

NAVIGATING YOUR WAY THROUGH AGED CARE

One Alternative

Staying Home – with Help – with a Home Care Package

Some ideas – from Graham Ferres – a long-standing member of the Bowling Club

Friends recently told us that they were going to start getting support help at home by accessing the Federal Government's Home Care Package scheme - when they had time. As they looked back over the two years of the pandemic they talked of how they felt that it would be a help to have some more support so that they could stay longer in their home, as they had aged and now realised that they were not as well / not as mobile as they previously thought. As we all know, some bowling friends at Doncaster now prefer to use a bowling arm to bowl.

Susan, my wife, had her serious stroke nearly nine years ago. We come to the Doncaster Bowling Club, church, Probus and U3A with Susan in her wheelchair. We have been able to stay in our home only with the tremendous support from Susan's Home Care Package – funded by the Federal Government.



You may not recognise that several of your Probus Club, Church, U3A and Doncaster Bowling Club friends with a few illnesses and mobility issues also are helped with Home Care Packages with various Levels of support. Some Club members and your friends might receive Federal Government support - for example - with cleaning their home, employing

a contractor to cut their lawns or help with their gardening needs.

Here are some ideas from our personal experiences. Someone in your family or a friend might benefit from this information.

- If you believe that some help to stay longer at home would be useful, then I suggest that you ring 'My Aged Care' today to register your Name with 'My Aged Care' and to arrange your exploratory Telephone Assessment Interview.
- Ring 1800 200 422.
- Another option is to Register online at www.myagedcare.gov.au
- Join the Aged Care system as an insurance scheme before you need it.

Once you have had your Telephone Assessment Interview then 'My Aged Care' will arrange an Assessment Interviewer to visit you at home. It is important to start today as the complete process might take from 6 months to 2 years before you obtain the support that you think that you need already. The Federal Government wants us all to stay in our homes as long as possible, as it is far more costly for the Government when it has to subsidise you if you move to a Residential Aged Care facility, sometimes referred to as an Assisted Aged Care facility.

As part of your preparation for your 'My Aged Care' Assessment Interviews I suggest that you make Lists of all current Medications; the contact details for your GP and all specialist doctors that you visit each year and the Medical reasons why you meet with them; and a List of your Medical History, including any minor or major operations or illnesses (eg for stents, heart attacks, hips, knees, cancers, eyesight, hearing), any longstanding or new medical issues, and times in hospital -

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particularly over the last few years. Do not downplay your medical issues or your support needs to stay at home successfully. Assessors expect that you will talk about your medical issues and personal needs to run the house so that you can stay at home. They will assess your needs to stay at home successfully from now on. Indicate how your support needs to stay at home successfully have changed and increased over time recently. Be prepared.

Some people go through this First Stage process when they are about to leave hospital after a significant operation or illness. When in hospital take advantage of all offers from Social Workers and medical staff to help you start this Registration and Assessment Interview with 'My Aged Care'. Often this assistance and References at Hospital quickens the approval Process. Some hospital Social Workers arrange what is called 'Transitional Care' support until your Home Care Package is granted.

CHSP – Commonwealth Home Support Programme

If the Aged Care Assessor rates your needs as possibly short-term or requiring only one or two support Services on a regular basis then you will be recommended to a CHSP program – Commonwealth Home Support Program – conducted by your Regional Provider – in fact, organised by your local Council such as Manningham, Banyule, Boroondara, Maroondah, Nillumbik or Whitehorse Councils. CHSP support is not means-tested. You may be asked to make a small financial contribution for each Service. Nowadays you cannot access your local Council support Services without first registering and being Interviewed by 'My Aged Care', and then being referred to your Council for support.

HCP - Home Care Package

If the 'My Aged Care' Assessor rates your needs to stay at Home as more long-term and more complex, then you will be recommended to obtain an HCP program - Home Care Package – Levels 1, 2, 3 or 4. You do NOT receive any monies directly. The Federal

Government funds are transferred monthly to an Aged Care Provider that you select. These funds then are used for the Services that you request from your Provider. At the end of each month your Provider gives you a Statement of Income and Expenditure, showing the monthly balance in your Provider Account and the balance of funds still available for you to use from your Government home care Account.

The My Aged Care scheme is entitled a 'Consumer-Directed' one. There are many For-Profit Providers in the Home Care support field. Some people like to select a Provider that is Not-for-Profit - local community or church Provider; such as Club sponsor and partner 'MannaCare' or church providers such as 'Villa Maria' or 'Baptcare'. If you wish, at a later time, you are able to change your Provider and take your unspent funds with you. Initially, even if you are assessed as needing Level 3 or Level 4 Support, you at first might be offered only a Level 2 Home Care Package, until a higher Level Care Package becomes available.

When you are awarded a Home Care Package you will be asked to complete a long Income and Assets Form, similar to the Form completed by those who have applied for a Pension. If necessary, ask some younger family members to help you complete the Form. You then may be told by 'My Aged Care' that you should / or could make a top up financial Contribution per Day to your Account with your Aged Care Provider as part of your Agreement with your Provider. That contribution amount is negotiable when you get to that stage, and sometimes it is reduced greatly by agreement with your Provider. Aged Care Providers pay for their office, staff and organisation by charging Administration Fees to your Package. These negotiated Fees vary in the range from 20% to 35% of the Package depending upon the Provider and how much you are able to help with the organisation yourself of the Home Care Package and the support Services.

