

**IMPORTANT UPDATE TO ALL UNITING AGEWELL
SOCIAL SUPPORT & CARER RESPITE PARTICIPANTS
RE MODIFIED SERVICE DELIVERY EXTENSION**

Thank you to everyone for your support as we face the COVID-19 pandemic together.

The continuing safety and wellbeing of all Uniting AgeWell clients, our staff and our communities remains Uniting AgeWell's primary concern.

As previously advised, Uniting AgeWell has been closely monitoring the evolving coronavirus situation and implemented a range of precautionary measures based on the advice of Government and the Department of Health.

With the social distancing measures and restrictions ongoing, Uniting AgeWell will need to continue with modified delivery of social support and carer respite services until at least **Sunday, 31 May 2020.**

What this means for you

Uniting AgeWell services impacted by this extension include:

- All group-based activities in our centres
- All group-based outings
- Transport to and from group programs
- Overnight respite options

If you need support, we will work with you to identify what services we can put in place quickly to assist you to remain independent at home.

Our staff will make contact with you or your primary contact to develop a care plan that reflects your requirements in the coming weeks.

Some examples of things we can undertake include:

- Visiting and support in your home;
- Regular telephone-based contact;
- Sending you activity packs to do at home;
- Arranging alternative services where available in your area;
- Arrangement of transport to attend essential appointments; and
- Assisting you with chores including shopping

What other services are available during this time?

On 20 March 2020, the Department of Health announced that if people need urgent or immediate services, these can be put in place for up to six weeks without the requirement for an assessment for clients affected by COVID19 or in self-isolation.

Please feel free to contact the Uniting AgeWell team via our special email address: AgeWellCentresVic@unitingagewell.org or contact your local AgeWell Centre on the number listed below for further information.

What else do you need to know?

If you are contacted as a result of an urgent referral and present with any of the following symptoms including: sore throat, coughing, fever, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, please let us know before we visit you at home.

We will enquire about your health, whether you have seen a Doctor and work out a plan to assist. We may ask you to wear a face mask that we will provide.

Our staff will also take extra precautions when providing 1:1 support including frequent hand washing. They may also wear a protective mask and a disposable apron if you have shown signs of the above symptoms. All staff visiting people at home will be wearing their Uniting AgeWell identification badge.

What are the charges for these services?

Fees will be in line with Uniting AgeWell's fees for 1:1 assistance. This will be discussed with you prior to any service commencing.

If people are receiving 1:1 assistance currently, these fees will continue.

Clients will not be disadvantaged if they cannot afford to pay for services.

Contacting us

We will continue to review this extended timeframe for modified services in line with government and medical advice and will keep you informed of any changes.

We have also established a special email address for client enquiries about the information in this letter and our services at AgeWellCentresVic@unitingagewell.org

Where we receive an email, we aim to respond by the next business day.

Please call your local Uniting AgeWell centre if you have any queries.

We acknowledge that for many people, attending Uniting AgeWell centres is a staple and we understand the practical and emotional burden this decision will have on our clients, their families and supporters. Our aim is to reduce the risk, slow the spread and support the community to keep safe during these challenging times.

We appreciate your ongoing support and understanding.

Contact numbers for your local Uniting AgeWell Centre team:

Melbourne – (03) 9845 3114

Bendigo – (03) 5454 2100

Tasmania – (03) 6289 8850