

SUMMER 2023/24 ISSUE 20

AGEING WELL

Welcome to Ageing Well! In this edition, we explore strategies for maintaining a sharp and active mind. You'll gain insights on staying healthy and safe in hot weather and snake season and be inspired by stories from our cherished client and dedicated volunteer. Stay in the loop with the latest service satisfaction feedback, get to know our new Ageing Well team members and learn how to plan ahead.



THE KEYS TO HEALTHY AGEING

The last part in our healthy ageing series.

Tip 5: Keep your mind sharp

There are many good reasons for keeping your brain as active as your body. Exercising, keeping your brain active, and maintaining creativity can help to prevent cognitive decline and memory problems.

The more active and social you are and the more you use and sharpen your brain, the more benefits you will get. This is especially true if your career no longer challenges you or if you've retired from work altogether.

Challenge your brain

For some people, challenging your brain could involve playing new games or sports. Other people may enjoy puzzles or trying out new cooking recipes.

Find something that you enjoy and challenge your brain by trying new variations or increasing how well you do an activity.

If you like crosswords, move to a more challenging crossword series or try your hand at a new word game. If you like to cook, try a completely different type of food, or if you're a golfer, aim to lower your handicap.



Vary your habits

You don't have to work elaborate crosswords or puzzles to keep your memory sharp. Try to work in something new each day, whether it is taking a different route to work or the grocery store or brushing your teeth with a different hand. Varying your habits can help to create new pathways in the brain.

Take on a completely new subject

Have you always wanted to learn a different language? Learn new computer skills? Learn to play the piano? Taking on a new subject is a great way to continue to learn. There are many inexpensive classes at your local community centre or community college that allow you to tackle new subjects.

SNAKE AWARENESS

Staying safe this snake season

As temperatures increase, snakes are emerging from their winter hibernation, becoming more active in their quest for food and mates. Here are some practical tips to discourage snakes from your property and ensure safety if you encounter one:

- 1. Manage the Food Chain:** To deter snakes, minimise their primary food sources, such as rats and mice. Avoid leaving food scraps, pet food, or spilled seeds that can attract rodents to your property.
- 2. Remove Hiding Spots:** Reduce potential hiding areas by maintaining a tidy shed, keeping grass trimmed low and moving wood heaps away from the house. Seal door bottoms with rubber or weather stripping to prevent snakes from entering homes. Store shoes off the ground and check before putting them on.
- 3. Encountering a Snake:** If you come across a snake, never attempt to catch or kill it. Most snake bites occur during these encounters. Instead, observe its movement, keep children and pets away from snakes, and contact a licensed snake catcher for professional removal.
- 4. Safety in the Garden:** When working in the garden, take precautions to minimise the risk of encountering snakes.
 - Disturb garden and mulch piles with a long stick before reaching in.
 - Wear thick leather gloves, long pants, and covered footwear.
 - Avoid putting hands into potential snake shelters like tree holes, ground holes, and under rocks.

As we share our environment with snakes, understanding and implementing these simple measures can significantly reduce the chances of unwanted encounters. By fostering coexistence and respecting the role of snakes in the ecosystem, we can enjoy a safer and more harmonious living space for both humans and these essential reptiles.



HOT WEATHER

Keeping healthy in the heat

The increasing temperature across Australia and the confirmation of an El Niño weather phenomenon hints at the possibility of multiple heatwaves in the coming months. Though everyone gets affected differently, older people are more at risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat Exhaustion: Arises from excessive water and salt loss, typically through profuse sweating. Symptoms encompass headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperature, and decreased urine output.

Heat Stroke: Occurs when the body loses control of temperature regulation. Symptoms include reduced sweating, body temperature above 40°C, dry, flushed, hot skin, nausea, muscle spasms, widespread pain, unusual behaviour, confusion, seizures, or loss of responsiveness.

