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MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter. It has been a wonderful albeit warm start to Autumn, the days are certainly getting shorter!

It has been a busy time with the recent federal election and preparations are underway to ensure we are as ready as possible for the implementation of Support at Home (SaH) program that is slated to commence on 1st July 25. There are still a number of items in the rules that the Department of Health has/is drafting that have yet to be approved by the Senate, as a result we may still see some late changes/ a delayed commencement of this program, please see further information on page 2 on the upcoming changes.

We are hosting a Biggest Morning Tea on the 28th of May 2025 in our Bunbury Activity Centre (3 Parade Road, Bunbury). All proceeds raised will be donated to the Cancer Council. If you haven't already registered your interest, please contact Judith on 9720 5100.

Michelle

Michelle De Ronchi
Chief Executive Officer



SERVICE DELIVERY TIMES

We know it is important to our clients that your services are on time within your preferred windows. We keep an eye on this, regularly checking that we are providing services within the agreed time-bands. Occasionally we aren't able to make it to you within your preferred times, and when this happens we look into why, and how we can improve.

In some cases, your time band may not be feasible. When this occurs, we will contact you to discuss and reschedule to a mutually convenient service window. We are committed to making improvements in this area and appreciate your understanding.

GRANT SECURED FOR VOLUNTEER WEEK CELEBRATIONS!

We are very pleased to announce we were successful in obtaining a grant for Volunteer Week from Volunteering WA with the generous support of Lotterywest.



The grant allowed us to purchase a thank you gift for all our volunteers as a small token of our appreciation. We will also recognise our volunteers at all our sites with some sweet treats and a certificate of appreciation during Volunteer Week May 19th – 25th.

Volunteers are truly an important part of our service delivery at Belong at Home, and we are lucky to have such dedicated, compassionate, and friendly people volunteering with us.



SUPPORT AT HOME UPDATE:

Important Updates on Aged Care: What You Need to Know

The Australian Government is making significant reforms to the aged care system, including the introduction of the New Aged Care Act and the Support at Home (SaH) program. These changes will impact those receiving Home Care Packages (HCP) and will also introduce some minor adjustments to the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP).

What's Changing?

These reforms aim to improve service delivery, ensure quality care, and create a more transparent pricing structure for older Australians. Support at Home is designed to simplify funding, ensuring services align with individual needs.

Key Information & Resources

To stay informed about these changes, visit the government's official website: My Aged Care - Improving Australia's Aged Care System.

Additionally, the Department of Health and Aged Care have mailed out letters with important details about the transition which you should receive by mid May. If you haven't received one, you can reach out to My Aged Care.

Next Steps

Your service agreement, care plan, and budget - including new pricing - cannot be finalised until the legislation is complete, as the new Act will outline requirements for these essential documents.

Rest assured, we will work closely with you to ensure a seamless transition once all details are confirmed.

Staying Up to Date

You can check for ongoing updates by visiting the government's website for further announcements. We will endeavour to keep you informed as this information is released.

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/support-at-home/about>

FAQs for Existing Clients

Here's what we know so far, based on current information:

- **Will my services change?** Your services will continue under the new funding model. There will be no immediate changes to scheduled services, aside from necessary adjustments following the review of care plans and budgets. Your **Client Services Coordinator and our contact details will remain the same.**
- **How will pricing work?** Support at Home introduces an **all-inclusive service fee model**. Currently, HCP fees include daily care management and package management fees along with service-based charges. Under the new model, your package **will only be charged for services delivered**, but pricing will increase to cover costs previously included in the fees.
- **What happens to unspent HCP funds?** Any unspent HCP funds **can be carried forward for use in Support at Home**. Details on how this will work are still being finalised by the Government.
- **How will client contributions be calculated?** **Services Australia** will assess contributions requirements based on when you entered the HCP Program and the fees you currently pay:
 - If you were **allocated, on the National Priority System or assessed as eligible for an HCP before 12 September 2024:**
 - You will be **grandfathered** into the new system and **won't be financially worse off.**
 - If you **did not pay an Income Tested Care Fee**, you will still **have no contributions (unless your circumstances change).**
 - If you **did pay an Income Tested Care Fee**, your fees will **not exceed** the current Income Tested Care Fee. Services Australia will provide details on fees payable.
 - If you were **entered the HCP program after 12 September 2024:**
 - Services Australia will assess your **income and assets**, then send you a letter outlining any fees payable.
 - The fees are then dependent on the types of services you receive.

Income and assets assessment outcome	Service category – clinical	Service category – independence	Service category – everyday living
Full pensioner	0%	5%	17.50%
Part pensioner and self-funded CHSC	0%	Between 5% and 50%*	Between 17.5% and 80%*
Self-funded non-CSHC holder and means not disclosed	0%	50%	80%

* Contributions will be applied on a tapered rate based on the participant's income and assets assessment.



DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE IN THE HOME

If you receive a domestic / cleaning service from us you should have received a copy of our new Domestic Assistance brochure. The brochure outlines the approved duties that our staff can perform, required equipment to be supplied by clients and some frequently asked questions. If you haven't received a copy of the brochure, please ask your support staff next time they attend.

Recently all Support Workers and In Home workers have attended an in-depth training session on our expectations around quality of domestic cleaning services. The brochure outlines key points from the training and aims to ensure that staff and clients are aligned in their expectations.

Just a reminder if you wish to provide feedback at any time you can email us on:
feedback@belongathome.org.au



INFLUENZA (FLU)

Peak flu season is fast approaching, protecting yourself has never been more important.

Flu prevention tips include:

- **Get Vaccinated:** Flu vaccinations are free for over 65's and currently free for family members during May and June 2025.
- **Practice Good Hygiene:** Wash hands regularly, use hand sanitizer and cover coughs or sneezes, and wear face masks if concerned.
- **Healthy Lifestyle Habits:** Stay hydrated, exercise and get enough sleep.
- **Avoid contact with sick people.**
- **If you are unwell, stay home and rest to prevent further infection spreading in the community.**

Did you know that at Belong at Home we track and trend infection rates? Please assist us by letting us know if you are unwell, particularly if you have been prescribed antibiotics or antiviral medications. Please remember to take any prescribed medication directed to prevent resistance to antibiotics and recurrence of the infection.

DYSPHAGIA

Dysphagia is when you have trouble swallowing solids or liquids, this can cause choking and chest infections. This includes problems with drinking, chewing, eating, controlling saliva and/taking oral medications.

Signs that you may be having difficulty can include:

- the sensation of not being able to swallow
- gagging or choking when eating or drinking
- food or drink getting stuck in your throat or going down the 'wrong way'
- coughing or clearing your throat during or after eating and drinking
- taking a long time (more than 30 minutes) to eat a meal
- being short of breath when eating and drinking
- changes to your voice
- avoiding some foods because they are hard to swallow

If you are experiencing any of the above, please let us know so we can provide support and guidance.

GETTING IN TOUCH - SANDWAI APP

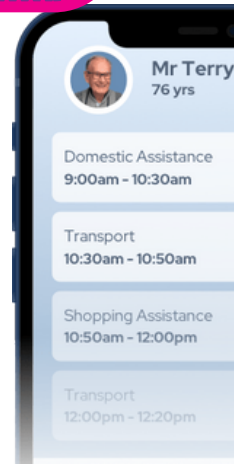
Search for the pink
Sandwai logo

Are you having trouble getting through to us on the phone?

Please leave us a voice message as we check these messages regularly and will give you a call back as soon as we can (during office hours). If you have weekend services, you can ask your CSC for our after-hours details.

We have a client App that can be downloaded on your smart phone or tablet allowing you to conveniently access information regarding your support worker's attendance at any time. Remember to refresh your app regularly to get the most up to date information.

The Sandwai App can be downloaded via the App or Play store. Our staff will gladly assist you with downloading the app, which is user-friendly and straightforward. Upon installation, simply tap on the app to view your schedule without the need for constant logging in and out. Please contact your local site so that we can arrange assistance in setting up the app for you if you are interested.



Sandwai Home Support
For clients and their family

OPEN

The **Client Advisory Committee** met in March and the members shared their feedback and experiences as clients of Belong. The Committee were very pleased that the Domestic Assistance training has been completed with our team, and that feedback they had shared was included in the training package. We also said a big thank you to members of the Committee who have come to the end of their membership, as their feedback and ideas have helped us improve our services.

We would like to encourage anyone who is interested in joining the Committee to contact us. Our next meeting is in September and we are excited to hear lots of perspectives.

Direct Debit is our preferred payment method as it is secure, reliable, and helps keep things running smoothly for everyone. If you have questions or want help setting it up? Our team is here and ready to assist. Just reach out – and if you'd like a copy of our FAQ, we're happy to send it your way.

Bridgetown
Bunbury
Busselton
Collie
Donnybrook
Margaret River

QCAC UPDATE

Our Quality Care Advisory Committee is a team that meets every 3 months to review feedback, incidents, training, improvements and lots of important topics to identify trends and areas of improvement.

We have been talking about how to improve consistency on when clients' services start and finish. After looking at the data, we can see that short notice cancellations made by clients have a big impact on other clients' schedules, so we would like to let our clients know that they can help us improve our reliability by:

- Avoiding booking appointments for the time you usually receive your services
- Let us know as far in advance as possible if you are not going to be home on the day of your service
- Speaking to your local office about what time bands you have selected, and if they are still the right fit for you.

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