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Home Care Support Services

Some typical Services for Home Care Packages include: help with showering and dressing; help with toiletry; physio, OT and podiatry costs; help with the safety of medicines; continence management; installation of paths, rails, ramps and minor house modifications; OT advice regarding Aids for anyone with a minor or major disability; purchase and repairs of a shower chair, splints, crutches, walking stick, walking frame, wheelchair or mobility scooter; preparing, cooking or serving meals with or without you; payment for pre-made meals; house cleaning (you don't have to tidy your house before they come!); shopping with or without you; taking you on trips - to doctors and physio appointments, to water therapy physio sessions, to libraries, to nurseries, to shopping centres, to your community interest groups or to cafes; taxi costs; spending Respite Care time with you so that your carer may pursue an interest – like Bowls at Doncaster; assistance with craft interests, sewing and knitting, jigsaws and crosswords; going for a walk with you; and company; and contractors to cut your lawns, do your garden and pruning, clean the oven, the windows or the gutters, for instance.

Each person selects the Services they need the most.



Susan in 'Banksia Park, Bulleen', behind Heidi

Think of the Support Workers / Carers who will be coming into your home as people who want to help you to stay in your Home – your Personal Assistant – so that you have the energy and wellness to enjoy other parts of your life that you still can do by yourself. The better Aged Care Providers all strive to provide you with the same Support Worker for the same Service on the same Day each week or fortnight as you request. You get to know them. Some Carers stay with you for years, until their life situation might change. They know you. You may develop friendly relationships, with those who have similar interests. Providers also appoint a staff Liaison person as your Case Manager / or Care Adviser.

Information and Resources for Home Care support Packages

Talk to any friends who have experience with Home support through the Aged Care system.

- Talk to your families and friends who know your lifestyle, interests and possible needs.
- A very clear explanatory website regarding Home Care support Packages is that for COTA 'Council of the Ageing' - www.cota.org.au
- Another very clear explanatory website for Home Care support Packages is that for 'Uniting Care' – organised by the Uniting Church - www.uniting.org
- The most local not-for-profit community-led Provider for Home Care support Packages in Manningham is 'MannaCare' – Ph 1300 902 023
- 'MannaCare' is one of our Doncaster Bowling Club's sponsors and partners - www.mannacare.org.au
- The Government website with all Aged Care information is www.myagedcare.gov.au
- Further information about Payment arrangements for Home Care is available on the Department of Health website www.health.gov.au
- Another well-known Home Care Provider is 'Villa Maria Catholic Homes' (VMCH) – www.vmch.com.au - Ph 1300 698 624

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- You and I – any of us – can access free, confidential and independent aged care advocacy through the ‘Older Persons Advocacy Network’ (OPAN) on 1800 700 600 or visit www.opan.org.au
- At any time, if your health deteriorates and your needs at home change, then you may request another Assessment from ‘My Aged Care’ – ring them - and hopefully obtain a future upgrade of your Level of Support for Home Care.

Ring ‘My Aged Care’ today to register your Name in the Aged Care Home Care system. Phone ‘My Aged Care’ at 1800 200 422 - before you urgently need support to stay at home. Every step in the Aged Care Assessment process takes considerable time. Talk to your family and friends about these possibilities.

Chat to me anytime at the Bowling Club, if you wish.

Best Wishes – Graham Ferres



NAVIGATING YOUR WAY THROUGH AGED CARE

A Different Alternative

Living in a Residential Aged Care or Assisted Aged Care Centre

You may know some Bowling Club members or friends or members of your own extended families that are living in apartments or rooms in a Residential Aged Care Centre. These Aged Care Centres provide for those of us who wish to 'downsize' and who are happy to be assisted or need to be assisted in their daily lives. There are several such Aged Care Centres across Doncaster and Templestowe and obviously many across all the suburbs of Melbourne.

- If you or one of your friends still wish to live locally after moving from the family home, then an option is one of the two Residential Aged Care Centres in Templestowe managed by 'McKenzie Aged Care'.
- 'McKenzie Aged Care' is a Doncaster Bowling Club sponsor and partner. Their business name is printed across our Club Pennant shirts.
- For more information look at their website www.mckenzieacg.com
- For 'McKenzie Aged Care' enquiries phone 1300 899 222.
- 'McKenzie Aged Care' manages 17 Aged Care Centres throughout Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.
- 'McKenzie Aged Care' manages 'Newmans on the Park Aged Care' at 33 Newmans Rd, Templestowe. If you are interested, organise a tour - Ph 9814 8100.
- 'McKenzie Aged Care' manages a second local Centre 'Charlesbrook Aged Care' at 1 Innisfallen Ave, Templestowe. If you are interested, organise a tour – Ph 9814 8200.

Another Bowling Club sponsor and partner 'MannaCare' also manages a Residential Aged Care Centre at their 'Melaleuca Lodge' in Doncaster. You can check their options at their website www.mannacare.org.au. Phone 1300 902 023 if you have some queries about MannaCare's Residential Centre.

You may know that some Bowling Club members and friends of members also live in apartments at 'Arcare Aged Care Templestowe'; 'Baptcare The Orchards Community', Doncaster East; and 'Mercy Place Templestowe', managed by Mercy Health.

These Aged Care Centres provide several local Choices if you wish to investigate this alternative.
Best wishes with your decisions - Graham Ferres.