

Welcome to our first Carer Gateway News

Welcome to the first Barwon Health Carer Support newsletter since becoming part of the national Carer Gateway in April 2020. We thought this was an ideal time to introduce our new look newsletter, so we hope you like our new design.

Unfortunately due to covid-19 this newsletter is not jam-packed with upcoming carer activities and education sessions, but it does have useful information about Carer Gateway. Hopefully in our Spring newsletter you will start to see the return of some of our groups and activities.

Carer Gateway consists of a regional network of service providers led by Merri Health. In addition to providing direct support to carers at a local level, Carer Gateway provides **free telephone counselling**. Each weekday from 8am to 6pm professional counsellors are waiting to talk through the concerns you have and how you feel about your caring role. To use the service call **1800 422 737** and select Option 2 to speak to the counselling team.

Carer Gateway Website

On the website you can access the carer's **community discussion forum**. It is a safe, anonymous space to connect with other carers, share stories and advice, and support each other. Ask the community a question, join an existing discussion or start a new one about what matters to you.

Also on the website, **Carer Skills courses** provide information, insights and practical tips



to help carers develop new understanding and skills important in the caring role. Each free online learning module takes approx. 20-40 minutes to complete. Course topics include *Dealing with Stress, Legal Issues and Effective Communication Techniques*.

Bethany Covid-19 Support Line

Bethany Community Support has established a support line to help people living in the Geelong and Warrnambool areas. Free support is available on issues such as anxiety and stress impacting individuals, couples, children and families; financial stress; emergency financial relief; parenting and relationship issues; social isolation and gambler's help.

Bethany counsellors will listen to you, provide support, advice and helpful strategies, and guide you to other services that might be useful to you. No problem is too big or too small.

Call **1300 655 598** Monday to Friday between 10am and 3pm.

What is the Carer Star?

The Carer Star is a widely used assessment tool that has been introduced under the Carer Gateway model across Australia to assist carers to achieve optimal wellbeing for themselves and still be effective in their caring role.

It looks at seven different areas of your life; work, health, the caring role, managing at home, time for yourself, how you feel and finances.

The Carer Star is completed in collaboration with a support worker and is designed to help you decide where you are at currently on your caring journey, and how this is affecting different parts of your life.

Based on the Carer Star discussion you will then decide what areas, if any, you would like to improve on and the support worker will work with you to come up with goals and actions to best assist you in your journey.

In most cases, the Carer Star can be completed over the telephone and takes about one hour. Young carers and people from a non-English speaking background may benefit from doing the Carer Star in a face to face assessment if possible. We will arrange an interpreter if needed.

At regular intervals you will revisit the Carer Star with your support worker to get a clear picture of what is working well and where things could be improved for you.

We believe that the Carer Star is a valuable tool to help carers to focus on their own needs and we encourage all of our carers to complete the Carer Star process at some stage so that we can better support you to reach your goals in your caring journey.

Do I need to register with Carer Gateway?

Carer Gateway is the Australian Government's new way of providing support to carers.

Carer Gateway uses a new information system to record information about people we support. With your permission, we will add your personal details to the new system. Over the coming months we anticipate all carers will be registered on Carer Gateway. Even if you have been receiving services from us in the past you will need to be registered on the new system.

If you ever need emergency respite, it is especially important to be registered on Carer Gateway, rather than doing this during a time of crisis.



Do you need an interpreter?

If you speak a language other than English you can contact Carer Gateway through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

TIS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the cost of a local call on **131 450**. When you call TIS an operator will ask you what language you need. Tell the operator in English the language you speak.

The operator will then connect you with an interpreter who speaks your language. You may need to wait on the line for the interpreter, or the operator may need to call you back when one is available.

Once you are speaking with the interpreter, tell them you want to contact Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737. The interpreter will call for you. Once Carer Gateway answers the phone, the interpreter will interpret your conversation.

Role of the Central Intake Team

One of the major changes with the Carer Gateway is the establishment of a state-wide intake team. They play an important role at the start of a carer's involvement with Carer Gateway.

The intake team has three main responsibilities;

- Registration of carers
- Organisation of emergency respite
- General information provision

Central Intake will capture personal information of eligible carers on the new information system and refer these carers to their local outlet for support planning. When you need respite in an emergency, the Central Intake team will arrange this for you.

Do you need emergency respite? Call 1800 422 737

This number operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please do not call the landline number after hours as it is not attended.

Emergency respite may be required where the carer needs to take a break urgently due to stress or illness, or when the carer is admitted to hospital at short notice. It may be due to a family emergency or death in the immediate family.

An emergency registration and home risk assessment will be conducted with the carer or carer's representative. In-home respite may then be put in place overnight or for a few hours as required. There is no cost to carers to access emergency respite through Carer Gateway.



4 WAYS TO CONTACT US

Call Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737 and press 1 to speak to the Central Intake team or 2 to for carer counselling. This is a FreeCall number. You may experience a short wait time when calling the 1800 number. The Central Intake team will check if you are registered on Carer Gateway. If not they will complete a brief registration which will only take around 10 minutes. You will not need to tell 'your story' again as this is done during the support planning process. Once registration is complete, Central Intake team will refer you to your local team for carer supporting planning. If you need emergency respite, the Central Intake team will arrange this immediate support.

Call your local outlet directly:

Barwon team **4215 7600**

South West team **5564 6054**

If you are not registered on Carer Gateway, we will seek permission to record your personal information on the Carer Gateway. Local call charges apply when calling the landline number, with calls from mobiles charged at applicable rates.

Email carersupport@barwonhealth.org.au and request a call back from the Barwon or South West team.

Visit the website at carergateway.gov.au and click on 'Do you need to call someone?' Click on 'Request a call back' and choose a day and time that suits you. The Central Intake team will call and register you on the Carer Gateway if you are not already registered. The Central Intake team will need some personal and demographic information about you and the person you care for. Registration will only take about 10 minutes. Once this is complete they will then refer you to your local outlet for support planning and assistance.

Staying Connected

Our carer support groups across the Geelong and Colac regions are currently on hold due to covid-19. We will keep you updated about when they might resume.

It's been a difficult time for everyone lately and we understand that some of you might be missing the social aspect of attending our carer support groups.

We are reaching out to carers who might be interested in participating in a carer group using videoconferencing...even if you don't currently own a computer or tablet, or if you own one but struggle to find the 'on' button.

A project worker will soon commence work with us on an exciting new project to better understand carers' needs and requirements in using technology. The project will support carers to become more familiar and increase their capacity in using technology to maintain social connections. Call us on **4215 7600** (Barwon) or **5564 6054** (South West) to discuss your technology needs and register your interest.

Over the past few months our young carers have remained connected to each other through regular videoconferencing technology, enjoying a variety of activities such as craft and cooking.



Farewell Cynthia

After 16 years of outstanding service at Barwon Health Carer Support we have said farewell to Cynthia Rossack. Cynthia joined us in 2004 and managed the Commonwealth Home Support Program and group respite outings.

Working in collaboration with Dementia Australia, Cynthia developed the Making Memories Support Group in Colac as well as the highly successful Girls Together community respite group.

Cynthia is looking forward to a well-deserved retirement with more time for her great passions of gardening and travel, and spending more time with her family.

Our Team

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

carergateway.gov.au
1800 422 737