Welcome

Welcome to the 25th edition of the Rural Allied Health Team (RAHT) newsletter. The RAHT continue to work hard providing services across the City of Greater Shepparton, Moira and Strathbogie Shires.

The team have had a busy start to 2018 and are looking forward to a change of seasons and some the cooler weather after a long hot summer.

Congratulations to Rhonda White, one of our Physiotherapists who was recognized at the recent GV Health Service Awards for 20 years service at GV Health and the RAHT. Well done Rhonda we value your knowledge and expertise.

Over the past few months team has started to work with some National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) clients who have accepted early release packages. This has given the team an opportunity to start and develop our processes when working with NDIS clients, ahead of the rollout planned for our region in July 2019.

The team are also looking forward to running our “101 ways to Stay Healthy and Independent” group program again this April and May. If you are interested in attending a future group program, please speak with a RAHT team member.

Flu Shots

The cooler weather marks the beginning of flu season.

From April 2018, Influenza vaccines will be available through the National Immunisation Program following a recommendation from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

These will be available free of charge to people aged 65 years and over.

Please speak to you General Practitioner at your next visit to organise your flu shot ahead of the flu season.
Staff Profile – Melinda Jurd

Melinda (Mel) was born and raised in Newcastle, New South Wales and spent a lot of time riding her horse and going to the beach during her youth.

Mel obtained her Bachelor in Speech Pathology from the University of Newcastle and moved to Victoria in 2011.

From there Mel worked at the Bairnsdale Health Service as a Speech Pathologist until December 2012. Mel then moved to Shepparton, working as the Speech Pathologist on the wards at the hospital for 4 years before starting with the RAHT in November, 2016.

Mel is one of the lucky people who can say she really enjoys her job. Away from work she loves to take photos, walk her dog, travel with her husband, and keep in touch with family and friends back in New South Wales.

Change your clock, change your smoke alarm battery

Smoke alarms are compulsory in every home. They should be checked regularly and now that daylight savings has come to an end, it is time to change your smoke alarm battery. This is even more important as it is known that more house fires occur in the winter months.

Remember all smoke alarms need to be replaced after 10 years.

When replacing an existing smoke alarm which has a 9 volt (square battery) consider installing a photoelectric smoke alarm with an inbuilt ten year lithium battery. This will take away the need to change the battery every year.

Did you know a special smoke alarm is available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing? Due to the cost of this type of smoke alarm, the Department of Human Services provides financial assistance. For more information contact Vicdeaf on TTY (03) 9473 1199 or (03) 9473 111, or alternatively visit the website at www.vicdeaf.com.au

If you need help with changing your smoke alarm battery, please contact the following services in our local area:

- **Greater Shepparton**: Greater Shepparton City Council - Phone: 03 5832 9700
- **Moira Shire**: MHA Care - Phone: (03) 5742 1111
- **Strathbogie Shire**: Nexus Primary Health - Phone: 1300 77 33 52
One of the barriers for older, frail or younger people with a disability can be difficulty accessing transport. Public transport may not be readily available or within a suitable distance to your home. There may also be some destinations where you prefer not to drive e.g. Melbourne because of traffic, parking or navigation problems. Family and friends can sometimes assist, however they may not always be available.

Community Transport is a service that is available in the Goulburn Valley area to eligible clients. The service helps drive you from your home to medical, therapy and social support appointments, both locally and between regional centres (including Melbourne).

When contacting Community Transport they will ask questions to help determine your eligibility and will also let you know of any fees which apply to use the service.

If you are eligible for the service, and you are already aware of an appointment in which you need help with transport to be able to attend you will need to provide the following information:

- Your name and address
- Where you are going
- Day date and time of your appointment
- How long you will need
- Will you have a carer travel with you

For further information please contact the following services who are the main organisations who provide Community Transport in your Shire:

- **Greater Shepparton** - GV Community Transport - Phone (03) 5831 8515
- **Moira Shire** - MHA Care - Phone 1300 655 372
- **Strathbogie Shire** - GV Community Transport - Phone (03) 5831 8515
RAHT Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s)

Where is the Rural Allied Health Team located?
- The team works from Shepparton and are based at CommunityHealth@GVHealth building, located on Corio Street.

