

Information for Carers

Northern NSW Local Health District



This booklet is for family and friends who provide care and support to loved ones in hospital and at home.

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this region; the Bundjalung, Yaegl, Gumbaynggirr and Githabul Nations. We pay respect to Elders past, present and future. We honour their cultural, spiritual, and emotional connection to this land. We also acknowledge the many Aboriginal people from other Nations who have come to the NNSWLHD to live or visit.

Working Together for a Carer Friendly Health Service

Northern NSW Local Health District values and acknowledges carers as partners in health care and supports the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010.

We are working toward creating carer friendly health services and welcome your stories and feedback regarding your experience in our hospitals. If you have a suggestion for how we can better support carers, please contact:

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This booklet has been adapted for carers living in Northern NSW, from the booklets “Information for Carers” developed by the Western NSW Local Health District Carer Support Program and the “Journey of Caring” booklet developed by South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Carers Program

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We hope that you find this resource useful.



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Is this booklet for you?

Do you provide support to someone with a chronic health condition, disability, age related frailty, terminal illness or mental illness?

Are you a family member, partner, friend or a neighbour that provides support?

Do you assist the person with any of these activities: personal care such as showering or dressing, mobility, transport, emotional support, communication, meals, medication, housework or assistance with the management of finances?

If you answered yes to these questions – then you are a “carer.”

Anyone, at any time throughout life can become a carer. Carers are a very diverse group of people, of differing ages and backgrounds with each caring situation being unique. Caring may involve a few hours of assistance per week or sustained 24-hour care. It may also involve balancing full or part time work with caring responsibilities.

Caring can be a rewarding experience, however it can make many demands on you. These demands may be physical, financial and/or emotional. Looking after your own health and well-being is important when you are a carer.

Privacy and Rights to Information

Carers have the right to receive information about the person they are caring for where the patient gives approval, or if the condition of the patient requires the carer to make decisions about their treatment or welfare.

It is important that the hospital or health service has the correct contact person recorded in the patient's file. Misunderstandings may be avoided if one agreed person, such as the carer, is the contact person and can pass on information to the family as appropriate.

Rest Areas for Carers

Many hospitals in Northern NSW Local Health District have quiet areas where carers where can take a break and make a cup of tea or coffee.

For further information regarding the location of quiet areas, please speak to health service staff.

Carers Guide to the Hospital

People enter a hospital through the Emergency Department in an emergency or through the hospital reception for a planned admission arranged by a doctor.

The Emergency Department

When you enter the Emergency Department (sometimes called the “ED”) a nurse will assess the patient and allocate a category according to the urgency of their medical needs. This is called the triage process and the sickest people will always be seen first. If you have any concerns in the ED, or need an interpreter, talk to the ‘Triage Nurse.’

Tips:

- Let the Triage Nurse know that you are a carer, as you may be able to provide them with valuable information, such as medical history, medications, behavioural issues, and what helps the person to feel less anxious, comfortable and settled.
- If the person you are caring for has dementia and you have previously completed a TOP 5 strategy form, you can provide this to the nursing staff who will place a copy on the patient’s medical record.
- It is important to bring along all the medications that the person you care for is currently taking. It is useful to have a current list of medications completed by your GP or Pharmacist.
- If you need to attend the Emergency Department for your own health concerns, let the triage nurse know if the person you care for has medical conditions or behavioural issues which might be a concern.
- If you have any concerns about the care or treatment provided in the Emergency Department you can ask to speak to the Nursing Unit Manager (NUM).
- If you are worried that the patient’s health is getting worse with the care and treatment being offered, you can ask for the ‘REACH phone number’ and a phone to use. This number will connect you with a different clinical team to review the patient’s care and treatment. REACH stands for ‘Recognise-Engage-Act-Call-Help is on its way.’



Carers Guide to the Hospital

On the Ward

If you are caring for someone who is admitted to a ward, introduce yourself as the patient's carer, to the nursing and medical staff.

