

✠ MercyCare

Home Care Newsletter



Key Name Changes Coming to Home Care



Many changes are coming our way with the commencement of the Support at Home program on 1 July 2025. Some of the simple but meaningful changes relate to the changes in terminology.

Here are some key name changes you should be aware of:

From: Home Care Packages Program -----> To: Support at Home Program

From 1 July 2025 all home care package consumers will be automatically transferred to the newly created Support at Home Program. The new program name change reinforces the ongoing preferences of older people to age independently in their homes with appropriate and timely support. We will continue to be your approved provider and manage the package financials on your behalf.

From: Care Manager -----> To: Care Partner

This represents a significant shift in the relationship between the provider and the person receiving care. Whilst Care Management will remain a core component of the program, your relationship with us will be more collaborative. We will partner with you so you are more involved in making decisions about your care, giving you more autonomy and a sense of independence and control.

From: Consumer -----> To: Participant

Older people have given feedback to the government that they want strengthened rights and to be more involved in decisions relating to their care at home. Some consumers want to rely less on their Care Partner by taking on some aspects of organising their care and services but everyone will continue to have the safeguards of having a Care Partner to assist them when they need it.

Allowable Payments After Unexpected HCP Exit



One of the key features of the Home Care Packages (HCP) program is the flexibility it offers in using funds to meet an individual's care needs. We often partner with consumers to plan ahead and allocate HCP funds in advance for modifications, equipment, or other necessary items. Unfortunately, there are situations where a consumer may exit their package due to death or relocation to residential care before a modification or purchase is finalised. In such cases, the Department of Health and Aged Care provides guidance to help us determine the next steps, emphasising the importance of having a written agreement in place.

✓ **Formal written agreement in place with us before you exit:**

- If you have a formal written agreement with us confirming the plan, budget, payment arrangements, suppliers, and other details, we can complete the work or purchase in accordance with the agreement within 70 days of your exit date.

✗ **No formal written agreement with us before you exit:**

- If there is no formal written agreement with you, or if you have purchased, pre-paid, committed to, or started work without our approval, we cannot use unspent package funds to reimburse you or pay suppliers or contractors to finalise the work or purchase.
- If you (or a representative on your behalf) have completed and paid for the work or purchase before exiting the HCP program, we cannot modify your care plan or accept a retrospective request for reimbursement from your representatives or estate, regardless of the balance of your unspent funds.

If a consumer voluntarily decides to transfer to another HCP provider before finalising the agreed process, their unspent HCP funds will be quarantined for up to 70 days, and reimbursement agreements won't transfer to the new provider. It is advisable to finalise the agreement process before making a transfer.

Can my Package Pay for my Hobbies?



Many of our consumers have pursued hobbies throughout their lives and are keen to continue these activities as they age. We are often asked whether a person's home care package funding can be used to pay for participation in hobby-related activities, so we have investigated what expenses can and cannot be covered.

Over time, the flexibility to cover certain costs has been scrutinised by the Department of Health & Aged Care, resulting in clearer guidelines regarding hobby-related expenses.

Generally speaking, home care package funds cannot be used to pay for items that everyone, regardless of age, would typically need to cover from their general income.

This includes recreational and sporting equipment, garden supplies and tools, arts and crafts supplies, educational activities, classes, memberships or events.

So, what can your package pay for in relation to social engagement activities that enhance your enjoyment and participation in life?

Firstly, any care and services must be identified through our assessment process or by professional recommendation and be included in your care plan and budget. Here are some examples of what may be covered:

- Social support from a worker to assist with activities related to your hobbies
- Organised activity programs specifically designed for older adults
- Activities or programs targeted at ageing-related health conditions
- Transport to access community-based activities

We are here to work with you to identify the most helpful and enjoyable ways to meet your social needs and preferences. Please reach out if you would like to discuss your options.

Living with Dementia: Spotlight on Apraxia



Apraxia refers to a loss in voluntary motor skills that affects the ability to perform purposeful movements or familiar tasks.

In practical terms, for people living with dementia, having Apraxia may mean they struggle with activities like walking, dressing themselves, eating, brushing their teeth, or using everyday tools or utensils, due to problems with movement planning and sequencing.

If you or the person you're caring for is experiencing Apraxia, here's what you can expect from us:

Assessment

We will ensure you have an assessment for your eligibility for the additional 10% HCP Dementia and Cognition Supplement and schedule regular reviews to monitor whether your services are meeting your changing needs. Care Plan: We will ensure your goals are well articulated and adequate time is included for your services so you do not feel rushed or pressured. We may suggest you increase the frequency of services to help you at home.

Budget

We can allocate package funding for Assistive Technology to support your independence and safety, such as adaptive clothing, equipment and functional everyday living and lifestyle items.

Support Workers

For individuals with complex needs, support workers may require additional training. Support workers should be trained to provide gentle guidance, allow extra time for tasks, break complex tasks into simple, manageable steps, and encourage independence by helping you do as much as you can for yourself.





Free Online Events for Carers



May 15th - How to Navigate My Aged Care

My Aged Care includes a wide range of services that are available to support older people to stay at home longer, including respite. However, many carers find the aged care system to be confusing and difficult to navigate. Join us to find out what's available.

<https://www.carersnsw.org.au/events/navigating-my-aged-care15.05>

May 23rd - National Gallery Australia - Art and Dementia Online

This is a social and creative program for people living with dementia and their carers from across the country, that engages participants with the National Gallery's collection through discussion and art making.