Tips for Staying Cool:

- Service your air conditioner regularly
- Use air conditioners or fans for cooling
- Apply a wet cloth around your neck or soak feet in cold water

- Stay hydrated; bring water when going out
- Consume fruits and vegetables with high water content
- Make cool meals to decrease the use of ovens and stoves
- Check local weather forecasts to plan activities during cooler times
- Avoid outdoor activities during peak heat hours
- Wear long, loose-fitting clothes, a hat, and SPF30+ sunscreen
- Cool down in air-conditioned public spaces like Charles Sturt libraries and community centres
- If your needs have changed, consider arranging a My Aged Care assessment for extra support at home.

Emergency Contacts:

Emergency: 000

State Emergency Service (SES): 132 500

Red Cross Telecross REDi Service: 1800 188 071

For Ageing Well clients needing extra support during heatwaves, contact 8408 1111 for assistance.



Older people living independently in the community, particularly those who reside alone without frequent contact, face an even greater risk. Having a strong support network and checking in with each other are crucial during these times. For those without an extensive support system, the City of Charles Sturt highly recommends engaging with services such as the Red Cross Telecross REDi. This invaluable FREE phone service offers regular check-ins during higher-risk times to ensure your safety.

Register by calling 1800 188 071.

SERVICE SATISFACTION SURVEY

Earlier this year, we conducted a comprehensive service satisfaction survey as part of our commitment to delivering quality programs and services for our Ageing Well clients. This survey aimed to evaluate program effectiveness, understand client needs, and identify areas for improvement.

Key findings:

- 99% feel that their privacy, dignity and confidentiality are respected
- 99% believe that staff are kind, respectful and caring
- 98% find the services affordable
- 96% find services are valuable for what they pay
- 95% are happy with the meals provided during social group programs
- 95% always or most of the time feel satisfied with staff support
- 90% said that staff always or most of the time follow up raised issues
- 90% believed that services improved their quality of life

While most of the feedback was positive, we acknowledge that there are areas that need to be improved and have been working on improving these areas:

- Only 68% said that their services and wellbeing are reviewed annually or as needed
- Only 56% feel they are always involved in decision making on provided services
- Only 51% feel they are always given information that can help them get the most out of their care and services

Some recent improvements include strengthening our policies and procedures, engaging with our community, and increasing the level of information we provide to the community. We have increased our resources in the Ageing Well hub (visit us in the Civic Centre), have an engagement calendar which we aim to fill sharing our services across the community, and have improved our client feedback systems. If you are a new or existing client of our CHSP Ageing Well program, you may notice the team phoning you to arrange for a care plan assessment - this is an opportunity to make sure we have up to date information, as well as ensure we are supporting you based on your current needs. This is also an opportunity for us to discuss the service being provided and any improvements to be made.

SHOPPING ASSISTANCE

Whether you require transport to and from the shops, assistance in checking food labels, reaching out for items, pushing the trolley, carrying shopping bags, or need a designated person to do your shopping, we're here to help! We can also assist in bill paying, going to the chemist, or even banking. To find out more, contact the Service Coordinator on 8408 1367.

RESPIRE SERVICE

Life can be demanding, and everyone deserves a moment to recharge. If you're caring for a loved one at home and needing a brief break, we've got you covered. We offer weekly or fortnightly flexible respite service that can be tailored to your need and your loved one. To discuss further, contact Social Participation Coordinator on 8408 1846.

NEW FACES



Sid

I'm Sid Bowring, the Transport Coordinator for Ageing Well. With a strong background in Transport Management and the Aged Care sector, I previously served as the Transport Coordinator at Southern Cross Care. I'm excited to enhance our current services and welcome suggestions from the community. Feel free to call for a chat. Outside work, I'm a keen caravanner, also known as a Grey Nomad in training, and enjoy short breaks away whenever possible.



Lissy

I'm Lissy, the new Team Leader for the Ageing Well team. Formerly the Social Participation Coordinator at the Arch Paterson Centre, I'm passionate about promoting social inclusion and ensuring residents play a valued role in their community. Balancing married life, parenthood, and studying a Diploma in Dementia Studies, I love exploring South Australia and what it has to offer. I'm excited for the future and look forward to achieving great things in the Ageing Well space.



