.
- A resident and her daughter had the time of their life on a joy flight in a helicopter.
- A fast food fan enjoyed a trip to the local McDonalds drive-through.
- A car enthusiast enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime ride in a Ferrari
- Opal teamed up with the NDIS to enable a resident who had always loved horses to go horseback riding.
Building workforce leadership

GOAL:

- Support customer, team and leadership feedback and continuous improvement
- Ensure Opal’s governing bodies review and act on feedback and data
- Build a culture that recognises the value of feedback on consumer outcomes
- Improve customer and care outcomes

10. Listening and Responding to our Customers – Voice of the Customer

To deliver person-centred care, providers need to be implementing practices that enable them to gain real insights and feedback from customers.


Building workforce leadership through Voice of the Customer

The program is critical to building workforce leadership as:

- An enabler to deliver our Purpose by deeply understanding our customers;
- A driver of leadership accountability at all levels of the organisation to:
  - Enable and encourage customer and team feedback;
  - Ensure transparency at all leadership levels on performance and risk
  - Be transparent with customers about our processes and actions;
  - Respond in an appropriate way and a timely manner; and,
  - Deliver continuous improvement.
- Demonstrate to our customers that their feedback has informed service delivery improvements;
- A driver of high performing teams; and,
- A key indicator of care and service improvement for our customers.

Image: Leaders will go through a four-step process to listen, analyse, report and act on feedback and insights received via our Voice of the Customer program.

(Appendix 4a: Four Step Process)
Appendices

1. Purpose, Vision, Values and Strategy – embedding the Opal culture
   a. Opal Culture and Values
   b. Opal Strategy on a Page
   c. Balanced Scorecard
   d. More Joy campaign
2. Risk Framework – Feedback and Continuous Improvement
   a. Closing the loop – The Big Picture
   b. Closing the loop – Case study
   c. Daily Feedback Report
   d. Feedback and Continuous Improvement at Opal
3. Transformation Program
   a. Transformation Program Design Principles
   b. Transformation Project Scope
   c. Transformation Timeline
4. Engagement
   a. Opal Voice of the Customer - Our 4 step process
   b. Opal Voice of the Customer - Data sources
   c. COTA Pathways to consumer participation
   d. Engaging residents in Opal recruitment – case studies
   e. Residents have their say when hiring new staff. HelloCare article
5. Opal language of respect and dignity
   a. A sample of CEO weekly emails
   b. Opal language of dignity and respect
   a. The Leadership Challenge, Kouzes and Posner
   b. Examples of Team Room whiteboards
   c. Leadership Awards 2019
7. Building our capable and qualified team
   a. Opal Scholarships 2019
8. Creating a culture of storytelling - ‘Sharing the gold’
   a. Examples of Team Room screen messaging
   b. Kindness for Carers