



Case Study

Peninsula Villages

Residential and retirement | 420 employees
November 2025

Background + Challenge

Peninsula Villages is a community based not-for-profit operating 3 RAC and RV sites on the NSW Central coast with 290 beds and employing 420 staff. They had an existing referral program in place, but it was generating very few candidates. Their primary recruitment channel, Seek, was also underperforming.

The solution

They launched Care Friends in May 2023 to reinvigorate their referral program. A year later, they expanded its use to include employee recognition via the Bonus Points feature.

Employees can now earn additional points for actions such as going above and beyond, filling a short-notice shift, and modelling organisational values, among others.

Managers receive a monthly allocation of bonus points and have collectively awarded them more than 400 times, reinforcing a strong culture of appreciation and recognition across the organisation.

Results after 2.5 years

- ✓ Almost 70% of employees registered for the app
- ✓ 690 referred candidates of which 100 were hired, including 8 RNs.
- ✓ 38% of new hires via referral (50% in their first year!)
- ✓ Significant reduction in agency use
- ✓ 86% retention rate of referred hires
- ✓ Reduced job board spend has funded all referral program costs
- ✓ **Reduced cost per hire by 81%**

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“We are really happy with our Care Friends program. Our location meant care-minute targets were a major workforce challenge. Referral hires have been key to achieving our minute targets.

Referrals are close to becoming our primary source of staff as we’ve significantly reduced reliance on job boards. For the first time in four years we have virtually no unfilled vacancies and are now using referrals to fill holiday and relief roles.

The quality of referral hires is noticeably better than job boards. We are committed to a positive workforce culture, our turnover remains well below industry average, and Care Friends has reduced our recruitment effort and time-to-hire.

Reduction in job-board spend has covered the cost of the program and staff rewards, and agency spend is significantly reduced. Staff love the program, and uptake has been excellent, which has driven its success.

Care Friends gives us access to candidates we would never reach otherwise.”

Nicola Burton, Executive Manager Quality & Organisational Development

Hear from Nicola



Why Care Friends?



Referrals vs Job boards



Candidate quality

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“Care Friends has become a critical tool in our recruitment strategy. It enables us to identify local frontline and clinical staff quickly and cheaply.

We have reduced recruitment and related costs whilst diverting job board and agency spend back to our staff as referral rewards. Access to, and retention of good staff in meaningful numbers has delivered benefits across the whole organisation, especially in service delivery, staff wellbeing and financial performance.”

Colin Osborne - CEO