



SUMMER2021

Chatterbus



Formerly known as Easy-Go Connect and Great Community Transport, Active Care Network has been serving the community since 1982.

CEO UPDATE



Ben Jackson
CEO | Active Care Network

Welcome to the Christmas Edition of Chatterbus. 2020 has certainly been a difficult time for all of our clients. Restricted in their homes, restricted in what they can and can't do to keep well, restricted in how many of their family and how often they can see them. Christmas is starting to look like some normality will come back to our lives. I hope you all make the most of Christmas and are able to celebrate wholeheartedly with the people that you love.

You will have noticed by now that our Client Christmas Party is looking a bit different, a bit smaller than the combined one we had last year. We are doing what we can to include as many people as we can. So it will have to be more parties with less people I am afraid and unfortunately (or fortunately if you have seen me dance) we won't be allowed to dance this year.

Now that there is light at the end of the COVID tunnel we are working hard to make sure you can be connected. In the Penrith LGA, Council and Active Care Network have come together to subsidise the Care and Repair Program. The Care and Repair Program is for our clients that during COVID have become especially disconnected. Active Care Network will come to you for the nominal fee of \$30 and spend a half an hour helping on

your garden or any maintenance that you require and then make you a cuppa tea or coffee and talk about the things that you might need now the world is opening up. We are also pretty keen to hear about how good your kids and grandkids are and showing us the pictures.

Gradually you will start to see the look of our fleet changing so keep an eye out for our new vehicles. Of course you will still see the Great Community Transport and Easy Go Connect vehicles as we phase in our new look fleet. You will see that underneath our logo will be the division the vehicle belongs to, either Community Transport in orange or Gardening and Maintenance in green.

Stay Safe, have a Merry Christmas and Keep Travellin'



We now only have ONE phone number **02 4722 3083**

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR CLOSURES



**Our office is CLOSED from
24th December to 4th January**

However essential services will be running except on public holidays.



COUPLES AND CARER FEES

We understand that some clients require assistance when travelling with us. We also know that people often prefer to travel with a partner. Therefore, we've created a flat \$5 fare for couples and companions. This helps balance the space we have available in vehicles with the needs of all our clients. The couples fare applies when two people travel from the same address to the same destination, but only one person has an appointment.

**Individual fares apply:
For social outings**

**When two people are travelling
from the same address, both
with appointments**

**When one person travels to
another person's home to
meet and travel to the same
destination or appointment
with Active Care Network.**

WE NOW HAVE PAYPAL

Keeping you at the centre of all we do, Active Care Network now have PayPal machines in most of our vehicles. Cash is no longer needed, as there is a quick and easy way to pay for your travel with a debit or credit card.

Please advise booking team if you wish to pay by card.



WELLBEING AND THE BENEFITS OF BEING AN ACTIVE SENIOR

2020 has been a difficult year for many people, we started off with a horrendous fire season, then in March the COVID-19 Coronavirus began to impact on us. However, as cases of COVID-19 are greatly reduced it's a good time to start planning to get back out in the community.

Here at Active Care Network, we have lots of interesting outings arranged to get you out of the house. So now is the time to get back on the Community Transport bus and get on with enjoying your life!

To help you along and build on your wellbeing, we have also compiled a few recommendations from NSW Health, Beyond Blue, Lifeline and some leading public health organisations. We have also added our own '**Expert tips**' to help you focus on your wellbeing.

The importance of being socially connected and participation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that many of us have become more isolated. Being **socially isolated** particularly in older Australians is linked to many negative physical and mental health issues that may have serious long term impacts on us. To avoid social isolation it's important to stay connected to other people and participate in the community.

EXPERT TIP Try having a chat to your neighbour over the fence or giving a friend or relative a call or better still go and visit them!

Please contact us to discuss local transport options.

Importantly our Community Transport Social Outings are a great way get out into the community and socialise with

others (you might even make some new friends!). Don't forget to take a mask, water (particularly as we move into the hotter months), regular medications, a hat, sunscreen, sunglasses and wear clothes that give you plenty of sun protection.

EXPERT TIP As we age many of us do not drink enough water so make sure you are drinking enough water at home, and take water when you are out to **stay hydrated**.

Retaining your independence.

As we age we may become more dependent on others. Whilst we may need help with things we used to find easier to do, it is important to remember that retaining our independence is vitally important. Retaining independence also means we can live in our own homes, and prolong or possibly



avoid the need for us to go into aged care. Research also proves that most people are happier and healthier if they can remain living at home. It's also important to understand that Community Transport is a vital part of retaining independence as it provides community access that works for older Australians.

