



Chatterbus

SPRING 2021



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

Hi Everyone

Just when you thought we were out of the woods a new strain of COVID hits Sydney. I am sure you have not been surprised to see Active Care Network's response to this as we try and navigate the best way to get as many of our clients to their destinations as safely as possible.

I hope you are doing ok. If you feel the need to have a chat please do not hesitate to give us a call for any reason. Please also consider our Care and Repair program that will help you around the house but also help you reconnect with your community. Give us a call on (02) 4722 3083 and ask for more information.

I have now had both of my COVID vaccination shots and I am really interested in how many of our clients have also had the jab. Whilst it is not mandatory information to provide we will start to ask whether you have had the COVID jab. It will help us make decisions about when we stop making masks mandatory and allow singing on the buses. Everyone sings on the bus don't they? If you have not had a vaccination yet but need transport to get there Active Care Network will prioritise your booking to make sure you do.

As you would have seen in our last Chatterbus we had some exciting new projects coming up at Active Care Network. Unfortunately we had to postpone our Community Conversations but we have put together new dates so I am looking forward to seeing you in the coming months.

The Home Support Team started delivering Home Modifications and Domestic Assistance as new

services to our clients before we went into lockdown and hopefully will be back on the tools when you receive this newsletter.

We had a great response to our first overnighter to Floriade and with that success we are looking to put together an annual schedule of overnight and longer trips. If you have ideas of where you would like to go please let us know. I know that the Hunter and the South Coast are on the list.

As part of our strategy, we want every staff member and volunteer to get out on the buses, so when you are talking to our lovely booking staff ask them when they are going to be coming out with you. Even better why don't you request someone to be on your trip with you!

Stay Safe and Keep Travellin'

Ben

IMPORTANT SOCIAL OUTINGS UPDATE REGARDING COVID-19

You will be able to book up to a month ahead for any social outings advertised in the October to December outing calendar for 2021.

- However outings may be cancelled by Active Care Network right up to and including the day of the scheduled outing.
- If your chosen outing is cancelled, you may be offered an alternative local outing in its place. Please note however, that the availability of an alternative outing will be dependent upon any current NSW Government COVID-19 restrictions at the time.

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

BE A PART OF OUR COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Active Care Network prides itself on its values which are; Innovation, Integrity, Reliability, Respect, Service, and Trust. For Active Care Network to meet these values it is critical for us to understand what is important to our community and the people we serve. So that we can better understand what matters to you, we would like to have a short conversation with you about the aspirations you have for your community. Gaining these important insights will enable us to deliver a service and programs that better suit your individual needs and those of your community. Active Care Network has a goal to speak with every one of our clients in the next year. In having a conversation with us you will have an opportunity to talk about the community you want to be a part of and, importantly, you will also have a longer term influence on how we better deliver our service and programs.

Our preference is to have a friendly, in-person conversation with you and so we have organised six free events that you can participate in. The transport will be free and there will be some lunch specials available at the venues so you can grab a bite before or after the event. Normally we would ask that you book no more than the month in advance, however because these conversations are one of the most important things we will do this year you may book as far in advance as you like in this instance. We want to make sure we accommodate as many people as we can.

In October we will do the events in Blacktown LGA - Thursday 14th and Friday 15th October. Health orders permitting.

In November we will do the events in Penrith LGA - Wednesday 10th and Thursday 11th November, and in the Blue Mountains LGA - Monday 22nd and Tuesday 23rd November. See overleaf for booking details.

In the meantime we have a goal to start calling our clients to begin the community conversations process. So expect a friendly call where we will check in with you and ask you four questions regarding what changes you would like to see to the community that you live in. We look forward to the opportunity to speak to you soon.

'WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GET GOING!'

We are quoting Billy Ocean's smash 1985 hit because it's good advice when times are tough, and due to COVID-19 it's been tough in Sydney. Social Isolation has also increased and has impacted older people greatly. So let's 'get going' to maintain good physical and mental health. Below are some tips below to help you with this;

1. Do you use Facetime or Zoom for catch-ups with your family and friends? If not call someone you know for a chat. If you don't know anyone you can call a support service (see last two pages of this magazine for details).
2. If you are able, undertake regular gentle exercise and stretching.
3. Maintain your medical appointments and check-ups.
4. Don't get caught up in the 24 news cycle. Remain informed, however too much news particularly when it's negative doesn't help.
5. Challenge yourself! Crosswords and Sudoku puzzles are a great way to do this. Learn a new language or brush up on an old one. Developing these skills is also proven to help in staving off dementia and cognitive decline.
6. Maintain a good daily routine.
7. Eat well do not skip meals.
8. Get plenty of sleep.
9. Keep busy and have purpose! If you are able organise your wardrobe, do some gardening or re-arrange your kitchen draws.
- 10. This is the most important message on this page. If you need help ask! (See the last two pages of this magazine for details).**

Updates.

Community Transport
Community Connections

TRANSPORT BOOKINGS

Active Care Network wishes to advise you that some slight changes will be made to the way you book transport services. Please take time to read the following.

