



Celebrating National Carers Week

National Carers week is an opportunity to recognise, celebrate and raise awareness for Australia's 2.65 million unpaid carers. The Barwon Health Carer Support team organised a range of activities to give our carers a week of self-care.

The week started with a lovely morning tea at Cafe Palat, followed by High Tea's at Cafe Zoo and RACV Torquay Resort.

Carers allowed themselves to completely relax during a Good Vibes Sound Healing session. Another group shared a journey in African Drumming, delivering a mix of drumming, dancing and singing to connect people.

Locally, Barwon Health hosted 11 events with more than 200 carers taking time out of their busy schedules to attend.

Thank you to everyone who helped us celebrate.



A message from Sharlene Meldrum

Carer Support Coordinator, Barwon Health

Welcome to the final edition of Barwon Health's Carer Support newsletter for 2023, and my first edition!

I joined the Carer Support team in August after previously working in the Barwon Health Hospital Avoidance Program. I moved to Geelong from Tasmania three years ago. I'm married with two children (I know, I don't look that old), I have two dogs, Bear and Daisy and two fish, Bazza and Frank. In my spare time I like to take trips with my family and my most favourite self care activity is painting.

As a carer myself, I understand the wide range of emotions associated with caring for someone and prioritising the needs of the person you are caring for over our own. Being part of Barwon Health Carer Support allows me the opportunity to work with caregivers to look after their wellbeing while they are caring for others. Unpaid caregiving is often overlooked and I aim to ensure caregivers know how important they are.

I also want to wish everyone a joyful holiday season. Please take care and stay safe during this holiday season. We understand this time can be challenging for some so please reach out if you need support. We will be available throughout the Christmas and New Year season (excluding public holidays).

Kind regards,

Sharlene



How many reindeers does Santa have?

Email the correct answer, your full name and contact details to cs.events@barwonhealth.org.au to go in the draw to win a prize!

Congratulations to Rene who answered Sam Kerr as the captain of our national women's soccer team in the last edition.



We, Barwon Health, acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land, the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders both past, present and emerging.

Barwon Health is committed to LGBTIQ+ inclusion.



New group Respite Program

For men aged 65 and over

Barwon Health would like to establish two new group respite programs to support carers and the person they care for. The groups are aimed at men over the age of 65 with memory loss who are still independent and want to enjoy the company of others.

About the program:

- Four men in each group.
- Fortnightly for two hours.
- Transport is provided to participants from a designated meeting space.
- Each activity/outing will be decided on by participants.
- Participants will need to pay for their own refreshments and any costs associated with the activities they choose.

➤ Expressions of Interest

If you would like to participate and you live in the Geelong or Bellarine areas please contact:

Barwon Health Carer Support, cs.events@barwonhealth.org.au,
or phone (03) 4215 7600

Want to help carers receive the best support possible?

Merri Health is developing a [Carer Gateway Advisory Group \(CGAG\)](#) and a [Young Carer Gateway Advisory Group](#) to inform their work across Victoria.

Carers will have an opportunity to be involved in decision making, designing and evaluating services, policies, communications, and programs. Carers have valuable perspectives and can help shape services to be more effective and equitable. Carer representatives will be paid for their time and participation.

All voices are welcome, even if you've never done anything like this before! If this sounds like something you'd like to be part of, visit the [Merri Health](#) website or scan the QR code for more information and to apply.





Mental Health and wellbeing Connect Centres

If you are supporting someone who is experiencing mental health or substance-use challenges, you can access free information, resources and support.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect Centres (Connect Centres) are led by trained staff who have been through it and understand what it takes to support a loved one with these challenges.

To find out more you can call 1300 000 717 or email [Wellways](mailto:barwonsouthwestconnect@wellways.org) at barwonsouthwestconnect@wellways.org



Bushfire planning for you and the person you care for

Are you prepared for bushfire season?

Country Fire Authority (CFA) has developed an online learning module for carers to improve fire safety for people who are at high risk from fire.

The module was developed with the support of several stakeholders from across the sectors including National Disability Services and people with lived experience of disability. It takes 40 minutes to complete.

You can access the module and find more information on the [CFA website](#) or by scanning the QR code.



Accessible beaches

The Surf Coast Shire Council is working with the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority (GORCAPA) and local Surf Life Saving Clubs to make it easier for everyone to enjoy our beautiful beaches. During peak summer season, GORCAPA are providing beach accessible wheelchairs, beach access matting, and other sporting resources at four locations along the Great Ocean Road.

All wheelchair hire is free!

For more information about the accessible beach initiatives, or details on how to hire beach wheelchairs visit the [Surf Coast Shire](#) website or scan the QR code.





