

## President's Report / Board Chair 2019

A year ago I closed my 2018 President's Report for Little Haven with the words :

"I can only hope that AGM 2019 is the year we will be able to finally report that Queensland Health has come to the party".

Well - Queensland Health came to the party in 2019 and they brought presents.

Let's go back a bit . . .

in 1991 I was finishing high school. I knew *all* about Palliative Care (in a 16 year old kind of way - volunteering occasionally - always seeing Grandma in the paper - often wondering why everyone else's Grandma knew how to bake).

Phyllis was stepping down as President - making way for a new era. She was nearly seventy and would only live for another six years after writing her final president's report.

In the twenty years between Phyl stepping down and my first year on the committee things certainly moved forward.

By next year, 2020, I will have been involved in the Little Haven Management Committee for around ten years - with a two yr break in the middle. Boy did I come in at the right time!

Over the past few years the AGM has been a time to show the community of Gympie where their fund raising dollars have been put to use. How the hours of volunteering by so many have enabled in turn many hours of community based palliative care. We have shown you graphs of increasing patient care numbers alongside graphs of stagnant funding. We have tried to illustrate how Little Haven embodies all that is a compassionate community.

We have *sincerely* tried to convey our appreciation to our community for their ongoing support.

And now, in 2019, it feels like we can finally put a tangible figure on how much value this community has given to Little Haven over the past 4 decades. And in 2019 that figure is nearly 5 million dollars in State and Federal funding over the next 4 years.

The day I got to announce to my Grandmother's daughters that Little Haven had been recognised and funded accordingly will remain one of highlights of my life.

So now the next challenge - how do we keep what we have while Sue and our clinical staff rise to meet the new levels of reporting and standards.

As a Board - no longer a Management Committee - we will be continuing a process of professionalization. There's a few title changes, adjustments in procedure and a review of our role in the future governance of Little Haven. Our job now, more than ever, is to help steer the strategic direction of Little Haven while supporting Sue, our paid staff and our volunteers to navigate the new hurdles attached to significant external funding.

The original vision of the Little Haven Hospice remains in our strategic planning - and we feel that as the model of care we provide at Little Haven continues to evolve to meet the needs of the community it may certainly be part of Little Haven's future.

I am going to go back to Phyl's words here - from her Past President's Recollections in 1991.

*"At last, Little Haven was becoming more than just a name - a positive line was being taken to ensure that the needs of the terminally ill would be met both in their homes and in hospital, and Phyl hoped that all the wonderful people whose efforts and support had made this possible would feel elated at the outcome.*

*She said she hoped the townspeople would understand her stepping down (since she had always said she would not give up until the hospice was a reality) and she hoped they would agree that a dedicated young president would give Little Haven the lift it deserved, while as for the disappointment some may feel about not getting a hospice - well, first things first.*

*A Palliative Care Service is a key ingredient of hospice and, in her eyes, the first foot on the ladder. In a few years . . . . who knows!*

*It's up to the people!"*

In the end, I strongly believe that the 'lift Little Haven deserved' was brought about by the tireless work of Sue Manton. The past few years have been difficult, unrelenting and largely unrewarded - yet Sue has not deviated from her vision for equitable and sustainable funding for Little Haven and a recognition of our model of community care as a model for all Australians with life limiting illnesses.

On behalf of Phyl Little and her family - all the past management committees - our volunteers and paid staff - our community - and especially the families who have been under the care of Little Haven over the past 4 decades - I thank you Sue.

Brandy Murley  
25/09/2019