



Gavin Young

grounded in what matters most: staying connected to residents, clients, and staff.

He shares a story from Mercy Place Parkville, where a resident arrived high-risk for falls and living in memory support. Within three months, the resident became ambulant, conversational, and was enjoying coffee at the café. This transformation was achieved through proper medication management, consistent meals, socialisation and a safe environment.

“It’s moments like these that remind me why I do this work,” Gavin says. “How lucky I am to lead such wonderful people who can make such a difference.”

Looking ahead, Gavin’s legacy ambition is clear — shifting Mercy Health from compliance-driven to innovation-focused, while maintaining quality

oversight. This includes exploring digital technologies to reduce administrative burden on clinical staff.

New service models — such as free webinars on Living Fees and Support at Home services — have attracted strong engagement, with around 100 attendees per session. Promoted via social media, they reach beyond current Mercy Health clients and reflect a broader commitment to community education.

Gavin also plans to introduce a concierge service where people can call with any aged care question — not just about Mercy Health, but about the sector more broadly. It’s a practical way to live the mission of serving the community.

He encourages emerging leaders to stay true to their values, remain accessible, and listen across all levels to lead with purpose and impact.

“In my career I have worked with, and for, some wonderful people that I have learnt from along the way. They were people that never compromised their values, listened to their people and customers, and aligned themselves with the values and mission of the organisation. I think as an emerging leader if you can do this, and demonstrate your own skills and ability, this will set you up for future success.” ■

**Saleha Singh**

“We’re bridging care and services shortfalls where they matter most,” Gavin says.

He outlines plans for new developments in Western Australia and Victoria, aimed at strengthening regional reach and introducing new technologies to improve care quality.

He stresses about cultural considerations, recognising the low number of Indigenous residents and Mercy Health’s commitment to improving representation.

**Improving care by empowering people**

Gavin’s operational expertise is evident in his approach to workforce challenges. At Mercy Place Fernhill, a service manager joined Mercy’s transformation and performance improvement program, focusing on reducing agency staff reliance. Within six months, agency usage dropped from nearly \$100,000 monthly to virtually zero.

“Residents having familiar people caring for them really matters,” Gavin says. “It’s not just about the bottom line — it’s about knowing what time you want to get out of bed, what you like for breakfast. And it has a positive impact on the team, because they can rely on their colleagues.”

This example reflects Gavin’s leadership philosophy: listen to frontline staff, give them the tools and permission to innovate, and measure success by their success. “I see my job as making sure they have everything they need to be successful,” he adds.

He values staying connected to frontline staff across all roles — care, clinical, hospitality, maintenance, and administration — as they share insights that strengthen services across Mercy Health’s 30 homes, 10 retirement villages, and nearly 5000 home care clients. Regular visits and events help leaders understand staff experiences and respond effectively. This culture is embedded across Mercy Health Healthy Ageing, with executive and Board members regularly visiting services.

As the sector manages the new Aged Care Act, new standards, and accreditation processes, Gavin remains

