

Newsletter

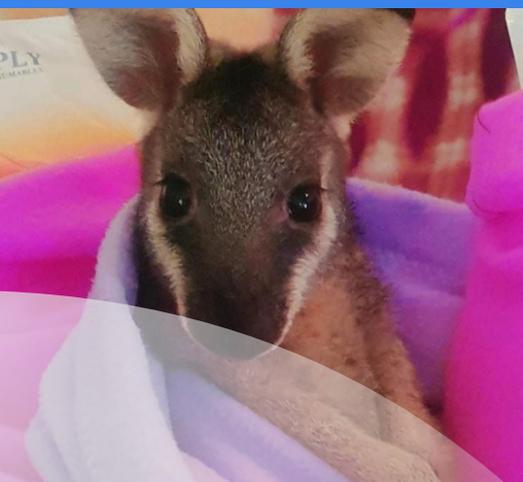


This Just In!

December 2022



THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING



WHAT'S INSIDE

- NEW DEMENTIA SUPPORT PROGRAM
- PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT
- UNDERSTANDING MONTHLY STATEMENTS



Gippsland Lakes Complete Health acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waters where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their continuing culture and enduring connection to country, and pay respect to Elders past and present.

Everyone is welcome at GLCH. We are committed to including all people, embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination.

Can my home care package pay for technology products?

Technology advances are moving faster than most of us can keep up with, which can seem daunting and overwhelming for many older people. However, technology can bring so many amazing things to our lives, so keeping an open mind about it can have some advantages and positive outcomes.

Rather than focusing on highlighting different products and their benefits, this short article focuses on how you can potentially use your home care package to learn HOW to use technology products in a meaningful way for you.

The process of deciding whether your package can or cannot pay for certain technology products is something we can work through with you to make sure it matches up with your assessed care needs and is documented in your care plan. But there is often something missing in this process... and that is, adding some technology coaching to ensure you learn how to use the product for the reasons that it was purchased in the first place!

To help support technology purchases in the future, we may suggest that you also use your package funds to book a couple of tech sessions with one of the fantastic companies that support older people to learn how to use technology and tech products.

Once you have had a bit of coaching from a tech helper, you can independently continue to use your new product with more confidence and skill. This will also help to demonstrate that purchasing the product directly links to your care needs.

If you already have a tech product and you're not too sure how to use it for the intended purposes, please contact us so we can get some tech coaching in place for you!



The benefits of volunteering

With an estimated 6 million of us volunteering around the country each year, it seems we know a thing or two about the benefits it provides. And it turns out both men and women volunteer at similar rates.

While volunteering has a range of benefits for the people, and/or animals or community you're helping, it also has benefits for our own wellbeing.

As well as enabling you to feel that you're a part of something greater than yourself, it can also help you make new friends, learn new skills and provide a sense of purpose.

Plus, volunteering has also been shown to:

- Improve quality of life and self esteem
- Improve the ability to carry out activities of daily living
- [Increase life expectancy](#)
- And improve mental health



And what's more, studies that have looked at the mental health benefits by type of volunteering, haven't found any significant differences across sectors or roles. So it really doesn't make any difference how you spend your time helping others.

If volunteering sounds like something you'd like to consider getting involved in, a good place to start is by having a chat with family or your care manager about the type of causes that are important to you.

Once you've identified the type of causes that are personally meaningful for you, you can start searching for opportunities via these two websites:

<https://govolunteer.com.au/>

<https://www.ethicaljobs.com.au/volunteer-unpaid-jobs>

There are also plenty of opportunities that enable you to volunteer from home.

6 meaningful ways you can volunteer from home

Whether you have limited mobility or a lack of transportation, there are many wonderful opportunities for volunteering from home. Although we don't endorse any specific organisation, our care managers will be happy to chat to you about finding opportunities that are meaningful for you.

