

Winter Newsletter

Message from our CEO


Welcome to our Winter Newsletter, it has been so lovely to have some good rainfall and hope we see some more in the coming months to offset our rather dry year.

In this newsletter you will find information on the up coming new Aged Care Act and Support at Home program, which is now slated to commence on 1st November 2025 (originally 1st July 2025). As a result of this delay, the Commonwealth has also not released the promised 83 000 new packages. A Senate Inquiry is underway to look into the aged care reform delays and impact to clients, who have been approved for support/services but are waiting on a package to be released. Please let us know if you need assistance with applying for a Home Care Package/following up on where you are on the waitlist.

A key priority in the next 12 months is working with you to prevent and reduce falls. You will see some information in this and future newsletters about simple strategies that can assist you to stay safe and prevent injury.

Our team will also be providing advice/recommendations on how falls can be reduced, and we are hoping to facilitate some specific balance and falls exercise and prevention groups.

We are also revisiting your preferred service time bands to ensure these are accurate and up to date. One of our team will be in touch in the coming months to review this with you. Our focus is to build a team of up to five staff, per service type, to ensure more consistent staff attending who know you. We do ask that should you need to cancel a service to please give us as much notice as possible, minimum two business days (48 hours).



If you have not already done so please ask our team about our mobile app which will allow you to easily see the approximate time of your scheduled service.

We recently celebrated Aged Care Employee Day, a chance to thank our incredible staff for their care and dedication. To our clients: if you see one of our team members, please take a moment to say thank you. It means more than you know.



Michelle

Michelle De Ronchi
Chief Executive Officer

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Contact

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If you would like to read our Whistleblower Policy, visit <https://belongathome.org.au/about/policies/>

New Hardship Assistance for Aged Care Starting 1 November

From 1 November 2025, the Australian Government will roll out expanded financial hardship support under the new Aged Care Act, helping those unable to afford aged care services. Eligible individuals may receive government assistance for residential and in-home care fees, including new support for those previously excluded. Applications require financial documentation and are processed by Services Australia.

Learn more about how to apply and what's covered here:

<https://hellocare.com.au/how-to-get-aged-care-support-if-youre-broke/>

RAY COLGAN'S REMARKABLE JOURNEY OF SERVICE

Collie Retired Volunteer - Aged 95

After 42 years with the railways, Ray Colgan retired early—but quickly found new purpose volunteering with Meals on Wheels. Already familiar with many clients through the local Bowling Club, Ray's transition was seamless and heartfelt.

Over the years, he's cherished the friendships and joy of connecting with clients, saying, "The service makes their day." Now 95, Ray reflects with humour: "One day someone may be delivering to me."

His message is simple: "I hope this service keeps ongoing—it's a wonderful service."

Thank you, Ray, for your incredible kindness and commitment. Your warmth and dedication have touched so many lives, and we're truly grateful to have you as part of the Belong at Home Meals on Wheels family.

You bring joy, connection, and heart to our community.

Thank you for everything.



Thank you

Biggest Morning Tea a Sweet Success!

We're thrilled to share that our Biggest Morning Tea event was a wonderful success, raising an impressive \$1,249.75 for the Cancer Council.

Thank you to everyone who contributed, baked, brewed, and joined us in support of this important cause. Your generosity and community spirit truly made a difference!



SERVICE CANCELLED

Important Update to Our Cancellation Policy

To ensure consistency and align with industry standards, Belong at Home is updating our cancellation notice period to 2 business days (48 hours). This change reflects our Home Care Package agreements and will soon apply to Short-Term and CHSP services.

Why the change? Giving 2 business days (48 hours) notice helps us support our dedicated staff, manage rosters effectively, and ensure team members receive the pay and entitlements they deserve.

