

Aged Care. Sounds like a nice, restful business to be in, doesn't it. Not too much disruption, big data or Gen Y to worry about there. Well, twenty minutes talking to Alexandra Zammit, CEO of aged care provider Thomas Holt, soon changes your mind about all that.

Sixty years ago, the family of Thomas Holt, Australia's first treasurer of the colonial parliament, gifted enough land in Kirrawee in southern Sydney to establish affordable housing for seniors by way of four small fibro cottages. Today, Thomas Holt is a \$20million turnover, not-for-profit operation with 150 staff servicing over 300 clients spread over four sites across St. George and Sutherland shires. Its services range across retirement living, home care and residential care.



Alexandra Zammit - CEO, Thomas Holt

Aged care has always been a high regulation, high compliance sector, battling regular policy changes and a constant battle for funding. "A state hospital bed is subsidised by \$1500 a day. We have to provide far more services but receive just \$171 a day as a national average," comments Alexandra. But the latest round of changes arising from the Living Longer, Living Better reforms present a seismic shift in the way aged care and human services will be provided in the future.

As governments face the enormous funding challenges of an ageing population, the Living Longer, Living Better reforms to be introduced on 27 February represent a fundamental move beyond the heavily controlled, centralised programs of the past towards more consumer directed care. Customer payments will be delivered in the form of fully portable vouchers, giving clients a new level of flexibility to move between service providers to meet their individual and changing needs.

For aged care providers, deregulation is a major challenge, demanding transformational change and innovative responses. For Alexandra Zammit, it's a fantastic opportunity to utilise the full potential of technology, including automation and Artificial Intelligence.

"We're moving away from a typical aged care welfare model to a human services commercial and retail model, driven by the market," explains Alexandra. "If you understand that, it's an exciting time because you can be sustainable by providing what customers want."

Alexandra's response is a new, world-first platform called Live Care 360°, that utilises the modern internet of things, sensors and machine learning technologies to help create a unique care environment that interacts with clients.

Live Care 360° monitors each person's health status around the clock using collected data and responds through real time carer alerts and building automation changes to provide timely client care and comfort.

Live Care 360° and its supporting technologies are a key part of a new \$51m residential care building due to be opened in Kirrawee next October. Each client will have a tablet at their bedside. Carers and families will be in constant contact, able to check on activities and appointments, order special food or treats, and chat over Skype.

And with machines monitoring vital signs and doing complex assessments, staff will be released to provide more of the face, touch and engagement time their clients need most.

Alexandra expects this 'smart building' pilot program to lead to a roll out of Live Care 360° into Thomas Holt's other residential areas and home care services.

In the course of discussion it becomes clear that change genuinely excites Alexandra. What will driverless cars mean to her business? To her staff who currently drive clients around to appointments, weddings and hospital visits? What will 3D printing mean when building her next retirement village? What can be manufactured on site and what will it save in freight costs and construction time? These are the sort of things Alexandra incorporates into her strategic planning, aligning her own business with the macro changes happening around her.

Indeed, staying connected to the macro environment is central to Alexandra's world view. She is very much inspired by Gabe Rijpma, Senior Director Health & Social Services Asia at Microsoft, and his conviction that we need to do much more in terms of sharing our data and our learnings, and so contribute to a greater global good. Alexandra is eager to share her own outcomes with the international health and aged care community, particularly in countries like China, Japan, Thailand and India which are facing tremendous challenges without any significant aged care industry to build on. Rijpma's exhortation to provide 'an amazing experience for our clients' resonates strongly with Alexandra and has fuelled her determination to create world class systems like Live Care 360°.

Alexandra also draws inspiration from her fellow CEO Syndicate members.

"The CEO Institute is one of the single most beneficial groups I have ever joined. It has been fantastic for me," says Alexandra. "I find it heartening, a relief and extremely valuable to meet with my Syndicate in a safe place to discuss my challenges, my concerns, my triumphs and trials and receive credible, usable feedback from the group."

To her fellow CEOs, Alexandra says never underestimate the value of mentors - more than one if you can. Check out Peter Diamandis and his Creed of the Persistent and Passionate Mind. And engage with those macro changes that are happening out there in the world - all the revolutions in medicine, health, technology; and think about the impact they'll have and the opportunities they offer for your business.