Bookings:

- The Active Care Network office accepts transport bookings between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm Monday to Friday.
- A minimum of one weeks notice is recommended for all booking requests and bookings can be made up to a maximum of one month in advance.
- Active Care Network makes every effort to accommodate all transport requests, however making a booking does not guarantee transport will be available. Transport is dependent upon availability of resources, especially for out of area transport.
- Active Care Network is not an emergency service so please make bookings in a timely manner.
- Please advise our office when booking if a support person (i.e. carer, spouse or friend) is travelling with you, so that seating can be correctly allocated.

Ongoing bookings:

- Bookings are not automatically renewed by staff and generally 'standing bookings' will not be accepted (errors can occur when changes are made).
- Clients are encouraged to contact our office to re-book their regular transports on a monthly basis.

Late notice – bookings:

- Active Care Network understand that clients may occasionally receive late notification from their medical providers or forget to book.
- **Every effort will be made to accommodate your request. However, services may not be provided if the necessary resources are not available.**
- Active Care Network will advise you if transport cannot be provided.

Notifications:

- You will receive an automated call advising of your pick and return time, on the working day prior to your booking.
- If your answering machine is not working or you have not received a call please contact **the office after 2:00pm if you wish to check timing.**
- Times provided may vary by up to 30 minutes early for inward journeys or up to 30 minutes late for return journeys. This may be due to cancellations, traffic, weather and unforeseen circumstances.

- Clients are asked to be ready to leave their home when the driver arrives. Please remain inside in case we need to contact you.
- For return journey if you have a mobile phone please have it available in case we need to contact you.

Christmas and New Year closure and updates

- December 8th 2021 – Client Christmas Party (see your outing calendar for details) **please note that limited transport services will run on this day**
- December 14th 2021 – Active Care Network will be closed for staff training.
- December 27th to December 31st our service will be CLOSED. If you require transport to essential medical appointments during this period please contact our office so alternate arrangements can be made.
- January 3rd 2022 – New Year's Day – Active Care Network will not operate on this day.

Cancellations and changes:

Please contact our office as soon as possible if you (and your support person) no longer require transport or need to make changes to your upcoming booking

Messages:

When leaving a phone message **please clearly state your name, phone number and address.** Your patience and understanding is appreciated.

////////////////// **STOP PRESS!** //////////////////

Notification of Subsidised Fee Changes effective **1 January, 2022.** Please see below for further details.

BLUE MOUNTAINS

Blue Mountains Food Services – Community Meals transport will increase to: **\$10.00** (one way or return)

Social Outings:

Weekdays: from **\$20.00**
Twilight outings: from **\$25.00**
Saturday outings: from **\$30.00**

PENRITH

Social Outings:

Weekdays: from **\$20.00**
Twilight outings: from **\$25.00**
Saturday outings: from **\$30.00**

BLACKTOWN

Social Outings:

Weekdays: from **\$20.00**
Twilight outings: from **\$25.00**
Saturday outings: from **\$30.00**

Shopping:

Group shopping trips will be reduced to: **\$10.00** (one way or return)

Our Chatterbox feature this edition is with Susan Crosbie who works with Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District.



 Hi Susan, thank you for agreeing to speak to me today regarding your work with Nepean Hospital.

Susan: My pleasure, and I appreciate the opportunity”.

 So, to start off, can you tell me about the work that you and your department does at Nepean Hospital please?

Susan: I’m the Non-Government Organisations (NGO) and Corporate Projects Officer at Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District – The NGO (non-government funding) part relates to managing funding we provide to NGO’s like Active Care Network, to provide services to the community. The service that Active Care Network provides for us is Health Related Transport, so very important to our patients and clients to be able to reach their appointments like renal dialysis and chemotherapy, but better use of our resources if we contract you to deliver it.

 Does your role assist older people and those living with disability in Nepean and the Blue Mountains?

Susan: The Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District helps to provide and fund a number of support and health services for vulnerable and at-risk populations within our community. There are certainly some of these programs through NGOs that would help to support older people.

 What do you enjoy most about your work and why?

Susan: “It is very interesting working with such a wide variety of services and each program also has a Local Health District program manager, so it really connects me with services and staff that I otherwise wouldn’t know anything about.

 What are some of the barriers you have to overcome in your role, and how do you overcome these?”

Susan: Funding programs have gone through a lot of policy changes in the past few years, with increased requirements for services to show outcomes from the funding provided. I’ve been working very closely with NGOs in the development of new ways to show how those outcomes are being achieved.

 How did you become interested in this type of work and how long have you done this?

Susan: I’ve been working with NGOs since 2017, but I’ve been working at Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District for nearly 20 years now. Before that I had 15 years of experience working within the field of Disability. I started there to ‘give back’ after surviving a disabling accident myself and all the support I received to recover from that experience”.

 Thank you for your time speaking with me today Susan, and I think it will be interesting to note for many people the very diverse range of services you and your department are involved in at Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, and how important this is to the community you serve.

Susan: Thank you also.



