

Quarterly Newsletter

COMMUNITY CARE OPTIONS

◆
December 2024



Here's what has happened over the last year and what's to come!

As we approach the end of 2024, we are thrilled to share with you the latest developments in our mission to support an improved quality of life and independence for people living in the community of the Mid North Coast.

2025 is a year that is set to revolutionise the provision of Aged Care supports in Australia. We believe the change is necessary however its implementation over the next 12 - 24 months will be challenging, particularly for providers like us who will weather significant financial blows. You can read about the changes coming in to effect in more detail on page 3 of this newsletter.

To ensure our organisation is positioned to manage the changes, we are working to ensure that our strategic plan aligns to the reforms. This means we are focusing intently on areas of our business such

as our corporate structure and overall business model, marketing and branding opportunities. At a time when organisations will be pushed to provide more for less, we are considering how we can offer our clients a different experience and create new opportunities for value added, capacity building activities. 2025 will be an exciting but challenging year. We will keep you up to date with changes as they progress.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to you for choosing us to provide your support. It is an immense privilege to work with you and we look forward to our continued relationship in the new year.

Thank you and
Merry Christmas!

Liz Anscombe



In this newsletter
you can expect:

Organisation
Updates

QCAB

CCO
Rebrand Launch

The Support at
Home Program

Legislation
Updates

Staying Safe in
the Heat



Key Leadership Changes

In June 2024, Deb Ryan departed CCO after 17 years at the helm as CEO. We thank Deb for her significant contributions to our organisation and wish her well in her chosen future endeavours.

CCO's revised leadership team is excited for a new era at CCO and is focused on driving new innovations, enhancing operational effectiveness and positioning us for future challenges and opportunities.

CCO has a proud 30 year history supporting our community and we are committed to ensuring CCO is sustainable in to the future.

We are looking forward to working more collectively with you and our peers and together, creating opportunities to build the capacity of our clients and our community as a whole.

QCAB (Quality Care Advisory Body)

In December of 2023, we established our Quality Care Advisory Body in response to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's strengthened governance arrangement for aged care providers.

QCAB is comprised of a mix of aged care clients and CCO employees. It focuses on all aspects of CCO's service provision and identifies areas of **improvement** and **opportunities** to build **client satisfaction**.

The role of the quality care advisory body is ultimately to support and inform CCO's governing body (our Board of Directors) by helping with **problem-solving** and suggesting improvements.

Thank you to those clients who have served on the committee over the past 12 months. If this is something that you would like to be involved with, please contact us to discuss.

Introducing a new look brand for CCO!



Our brand was comfortable, familiar and... 30 years old! So we've had a facelift!

We engaged a **specialist firm** to reinvent our brand. They have created a brand designed to communicate trust, health, happiness and wellbeing – all the things we strive to deliver. It has **coastal vibes** to align with us being purely local. They have taken our existing colours and used them as a base creating a more **professional colour palette**. The brand is deliberately understated in some areas and playful in others. It is vastly different to what we have had and may take some getting used to! But it is **fresh**, it is **modern** and will hopefully represent not only a brand change, but an entire organisational culture shift.

Please tell us what you think!

The Support at Home Program (SaHP)

The new Support at Home Program will commence from July 2025 when the New Aged Care Act becomes effective. There are many significant changes that will come in to effect.

Access - Participants will have quicker access to services. Additional funding over the first two years of the new Support at Home program will shorten average wait times for services to a target of 3 months from 1 July 2027.

A new classification system - Participants will be assessed into one of 10 new funding classifications. The new classifications improve on the current 4 packages available through the Home Care Packages (HCP) program by better aligning funding to need. This includes 8 ongoing classifications, and 2 short term classifications – the restorative care pathway and end-of-life care pathway. Under Support at Home, the highest ongoing classification exceeds the current Level 4 HCP, with a budget of almost \$78,000 per year.

A defined service list - The program will have a service list which specifies the services available under Support at Home. This will provide clarity for older people and service providers about what can be accessed. The service list includes clinical care (such as nursing and physiotherapy), support for independence (such as personal care, respite, transport and social support), and help with everyday living (such as cleaning, meals delivery and gardening).