We encourage you to ask questions about the patient's care. If a patient requires a high level of care and you are available to provide some support, please advise the nursing staff. In special circumstances, carers may be encouraged to stay overnight in hospital with the patient.

It is also important for carers to have input into care planning to ensure that all of the patient's care needs are considered. Make sure that you ask to be included in decisions about the patient's care.

Tips

- Nursing staff discuss patient's care needs and plans at the end of shift 'handover meeting' with the in-coming staff. These occur around 07:00, 14:30, 21:30 daily.
- Doctors discuss changes to plans with the nursing staff when they do their 'hospital rounds.'
- Multi-disciplinary Discharge Planning Meetings (Discharge Planner, Doctor, Nurse, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Social Worker) occur regularly to discuss care plans. This includes the 'Transfer of Care Plan (sometimes called the Discharge Plan), which sets out all of the supports required for a successful transfer back to home, hospice or aged care facility.

Things to ask staff:

- How long is the patient expected to be in hospital?
- Do staff have any questions about the patient's behavior?
- Do staff need information to assist with providing care to the patient?

Things to tell staff:

- If you notice the patient is deteriorating.
- If there is something that would help them to provide personalised care.
- If you feel that the patient would benefit from you remaining at their bedside.
- If you are concerned about care arrangements when the patient leaves hospital.

Please also advise the Discharge Planner if the patient is receiving services at home, so the necessary arrangements can be made to notify those services when planning for discharge. There are a number of programs which provide short term packages of care to older people to assist in their transition from hospital to home. Please ask the nursing staff, discharge planner, or a social worker if the person you care for is eligible for a package.

Who is Who in the Hospital?

There are a range of health professionals who may be involved in the care and treatment of a patient. This will depend on the size of the hospital, the patient's medical condition, and whether they are in the hospital as an inpatient, or in the community as an outpatient. Here is a brief description of the role of each health professional that you may meet in the hospital.

Medical Staff - Doctors

As a carer you may or may not see the admitting Doctor (usually a 'specialist'), but may see the 'Registrar' (a specialist in training), a 'Resident' (a doctor who has been working in the hospital for more than 12 months since graduating) and sometimes an 'Intern' (a doctor who has been working for less than 12 months since graduating).

The Registrar is responsible for supervising the team of residents and interns, and consults with the admitting doctor as required. It is advisable to direct your questions about the day-to-day medical progress of the patient to the Registrar.

As many of our hospitals in the Northern NSW Local Health District are teaching hospitals, the patient may be asked for their permission to have student doctors and nurses present when the doctor is doing check-ups of patients.

Health Service Manager

The Health Service Manager is responsible for the overall management of the Hospital, Community Health Service or Multipurpose Service (MPS).

Nursing Staff

Nurses provide support for both the medical and personal care needs of a patient.

The Nursing Unit Manager (referred to as the NUM) is responsible for all nursing staff on the ward and overall patient care. The NUM can assist with questions you have about the patient. Other senior nursing staff (i.e. RN'S) are also able to answer and follow up on questions you may have, or make referrals to other health professionals such as Allied Health staff. The NUM is the best person with which to raise any unresolved patient-related concerns or issues you may have.

Registered Nurses (RN's) provide treatment, administer medications and monitor patients.

Enrolled Nurses (EN's) provide treatment and administer some medications and provide personal care.

Assistants in Nursing (AIN's) provide care such as bathing and meals.

The Discharge Planner is usually a nurse specialist involved in coordinating the patients discharge to home. Sometimes they are a Social Worker. They are responsible for care planning and referral to community based services if required. Some hospitals may not have a dedicated discharge planning position. In smaller hospitals discharge planning will be coordinated by the nursing staff or ward clerk.

Allied Health Staff

Social Workers

Social Workers are a key contact point for families, providing information, support and speaking on your behalf when necessary. They consider the patient's medical needs, social situation, home environment, background and family dynamics.