HOME SUPPORT SERVICES

Our Home Support Services continue to grow in response to requests for assistance from our clients and their families. Our friendly and experienced Team are able to provide a wide range of quality services, whether it is a one-off, fortnightly or monthly based service, our team is here to meet our client's needs in the following professional services.

A well-maintained garden creates an excellent impression for your business and home. Whether it is mulching, planting, hedging, or fertilising we can create a customised package for your needs including:

- Garden rejuvenation
- Landscaping projects
- General gardening such as pruning and hedging
- Lawn care – mowing, edging, fertilizing programs
- Clean ups and rubbish removal
- Garden maintenance for Real Estate and Commercial Properties.

Whether it is to mount a picture on the wall or something a little more complex, our Home Support Services Team have got you covered. We can provide a range of services including:

- Home modifications including step modifications, widening doorways, ramps, and decking
- General building maintenance such as light bulb changes, door lock repairs and minor leaks
- External building gutters, walls, and window cleaning
- Bathroom modifications including grab rails, handheld showers, and lever taps
- Repairs to fences, gates, and paths
- Repairs to flooring, patching, and painting
- Plumbing and electrical services
- Internal grabrails and external handrails

Our friendly team will ensure your space is cleaned professionally, efficiently, and cost effectively. We can provide a range of cleaning services to suit your needs including:

- Specialised detailed cleaning including shampooing and steam cleaning
- Preparing homes for sale and end of lease cleans
- Contaminated cleaning
- Spring cleaning and de-cluttering services
- Window cleaning (internal and external)

Our promise to our Clients is that 100% of all surplus funds go towards our Community Connections programs that are designed to support older Australians and vulnerable marginalised people.

ACTIVE CARE AND REPAIR

Many of our Clients continue to express the need for help with their gardens and lawns during the ongoing restrictions caused by this awful pandemic.

After the initial Active Care and Repair Program that was operating last year, we have decided to again offer the program to our clients. This important program both helps those in need with their gardens and will provide a social connection to this service which may be as simple as spending time with clients over a cup of tea and listening to what is important to them.



ACTIVE GARDEN CLUB

Regrettably due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Greater Sydney, the launch of our Penrith Active Garden Club has been postponed to a future date. We are currently hoping to launch the Active Garden Club in early November up to Christmas. Once launched, the Active Garden Clubs weekly program will initially include the following:

1. Regular weekly Gardening Club meetings at the Penrith City Council Nursery, located at 2151A Castlereagh Road, Penrith.
2. Monthly Wellbeing and Education programs facilitated by internal and external facilitators
3. Gardening Club outings to local Gardens and Parks and other places of interest.

The key components of the Active Care Gardening Club include the following:

1. The Gardening Club will initially operate 1 day each week from November on Friday mornings from 10:00am to 1:00pm.
2. Location: Penrith City Council Nursery at 2151A Castlereagh Road, Penrith.
3. All of our clients and members of the local community are welcome to join the Gardening Club.
4. There will be a mix of activities at the Nursery and at other locations which will be set out on the 6 monthly timetable.
5. The Gardening Club will be led by a qualified Horticulturalist and the weekly programs facilitated by experienced volunteers with regular input from the staff of Active Care Network and Penrith City Council.



HELP LINE

Mental health assistance

Beyond Blue - 1800 512 348

<https://online.beyondblue.org.au>

Lifeline - 13 11 14

Head to Health - www.headtohealth.gov.au

Counselling support

Free ongoing counselling support contact your

Doctor to discuss your needs and they may be able to refer you to see a mental health professional. These sessions may be covered under a subsidy through Medicare.

Telecross

The Australian Red Cross is able to set up a daily check in phone call. To qualify you need to be living alone, and you need to be currently assisted through the NDIS or My Aged Care. Please call the number below to check on your eligibility.

Phone 1300 885 698

Physical Health and exercise

Heart Foundation Walking – Active Mind Active Brain

www.heartfoundation.org.au/walking

Phone: 1300 36 27 87

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**.

Where **English is not your first language** the Translating and Interpreting Service is available on **131 450**.

Planning Ahead Tools for future legal, health and financial decisions

NSW Office for Ageing and NSW Public Guardian
1300 887 529

My Aged Care: Coronavirus information and support for older Australians

For older people at risk of COVID-19, how to arrange support with personal care, meals and home support in emergency situations.

Phone 1800 200 422

Monday to Friday 8:00 am to 8:00 pm and Saturday 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

www.myagedcare.gov.au/covid-19-information-support

Aged Care Rights and Resources

The Aged Care Rights Service

www.tars.com.au

Aged Care Information Line – 1800 500 853

LGBTI Services

Programs and Resources for LGBTI Ageing

ACON – www.acon.org.au/home

Local Council contacts

Blacktown Council - (02) 9839 6000

Penrith Council - (02) 4732 7777

The Blue Mountains Council - (02) 4723 5000

Using technology to contact family and friends.

This is a well-established service in the UK, for information links and advice (see the website details below).

www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet/video-calling/

Further information

If you would like any further information on anything written here or if you would like to book transport or gardening services through Active Care Network please **call us on (02) 4722 3083**.



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!