Being Sun Smart in Summer

With summer upon us, being sun smart is essential to protect the health and wellbeing of the people you care for. Here are some key tips to ensure their safety when it comes to sun exposure:

- **Apply sunscreen.** Use SPF 30+ sunscreen (or higher) on all exposed skin, and reapply every two hours.
- **Cover up.** Dress in protective clothing, including hats, sunglasses, and lightweight, long-sleeved shirts.
- **Seek shade.** Stay in the shade during peak sun hours, and use sunshades when outdoors.
- **Hydrate:** Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated in the sun.
- **Regular skin checks:** Monitor skin for any unusual changes and consult a healthcare professional if needed.

You can protect yourself and the person you care for from high UV levels with the Cancel Council Victoria SunSmart Global UV app. Scan the QR to download the app for iOS or Android phone users.

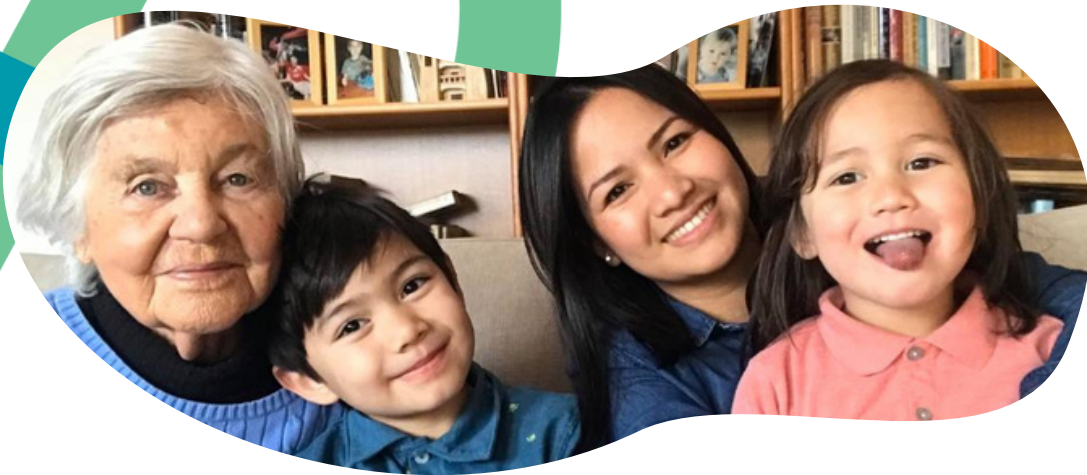


Barwon Health Carer Support Facebook Group

Be the first to hear about news, activities and events for carers across our region. This page is another way to keep you updated about our carer support group meetings, in person peer support, carer education, training sessions and other events of interest being held in the community.

Search for **Barwon Health Carer Support** on Facebook and like our page to stay up to date with all the latest news from our service.





Discounts for caregivers

As the cost of living goes up, it can be tough to cover all your expenses. We've got a few tips that might help stretch your money a little further. If you're someone who takes care of others in Victoria, you might qualify for government help and discounts to ease your financial stress.

Carer Payment

The carer payment is for individuals who offer daily care to a family member or friend, which prevents them from working full-time. Additionally, carers might qualify for the Carer Allowance, a payment aimed at assisting with the expenses associated with looking after someone with a disability or chronic illness.

To find out if you can access the Carer Payment [here](#).



Carer Card

The Victorian Carer Card recognises the significant contribution carers make to the lives of people they care for. The Carer Card offers discounts and benefits on various items, services and leisure activities for both you and the person you care for. The Carer Card is available for carers receiving the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance, as well as those who provide care voluntarily.

It is easy and free to apply for the Carers Card, you can find more information [here](#).



Companion Card

If you accompany your care recipient to participating venues and events, you may be entitled to free entry.

Find out more about the Companion Care [here](#) or scan the QR code.





Torquay Neighbourhood Carers Club Coming in 2024!

Torquay Community House (TCH) looks forward to introducing a new program in 2024 - Neighbourhood Carers Club (NCC). This group will be a place where carers are welcome anytime for a coffee, a chat and participation in a range of the house's programs.

Each carer has a unique circumstance, the TCH are seeking feedback from local carers to help tailor this club to fit within your needs.

To voice your feedback please email activities@torquaycommunityhouse.org.au, or call 5261 2583.

You can also give your feedback in person and visit the Torquay Community House at 14 Price Street, Torquay.



**Torquay
Community
House**

respect • equality • inclusion

Young Carer Events

Please note: You need to be registered with the Young Carer Bursary in order to attend these events.



Young Carers

Enjoy a game of 'Getting Lost', dinner at Panache followed by a walk along the Geelong waterfront

Date: Wednesday 20 December

Where: Panache Cafe and Creperi, Geelong Waterfront

Young Carer Family Day

Family day out to Sorrento

Date: Wednesday 17 January 2024

Where: 11:00am ferry from Queenscliff to Sorrento, return on the 3:00pm ferry from Sorrento to Queenscliff.



RSVP cs.events@barwonhealth.org.au
or ph (03) 4215 7600.

Dementia Support Program in Geelong

Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMC Services) are currently working on a government funded project called 'Staying at Home', focusing on people living with dementia and their carers. Their new Dementia Wellbeing Centres will provide comprehensive support and care to individuals living with dementia and their carers through five government funded sessions.

AMC Services are looking for participants for this initiative.

The aim of the initiative is to empower carers who care for a person dementia, provide valuable wellbeing support and foster a nurturing community to enhance the caregiving journey.

To find out more about eligibility, program locations, and the services AMC offer, email sah@amcservices.org.au or call (03) 9689 9170. You can read more about the Staying at Home initiative via their website www.amcservices.org.au

TRAVELLERS AID

Travellers Aid offers free support services to travellers with mobility requirements. Their services are available from four train stations in Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria.

Sandra from Geelong recently used Travellers Aid and highly recommends the service for anyone travelling to Melbourne for medical appointments.



"I would've been lost without them. Melbourne transport can be confusing, but my personal carer made it so easy for me.

A carer met me at Southern Cross Station with a buggy waiting for when I got off the train to take me to the tram stop. The carer stayed with me the whole time, ensuring we caught the correct tram, there was seating available for me to sit down and made sure we got off at the closest tram stop to the hospital.

My personal carer waited for me while I had my hospital appointment and transported me back to Southern Cross Train Station where I was able to have quick rest in the Travellers Aid lounge before my train ride back to Geelong."

Travellers Aid services provide the highest level of care, respect and dignity and are designed to enable travellers with mobility requirements to fully participate in life activities. Their services are easily accessible and available to anyone in need.

For more information about Travellers Aid services scan the QR code or visit the [website](#).



Social Supports Program



Located on Reynolds Road Belmont, the Social Supports Program (SSP) offers a warm environment, caring staff and an opportunity to make new friends. The program works with clients, carers or support services in tailoring activities that meet their needs.

The SSP and Barwon Health Carer Support have recently hosted open days for carers and the person they care for to the program in Belmont.

SSP staff provide an overview of the program to carers while the person they care for enjoys activities available.

The Social Supports Program Open Days are held monthly. Look out for details on our Facebook page or your emails.

If this interests you or the person you care for, phone (03) 4215 7600 or email cs.events@barwonhealth.org.au



Real Carer, Real Stories - Faten

Faten, originally from Bangladesh, cares for her mum Nurun, aged 87. Nurun has a physical disability and requires ongoing care. Faten's caring responsibilities include helping Nurun with personal care, dressing, rehabilitation exercises, and social activities. Faten felt it was her responsibility as a daughter to help her mother as she aged. Faten thought she was not eligible for help with her caring role as she believed services would only be available to Australian citizens. That is until one of her friends suggested she contact Carer Gateway. Carer Gateway was able to provide help to Faten immediately. She received a tailored support package and access to respite care.

“Carer Gateway was wonderful. Not only did they help me understand the system and provide advice about nursing homes, they rang me every month to check how I was coping.”

Eventually Nurun needed more care than what could be provided at home and Faten was able to assist Nurun to move into a residential aged care facility. Carer Gateway provided advice to Faten about the process to access aged care and link her to other government services.

“I was overwhelmed with gratitude. I did not know how I would be able to afford a nursing home. I was so unfamiliar with the social security system here in Australia.”

Faten still cares for her mother but in a more supported way, making it much easier.

“I visit my mother every day to interpret for her as she does not speak English, to help with her medications, and to feed her which can take up to an hour,” said Faten.

‘But it is so much better for me now. I know Carer Gateway is there to help me when I need it. It is such a caring service and I always felt people cared about my health and well-being. The practical help and support were the best, especially the information about respite care.’

Faten was particularly impressed by the level of cultural sensitivity displayed by Carer Gateway.

“Danielle from Barwon Health Carer Support Carer Gateway knew everything about our culture so was able to really help me in ways that showed understanding. It was very, very nice to be respected in this way.

‘I am always talking to my friends about Carer Gateway and how wonderful it is. I still use them and it is such a comfort to know they are always there.

Thank you Carer Gateway.”

If you would like to read more real carer stories from from a diverse range of backgrounds , scan the QR code or visit the [Carer Gateway website](#).





