

Re-Naming of the Aged Care Facility from 'Hostel' to 'Helga Forster House'

Following changes to the Aged Care Act (1997) (as amended in 2014), the distinction as between 'Hostel' (low care) and 'Nursing Home' (high care) was removed. From this time it has no longer been appropriate to call the Christophorus House Aged Care Facility by the name of 'Hostel'. Therefore it was decided to rename the old 'Hostel' and in the process honour our founder – Helga Forster. The re-Naming ceremony was held on **19th November 2016** and this special newsletter commemorates the event. Robert Allerdice, Chairman of the Board, officiated as Master of Ceremonies and special guest speakers were Karl Kaltenbach – Patron, (who had also given a talk at the opening of the facility some 33 years earlier) and John Shaw (past Patron and Board member).

The occasion was well attended by residents and friends, including members of the Anthroposophical Society, (the Society having supported the work of Helga Forster). After the formality of unveiling the plaque, which was a joint effort by our oldest resident at the time – Late Mr Bill Arndell (then 100) and our youngest albeit, longest resident (since 1983) Mr Gordon Allerdice, there was the opportunity to have another one of our Christophorus House socials, where everyone could catch up with one-another whilst sharing and enjoying light refreshments catered by our kitchen staff.



Milan Telford
CEO / Editor

Robert Allerdice Master of Ceremony with the two guest speakers



In order of presentation:

- ★ Robert Allerdice (Chairman of Board) (centre)
- ★ Dr. h.c. Karl Kaltenbach OAM (Patron) (right)
- ★ John Shaw (Director) (left)

What they each said can be read on the following pages.

Following the talks, the plaque was unveiled by the Oldest Resident – late Mr Bill Arndell and the youngest resident, but longest in facility – Mr Gordon Allerdice.

Robert Allerdice - Master of Ceremony



'Welcome everyone to this special event, the renaming of the Aged Care facility which is going to be named 'Helga Forster House. Just a brief history; when the Building was opened in November 1983, which makes the Building 33 years old this year, it was called the 'Hostel', and the reason for this was twofold. First, to distinguish it from Self Care units, and on the other hand, to distinguish it from full blown Nursing Homes, which the Hostel was not at that stage.'

'Two to three years ago, when the Commonwealth Government did a reform of the Aged Care sector, concepts such as Nursing Homes and Hostels were abolished. There is no longer such as thing as a Nursing Home, or a Hostel – all are just Aged Care Facilities. And so we thought, rather belatedly, that despite the use of the word Hostel for the last 33 years, we really needed to come up to date and the suggestion was that we really should rename it and we scouted around for suggestions as to what we

should call the Building. And the person who came up with the idea of renaming the Building 'Helga Forster House' is fellow Director Graham Long, and everyone was enthusiastic about the name. The only surprising thing is that it took 33 years to come up with the name and honour the founder of Christophorus House – Helga Forster.'

'We don't know how long it will be before the use of the words, 'the Hostel' just disappear entirely and after 33 years it's going to be a hard habit to break – but one hopes we can all embrace the spirit of this day's events and start using the expression, 'Helga Forster House' as soon as possible.'



Robert next introduced Karl Kaltenbach as the Patron and founding member and someone associated with the Anthroposophical Society for many years.

Dr h.c. Karl Kaltenbach - OAM

'Thank-you for inviting Hannelore and myself to be part of the Naming Ceremony honouring Helga Forster. As I was preparing my speech I read the Annual Report 2016 and was impressed as it demonstrates how the Board and the CEO, together with the staff are successfully managing this organisation. I also experienced how Christophorus House is managed to the satisfaction of the residents and everyone appears content. I am sure Helga Forster who is today in the spiritual world, would be pleased about this progress of Christophorus House.'



'Today, we name the Hostel, 'Helga Forster House' and I am so glad that his organisation is honouring its founder. This is a Christian tradition; in the past the churches honoured their saints. Today we honour our pioneering founders. Without the founders, we cannot establish such socially mature organisations. Christophorus is 33 years old. During this time much has changed in the general main-stream Society. We focus more and more on the ideas of human rights, but these must not only be understood, but must be practically implemented. One of these principles is that of each individual's human dignity. Today, all staff and office bearers must make sure that the dignity of people is maintained as it is incontestable.'

'Furthermore, recognising that any organisation ages, this requires that the organisation's core values remain younger and younger. So we must be constantly vigilant to keep the ideals in Christophorus House also young.'

'I knew Helga Forster 46 years ago. She was determined as she was, to start an Anthroposophical organisation for aged care in Australia, which was at that time the first Anthroposophical retirement organisation in Australia. Helga died in 1989 and she lives in a state of peace and tranquillity and out of that realm she would be happy to see what is happening.'



It is wonderful to name this Hostel, 'Helga Forster House'.

'Hannelore and I give our good wishes to the Board, the staff and the residents for the future of Christophorus House.'