Simone

I'm Simone, a Community Support Officer since October 2023. Growing up and living in the City of Charles Sturt, I'm thrilled to provide hands-on, face-to-face services in our community. With previous roles in community aged care, including being an assessor for My Aged Care and a Home Care Package Coordinator, I'm passionate about making a real difference in people's lives. I enjoy hiking, nature, dancing, music, and embracing the YOLO (You Only Live Once) motto.



Peter

I'm Peter McMullen, the newly appointed Community Support Officer of Ageing Well. Transitioning from a career in financial services and the building industry, I find joy in helping and engaging with people, especially hearing their life stories. As a running enthusiast, I recently achieved a personal goal by running from Glenelg to the top of Mt. Lofty. With family spread across Tasmania, Melbourne, and Queensland, I'm excited to meet everyone and appreciate the warm welcome from the team.

PROGRAM TESTIMONIAL



Meet Erika

Erika joined the SAGES on a friend's suggestion when she was going through a tough time after her husband passed away. She found comfort and friendship in the social group, and what started as a tentative decision turned into a lasting bond that has lasted for almost two decades.

Reflecting on her time at Arch, Erika expresses deep appreciation for the collective care she receives. It's not just the caring staff but also the genuine concern of her fellow participants that has made her feel genuinely supported. This sense of community has become a central part of her life.

Over the years, Erika has enjoyed the diverse offerings of the social group – from entertaining activities and engaging centre-based programs. As a vegetarian, she is also grateful to the accommodating kitchen staff who seamlessly tailored meals to her dietary preferences. When asked about the best aspect of being part of the group, Erika is quick to highlight the warmth and friendliness that defines the people at SAGES.

Despite exploring other groups, Erika consistently finds herself returning to SAGES. The familiarity, coupled with the unique bond she shares with fellow participants, anchors her in a community important to her life. In every gathering, Erika stands as a living testament to the beauty that unfolds when individuals come together to create something truly special.

VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIAL



Meet Peter

For nearly a decade, Peter has made it his mission to keep the community clean and free from graffiti tags. Equipped with rollers and paint, Peter travels from street to street as part of the Thursday

Graffiti Volunteer Team removing vandalism and restoring community pride.

After retiring at the age of 63, Peter wanted to make the most out of his spare time. An active person by nature, Peter was also looking for something to benefit himself and support his community. When he learned about the Graffiti Volunteer opportunity, he felt it would be a great fit. Peter says that the best things about being a Graffiti Volunteer are the people he meets and the friendships they have built over the years. Volunteering also keeps his mind and body active which helps him to age well. While receiving praise and gratitude from the community often warms the hearts of our Graffiti Volunteers, it is the feeling of satisfaction from contributing to the community that matters most. "I'm doing something for the community. It feels like I am putting something back," says Peter.

The City of Charles Sturt is grateful to our dedicated volunteers like Peter. To learn more about Ageing Well volunteering opportunities, call 08 8404 1111 or visit charlessturt.sa.gov.au/community/volunteering

PLAN AHEAD

Life is unpredictable. Accidents, illnesses, or unexpected events can happen at any moment. Have you thought about who would speak for you if you couldn't speak for yourself? Do they exactly know what you want? Have you planned ahead for your future?

There are three important legal documents to help you secure your future health, financial, legal and personal choices:

1. Will – sets out what you would like to happen to your property and assets after you pass away
2. Enduring Power of Attorney - allows you to appoint someone you trust to make decisions on your financial affairs if you become unable to make those decisions yourself
3. Advance Care Directive – allows you to outline your future health care and lifestyle choices and appoint a Substitute Decision-Maker who will make these decisions on your behalf when you're unable to do so

The City of Charles Sturt is delivering FREE Advance Care Directive Workshop to provide resources and support residents understand how to complete an Advance Care Directive. If you'd like to attend future workshops, join our wait list now by contacting the Community Engagement Officer on 0417 878 077.



COMING SOON

We are excited to announce that we are opening a new bus program in the new year for Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) participants called 'Gals On The Go' in February 2024. Please contact our Social Participation Coordinator on 8408 1369 to discuss eligibility and express your interest.



WE'RE HERE

If you want to know more about Ageing Well programs and services, call 8408 1111 or visit charlessturt.sa.gov.au/ageing-well