Sick pay for working carers

The Victorian Sick Pay Guarantee provides eligible casual and contract workers with a guarantee they will receive sick pay when they can't go to work. Because no worker should have to choose between a day's pay and the health of a loved one.

There is eligibility requirements, and you must sign up and be approved before you can claim sick or carer's pay.

To read more, or to sign up for the Victorian Sick Pay Guarantee, scan the QR or visit their website [here](#).



Season's Greetings from Barwon Health Carer Support

From all of us at Barwon Health Carer Support, we are honoured that you shared your stories with us and let us support you in your caring role.

Our team will be here to support you over the Christmas and the New Year period, and if you have any concerns or supports that you may need, please reach out.

If you require emergency respite call Carer Gateway on phone 1800 422 737, 24 hours, 7 days a week. Please remember, however, that many services reduce their programs or close during this period so respite cannot be guaranteed.

We'd like to wish you and the people you care for a happy and safe Christmas and New Year. We look forward to working with you in 2024.



Community Kitchens Recipe

Kale and Quinoa Salad with Lemon Dressing

Serves: 6

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch of kale, stemmed and chopped
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped shallot
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- 2 cups of cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 cups cooked quinoa
- 1 cucumber, thinly sliced
- 1 medium red capsicum, sliced
- 1 medium yellow capsicum, sliced
- 1 (15 ounce) can unsalted chickpeas, rinsed
- ¾ cup feta cheese, crumbled
- ½ cup sliced almonds, toasted

Method:

1. Place kale in a large serving bowl. Whisk together oil, lemon juice, shallot, honey, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Pour 2 to 3 tablespoons of the dressing over the kale; lightly massage until slightly wilted, 1 to 2 minutes.
2. Top the kale with tomatoes, quinoa, cucumber, peppers, chickpeas, feta and almonds. Drizzle with the remaining dressing and toss before serving.

Find more Community Kitchen recipes here:





What's coming up

Norlane Community Centre

Parents Carers Group (School terms only)

When: Every Monday

Time: 10:00am - 12:00pm

Where: 39A Rose Ave, Norlane

If you are someone who cares for a child and looking to socialise, Norlane Community Centre hosts a carers group every Monday. Bring the child's favourite toys and snacks along while you enjoy a complimentary tea or coffee. Cost is a gold coin donation.

Vines Road Community Centre

Drug and Alcohol Carers Support Group (School Terms Only)

When: Every Tuesday

Time: 10:30am - 12:00pm

Where: 37-61 Vines Road, Hamlyn Heights

For family members caring for someone affected by drugs and alcohol. Open to anyone and providing opportunities to talk and listen to others in a non-judgemental, safe environment.

To register, please email Kay Callander kaycallander.1960@gmail.com

Torquay Community House

Walks for Carers (Dates for 2024 TBC)

When: Once a month (weather permitted)

Time: 10:00am - 11:45am

Where: Torquay Community House, 14 Price Street, Torquay

The walkers group aims to bring carers in our community together and provide information on support services available.

For more information, please contact:

activities@torquaycommunityhouse.org.au or call (03) 5261 2583.





Barwon South West Region

Carer Support Groups

Group name	When	Contact
Bellarine Carer Support Group	Monthly: Wednesday	(03) 4215 7600
Eastern Carer Support Group	Monthly: Monday	(03) 4215 7600
Northern Carer Support Group	Monthly: Thursday	(03) 4215 7600
Barwon South Support Group	Monthly: Tuesday	(03) 4215 7600
Geelong Carer Walking Group	Fortnightly: Thursday	(03) 4215 7600
Colac Carer Support Group	1st Tuesday of the month	(03) 4215 7600
Portland Carers Group	Last Friday of the month	(03) 5561 8111
Casterton Carers Group	3rd Friday of the month	(03) 5561 8111
Warrnambool Carers Group	3rd Wednesday of the month	(03) 5561 8111
Hamilton Carer Support Group	1st Monday of the month	(03) 5561 8111
Coleraine Carer Support Group	2nd Wednesday of the month	(03) 5561 8111
Terang Carer Support Group	2nd Thursday of the month	(03) 5561 8111
Timboon Carer Support Group	1st Tuesday of the month	(03) 5561 8111



Mailing List

If you are getting the newsletter by post but would prefer to receive it electronically, please email carersupport@barwonhealth.org.au and request to be added to the email distribution list.



Our Team

Sharlene, Gabrielle, Bec, Cheryl, Danielle, Deb, Donna, Emily, Elizabeth, Jodi, Kristy, Laura, Linda, Melissa, Robyn and Ria



Let's Connect

Join the [Barwon Health Carer Support](#) Facebook group to stay up-to-date with events and connect with other carers.