Elder Abuse

Unfortunately some older people become victims of abuse. Elder Abuse is often a taboo subject, and it may be hidden away and not spoken about. However the long term impacts on a person's physical and mental health can be dire. Another sobering fact is that the COVID-19 pandemic has also seen an increase in the abuse of older Australians. And sadly often the perpetrator is a relative or friend. The reality is that everyone has the right to live free from abuse and help is available. See back page for more information and Helpline.

Maintaining and building on your wellbeing.

Being an active senior starts as a state of mind as our thoughts have

a great influence on how our lives progress. Even people with serious physical limitations who have a positive outlook will have a better quality of life than a person in a similar situation who does not think positively. So wellbeing really does start **in your head!** The following is some professionally sourced advice to help you be a better being.

Maintain your daily routine as this will give you **structure** and surety as things around us change.

Don't get locked into the 24/7 news cycle, stay informed but not overloaded with bad news as constantly hearing bad news may make us feel worse.

Regular stretching and light exercise can really help your general physical and mental health.

EXPERT TIP If you aren't currently doing any regularly exercise it is prudent to speak to your doctor first to get the all clear to go ahead. Hobbies are also very beneficial to our physical and mental health.

Hobbies may include things like sewing, knitting, painting, and woodworking or they may take many other forms.

EXPERT TIP If you have access to a **garden**, this is a great natural way to exercise. Gardening is also very therapeutic for your mental health and a big bonus is that you can beautify your yard or grow some fresh herbs and vegies to eat!

Taking care of your mental health. When our lives are stressful particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic it's normal to be worried. Sometimes we can deal with this ourselves however, it often helps to **talk to someone else.**

Even with all the best intentions and good habits things become too much for us to deal with. If you notice things like changes in your sleeping or eating patterns, difficulty concentrating, worsening physical or mental health conditions, increasing alcohol intake or negative ways of coping then it would be best to get some **professional assistance** to help you with this.



GARDENING AND MAINTENANCE

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an impact on our Clients and the services that we provide.

During winter and spring seasons our transport services have either been not operating or restricted with the results being that many of our clients have had to stay at home. During this period, Active Care Network provided our clients with help around their homes with lawn mowing, gardening and basic jobs. Many of you expressed the desire for us to continue providing these services on an ongoing basis. We are therefore delighted to formally advise everyone that as part of the services provided to our clients, we have commenced a Gardening and Home Maintenance services.

The team is led by a qualified Horticultural professional Pat McGavin and the other staff members include Stephen Lemmer (Gardener) and Emma Burns (Client Services).

Our Gardening and Home maintenance services include:

- **Gardening and Lawn care**
- **Minor external home projects and landscaping**
- **Property and home maintenance**

If you would like to speak with our Gardening and Maintenance team or would like a free quote, please contact us directly on **(02) 4708 9439**.

HOME SUPPORT

On the back of our successful launch of our Gardening and Maintenance Team, Active Care Network will shortly be launching its Home Support Team. While the Gardening and Maintenance Team mostly take care of the outside of your home, the Home Support Team will take care of you inside your home helping you with cleaning, shopping and cooking.

If you would like to register your interest in our Home Care Services call us on 02 4722 3083 and ask for Emma.



HELP LINE

Mental health assistance

Beyond Blue:
Phone: 1800 512 348,
<https://online.beyondblue.org.au>

Lifeline:
Phone: 13 11 14

Head to Health:
www.headtohealth.gov.au

Elder Abuse Help Line

1800 353 374. However, please note: if you are feeling unsafe or concerned you or someone else or may be harmed, call – **000**.

For free ongoing counselling support.

Contact your doctor to discuss this and they may be able to refer you to see a mental health professional. Where **English is not your first language** the Translating and Interpreting Service is available on 131 450.

Finally remember to take each day as it comes **stay in the moment** and **plan for tomorrow**. If you would like further information on anything written here or you would like to book transport through Active Care Network **please call us on (02) 4722 3083**.

We would also like to assure you that whilst you are travelling with us we are taking all precautions to keep you safe when you are out in the community.

WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK

Active Care Network is committed to continuously improving and developing the services we can offer our community. As we develop new initiatives we would value your feedback.

Over the coming weeks one of our friendly staff members will be calling our clients to ask for their feedback about the new wellbeing programs that we are planning to offer. To help us perfect these programs we will be asking you a few questions.

These questions should only take 10 minutes of your time. Your feedback will help ensure we are offering relevant and engaging programs as well as giving you an opportunity to suggest other wellbeing projects that engage your interests.

It is important to Active Care Network that we are supporting our clients in ways that nurture their independence and wellbeing.

We appreciate your time and contribution to improving our service.

Thank You!

