



**BUCKETTS  
WAY** Neighbourhood  
Group Inc.

*February 2025 Newsletter*



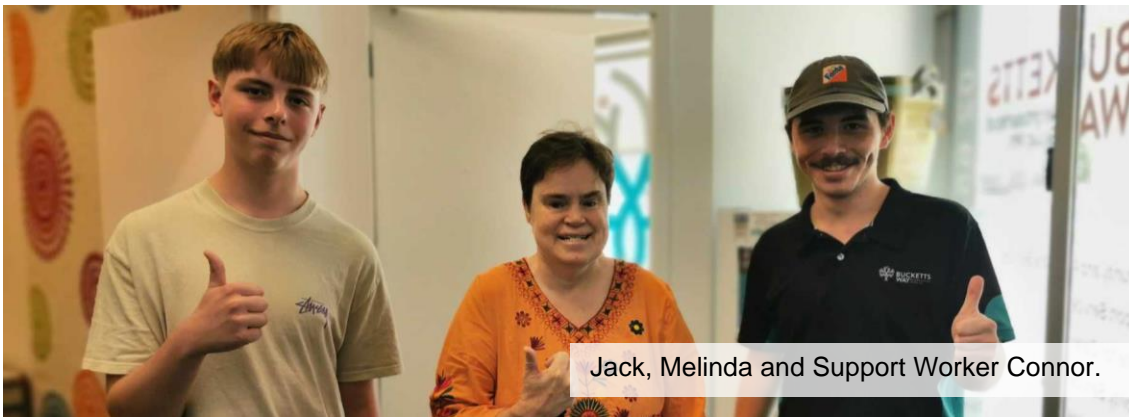
## JACK JOINS BWNG FOR TRY A TRADE DAY

At the end of last year, we were pleased to welcome Gloucester High School student Jack to the BWNG team—if only for a day!

Each year, as part of the Gloucester High School Careers Program, Year Nine students select an industry of interest and participate in a one-day work placement with a local business. This initiative gives students a valuable opportunity to explore potential career paths, connect with professionals in the field, and gain firsthand experience in the workplace.

For BWNG, it was a privilege to take part in this program and introduce Jack to the rewarding world of care services. Supporting young people as they consider their futures is something we take great pride in, and it's inspiring to see the next generation showing interest in making a difference in their community.

We wish Jack all the best in his studies and future career choices, and we hope to see more students follow in his footsteps through this fantastic initiative!



## SAFER INTERNET DAY – 11 FEBRUARY 2025

Safer Internet Day is a great reminder to take steps to protect yourself online. Here are some key ways to stay secure:

### 1. Be aware of scams

Scammers often pretend to be from banks, government agencies, or tech companies, so never share passwords or bank info over the phone or email.

### 2. Create strong passwords

Use a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols and avoid using personal details like your name or birth year.

### 3. Be careful on social media

Only connect with people you know and avoid sharing too much personal info.

### 4. Shop and bank safely

Enable two-factor authentication where possible for added security, and be cautious when clicking on links in emails or messages.

### 5. Seek support if you are unsure

If you're unsure about an email, message, or website, ask someone you trust or contact the organisation the message claims to be from through their publicly listed phone number.

## CONTAIN PETS DURING SERVICES TO ENSURE A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT

BWNG understands that your pets are an important part of your life, and we also acknowledge that Support Workers are a significant part of your daily living.

Just a friendly reminder that not all Support Workers are comfortable with pets and not all pets are Support Worker-friendly.

As an employer, BWNG is responsible to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our workers and at the same time, we have a duty of care to you as a client.

It is therefore an important Work Health and Safety (WHS) requirement for BWNG to request all clients to please restrain pets wherever possible during services.

We also ask for you to notify BWNG prior to your service if you get a new pet or have a friend or family member coming over to visit with a pet.

# February 2025 Newsletter

## HELP US KEEP EVERYONE SAFE: LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR RECENT TRAVEL

COVID-19 remains a very real risk, especially for older adults and people with a weakened immune system.