Quarterly budgets - Participants will receive a quarterly budget that aligns to their funding classification. Participants will work with their provider to choose how to spend their budget across some or all of the services they have been approved to receive. Participants will be able to save up to \$1,000 or 10% (whichever is higher) of the value of their quarterly budget across quarters, if available.

Capped prices - Service providers will draw down on participants' budgets after services have been delivered. Prices for each service must not exceed price caps set by the government based on the advice of the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority.

Assistive Technology and Home Modifications Scheme - Participants will have upfront access to assistive technology and home modifications through a separately funded scheme. This means people will no longer have to save their package funds for these supports. The scheme will have a defined list of the assistive technology and home modifications that can be funded.

Restorative care pathway - The new restorative care pathway will improve on the Short-Term Restorative Care Programme by more than doubling the number of places, increasing the maximum duration of support, and opening access to less complex clients to prevent falls and other injuries before they occur. Participants assessed as likely to benefit can receive up to 12 weeks of intensive allied health focused support to help restore or maintain function, up from 8 weeks currently. The pathway will commence with 5,000 places, supporting up to 20,000 people a year.

End of life care - Older people with less than 3 months to live and who wish to stay at home, will be given priority access to the program's dedicated highest funding classification for additional home care services (\$25,000 for 12 weeks). The pathway will work in conjunction with, not replace, specialised palliative care services such as symptom management and advanced care planning.

Flexible care management - Service providers will draw down 10% of participants' budgets for care management, to be delivered by care partners. Care Partners will ensure services meet participants' needs and support their wellbeing. Care management support may increase or decrease as needs change. For example, a participant may seek more support from their Care Partner after an event such as a hospitalisation.

Service providers will have access to additional funding for some participants such as First Nations peoples, people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, and veterans.

Participant contributions framework - Under Support at Home, participants will contribute towards the cost of some assessed services, while other services will be free of charge. These contributions will only be paid for services that have been delivered. Contribution rates will vary by the type of service received and the participant's income and assets. The Age Pension means test will be used to determine the means tested percentage contribution, and Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders will pay lower contributions than other self-funded retirees.

Existing Homecare Package clients will continue to be supported under their current funding arrangements. The Commonwealth Home Support Program will continue until 2027 before transitioning in to the Support at Home Program.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

In October 2024, new legislation came in to affect for all participants accessing NDIS supports. As a result, NDIS participants may see changes in:

- how eligibility is assessed
- what supports can be funded by the NDIS
- how plans are managed
- how funding is allocated and needs to be spent
- requirements for information gathering for eligibility reassessment.

The new legislation seeks to progress key NDIS Review recommendations in partnership with people with disability and the disability community. It also aims to clarify the intention of existing legislation to improve the delivery of NDIS now and reinforces the original intent of the Scheme.

If you have any concerns about what this means for you or would like to discuss any of the changes, please contact us.

Aged Care Wage Increase



In March 2024, the Full Bench set new benchmark rates with increases as high as 28.5% for direct care workers. This rate is inclusive of the first 15% wage increase which applied from 30th June 2023.

The first half of the total additional amount will apply from 1st January 2025, while the second half will come into effect from 1st October 2025.

In order to meet these increased wage costs, Government has announced aged care subsidies will increase 1st January by only 0.93%. In addition to this, it is expected providers will also increase their costs.

Early next year, CCO will need to **increase the cost of services for all Home Care Package recipients**. We will need to provide Home Care Package clients with a revised quote and a new service agreement for their consideration. Care Partners will work with you to determine the impact of this and how we can support you through the change



Happy Birthday Ruth!

In November, long time CCO client Ruth Phillips celebrated her **101st birthday!** Ruth celebrated her birthday by travelling to Melbourne to celebrate with family. She celebrated again once home with a party for her locally based friends and family.

We have had the immense pleasure of working with Ruth for almost 20 years. In that time, we have come to know and admire Ruth's immense determination and independence.

Congratulations and Happy Birthday Ruth!



