

Looking after your mental health

Depression is common throughout the Australian population, but older people are more likely to experience contributing factors such as physical illness or personal loss.

The National Ageing Research Institute and Beyond Blue report that between 10 and 15 per cent of older people experience depression and about 10 per cent experience anxiety.

- Older people are also more hesitant to share their experiences of anxiety and depression, often ignoring symptoms over long periods of time and only seeking professional help when things reach a crisis point.
- Chronic stress can potentially lead to anxiety and depression, as well as to physical health issues such as high blood pressure.
- In 2014, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported stress to affect more than half of people aged 65 and over in the previous year, with serious illness and the death of a loved one being most stressful.
- Rates of depression among people living in residential aged-care may be higher than those still living at home, at around 35 per cent.
- Anxiety is the most common mental health condition in Australia. On average, one in four people – one in three women and one in five men – will experience anxiety at some stage in their life. In a 12-month period, over two million Australians experience anxiety.

There are many ways to help manage anxiety and the sooner people with anxiety get support, the more likely they are to recover.

Good mental health is a key factor associated with healthy ageing –

However good mental health is determined by a combination of psychological, biological and/or social and cultural factors.

Australian statistics show that certain older people are at higher risk, including people in hospital, living in supported accommodation, people with dementia, and older carers. If you fall into any of these categories and are experiencing an issue with your health and well-being, it's important to access clinical and non-clinical services to support your mental health.

Supports include: Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Mental health nurses, Accredited Mental Health Social Workers, Occupational therapists in mental health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers, Counsellors, Complementary health practitioners, Hospitals, Crisis Assessment and Acute Treatment teams.

For more information, speak to your GP or visit:
<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/who-can-assist>

- Stress management strategies, such as relaxation, physical activity, time management and social connections, can help lower stress levels and reduce the negative impact experienced as a result of chronic stress.

The good news is help is available, effective treatments exist for older people and with the right treatment most older people can restore good mental health. ■

For more information about protecting your mental health as you get older, visit <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/older-people>



The Byron carer

February 2021
Volume 20 Issue 2
www.byronrespite.com.au

Byron Shire Respite Service is located at the Brunswick Valley Community Centre, South Beach Rd, Brunswick Heads.

Our incorporated non-government community based organisation is managed by a local committee and covers the shires of Byron, Ballina and Lismore.

NDIS Registered Provider

Respite care is delivered through our Flexible Respite, Day Respite and Social Support projects, with a person centred enablement approach across the respite continuum.

Telephone Janine on: 02) 6685 1629
or Peter on: 02) 6685 1921

Website: www.byronrespite.com.au
Email: caremanager@byronrespite.com.au



Byron Shire Respite Service acknowledge and pay respect to the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung nation, the traditional owners of the land on which we live and care – and pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging.

Byron Shire Respite Service Inc. is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health. Visit www.health.gov.au

Although funding for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) has been provided by the Australian Government, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government.

Older people and hospital emergency departments

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, back in 2017, 1.6 million Australians aged 65 and over entered hospital emergency departments. This is around one-fifth of the total 7.8 million presentations. The 3 most common diagnoses among people aged between 65–84, was 'Pain in throat and chest'.

1 in 4 people who entered hospital emergency departments were aged 85 years and over. For people in this age group, 'Other symptoms and signs involving the nervous and musculoskeletal systems' was the most common diagnosis. The second most common diagnosis for people over 85 years of age was Pneumonia.

The REACH program

Hospital stays can be of concern for people with older people. You may recognise a worrying change or have a serious concern about your, or

your loved-one's condition whilst in hospital. If this occurs, there are things you can do such as speak to your nurse or doctor. You may also request a 'Clinical Review'. However, if you are still worried, REACH is a system that

Community Packages (ComPacks)
If you are spending time in hospital, ask if you are eligible for the ComPacks Program before you are discharged.
ComPacks is a 6 week program that has been developed to facilitate safe and early discharge of eligible patients from hospital. It provides access to a short-term package of care designed to help people gain independence and prevent re-admission.

helps patients, their family and carers escalate their concerns.

Connecting Country People to City Health Services

The Friendly Faces, Helping Hands Foundation is supported by NSW Government and the Agency for Clinical Innovation. It's program links people from and rural and regional communities to the major hospitals, health facilities and resources within cities.

They assist people to access quality information to make a trying, traumatic time easier. If you or a person you care for is admitted to hospital a long way from home, The Friendly Faces, Helping Hands Foundation can help you to get control of some of the situation.

Their website is designed to support people seeking amenities close to hospitals. It offers essential information for people who often struggle to find services in unfamiliar cities. The website has a directory of metropolitan and regional referral hospitals containing information to ease the burden on families.