How do I contact the team?
- Phone: 1800 222 582 and selection “option 4”
- Mail: Rural Allied Health Team
  CommunityHealth@GVHealth
  121-131 Corio Street, Shepparton, Vic., 3630

What if I need an interpreter?
- We have access to an interpreter service, please advise team members if you require an interpreter and this will be arranged for your appointment.

What are the team’s office hours?
- The team works 8.30 – 5.00pm Monday to Friday.
- Team members are not available on public holidays.

Who is eligible?
- Frail older people, people with a disability and their carers.

Is there a waiting period?
- A waiting period may apply and each client is seen according to their individual need.
- Unfortunately due to a high number of referrals waiting times can often be over 3 months for disciplines such as Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy.
- If you have any concerns please contact us as we do prioritize urgent cases.

Is a referral required?
- Yes, a referral is needed.
  - Clients 65 years and over (or 50 years and over if from an indigenous background) need to contact My Aged Care which is the Australian wide entry point for aged care services. My Aged care can be contacted on Phone 1800 200 422.
  - Clients under 65 years (or under 50 years if from an indigenous background) can refer themselves or be referred by health professionals, friends or relatives with the consent of the client.

How do I make or change an appointment?
- Please call the Service Access Unit on 1800 222 582, “Option 4” and the Customer Service Officers will be able to assist you.
Occupational Therapy is a profession that promotes health and wellbeing through everyday activities. The primary goal of an Occupational Therapist is to enable people to participate in the activities (or occupations) of everyday life.

A person may see a Occupational Therapist if they experience:

- Difficulty showering, dressing and other daily tasks.
- Difficulty getting into the home or up the stairs.
- Pressure ulcers from seating or bed mattresses.
- Forgetting information or difficulty planning tasks e.g. planning meals, medications.
- Recent falls or trip hazards around the home.
- Difficulty with equipment such as wheelchairs or scooters.
- Signs of toileting issues within the home.

Some small tips to make a big difference!

1. Keep most used items in easy reach - on bench tops or on the top self of under bench cupboards, and organize your pantries so you don't have to reach high or low. Ideally items should be kept between the heights of your shoulders and knees.

2. Use clothes drying racks. If you don't like racks make sure you have a clothes line placed at shoulder height, close to your house and on even ground (preferably concreted or paved).

3. Vacuuming can be made easier by using a lightweight, rechargeable upright vacuum cleaner. It is light and easy to maneuver!

4. Remove clutter and make sure walkways and hallways are kept clear and have good lighting.

5. Do not rush to answer the phone. Many people fall trying to answer the phone. Either carry a cordless phone or let an answering machine pick up the call.
The RAHT is funded by both the Victorian State Government Home & Community Care Program for Younger people (HACC PYP) and the Commonwealth Government Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

In line with government guidelines we are required to have in place a client fee schedule. Other like funded services, such as District Nursing and council based services for example home help and personal care, have the same requirement.

Client fees are collected to assist in covering the costs of service provision, such as sterilization of equipment, supply of wound dressings, and the purchase of items to support our work to help you, such as equipment to demonstrate, resource books, pamphlets and other essential items.

Previously the RAHT had in place a client co-contribution fee of $30 which was paid annually, however to bring us in line with the government guidelines this will no longer be charged.

As of the **July 1st 2018**, the new fee schedule, which will apply to both home visits and clinic-based consultations, is as follows:

- $10 fee per visit (except Podiatry)
- $15 fee per Podiatry visit
- $5 per group program session

Please speak with a team member if you have any difficulties with paying the fees as no-one will be refused a service if they are unable to pay.

**How do I pay the service fee?**

1. You can pay the fee to the staff member at your appointment and they will issue you a receipt. Correct change is appreciated.  **Or**

2. You can send a cheque or mail order made out to Goulburn valley Health. Please remember to write your name on the back so we know the payment is from you and a receipt will be sent in the mail.

If you have any questions regarding the change to the RAHT fees, please speak with the team member or you can call and speak with the RAHT Manager on 1800 222 582, option 4.

**Providing feedback**

The RAHT welcomes any comments as we are committed to improving our service. It is also nice when we hear we have been able to help you and make a difference.

When visiting, team members routinely provide a copy of the GV Health “Tell us what you think” form. Please take the time to compete this form if you would like to provide any feedback.

**Completed forms can be sent to:-**

Patient & Community Liaison Officer, GV Health, Graham Street, Shepparton VIC 3630