The health and safety of our clients, team members and community remain our top priority. As part of our ongoing efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19, we kindly ask that you inform us if you or your loved one has recently returned from a cruise.

Cruises can be a higher-risk environment for illness, and early notification helps us take the necessary precautions to protect everyone in our community.

If you or someone in your household has recently returned from a cruise, please reach out to our team before receiving services.

You will still be able to receive services, but we will make sure the BWNG team members providing your services take appropriate precautions.

Thank you for your support. Together, we can help keep our community safe and healthy.

## INTRODUCING JUANITA

Volunteers play a vital role in our community, and at BWNG, we rely on their dedication to deliver essential services.

For nearly 12 months, Juanita has been our Food Collection Volunteer. Each weekday, she collects donated food from Woolworths for our Food Pantry program, stopping at Gloucester Pre-School along the way to drop off donations.

The food pantry is part of BWNG's Safety Net Program, providing vital support to those facing financial hardship.

Thank you, Juanita! Your kindness and commitment help ensure that everyone in our community has access to essential food supplies. We appreciate your effort!



Food Collection Volunteer Juanita.



Ian and Support Worker Anneka.

## PARTICIPANTS ENJOY SAILING ON GRAHAMSTOWN DAM

Sailing is one of very few sports in which able-bodied and disabled people participate on equal terms.

Several of our participants regularly enjoy the exhilaration of sailing thanks to the amazing volunteers of *Sailability*, Port Stephens.

*Sailability* is a not-for-profit organisation operating throughout NSW which promotes the activity of sailing to everyone regardless of disability.

With the help of Support Workers and *Sailability's* Volunteers, participants experience the freedom of sailing on Grahamstown Dam in yachts which have been especially designed for stability and ease of use.

We are grateful to *Sailability* for their commitment to inclusivity and for making sailing an adventure everyone can enjoy!





## UNDERSTANDING SENSORY LOSS IN OLDER ADULTS

Sensory loss affects hearing, vision, taste, smell, and touch, impacting communication, daily living, independence, and wellbeing. It's crucial to distinguish sensory impairment from normal aging and make necessary adjustments to support older adults.

Under **Standard 5: Clinical Care (Outcome 5.5: Clinical Safety)** of the **Aged Care Quality Standards**, older people with sensory impairment must have access to and be supported in using assistive devices to enhance their quality of life (**ACQSC 2024**).

In layman's terms this means as well as help to procure tools to help hear, see or communicate better (e.g. hearing aids, adaptive switches, screen readers, amplified telephones) people with sensory impairments will also receive guidance and training to use these devices effectively.

The **BWNG Communication and Sensory Assessment**, based on Patricia A. Politano's functional communication inventory, evaluates sensory and communication abilities. It helps facilitate access to allied health support, ensuring older adults maintain their independence and quality of life.

### Types of Sensory Loss in Older Adults

- **Hearing Loss (Deafness):** Ranges from partial to complete loss. Annual hearing tests are recommended for those over 65. Causes include aging (presbycusis), noise exposure, trauma, and genetics.
- **Vision Loss:** Legal blindness is defined as vision worse than 6/60 or a field of vision under 20 degrees. Risk increases after 40 due to macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts, and diabetic retinopathy.
- **Smell & Taste Loss (Anosmia):** Aging reduces smell sensitivity, affecting taste. Causes include smoking, nasal congestion, and olfactory adaptation.
- **Loss of Touch:** Reduced sensation can result from decreased blood flow, nerve damage (e.g., diabetes), or neurological conditions.
- **Dual Sensory Loss (Deafblindness):** Affects both hearing and sight. Around 100,000 Australians experience this, with two-thirds over 75.

## ACCESSIBLE TELECOMS

When it comes to technology, choosing the right information, equipment or services can be tricky.

*Accessible Telecoms* is a free information service for seniors and people with a disability. It provides information on which phone, tablet, accessory or app will best meet your needs.

They can help you:

- Find a phone that is easy to use
- Choose an emergency pendant or phone alert system
- Discover assistive devices such as eye gaze accessories and proximity switches.
- