

# CARER NEWS

Freecall 1800 052 222



Barwon  
Health

Carer Support

## Autumn Edition - 2020

### Introducing the Carer Gateway

April 6 is the start date for **Carer Gateway**. Barwon Health Carer Support has been selected as a service outlet to deliver supports to carers under a statewide partnership in Victoria. This is the Australian Government's new model of delivering services and supports specifically for carers.



You will notice some changes when you call us from April 6 onwards. The Carer Gateway FreeCall number is **1800 422 737**. Our old number will divert to this new number. Your call will be answered by staff from Carer Gateway's central intake team. Their role is to gather some basic information about you and the person you care for, to register you on the new Carer Gateway information system. Although you have given this information previously, this step is necessary to create a record for you with Carer Gateway. There will be no need to tell 'your story' again. Your call will then either be transferred to our Barwon or South West offices or the intake team will notify Carer Support to follow up your call. The next time you ring, the intake team will be able to identify you on the new information system and you can ask to be *transferred to Barwon South West*. The same Barwon Health Carer Support staff will continue to work with you under the Carer Gateway.

**What supports are available through Carer Gateway?** Carer Gateway offers respite for carers in an emergency, carer counselling (by phone, in person or online), peer support and facilitated coaching. Also for the first time carers will be able to access support planning through a nationally consistent process to understand needs and identify goals. Practical assistance will be delivered through carer directed support packages, which will give carers greater say and more control over supports for themselves and/or the person they care for. Over the coming months we will explain these services in greater detail.

The website is a great starting point to help you navigate the many services and supports available for carers. Visit the website at [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)

**Keep an eye out for our new look Carer Gateway Winter Newsletter**

OUR TEAM: Co-ordinator: Jennifer Polley Barwon Team: Aleisha; Cynthia; Danielle; Deb; Elizabeth; Gail; Jodi; Kristy; Linda  
South West Team: Gail; Lyn; Robyn Customer Service: Susan; Tina

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CONTACT US  
For carer support (24 hrs)  
**FreeCall 1800 422 737**

EMAIL [carersupport@barwonhealth.org.au](mailto:carersupport@barwonhealth.org.au)

WEB [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)

To restrict the spread of coronavirus as much as possible within the general community and amongst our most vulnerable clients, Barwon Health has made the decision to suspend all group activity and non-essential home visits in the immediate future. At this stage we are uncertain how long these measures will be in place. This will be dependent upon ongoing directives from the state and federal governments.

This means all carer support group meetings, activities and group respite outings are on hold for the time being. This is regrettable however our response is in line with the state-wide response to managing large gatherings. We understand the disappointment for our carers who look forward to the social aspect of these groups. Over the coming weeks if you are feeling isolated at home or experience increased carer stress we encourage you to call us on **1800 422 737** so that we can explore options to support you.

We are still able to arrange emergency respite, individual respite and respite in the community, subject to the usual risk assessments that we must undertake when we subcontract agency staff to come into your home, or that of the person you care for.

COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Some people will recover easily and others may get sick very quickly. People with coronavirus may experience fever, flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue as well as shortness of breath.

## 10 Ways to Reduce your Risk of Coronavirus

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Dry your hands with paper towel
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have one, cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow
- Isolate yourself at home if you feel sick. If you or the person you care for take medication, ensure you have adequate supplies
- Phone your GP first if you need medical attention. They will tell you what to do
- Continue healthy habits such as exercise, drink water, get plenty of sleep and avoid smoking.
- Don't wear a face mask if you are well
- Buy an alcohol based hand sanitiser with over 60% alcohol
- Get the flu shot when it is available in April
- Shaking hands is optional for now!

**If you are concerned call the Coronavirus Hotline  
1800 675 398**

## Support for Carers with education and training

Are you interested in completing a short course with a registered training organisation, community centre or TAFE? Do you want to learn new skills to help you get back into the workforce? Would you like to improve your skills to assist you in your caring role such as doing a course in cooking or first aid? Would you love to have some 'me' time and doing something for yourself to improve your own wellbeing? We currently have funding to assist with this, so if you have something in mind, give us a call so that we can discuss ways in which we might be able to assist you.

## Benefits Card

The Carer Benefits Card is part of the Frequent Values discount program and has been mailed to all carers who contacted our service in 2019. Only carers who are registered with Barwon Health Carer Support can access these benefits. It is exclusive to carers in the Barwon South West region. The discount program is valid for 12 months.