Important things to know and do on arrival to the hospital when you transfer care of your loved-one to health professionals

Notify the clinical team:

- How far away from home you are
- Any immediate concerns
- Who the emergency contact person is
- How your loved-one is getting home
- What support will be needed at home

Share:

- Your family member's lifestyle preferences (e.g. comforts, dietary likes or dislikes).

- Current medication used
- What matters to you and your family member or friend (e.g. health, unmet needs at home, finances).

Ask if there is a REACH service

(Recognise, Engage, Act, Call, Help is on its way) REACH was developed by the Clinical Excellence Commission. REACH helps patients, their families and carers escalate concerns with staff about worrying changes in their loved-one's condition.

Ask:

- Why has your family member been admitted?
- Who are the treating specialist teams?
- When can you and your family visit?
- What referrals or follow-up appointments need to be made for your family member?
- Is there accommodation onsite or close by?
- To see a social worker if you want to
- Where are any food outlets or vending machines after hours?
- To be included in case discussions with treating teams.

Know:

- The Friendly Faces Helping Hands website can help you access relevant services close to the hospital
- The REACH service telephone number
- What is available for you, the carer and family
- A contact number for any questions or concerns when you get home
- It may help to keep a diary. ■

For more information about the **The Friendly Faces, Helping Hands Foundation**, visit: <https://www.friendlyfaces.info/pages/index>

For more statistics on older Australians, visit the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/older-people/older-people-australia-at-a-glance>

REACH

(Recognise–Engage–Act–Call–Help is on its way)

- The REACH program helps you share your health concerns whilst in hospital.
- It understands that you know yourself or the person you care for best.
- If you are in hospital, and have a serious concern about your condition or your loved-one's condition, or notice a worrying change, tell the people at REACH.

You can find the hospital's REACH number on posters or flyers at your hospital.

How does REACH work?

- When you're in hospital, you may RECOGNISE a worrying change or have a serious concern about your condition.
- The person you care for may be in hospital and you may RECOGNISE the worrying change in them.
- If you recognise a worrying change, speak to the nurse or doctor. Tell them your concerns. This is called ENGAGING with clinicians.

If clinicians do not help you with your concerns or the condition is getting worse:

- Ask for a 'Clinical Review'. This should occur within 30 minutes.
- If you are still worried make a REACH call to the Emergency Team. You can find the REACH number on posters or flyers at your hospital. You can use the bedside phone or ask for a ward phone. HELP will be on its way.

Tell the operator:

- Who you are – a patient, family member or carer
- That you need a REACH call
- The name of the ward you are in and the bed number you, or the person you care for, is in.

Will I offend the staff if I call REACH?

No. Staff want their patients, carers and families to be involved.

They want to work with you to create the best experience for you during the hospital stay. ■

To learn more about the REACH program, visit NSW's Health Clinical Excellence Commission at <https://www.ccec.health.nsw.gov.au>

Need support?

- **Carer Gateway** telephone: 1800 422 737 for information about planned & emergency respite & other carer supports. www.carergateway.gov.au
- **Australian Government Department of Health** For more information about COVID-19 call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 or www.health.gov.au
- **My Aged Care** telephone: 1800 200 422 for information about the Australian Government's aged care system and services. www.myagedcare.gov.au

If you require emergency respite care, please call the Carer Gateway:

1800 422 737

- **Telephone Janine at Byron Shire Respite Service to discuss your role as a carer.** telephone: (02) 6685 1629
- **National Dementia Helpline** telephone: 1800 100 500
- **Carers Counselling Service** telephone: (02) 6628 6416
- **Carers NSW** telephone: 1800 242 636
- **Sandra Kimball Counselling** telephone: 0458 175 962
- **National Continence Helpline** telephone: 1800 330 066
- **NSW Elder Abuse Helpline** telephone: 1800 628 221

Aids:

- **Byron Ballina Home Maintenance and Modification Service 1/65 Centennial Circuit, Byron Bay** telephone: (02) 6685 7312
- **Lismore Home Maintenance and Modification Service 43 Habib Dr, South Lismore** telephone: (02) 6622 2323
- **Bright Sky Cards for Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS)** telephone: 1300 886 601

Need Transport?

- **Byron Shire Respite Service** can assist with transport to medical appointments. Telephone Janine or Karen: (02) 6685 1629
- **Byron Shire Limousines** telephone: (02) 6685 5008 Travel for medical appointments free with travel voucher or for Veteran and Widow Gold Card holders
- **Brunswick Limousines** telephone David on: 0412 855 747
- **Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport** telephone: 1300 875 895 Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport provide transport to medical appointments, weekly & fortnightly shopping outings & monthly social outings. The service is funded to support older people living at home independently or have a permanent disability or Indigenous Australians aged over 50 years. Phone Kathryn in the Byron office on: 1300 875 895 for transport to medical appointments or Amanda for any shopping bus or social bus enquiries.