1. Red Cross Trauma Teddies

Hand knitted Trauma Teddies provide comfort to children fleeing bushfires, a warm welcome to refugee children, company in a speeding ambulance and a happy face in a lonely time.

You can either join one of their many groups, or simply fill out their [form](#) and they'll put you in touch with a local coordinator so you can make teddies from home.

<https://www.redcross.org.au/act/knitting-for-charity-trauma-teddies/>

2. Translators Without Borders

Translators without Borders is a community that brings together bilingual volunteers from all over the globe who offer their time, language skills and voices to help people get vital information and be heard, whatever language they speak. Through translation, subtitling and the power of their speech, volunteers provide a wide range of information for humanitarian causes.

<https://translatorswithoutborders.org/twb-language-volunteer-role/>

3. Wrap With Love

With millions of people in the world suffering extreme cold, their mission is to distribute wraps to aid agencies and charities for those needing warmth.

When wraps are finished, you can either organise delivery through a local [Spotlight store](#), or post them directly to their Sydney warehouse.

<https://www.wrapwithlove.org/knitting-groups/>



4. Animal Rescue Cooperative Craft Guild

The Craft Guild is the world's largest group of animal rescue crafters who work together to make custom supportive products for animals in need. Regular requests are things like: knitted lamb and dog jumpers, joey pouches and possum cubbies and blankets. They post their most needed items via their lively Facebook group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2414894225229792/>

Patterns and tutorials can be found [here](#) and once you've completed your craft items, you simply get in touch with their team and they'll let you know where to send them.

<https://arcsupport.org.au/donateproduct/>

5. Australian Museum Digital Volunteers

If you're looking to build your online skills, the DigiVol (digital volunteer) wildlife spotter project may be for you. The program allows you to become a citizen scientist and assist researchers by looking for animals in wilderness photos taken by automated cameras around Australia. Plus, you'll be helping to save threatened species and preserve Australia's iconic wildlife!

<https://volunteer.ala.org.au/wildlife-spotter>

You'll also be able to chat with other DigiVols and be rewarded for hitting new goals in their lively community of DigiVol staff and citizen scientists.

<https://australian.museum/get-involved/citizen-science/>

6. Capes for kids

Capes 4 kids is the first program of its kind in Australia, gifting superpowered capes to our little superheros. Their carefully crafted capes are gifted to children in hospital so they can wear them whilst they undergo treatments or procedures.

The superpowers contained within the capes enable our little heros to feel they have a protective barrier of 'superpowers' to help them fight their illness with courage and love.

<https://capes4kidsaustralia.com.au/capes/>



Planning ahead in case you ever need to isolate at home

Even though life has returned to normal, COVID-19 and Influenza infections continue to spread throughout our communities. Like most other home care providers, we sometimes experience shortages of staff and support workers due to illnesses including COVID-19 and the flu. We're doing our best to manage this, and we appreciate your patience and understanding.

There are also increased risks for our clients receiving care at home, though there may be some small things you can do to help us act swiftly if you or someone living with you become sick with COVID or the flu.

Essential care, such as nursing and personal care, will continue if a suitably trained workforce is available. However, non-essential care will most likely not be possible if you are unwell, during the mandatory period of isolation.

How can we work together to prepare?

1. **Plan ahead:** Think about each of the services that you regularly receive, e.g., personal care, nursing, shopping, home care, medication support, meal preparation, and so forth. For each service, let's write down which of them you can do without for your isolation period and which you cannot do without.
2. **Share your plan** with others involved in your care
3. **Contact us:** Ensure you and your family/carers advise us as soon as possible if you contract COVID-19 or the flu so we can put your plan into immediate action.

Additionally, we can help you to get a few supplies of masks and Rapid Antigen Tests to keep at home, just in case you need them. We are here to help, and to support you to stay safe and well at home, so don't hesitate to reach out if you have any concerns or questions :)



Product spotlight: Modibodi for blokes

With an estimated 1.34 million [males in Australia being effected by incontinence](#), it can have a profound impact on your quality of life, causing some men to miss out on everyday social activities as a result.