Occupational Therapists (OT)

Occupational Therapists (OT) focus on maximising a person's function in activities of daily living. This can include helping people regain their life activities after events such as a hip replacement or stroke, teaching people and their carers how to use equipment, and advice on how to modify the home to improve safety.

Physiotherapists (physio)

Physiotherapists (physio) assist people with movement problems which may have been present at birth, acquired through an accident or injury, or are the result of ageing. Physiotherapy can help reduce pain and stiffness, strengthen muscles and increase mobility.

Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Worker

The Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Worker provides culturally appropriate services for patients, families and carers. Liaison workers are located in many public hospitals in NSW. You can contact an Aboriginal Liaison Worker through the Social Work Department or ask for a referral to be made.

Speech Pathologists (speechie)

Speech Pathologists (speechie) diagnose and treat language, speech and swallowing problems. They can work with people who have difficulty communicating because of a stroke, brain injury, cerebral palsy, dementia or hearing loss as well as other problems that affect speech and language. Speechies also help people with swallowing food and drink safely.

Dieticians

Dieticians provide advice on issues associated with diet and nutrition and can devise healthy meals plans which address specific dietary needs and health issues.

Aboriginal Health Care Practitioner

An Aboriginal Health Care Practitioner may also be available to provide clinical assessment and treatment of patients and liaise with other health staff for patient care coordination.

Referrals to Allied Health

If the doctor or nursing staff identifies that the patient needs to see an allied health staffmember, a referral will be made to the relevant service/s.

If you think the person you care for would benefit from being seen by an allied health staffmember, you can ask for a referral to be made, or you could contact the allied health staff directly by phoning the relevant department in the hospital or local Community Health Centre.

Feelings About Caring

The constant demands of a caring role and the many changes in family life may bring about a range of feelings and emotions. People may feel a sense of satisfaction about being a carer, though at times many carers say they can feel overwhelmed. These emotions can sometimes be difficult to cope with, however these feelings are a natural and normal reaction to caring. Some of the feelings carers often say they experience are:

Feeling overwhelmed, confused and shocked by:

- The diagnosis of illness or disability, especially at first; and
- Finding yourself caring and realising the changes that caring for someone will bring to your life

Feeling guilty for:

- Believing you bear some responsibility for the person's disability or illness
- Not wanting to be a carer
- Lost tempers and harsh words
- Needing a break from caring
- Placing the person that you care for in residential care
- Feeling resentful over doing the same things every day

Feeling afraid about:

- What will happen if you don't cope?
- Picking up your life when your caring role ends
- What happens if you get sick?

Feeling sadness for:

- Loss of a relationship – the parent, husband, wife, partner or child you once knew
- Loss of the life you once knew and plans for the future
- Loss of opportunities for the person you are caring for



Taking Care of Yourself

Carers are vulnerable to stress because of the physical and emotional demands of caring. Stress may bring physical symptoms such as headaches or difficulty sleeping, anxiety or feeling very emotional. Although it can be difficult, you need to consider your own needs as well as those of the person you are caring for. If your health begins to suffer, caring will become more difficult and it will not be easy to continue doing all the things you need to do.

The following tips about how to take better care of yourself may be helpful.

Getting out

Try to continue with activities you enjoy. Even though the many responsibilities of caring can make it difficult to manage, it is important that you develop and maintain your own interests outside of your caring role. Maintaining your interests can help your general health and well-being.

Some carers say that they feel guilty when they leave the house or enjoy an activity without the person they are caring for. If you are finding it difficult to get out and about, it may help to talk to someone about how you are feeling.

Knowing you are not alone

It's easy to feel isolated when you are a carer. You might be too busy to keep up with friends and family and people may visit less often. Talking to someone who understands what you are going through can be a great relief. Sharing your experiences with someone you trust can help. When feelings, concerns and problems are shared, the experience of caring can seem less isolating. It is important that you don't feel alone.

Why join a carer support group?