Protecting yourself

As we move towards a COVIDSafe Australia, it is important for people at greater risk of serious illness to take extra steps to protect themselves.

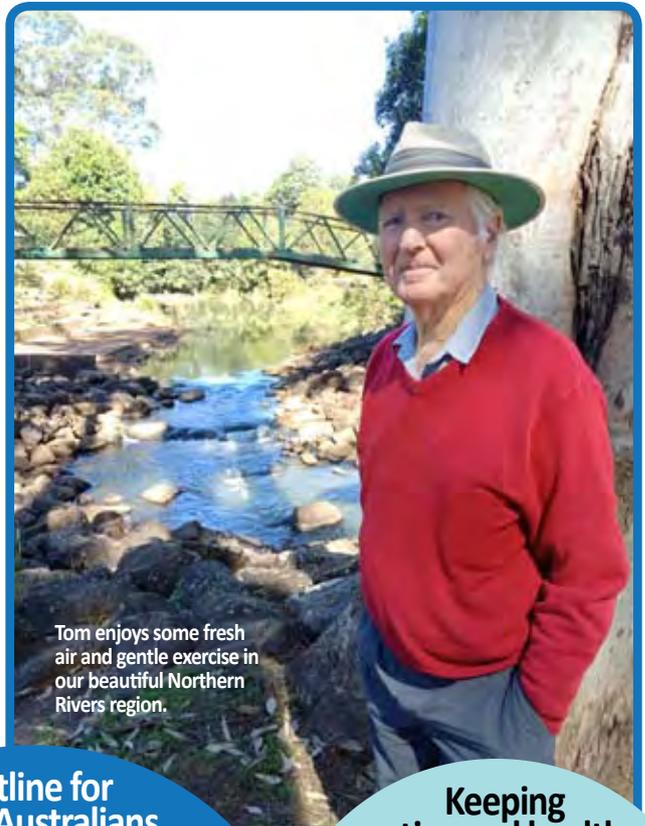
You should maintain good hygiene and take care when interacting with other people. These are the best defences for you and your family against coronavirus. This includes:

- covering your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- disposing of used tissues immediately into a rubbish bin and washing your hands
- washing your hands often with soap and water, including before and after eating and after going to the toilet, and when you have been out to shops or other places
- using alcohol-based hand sanitisers (60% alcohol), where available to clean and disinfect surfaces
- staying 1.5 metres away – 2 arms' length from other people. This is an example of physical distancing
- downloading the COVIDSafe app to your smartphone for the times you do need to go out. The Older Person's COVID-19 Support Line (see information to right) can help you do this.

Where there are cases of COVID-19 in your community, other steps you should consider taking to protect yourself include:

- continuing to stay at home and avoid contact with others
- continuing to avoid non-essential travel
- considering having the chemist deliver your medicines
- considering having your groceries and essential items delivered to your home.

For more information, visit: <https://www.health.gov.au> or telephone the Hotline for older Australians on 1800 171 866.



For more information about looking after yourself, visit: <https://www.nsw.gov.au>

Hotline for older Australians during COVID-19 pandemic

If you have questions about the pandemic or would like information on the up-to-date guidelines, call 1800 171 866 to speak to friendly, specially trained staff from a senior's advocacy organisation. This is a dedicated free call support hotline for Senior Australians, their families and carers.

The Older Person's COVID-19 hotline is supported by the Commonwealth Government and an initiative from the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia, National Seniors Australia, Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and Dementia Australia.

Keeping active and healthy

If you are limiting your contact with other people you still need to look after your regular health.

- Keep yourself active and healthy by:
- getting some fresh air and exercise
 - eating a healthy and balanced diet
 - looking after your regular medical needs
 - keeping to an active and healthy daily routine.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms include (but are not limited to) fever, a dry cough, a sore throat and difficulty breathing.

If you develop mild symptoms of COVID-19:

- isolate yourself from others at home and use a separate bathroom if available. You should also use a surgical mask when around other people.
- If you don't have a mask, practise good sneeze/cough hygiene
 - practise good hand hygiene
- call a doctor and tell them about your symptoms and whether you have had contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.

If you have serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing call 000, ask for an ambulance and notify the officers if you have been in contact with anyone with COVID-19.



Byron Shire Respite Service – Day Program Timetable

monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday
10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based activities for older people	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>
		10am – 3pm Bus Outings & shopping days		
Lunch, morning and afternoon tea is provided. The cost for the day including transport is \$22.00 (Fees subject to change).				
For more information, please telephone: 02) 6685 1926 or email: caremanager@byronrespite.com.au				