Not to mention the added stress of most male public toilet facilities [not having a way to dispose of incontinence products](#) when you're out and about.

If dribbles or heavier leaks have been stopping you from doing activities you enjoy, Modibodi's underwear might help to restore your confidence.

Their range of men's undies covers you for sweat, accidental dribbles, as well as moderate to heavy leaks.

And their newest Ultra Men's Trunk design, holding up to 250ml of liquid (with an optional reusable insert in place) is their most absorbent style so far.

Designed to manage incontinence discreetly, comfortably and without leaks or odour, this style looks and feels like everyday underwear but with a built-in leak-proof lining, which completely replaces disposable incontinence pads or underwear.

Each pair comes with an optional reusable booster pad which can be added for extra absorbency and ultimate peace of mind.

Whether you're prone to dribble, heavier leaks, or mishaps just happen, these comfy underpants might be a solution for you.

<https://www.modibodi.com/>

Please contact us to find out about government funded programs which can help to pay for products and services to manage incontinence.



Making Spending Decisions in Home Care

Home Care Packages are designed to be a flexible funding source to meet the individual needs of the person receiving care. Because everyone's needs are different, there's no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to making spending decisions.

The Department of Health & Aged Care have some questions for providers and consumers to work through to determine if the requested service, support or purchase:

- is directly linked to your care needs and goals;
- is necessary to support your safety and independence;
- fits in your available package budget; and
- would be considered acceptable use of Government funds.

If you have any ideas about what supports and services you think would improve your health, independence and wellbeing, these are some of the questions we can work through with you:

1. Is the support or service listed as an excluded item?
2. Does it align with the intent of the Home Care Packages program?
3. In what way does it align with your assessed care needs?
4. In what way does it help to meet your care goals?
5. Do you need a professional recommendation?
6. Will it compromise your access to other essential care and supports?
7. Are there any other ways to meet this need?
8. Does it directly benefit you or will others benefit from it?

We encourage you to ask yourself these questions so you can be fully involved in the decision-making process as well.

You can check out all the Decision Making questions on pages 41-45 in the [Home Care Packages Consumer Manual](#) or ask us to post you a copy of the questions in the mail.

Helping people who live with dementia to stay at home longer

Dementia Support Australia is excited to announce their new program - Staying at Home

Staying at Home is an Australian Government funded carer wellbeing and respite program. It provides carers with advice and practical strategies on how to support a person living with dementia to remain in their own home for as long as possible.

Designed as a 'short stay' residential program, people living with dementia are offered an introduction to respite, while you join other carers in a peer support educational program.

You and your loved one will receive practical suggestions from experienced staff, including nurses, allied health clinicians and others.

Topics include:

- Understanding and managing dementia
- Looking after yourself and planning for the future
- Managing behaviour changes associated with dementia
- Support for transition into respite care
- Meaningful engagement: how to continue enjoyable activities for longer
- Managing physical changes: mobility, continence and communication

Accommodation and meals are included and you don't need respite approval.

To find out more and register your interest, you can contact Dementia Support Australia's 24-hour help line on: 1800 699 799

Or you can find more information about the program here: <https://www.dementia.com.au/dsa-staying-at-home>



Quality and Safety in home services – Top 5 Risks

A new report from the Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission revealed that 49% of all home care services that have undergone a Quality Review between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2022, were found to be non-compliant in one or more of the requirements in Standard 8.

Standard 8 relates to an organisation's systems, processes, and governance, which ensure consumers receive the best quality care and services to meet their needs and remain living independently in their homes for as long as possible. The Commission has given guidance to help all providers know what to look for and how to respond regarding consumer risks. You might notice that we ask questions or react in a particular way if something comes up for you that fits their definition of risk.