- To meet other carers in a similar situation to yourself
- To have a break from your caring role
- Sharing of ideas, feelings, worries or problems can help you feel less isolated
- To access information and resources about available support services in your local community

Keeping Healthy

Try to make sure you are;

- Making time for regular exercise – this will help you feel more energetic and provide a break from your daily activities.
- Having healthy regular meals – this is not always easy to do, but it is important for your long term health and well-being.
- Getting enough rest and sleep – tiredness and exhaustion often add to the stress of caring.
- Looking after your back – if you need to lift or transfer the person you are caring for, get professional advice on the safest way to lift and any available aids to assist you.

Taking breaks

You cannot constantly care without a break. Even though it's not easy to do, don't be afraid to ask for help. Respite care services can help you plan for regular breaks. The sort of break you take will depend on what suits you and the person you are caring for, as well as the services that are available in your local area.

Breaks can be taken in your home or away from home. They might be for a few hours, a day, overnight or longer. It might mean that you get the opportunity to have a massage, go to an exercise class, enjoy coffee with a friend, or go on a short break or longer holiday.

Planning to look after yourself

Getting into the habit of making time for yourself as a regular part of your day is important. Don't feel guilty about this time – it's time for you! Planning ahead and pacing yourself will also help. If possible, plan activities such as housework for times when you are feeling you have the most energy. Don't rush, and remember to value yourself in all that you do.

Practicing relaxation

Although it can be easier said than done, you need to take time for yourself every day. It doesn't need to be long; 15 minutes can do wonders. Try to take some time to just sit and relax, read a magazine, listen to a relaxation CD or your favourite music.

Taking Care of Yourself – A Checklist

Do I have someone I trust to talk about how I am feeling?

- Am I trying to get some regular exercise?
- Am I trying to get enough rest and sleep?
- Am I trying to eat regular meals?
- Do I take enough breaks from caring?
- Do I take time out for regular relaxation?

What if I am not coping?

Most carers will tell you that they have times when they feel they are unable to cope. If you are feeling this way, seek someone to talk to – either your family, friends, doctor (GP), minister or a counsellor.

Counselling can help

Friends or family may provide you with emotional support to help you through this time, however sometimes people need to speak with someone who understands the emotional impacts of caring. Professional carers counsellors are available through the **Carer Gateway 1800 422 737**

Counselling involves talking to someone who listens and understands and can work with you to give you the encouragement and support you need. Talking with a counsellor can make a difference to your caring role and your well-being. It may be a way to assist with the changes in your relationships and roles as well as dealing with feelings associated with caring.

Counselling may involve just you and the counsellor, either face-to-face or over the telephone. Anything said is completely confidential, so it's a good chance to talk about things you feel you can't raise with family or friends. Counselling usually involves a limited number of sessions but will vary according to your needs.

Counselling can help with:

- Finding balance in your life
- Changes in care relationships
- Managing stress
- Difficulty sleeping
- Anxiety
- Isolation
- Coping skills
- Depression
- Grief and loss

Financial Assistance

Caring has many direct and hidden financial costs, which can stretch the budget. Financial assistance may be available to offset or directly subsidise some of the costs, even if only to a small extent. There may also be assistance to help with the cost of obtaining aids and equipment.

Types of financial assistance which may be available through Centrelink include:

Carer Payment

The carer payment is an income support payment to carers who are unable to work while caring for an adult or child who has a disability, is chronically ill or is frail aged, and needs fulltime care and attention. This payment is income and asset tested.

Carer Allowance

A carer allowance is a supplementary payment for carers who provide daily care and attention for an adult or child who has a disability, is frail aged, or is chronically ill. A carer allowance can be paid on top of a carer payment (it is not means tested). If you receive a carer payment for a child aged less than 16 years you will automatically be eligible for a carer allowance.

Rent Assistance

Rent assistance may be available for people who receive a payment such as a carer payment and pay rent for private accommodation.

For people who are unable to work full-time for at least two years because of a disability.