<https://nga.gov.au/events/art-and-dementia-online/>

June 3rd - Strong Boundaries, Strong Carers

This workshop will explain why strong boundaries are important and how they protect carers, and will provide practical strategies to protect your sense of self and wellbeing.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/strong-boundaries-strong-carers-online-workshop-10535-registration-1281695338259?aff=oddtcreator>

June 10th - Common Scams and Keeping your Identity Safe

As scams become more sophisticated, protecting your identity can be challenging. This session is designed empower you to be able to spot common scams and the red flags to look out for, as well as information on staying safe online and what to do in the event of identity theft.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/id-support-nsw/events/keeping-your-identity-safe-webinar-22>



Do You Have Electronic Copies of Important Documents?

It is often impossible to predict disasters and many of us aren't prepared for the legal problems that can occur after a disaster strikes.

We take it for granted that our many forms of identification needed to prove who we are, where we live and what we own/owned are always available.

Unfortunately unless you've made digital copies, this is often the first barrier people face, at a time when extra stress is the last thing you need.

And with over 70% of Australians now living in areas impacted by natural disasters such as storms, floods or bushfires, it's important that all of us are prepared for the potential legal complexities that can occur after an emergency.

Understanding that a key part of recovery after a disaster is connecting to services and support, is exactly why Get ePrepared was created.

Developed by Justice Connect, (in partnership with Telstra) and co-designed with Australians who have been impacted by disaster, Get ePrepared is a free online tool to help you create electronic copies of essential documents, in case you ever need them.

Designed for people of all digital abilities (with at least half their users being 65+), it provides step by step guidance on figuring out which documents you should make electronic copies of, where to store the documents, and the pros and cons of the main storage options. Simply visit the link below to get started:

<https://justiceconnect.org.au/help/get-eprepared/>

If you're ever affected by a disaster, you may also be eligible for free legal help from Justice Connect's network of over 10,000+ pro bono lawyers:

<https://justiceconnect.org.au/disasters/>



The Video Calling Device with Seniors in Mind



While nearly 90% of Australians now own a smartphone, the more features they come with, the trickier they can be to use.

With this in mind, the founders of CareWindow created a communication device that required no physical interaction, enabling them to stay connected with their father, who had lost the ability to use a phone.

Co-designed with carers, nurses and OTs, this iPad sized accessible video calling device makes staying connected to family and friends easier than ever.

Backed by top-notch cybersecurity features such as the camera privacy swivel and the family and friends app, means you can say goodbye to those pesky scam calls for good, starting from \$699.

Here are some of the features:

- Zero touch automatic answering.
- The ability to initiate video calls with just one touch, without the need for tricky sequences.
- Remotely updated so you'll always have the latest features "Do not disturb" mode and customisable options for the time of day incoming calls are allowed.
- Fall proof, spill proof and knock proof, eliminating the fear of accidental breakage.
- Screen can also be used as a photo gallery or a large font-size day clock.
- Available in English, Mandarin, Spanish and Hindi, with Greek, Italian and Polish coming soon.

If you have difficulty using or communicating with others using a standard mobile phone, get in touch with CareWindow.

<https://www.carewindow.com.au/> or via phone 1300 270 300.

Product Spotlight



Although the benefits of pottering around in the garden are well documented, physical limitations and other medical conditions can make gardening difficult. But one Aussie invention is revolutionising the way we garden, to make it more accessible than ever.

Say hello to Vegepod - the world's most accessible and pain-free raised garden beds.

Not only is the garden maintenance minimal, these compact, waist-height garden beds reduce the need for bending and help to support older people who may be at risk of falls or other injuries.

Here are just some of the benefits of Vegepods:

- Self-watering technology - plants can last for weeks without watering
- Amazing growth rates producing nutritious home grown produce
- No chemicals needed to keep pests away
- Portable - optional stand, wheels and shade covering
- 300 - 400 varieties of veggies and herbs can be grown.

Whilst the government have unfortunately excluded raised garden beds from being purchased using home care packages funds, we want to show you this great product which you can purchase privately if you wish.



<https://vegepod.com.au>
Ph: 1800 428 431

WORD SEARCH CHALLENGE: Australian Public Holidays

K	T	H	P	Z	G	T	Q	Q	P	L	A	F	L
B	O	X	I	N	G	U	A	G	N	E	W	W	F
B	P	P	P	C	E	C	N	W	M	A	I	K	W
Y	A	T	J	Y	P	X	Z	Y	P	D	K	Z	U
X	B	O	K	U	Q	O	A	D	E	E	F	Q	Y
A	E	A	S	T	E	R	C	F	R	L	I	V	Y
M	E	L	B	O	U	R	N	E	M	A	N	Y	D
T	A	U	S	T	R	A	L	I	A	I	A	S	P
L	B	F	Y	R	O	Q	Q	J	P	D	L	P	U
A	S	A	R	C	Z	E	H	K	B	E	I	A	D
B	I	W	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	D	G
O	L	K	K	S	W	A	K	U	Q	Y	H	Y	B
U	O	Z	B	I	R	T	H	D	A	Y	C	V	W
R	K	K	F	R	I	D	A	Y	F	B	E	A	Q

Find the 14 hidden words by searching for only the words in bold

• **Australia** Day • **New** Year's Day • Good **Friday** • **Adelaide** Cup **Day** • **Labour** Day
• **Easter** Monday • **Anzac** Day • **Christmas** Day • King's **Birthday** • **Melbourne** Cup
• **AFL** Grand **Final** Friday • **Boxing** Day

Get in touch!

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