To comply with Standard 8, we must demonstrate that:

- We monitor the quality of care and services delivered to you by all providers, including external (sub-contracted) service providers. So, no matter who provides your care and services, we must ensure that they comply with the highest standards and meet all the aged care regulations.
- We have systems to identify and manage risks that substantially impact consumer health, wellbeing, and safety. This includes falls risk, choking, medication mismanagement, pressure injuries & wounds, and physical or cognitive decline.
- Other risks that arise from incidents or hazards must be identified and strategies put into place to manage those risks, as well as the risks that consumers might face if their care needs can't be met with their available package funds.

We're committed to providing sound management and governance and we'll work with you to identify and manage risks that might compromise your health or safety, and discuss how your package can help address any issues.

Feel free to get in touch to have a chat about your situation at any time :)

Understanding your monthly home care package statement

Providing an accurate monthly financial statement to consumers is a requirement for all home care packages providers. All providers need to include the following information in their monthly statements:

a. Income received during the period

- Government subsidy
- Client contributions – Basic Daily Fee, Income Tested Care Fee, personal contributions

b. Expenses incurred during the period – Equipment, items and services purchased during the period

c. Refunds and adjustments

d. Equipment and item rentals and purchases, and

e. Services received by you

- This section lists out the services you have received during the period – it needs to be itemised to show when you received it, who delivered it, what service it was and how the cost is calculated.

f. Other package services including:

- Care management
- Package management

g. Remaining package funds

From time to time, we may make an error in the statement which shows you received something that you actually did not, or we haven't included something that did occur. If you notice any irregularities, please get in touch so we can make all the necessary checks to work out what should have occurred and then make the adjustment in the next statement period.

You can see the [Department of Health & Aged Care guidance](#) on what should be included in your statement, or let us know if you'd like us to print it for you.



Aged Care Navigators Research



For the past 4 years, COTA Australia has led an important research project trial to test a range of different services and supports that will help Older Australians navigate the complex aged care system.

The project ends in December 2022, and the Federal Government has announced its commitment to providing **500 Care Finders** across the country under the National Care Finder Program! Based on the project results and preferences from older Australians, the newly funded program will focus on 1:1 Specialist Support Workers as navigators.

Some of the key trial lessons learned include:

- Some older Australians find the paperwork hard to read and comprehend,
- It's a complex system to navigate, especially when a person is in crisis,
- Navigators need to be skilled in understanding the aged care systems and other related networks,
- Navigators need to be innovative and tap into local services and networks to better support older people needing care services,
- Navigators need to be seen as independent and trustworthy,
- Consumers must be respected as experts in their own life - consumer choice and control are fundamental to the consumer/navigator relationship,
- Navigator practice must be culturally safe, and observant of diversity,
- Navigators must set boundaries and always follow through on what they say they will do.

The Navigators trial has proven that with individual assistance and persistence by navigators, customers access to and use of aged care services can be improved. The evolution of the trial to the future care finder program demonstrates the benefit of building an evidence base through partnership between government and consumer support organisations, to develop new and innovative ways of working to meet the needs of older people.

Tips for improving your Health Literacy

In our last edition, we shared information about the importance of improving our own health literacy to help us be better informed and make better health decisions. This time, we are sharing some ways to help you do just that 😊

How can you enhance your health literacy?

First and foremost, be curious and be confident to ask questions to keep building your health knowledge. It's your right to be given time and information from your health professional, so don't let them rush you.

All health care professionals have a responsibility to clearly communicate, in plain English, to ensure you understand the diagnosis, treatment options, what to expect and so on. They also need to provide the information in multiple formats, if needed, and in your preferred language too.

Talking and sharing information with others is a great way to get feedback and input. It's also important to be open and honest with healthcare providers about your medical history and medications.

Don't underestimate your role and responsibility in the delivery of good care, as you are the holder of vital information which can have a real impact on your treatment and care.

If you don't have anyone specific to talk to, you can talk to your GP or nurse on-call services. Or, you can call us to discuss your concerns and we will point you in the right direction.