**Is this a concession card?** **No**, it is a discount card - the same as the one that comes with the gold 'Entertainment Book' that schools and community groups sell for fundraising. Your card is recognised at *participating businesses only*. It **cannot** be used to identify you as a carer, for concessions on transport or bills and does not entitle carers to any discounts other than those listed in the booklet and on the website. If you have any questions or comments about the program you can contact Entertainment Publications Customer Service on **1800 008 553**.

**How does the program work?** Your program gives you discounts at restaurants, accommodation, activities and shopping. Your pack contains a handbook and personalised card, which will be attached to a letter. Take care not to throw the card away as we can't offer replacement cards. The handbook explains how the program works and lists the restaurants where you can use your card and save 20% off the bill. At the back of the handbook you will find special one-off discount vouchers. If you go online to **bhcarers.frequentvalues.com.au** you can access more benefits such as discounted accommodation and online shopping. It is up to you which benefits you choose to use.

**Why do we provide this discounts program?** This discount program is a great way for carers to save money on takeaway and restaurant meals, shopping vouchers and for special prices on accommodation across Australia and even overseas. The discounts are the same that are offered to people who purchase the *Entertainment Book*. We hope that carers will benefit from the program by saving money on social and recreational activities while getting out into the community.

**What if I don't have a computer?** The online discounts can also be accessed on the mobile site from a smart phone. If you need help logging into the mobile site, make a time to drop into one of our two locations. If you do not wish to use the online benefits you can still use your card to save 20% off the bill at participating restaurants as well as making use of the one-off vouchers in the booklet.

## Expression of interest

We are proposing to run two wellbeing classes for carers in the coming weeks and once the covid-19 situation has settled down. Qi Gong is a gentle movement and relaxation program similar to Tai Chi that is designed to reduce stress. Bollywood dancing will be a fun activity for carers of all ages, with no dance experience required.

Sessions will be held at GenU Eastern Hub in East Geelong with both daytime and evening sessions proposed. If you are interested please register your interest with us on **1800 422 737**.



Are you or the person you care for over 65 years of age and needing more help to manage at home? **My Aged Care** is the Australian Government's starting point on your aged care journey. If you are not yet registered with My Aged Care, it is a good idea to plan ahead and start a referral for an assessment. An assessment is required to get help in the home, for short term respite care or for entry into an aged care home.

**Apply for an assessment:** You can apply online or call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422**. The online application is quick and easy and can be done at [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) - you will need the Medicare card for the person who needs the assessment. The online application takes at least 10 minutes and asks questions about health, managing at home and supports currently being received. A family carer can apply online or over the phone, for the person they care for, with their permission. Carers can be appointed as a 'representative' with My Aged Care. This can be set up at the same time as the application for an assessment. A representative can talk to and give information to My Aged Care on behalf of the person being cared for, as well as receive letters and phone calls.

**Prepare for an assessment:** There are two types of assessment that work out care needs and what types of support you may be eligible for. A home support assessment with the **Regional Assessment Service (RAS)** will be done for low level support to stay at home. This support is provided through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme. A comprehensive assessment with an **Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT)** is for people who have greater care needs such as Home Care Packages, short term care, residential respite, Transition Care and aged care homes. Both are face-to-face assessments done in the home. There is no cost for either assessment.

**After the assessment:** Once you or your loved one have had a face-to-face assessment to discuss possible services to assist you, you will receive a letter summarising the outcomes of the home assessment. If you are eligible for a home care package, the letter will include the level of package you are eligible for (levels 1, 2, 3 or 4). This is a **confirmation ONLY** as packages are in high demand and there is usually a wait time based on date of the assessment and priority of need.

While waiting for a package there are some things you can do – look up local providers, compare costs involved for these providers, contact and / or visit a few providers. About 3 months prior to a package being available you will receive a letter from My Aged Care advising you that a package will soon be offered. Now is the time to choose your preferred provider and contact them to enquire about availability in the next few months.

You will then receive a **second letter** from My Aged Care when a package is ready for you. This letter will contain a **Referral Code**. Give this code number to your chosen provider, they will then know what level of package they can offer.

You have 56 days from the date of your second letter to enter into a Home Care Agreement with a provider. If you don't, the package will expire and be offered to the next person on the national waiting list. If you are not ready for a package yet, simply call My Aged Care and let them know. Your place in the national queue is based on the original date of assessment and can be re-activated at any time by contacting My Aged Care again. You can call My Aged Care on **1800 200 422** from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and from 10am to 2pm on Saturdays. The staff at Carer Support will always be available to talk you through you the process of getting an assessment, what to expect and can also make referrals on your behalf or for the person you care for.