

**20 November 2023**

### **Nanyima celebrates 30 years at the heart of the Pioneer Valley**

Nanyima Aged Care Inc., a 51-bed not-for-profit aged care community in rural Mirani, 37km west of Mackay, is celebrating its 30th anniversary onsite today with a community celebration honouring the many families, staff, volunteers and residents who have contributed to its success.

Originally called 'The Valley Retirement Centre', Nanyima is at the heart of the Pioneer Valley community. Its 68 employees are drawn from the local community and Mackay region, and it boasts an extraordinary 28 volunteers, some of whom come back year after year with each cane cutting season.

At a time when almost 70 per cent of regional aged care communities are in financial distress, Nanyima thrives and offers a masterclass in care and governance excellence. It also exemplifies how an aged care community can support the social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of its residents, staff and volunteers.

Nanyima was created by the community, for the community when then-Chairman of Mirani Shire Council, Clive Rogers held a public meeting at Mirani High School to gauge interest in building a local aged care community. He received strong support and was swiftly elected Chairman of the Fundraising Committee.

"It took a couple of years to get going, but the public response was incredible," says Mr Rogers, who is one of the guests of honour at today's celebration.

"The target was \$600,000, but we collected \$700,000, thanks to the generosity of the local community, including significant donations from the Masonic Lodge and the RSL. Council then bought the land and donated it to The Valley Retirement Centre, and the first resident moved in on 20 November 1993."

Nanyima has undergone several renovations over the past 30 years, and a recently conceived partnership with national aged care specialist Apollo Care will ensure construction begins in 2024 on a new memory support wing.

Stephen Becsi OAM, CEO of Apollo Care, says: "Nanyima is a well-run and much-loved aged care community. We're thrilled the board had the foresight to future-proof operations by joining our alliance. Together, we'll ensure Nanyima continues to meet the needs of this important community."

Rosemary Lyons, Chair of Nanyima Community Association Inc, concurs: "Apollo Care is a great fit for us as we continue to expand to meet the high demand for aged care in our region."

"We may be located in a small North Queensland town, but this partnership shows our innovative approach," explains Ms Lyons. "Our five-star rating in resident experience and compliance proves we're delivering on our purpose, thanks to the dedication of our team of staff, volunteers, allied health professionals and the support of local businesses and the community."

"It's a great team," agrees Mr Becsi, "and we look forward to providing operational support while Nanyima's wonderful staff and volunteers continue to do what they do so well – care for residents."

Today's celebration is a typically community-centric affair: The chairs are borrowed from Mirani High School – where it all began –, the celebratory fruit cake was made by the daughter of a 95-year-old resident, and the cakes being given to staff and volunteers honouring their long service were made by a resident. Guests will enjoy morning tea while learning about Nanyima's past, present and future from speakers and via a slide show and displays of photographs and memorabilia.

Nanyima's residents, staff and volunteers reflect the region's rich history in sugar cane, beef and coal production. Its diverse population includes people from the Solomon and South Sea Islands, First Nations

peoples, and descendants of many Italian families who migrated to North Queensland to work in the sugar cane industry.

“Like Nanyima’s pioneers, staff and volunteers, Apollo Care understands the unique challenges of caring for elderly residents in regional settings like Mirani,” says Mr Becsi.

“We’re excited to deliver on our unique vision to protect the purpose and legacy of not-for-profit providers like Nanyima that play such a vital role in their local communities. Our innovative care, operating and financial models will strengthen Nanyima’s services while ensuring it retains its strong local community identity.”

*Note: Attendees of the celebration are asked to either come 15-30 minutes early to take a COVID rapid antigen test or bring a negative test with them. Masks will be provided by Nanyima Aged Care.*

**-ends-**

**For further information and photos, please contact:**

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**Background**

Apollo Care is an Approved Provider and professional manager of aged care communities, retirement villages, home care services and affordable housing. It was built from the ground up by a team of four industry veterans with a cumulative 85 years’ experience. In addition to Stephen Becsi, formerly CEO of Bethanie, WA’s largest NFP provider, Apollo Care’s leadership team comprises Barry Ashcroft, former CEO of Domain Aged Care, now Opal; Kylie Radburn, former National Care Governance Manager at Aveo; and John Young, a leading equity capital specialist.

Apollo Care currently manages nine aged care facilities, mostly in regional centres. These facilities are all community or religious charitable organisations. Joining with Apollo Care assures they can continue offering valued services to older residents in their community of choice.

The other communities in Apollo Care’s alliance are in New South Wales - Bundaleer (Wauchope), Charingfield (Waverley), Harden Grange (Harden), Vincent Court (Kempsey), Haddington (Tenterfield) and Millwood (Tenterfield); Queensland - PresCare Alexandra Gardens (Rockhampton), PresCare Groundwater Lodge (Maryborough) and PresCare Yaralla Place (Maryborough); and Victoria - Yamaroo (Yackandandah).