Staying Safe in the Heat

People over 65 years and people with some health conditions are more susceptible to heat-related health problems because their bodies may be less able to adjust to changes in temperature. As we move in to the summer months, it is important to prevent heat-related health problems by keeping cool and staying hydrated. It is important to plan ahead and check in with others.

Keep cool:

- Use air conditioning if available.
- Electric fans can help cool the body when the indoor temperature is below 39-40 °C.
- Keep your skin wet using a spray bottle or damp sponge.
- Soak a towel in cool tap water and wrap it loosely around your head.
- Take cool showers or foot baths with cool tap water.
- Wrap ice cubes in a damp towel and drape around your neck.
- Wear light and loose-fitting clothing.
- Consider visiting an air-conditioned building such as a shopping centre or public library.
- Use blinds or curtains to block sun from shining directly through windows.
- Open windows and doors if you think it is hotter indoors than outdoors.

Stay hydrated:

- During days when you are exposed to extreme heat, keep drinking water before you feel thirsty, especially if outdoors or performing physical activity. If your doctor has asked that you limit your fluid intake, ask them how much water you should drink during hot weather.
- Whenever you leave home, always take a water bottle with you.
- Watch for signs of dehydration like feeling thirsty, lightheaded, having a dry mouth, tiredness, having dark-coloured, strong-smelling urine or passing less urine than usual.

Plan ahead:

- During extreme heat, cancel or reschedule non-essential outings.
- Plan essential activities for the coolest part of the day. If you do have to go outside, take a water bottle with you, seek shade, and wear a hat and sunscreen for skin protection.
- Keep up to date with weather forecasts and warnings – via TV or radio, check the Bureau of Meteorology heatwave forecast online or via their app, and subscribe to receive Heat Health Warnings from the Department of Health.
- Stock up on food, water and medicines so you don't have to go out in the heat.
- Make sure that food and medicines are stored at appropriate temperatures.
- Check that your fan or air-conditioner works well. Have your air-conditioner serviced if necessary.
- Power failures can happen during times of extreme heat – ensure you have a torch, battery-operated radio, fully charged mobile phone or battery back-up, food items that don't require refrigeration, medications, plenty of drinking water and other essential items. Have a cool-box available to store ice or cool packs with medications.

Check in with others

- A quick call can make a big difference. Let family, friends and neighbours know you are OK or check in with those at increased risk or who may need your support during days of extreme heat.

Older people with medical conditions should review their care plan with their doctor to ensure that these conditions are well-controlled before the weather gets hot. Ask your doctor if you are at increased risk of heat-related health problems in hot weather. The doctor may advise that you adjust your fluid intake, avoid certain medications or adjust the dosage during periods of extreme heat.



Introducing... Andrew Murcott

In October, Andrew commenced with CCO as our new Clinical Care Team Leader. Andrew has a diverse work background including leading a team in the Emergency Department, Discharge Planning, Clinical Audits for NSW Health and training and developing new nurses.

Andrew's role at CCO is a critical one. He is responsible for leading our team of clinicians, ensuring high standards of clinical practice, clinical governance and staff training around clinical components of care.

If you have any nursing requirements, please speak with your Care Partner or relevant office contact.

We are so very excited Andrew has joined our CCO team. Welcome Andrew!



Service capacity

Do you know someone **needing support**? Our organisation currently has **capacity to accept new clients** across a number of geographical areas and through a number of different programs.

To determine if they are eligible and if we can help with their unique needs, and interested person can ring and speak with our **Intake Coordinator, Margaret Sillato, on 6650 2020** or by calling our office on 6650 2000.

We need you!

We are **seeking your input!** There are a number of ways you can get involved in our business and build connections with other people.

If you would like to **contribute content to our newsletters**, we'd love to hear from you! This could be an ongoing column, a shared recipe, a good news story or an experience you'd like to share.

If you are interested in **connecting with other clients**, please let us know. If having lunch out together as a small group, a coffee, attending the cinema together, hosting people at your home or meeting at someone else's home appeals to you, please let us know. We are looking at opportunities to connect interested clients in the new year and would love for you to be part of it.

Thank you for reading!

Community Care Options	6650 2000
www.cco.net.au	20 Curacoa St Coffs Harbour NSW 2450