Concession Cards

Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) and Health Care Card (HCC). If a carer payment or allowance is granted, you or the person you care for may be entitled to one of these cards. PCC and HCC cards entitle the holder to many concessions including prescription medicines, transport fares, rates, power bills and car registration.

NSW Companion Card

A companion card assists people with a significant and permanent disability who require attendant care at events and venues, to participate without having to pay for a second ticket for their carer at affiliated organisations. Applications can be made via: companioncard.nsw.gov.au or for enquiries Contact **1800 893 044**.

Department of Veterans' Affairs

The Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA) provides financial assistance to veterans, war widows, or widowers, and their families and carers. DVA can be contacted on **133254** or **1800 555 254**.

Disability Support Pension

Planning Ahead

As a carer you may be responsible for the legal and financial affairs of the person you care for. Planning ahead may provide some sense of security and peace of mind about the future for both you and the person you care for. If possible, it is best to get organised early in the caring experience before the need becomes urgent. Wills, Power of Attorney, Enduring Guardianship and Advanced Care Directives and Special Disability Trust, are all different ways of planning for the future.

Making a Will

A will is a legal document that sets out how you want your assets to be distributed when you die. Making a will is good planning. If you don't have a will it can cause delays, costs and difficulties. Make sure you keep your will up to date and let someone you trust know where it is kept.

A solicitor or trustee can help you avoid any misunderstandings and make sure your wishes are clearly and accurately recorded. There is no charge to make or update your will with the Public Trustee as your executor. Fees will apply on the administration of an estate.

Power of Attorney

A Power of Attorney is a legal document which appoints a person to act on behalf of another in areas of property and financial management. This person may be a family member, close friend, or the Public Trustee. An Enduring Power of Attorney continues to take effect even after the person loses their mental capacity.

Enduring Guardianship

An Enduring Guardian is someone you choose to make personal or lifestyle decisions on your behalf when you are not capable of doing it for yourself. These may include decisions such as where to live, or what health care or support services you wish to receive.

Advance Care Directives

This is sometimes called a "living will" and is a way of recording your wishes or instructions for the future that doctors and health care workers are to follow. It is used in situations when you are unable to communicate or have lost the ability to make decisions for yourself.

Special Disability Trusts

A trust can be set up for people with a severe disability for their future care. You may need to seek legal and financial advice as the rules can be complex.

Further information about planning ahead can be found at:

**www.planningaheadtools.com.au
or by phoning 1300 887 529.**

Organisations that may be able to help you:

Carers NSW Carer Line:	1800 242 636
Law Access (for details of your closest Community Legal Centre):	1300 888 529
Guardianship Tribunal:	1800 463 928

Practical Help at Home

As a carer you may need to work with a variety of service providers to access support and services. When you first start looking for help, it can be a bit daunting. Many service providers use jargon that sounds like a whole new language. Don't be afraid to ask as many questions as you need too.

There are a number of services mostly funded by the government to support people with disabilities, and/or chronic illness, older people and their carers to live independently in the community.

Community care services are provided by a range of service providers including government departments, non-government organisations, faith based, charitable institutions and small community agencies.

Mainstream services provide a service to all members of the community who are eligible, and others specialise in providing services to a particular group. For example; people from a particular language group, children with a disability or adults with dementia. Services may also be provided following discharge from hospital for up to twelve weeks to assist an older person's safe return home.

It can be difficult to take the first step and ask for help. Support services are there to help you and the person you care for. When trying to access a service, clearly outline your situation, don't underestimate it.

Service providers make decisions based on the information you give them. Tell it like it really is, and be persistent. Most services are free but some organisations may charge a fee. Always ask if there are costs involved. Income may be taken into account with some organisations reducing the cost depending on your ability to pay.

For further information regarding what is available in your local area including eligibility, contact the **National Carer Gateway** on **1800 422 737** (free call). The Carer Gateway can assist you in making contact with the correct service.

My Aged Care

My Aged Care is the national contact centre for older people and their family/friend carers to access aged care services. Services will be available from a range of providers including Northern NSW Local Health District.