If you need to cancel a service, we kindly ask for as much notice as possible. Cancellations with less than 2 business days (48 hours) notice may still incur a charge, as our staff are scheduled and may still need to be paid.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Belong at Home's Quality Goals

At the end of last year, we consulted across the organisation, including with clients, carers and volunteers, to develop our Quality Goal Framework for Belong at Home. This helps us to know what good quality care looks like to you and the people working at Belong at Home, set goals around how we deliver

care that meets these areas and helps us track how well we are meeting these goals. We will share more about these goals as they're further developed but for now we'd like to introduce our four goal areas.



Need a Lift? Plan Ahead for Social Support & Transport Services

We're here to help you get to your appointments and stay connected, but we kindly ask that you give us as much notice as possible when requesting transport or social support.

To ensure we can coordinate safely and reliably, please remember: we are not an emergency service. Last-minute requests may not be able to be accommodated.

By planning ahead, you help us support everyone more effectively.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation!



Door-to-Door Bin Collection Service for Eligible Residents

The City of Bunbury will continue its free door-to-door bin collection service for the 2025/2026 financial year, supporting elderly residents and those with disabilities or mobility challenges. Bins are collected and returned by the City's Waste Operations team. To apply, residents must submit an application with a supporting letter from a medical practitioner. Applications can be completed online, emailed, or submitted in person at the City of Bunbury Administration Building. For details, contact Waste Services on (08) 9792 7333 or visit www.bunbury.wa.gov.au.

Falls prevention

Did you know 30% of adults over 65 experience falls, and about 75% of those hospitalised for falls have a correctable vision problem?

As we age, our vision often declines, which is why regular eye tests throughout our lives are crucial for fall prevention. Vision loss not only alters your ability to see obstacles and navigate your environments safely but also help you to maintain balance.

Routine eye exams can spot and fix vision issues with updated prescriptions or relevant surgeries, significantly reducing your risk of falling. Ask your Optometrist to include a Falls Specific Eye Examination.

For active older people the recommendation is to use single-lens distance glasses (rather than bifocal, multifocal or progressive lenses) when active outdoors and when reviewing /updating older person's glasses prescription, it is recommended to limit the change in prescription where possible.

By prioritising your eye care, you're taking a key step toward a safer, more active life and reducing your risk of falling.



Support at Home Updates – What HCP Clients Need to Know



The Australian Government is introducing the new Support at Home (SAH) program, which will replace the current Home Care Packages (HCP) program as of 1 November. This change is designed to simplify aged care services and provide more tailored, flexible support to older Australians living at home.

If you are currently receiving services under a Home Care Package, your Care Services Coordinator (CSC) will be in touch with you in the coming months to guide you through the transition.

Here's what you can expect:

- **New Agreement:** All HCP clients will need to enter into a new agreement under the SAH program.
- **Budget Review:** Your current budget will be reviewed to align with the new funding structure.
- **Care Plan Update:** Your care plan will be updated to ensure it reflects your current needs and preferences under the new system.

We understand that change can bring questions, and your Coordinator is here to support you every step of the way. They will explain what the changes mean for you and help ensure a smooth transition.

Stay tuned for more updates as we move closer to the launch of Support at Home.

Client Advisory Committee

The Client Advisory Committee is a group of Client's or their representatives who get together to discuss the quality of care at Belong at Home, and contribute feedback, ideas and thoughts on how the organisation should run. It helps us to design our services to be more person focused.

The feedback you provide is submitted to our Executive Team and the Board of Management.

The Client Advisory Committee meetings are held twice a year and they always have cake!

If you are interested in joining the Committee or would like to know more, please contact Jodie on 08 9720 5100 or email info@belongathome.org.au

Update from our Quality Care Advisory Committee

The Quality Care Advisory Committee meet quarterly to look at how Belong at Home's feedback, incidents, training, improvements and other quality areas.

The Committee is made up of representatives from across the organisation including management, clinical staff, clients and carers. The Committee met in July and some areas they have been discussing include how we can improve our start time reliability and how we can make sure the staff are celebrated for their great work.

Aged Care Employee Day



*Thank you for
going above
& beyond.*