

### Volunteer Update

What a wonderful way to begin the year, with 2026 officially declared the **International Volunteer Year**. This global recognition highlights volunteerism as a key driver of sustainable development and encourages communities everywhere to champion the power of volunteers in creating stronger, more connected societies. At Warrigal, this is something we see every single day, and it gives us great pride to celebrate the extraordinary contribution of our **574** volunteers.

Across Warrigal, volunteers bring their unique skills, passions, and personalities to a wide range of roles. From spending time one on one with residents, assisting with lifestyle programs, supporting outings, gardening, bus driving, pastoral care, Church services, helping in the Cafes, Op Shop and Auxiliaries, and contributing behind the scenes, every role plays an important part in enriching the lives of older people. No matter how often you volunteer, every time you walk through our doors you bring warmth, kindness, generosity, and genuine connection. Your presence not only brightens the day of our residents, but also supports families and staff, and helps create the vibrant and caring communities we are so proud of.

The year is moving quickly, and I feel genuinely excited about what lies ahead in 2026. With the continued passion, dedication, and heart of our volunteers, I know this will be another remarkable year filled with meaningful moments, new opportunities, and lasting impact.

Thank you for all that you do to create a world where older people feel **known, loved, and connected**.

**Michelle Chate**  
Volunteer Manager



### Fish n Chips at APR

At our Volunteer Christmas events, we set a fun challenge for our Lifestyle Team Leaders to come dressed as Warrigal themed elves.

The winning homes, Albion Park Rail and Bundanoon, were each awarded \$150 to spend on something special for their residents. Congratulations to both teams for embracing the challenge and making it such a memorable part of our Christmas celebrations.

Albion Park Rail recently used their prize to host a Fish and Chips afternoon for residents, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. It was wonderful to see residents come together to share a relaxed and enjoyable experience.



# Volunteer Feedback Survey Results

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the 2025 Volunteer Feedback Survey. We received a significant amount of valuable feedback, and your insights play an important role in shaping and strengthening our volunteer program.

Your feedback helps ensure our programs continue to meet the needs of our residents, provide meaningful and rewarding roles for volunteers, and identify opportunities for improvement. Most importantly, it helps us ensure that our volunteers feel valued, supported, and recognised as an essential part of our workforce.



## Return and Earn



Throughout 2025, Warrigal Central has been participating in the Return and Earn program, collecting cans and bottles thanks to the wonderful efforts of volunteer Lily. Through her dedication, over \$300 was raised, which was used to purchase an interactive ginger cat for the Memory Support Unit at Coniston.

Last month, Lily visited Coniston to present the cat to the residents. It was a very special moment, and the smiles said it all. The cat was an instant hit, with residents immediately engaging, patting, and interacting with it. What a beautiful example of how small acts of kindness can make a meaningful difference.



## Know Me Program

The Know Me Program Phase 4 commenced in February, with 15 new volunteer students participating in visits with residents living with dementia over the next 16 weeks.

These volunteers will receive training and undertake reminiscence therapy with residents, as well as develop a 4 minute life story video that can be viewed by staff and allied health professionals to support person centred care.

## Deputy Chairmain Awarded OAM



Warrigal's Deputy Chairman, Roger Downs, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2026 Australia Day Honours. This prestigious national recognition celebrates his decades of voluntary service to the Illawarra community.

Throughout his 40 year legal career with Kells Lawyers in Wollongong, Roger has generously shared his expertise to support community organisations, providing legal advice, governance guidance, and leadership to organisations serving some of our region's most vulnerable people.

Roger's commitment to volunteering has also shaped Warrigal for nearly three decades. Since joining Warrigal in 1997, he has served as a Board Director, Vice Chairman, and Chair of the Board Risk and Audit Committee, and continues to contribute through his ongoing Board and committee roles. His leadership has played an important role in strengthening Warrigal's governance and quality.

Roger's dedication reflects the true spirit of volunteerism and the meaningful impact volunteers can have within their community.

*"Our volunteer team shares a strong bond, with laughter being the best medicine!"*

*Julianne, Warrigal Volunteer*

## Warrigal Op Shop

Congratulations to the winners of our Warrigal Op Shop Christmas Raffle. First prize was awarded to Maria and second prize to Dianna. Thank you to everyone in the local community who supported the raffle and our Op Shop.



We recently had a number of historical prints at the Op Shop that were not selling. As part of our ongoing commitment to reducing landfill and supporting the community, we were pleased to connect with the Illawarra Historical Society, who were delighted to accept the prints.

These pieces will now be preserved as part of Wollongong's rich history, ensuring they are appreciated and valued for years to come. It is wonderful to see items find a meaningful new home while supporting sustainability and local heritage.



## Goulburn Auxiliary



Warrigal Goulburn Auxiliary were delighted to tour the newly refreshed dining areas at Goulburn and see how their fundraising purchases have helped uplift these spaces.

Arrangements were purchased for the Waratah and Grevillea dining rooms, enhancing the environment and contributing to a more welcoming and enjoyable dining experience for residents.



## Warrigal Wellness Hub

Renovations at Albion Park Rail have now been completed, with the former administration building transformed into the new Warrigal Wellness Hub. This exciting new space brings together Home Services, staff training facilities, and welcoming areas for social support and engagement.

The Wellness Hub will serve as a central point for health, wellness, and connection, supporting people to live well at home and remain connected to their community in the Illawarra region.



## Save the Date

**Volunteer Week Northern Event**  
Tuesday, 19 May 2026

**Volunteer Week Southern Event**  
Thursday, 21 May 2026

**Volunteer Christmas Northern Event**  
Tuesday, 1 December 2026

**Volunteer Christmas Southern Event**  
Thursday, 3 December 2026

### Fleet Services

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### Community Facilitator

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### Warrigal Social

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### Lifestyle Team Leaders

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