My Aged Care can be contacted on **1800 200 422**

Support Services

A range of support services may be available in your local area.

The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

The Commonwealth Home Support program provides help to people aged 65+ years (50+ years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) who require assistance to remain living independently in their own home through the provision of basic level home support. Services include; planned respite, community nursing, allied health services, domestic assistance, personal care and meals and transport. For further information, please phone **1800 200 422** Mon-Fri 8am- 8pm and Sat 10am-2pm.

Information and Advocacy

Advocacy services provide information and advocacy to a client or a carer. Advocacy is about providing advice to clients about their rights and responsibilities and at the client's request, act on their behalf with other service providers. Please refer to the Useful Contacts section of this booklet for advocacy service contact details.

Nursing Services

Professional nursing care is provided by a registered or enrolled nurse. This can include teaching people to manage daily health care and health problems at home (for example, diabetes or incontinence), personal care and wound management.

Palliative Care

The Palliative Care Service promotes comfort, dignity and support for people with a life limiting illness, their families and Carers. Your Doctor can refer you to the Palliative Care

Register. Being registered will provide you with access to the 'Pal Care Team' in your area. The team usually includes a Community Nurse and Social Worker and sometimes a Palliative Care Specialist. The team are able to provide supportive care, advice, information and links to services.

Personal Care

Personal care includes assistance with eating, showering, dressing, toileting and personal grooming including shaving.

Domestic Assistance

Home help services assist with practical tasks such as house cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, shopping and paying bills.

The CDM Service

CDM stands for chronic disease management. CDM is a free service intended to improve the health, well-being and independence of patients.

Eligibility for the CDM service

People who have long term illnesses that may include:

- Diabetes
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Chronic heart failure
- Coronary artery disease
- Hypertension

How does CDM work?

CDM provides care coordination and health coaching to help manage a patient's chronic health conditions. Once enrolled, the program focuses on individual patient needs and links the health services that look after the patient. CDM Coordinators can be contacted on:

1300 361 465

Support Services

Home Modification & Maintenance

Help can be provided with essential home repairs and modifications. This could include the installation of safety ramps and support rails, widening of doorways, kitchen and bathroom modifications or garden maintenance. Contact your local council for further details or phone **1800 200 422**.

Transport Services

Transport can be provided for appointments, shopping, hospital visits and social activities if you do not have access to public or private transport, or are unable to use it. For further information, contact your local Community Transport Service.

Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Scheme (IPTAAS)

The IPTAAS scheme provides financial assistance for the patient and their 'escort' toward travel and accommodation costs when a patient needs to travel lengthy distances of 100kms or more for specialist medical treatment not available locally. Assistance may also be available for multiple short distance travel to a specialist service, when the distance equates to 200 or more kilometers in a week

For further information, contact **IPTAAS** on **1800 478 227**.

Food Services

Meals can be delivered to your home which are appropriate to individual dietary needs. Meals on Wheels caters to personal tastes, cultural preferences and specific dietary requirements. Phone **02 8219 4200** or search for your local **Meals on Wheels** www.nswmealsonwheels.org.au

Social Support

Social support may include home visiting and day programs to reduce social isolation, assist people to participate in meaningful leisure and recreational activities and provide respite to carers.

Aids and Equipment

A wide range of equipment is available to assist with mobility, personal care, home safety, seating, lifting, and communication. Equipment can be purchased, hired, or in some cases, provided free of charge if eligible. Contact the **Enable NSW Aids and Equipment Program** on **1800 362 253** for advice about how to access equipment.

Alternatively, you could contact your local pharmacy which may hire equipment or phone the Commonwealth Respite and Care-link Centre for advice about accessing equipment.

**The National Carer Gateway 1800 422 737
can provide further information about services that
are available.**

Respite

Caring can be physically and emotionally exhausting. Regular breaks from caring can help to relieve the stress and exhaustion you may feel from time to time. These breaks are called respite, and the services that can help you arrange breaks are called respite care services. Breaks can also be of benefit to the person you care for as they can provide new experiences and offer social interaction with other people.