Robert Allerdice thanked Karl Kaltenbach and introduced fellow Board Member and Life Member, John Shaw.

Mr John Shaw



'Thank-you Robert and thank-you my dear comrade of yesteryear, with whom we were probably associated together before we were born and we came into contact with each other in 1970, when you asked me onto the Board of Warrah and almost instantly I became Chairman and we got off to a flying start at that time and our lives have sort of interwoven until this present day, when we look back to that personality

who was known as Helga Forster and who was a very powerful personality and sometimes powerful personalities are their own worst enemies but of course they are necessary in order to get things moving. I remember Helga Forster telling me she was a public speaker or had done public speaking as a way of persuading people, including government officers and officials to 'come to the party' as it were and she was not a shrinking violet, when one reads in the history that she had contacted the people at the top; the Director of Social Security at the time Bill Hayden and other politicians, because she was filled with this passionate desire to help older people and homeless people, but particularly homeless who would be looked after in a way that would be fitting as Karl just indicated to maintain and have their dignity be recognised and be looked after in an environment that was warm and friendly.'

'Helga got together a group of people, one of whom, was David Wansbrough, who can't be here today; we think of David because he would otherwise be very

much to the fore – he was no shrinking violet as well, but we're not going to see David in action today, but we're thinking of him because he was one of the early workers for the organisation and did a lot of physical work.'

'I also want to mention in connection with Helga, Helen Feofanov. Helen Feofanov was a lady who came to Australia from Latvia and she brought a large block of land, with her husband Peter.'

'And after her husband died in 1970, she was a widow who was fired with enthusiasm by Helga Forster's vision of some place like this, for elderly people and so she said to Helga, 'I will sell my home and I will give you the money'; it was mortgage free as most homes were when they were purchased by people from overseas, they very quickly got rid of the bank. Helen said 'I'll give you the money provided I can live here until I die.' So she lived up in the Cottage and her money, together with other donations presumably, enabled the land to be purchased. Helen died in February 1979 and her body was cremated and her ashes were kept here somewhere.'

'When Michael Tapp, Lenker and Priest of The Christian Community [founded Stuttgart 1923], came to Australia in 1979, we, who were involved in the Committee for the foundation of the Church, which included Lesley Evans, approached Helga Forster and asked if we could have use of the farm for services for the Act of Consecration of the Human Being. Helga was most helpful and said "yes, you most certainly can" and so six services were held in the Barn and here today we have Hannelore Kaltenbach, popping up in my memory, as well as physically, who played music for those six services, together with Wendy Newman – thank-you for doing that, it's a long time since you did, but 1979 – I still remember the music from those services. So then we came to a situation with Michael being here, that Helen's ashes should be consecrated to the earth of the very place she had helped to purchase and so Michael Tapp was approached and was asked



if he would officiate at some laying of the ashes on this land and so he did and he gave a short talk on the relationship between the physical remains of the Human Being and their relationship to the earth itself as a kind of spiritualisation of our Helen Feofanov in March 1979. Then Helga herself took leave of the earth about 10 years after this deed 1st July 1989, and just prior to her husband who worked very, very, hard with her to bring about the construction of this Hostel and to advance the welfare people here, and she herself also had a last anointing by Michael Tapp.' 'My recollection of those times is that Helga, having been the founder of the place, had the usual problem of founders in that it is very difficult to walk away from responsibility of the creature they have founded and as a result, she was not entirely happy that other people were not, shall we say, seeing things the way she was perhaps bending to her Will, but we know, as Karl has just told us, because he got a direct message from her, that she is now at peace and very happy about what has gone on here since her death in 1989, the work that has been done, the units that have been created and the general contentment of the elderly folk – the senior citizens as we are called, [even Karl, Hannelore and myself are in that category – not Robert of-course, because he has eternal youth]; the senior citizens here are pleased with what's been created as well as what's been done and so we say thank-you to Helga who is listening to us in a certain way, for all that you did. Your name will go forward as an important part of the spiritual history of our country because you loved this land which you adopted, you came from Europe, from Germany and you made a lasting contribution which we are celebrating today.'



Robert Allerdice thanked John Shaw and remarked again that it seemed strange that it had taken 33 years to do something about honouring Helga Forster.

Unveiling of the plaque 'Helga Forster House'

The next part of the proceeding involved the unveiling of the plaque 'Helga Forster House'. This was a joint unveiling, involving the most senior resident, 100 year old Late Mr Bill Arndell, and the youngest resident who had been at the House the longest, since 1983 – Mr Gordon Allerdice.



Rose-Marie talking about Reuben Lane



Miss Rose-Marie van Hoogstraten stood up and spoke about Reuben Lane (Paraphrased)

'Reuben Lane the architect should also be remembered. He took into account in the physical spaces, the spiritual aspects, with high ceilings, walkways that are curved and each room being unique in shape and design. For this we should on this day, also keep Reuben in our consciousness.'



Impressions of the day

