

Case Study

Alino Living

December 2025

A NFP providing retirement living and residential aged care homes across the NSW Central Coast



The problem

Alino Living is a not-for-profit residential aged care provider formed through the merger of several smaller organisations. They have a retirement living community, four RAC homes and approximately 380 employees.

Before implementing Care Friends, Alino had no structured recognition program in place and relied on ad-hoc rewarding via gift cards, which often went unused. This was also quite costly.

Although a basic, paper-based referral program was in place, it was difficult to keep staff informed about vacancies and keep track of referrals.

With ongoing post-COVID workforce pressures and a highly diverse workforce, they needed a modern, consistent and easy-to-manage solution to support both referrals and meaningful recognition organisation-wide.

The solution

Jakara Gasson - Wellbeing & Safety Experience Co-ordinator: “The CEOs decided to introduce Care Friends and I was asked to manage this. To be honest, I didn’t think that it was going to work, but once we committed, it’s been really good, managers love it and it’s making a positive impact on our organisation”.

Alino launched Care Friends on March 10 2025.

“There wasn’t anything difficult in the set-up or implementation”

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Employee recognition

Alino set up a wide variety of Employee Recognition Categories, including Years of Service Awards, Being an Awesome Team Player, Inclusivity Champion, Person Centered Care and Positive Feedback.

Each Manager has a monthly Bonus Point budget and the autonomy to spend this as they see fit within those pre-set categories. Because the budget expires at the end of the month, managers tend to be quite good at using them!

"The fact that managers can reward for small things, recognition has become far more frequent, which had a positive impact on our culture", says Jakara.

Employees can choose to cash in their points at any time with points paid out via payroll. Jakara: "We have such a broad workforce with different demographics and it's hard to cater for them all. This is the right choice".

Employee referral

Employee referrals are managed by the recruitment team. Any vacancy is first posted via Care Friends and referrals are prioritised. Jakara: "We have noticed that referrals are more consistent, reliable, genuine and more purposeful."

Alino gets many tyre kickers via online job boards, wasting a lot of time, however with referrals, there is an initial reference check that has already taken place. Care Friends is also playing a part in reducing their staff turnover rates as they're seeing higher retention rates past the 6-month mark in referrals.

Results (after 9 months)

- ✓ Employees were recognised with bonus points 1,123 times
- ✓ Most common reward category used is "Team Commitment"
- ✓ 84% of employees downloaded the app
- ✓ All employees received a \$50 Christmas bonus via Care Friends

Results (after 9 months)

- ✓ 141 referrals of which 36 were hired (1 in 4)
- ✓ 9 RNs hired via referrals
- ✓ Averaging 14 referrals each month
- ✓ Cost per referral hire is \$472 (including reward + licence)

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“Care Friends has made such a difference for us. Before we had it, our recognition and referral processes just weren't working well, everything was ad hoc, mostly done through gift cards that expired or got lost, and tracking was inconsistent.

From the moment we launched Care Friends, the process was easy, the setup was straightforward, and staff engagement happened quickly and seamlessly. We've had no negative feedback at all. People sign up, earn points, refer others, and cash out and that alone speaks volumes.

It's given us a simple, consistent way to recognise great work, reward staff meaningfully, and keep everyone informed across all our sites. It's also allowed our managers to recognise staff in the moment, for both big and small things, which has helped lift morale.

The impact on recruitment and culture has been huge. Referrals through Care Friends are more genuine, reliable and committed and we've seen better retention with them than with other sources.

I'm most proud of how many staff have registered and are using the platform; we've tried things before that never gained traction, but this took off immediately. Care Friends is now an important part of how we appreciate our people, fill roles more efficiently, and make staff feel valued every day.”

Jakara Gasson - Wellbeing & Safety Experience Co-ordinator - Alino Living