Types of respite that may be available in your area:

- In-home respite care – this may be with a volunteer or paid worker
- Day care programs
- Residential respite care in an aged care facility
- Residential respite care for younger people with an illness or a disability
- Weekend and holiday programs and opportunities. These can be for the carer, the person with an illness or a disability, couples or for the whole family together
- Recreation activities in the community
- Camps for brothers, sisters and carers under 18

These types of respite services might suit you and the person you care for, or you may have your own ideas about the type of break you would like, or the type of assistance that would meet your needs. Some services also cater for people with particular language or cultural needs.

Planning ahead gives you the best chance of receiving a respite service at a time that suits you and before you are no longer able to cope. You might want to access respite on a planned and regular basis, or just as a one-off support. You are encouraged to talk to more than one respite provider to choose a service that will best meet your needs.

Whilst it is important to plan regular breaks, sometimes emergencies can happen which mean you need urgent respite care. This might be due to the death of a relative or your own illness which can affect your ability to continue caring.

**The National Carer Gateway 1800 422 737
can provide further information about services that are
available.**

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) can help you if you need assistance with a language other than English. Contact **TIS** on **13 14 50**.

Useful Contacts

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Carer Gateway

The Carer Gateway is a national online and phone service that provides practical information and resources to support carers of someone with a disability, chronic illness, dementia, mental illness or who are frail aged.

www.carergateway.gov.au

Ph:1800 422 737 (free call) Mon-Fri 8am-6pm

Veterans Affairs

www.dva.gov.au

Ph: 133 254 or 1800 555 254

Centrelink

www.centrelink.gov.au

Ph: 132 717

Far North Coast Commonwealth Respite and Centre-link Centre (CRCC)

CRCC provides information about respite options and other local support services, and assists carers to access short term and emergency respite support.

Ph:1800 052 222

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS supports a better life for Australians with a significant and permanent disability

www.ndis.gov.au Ph: 1800 800 110

Federal Government Website for Seniors

www.seniors.gov.au

Mensline

Mensline is a professional telephone and online support and information service.

www.mensline.org.au

Ph:1300 789 978 24 hrs, 7 days

My Aged Care

The new national contact centre for older people, as well as their families and carers to access aged care services.

www.myagedcare.gov.au/caring-someone

Ph:1800 200 422

Healthdirect Australia

Free 24-hour telephone health a service line staffed by registered nurses to provide expert health advice.

www.healthdirect.org.au

Ph:1800 022 222

Aboriginal Homecare

Provide in-home help for Aboriginal People who are carers.

Ph:1300 295 837

(specify Aboriginal Homecare when you call)

Alzheimers Australia

www.fightdementia.org.au

Ph: 1800 100 500 (national dementia helpline)

Useful Contacts

Aged Carer

Information about caring for ageing family members

www.agedcarer.com.au

Ph: 02 8003 4259

Continence Foundation

www.continence.org.au

Ph: 1800 330 066

Country CareLink

Assistance with transport and accommodation in Sydney for country people.

Ph:1800 806 160

Aged Care Rights Service – TARS

Information and advocacy service for older people

www.tars.com.au

Disability Advocacy Service

Information and advocacy for people with a disability, their families and carers

www.da.org.au

Ph: 1300 365 085

Young Carers

Emotional support and counselling, information and referral service

www.youngcarers.net.au

Carers NSW

Carers NSW provides a wide range of information and resources for carers including counselling services and carer support groups across NSW.

www.carersnsw.asn.au

Ph: 1800 242 636

Ideas

On line Information about events, education, services and products for people with a disability, older people, families and carers.

www.ideas.org.au

Ph:1800 029 904

Independent Living Centre NSW

Information about equipment for independent living

www.ilcnsw.asn.au

Ph:1300 885 886

National Carer Counselling Program

www.carersnsw.org.au

Ph:1800 242 636

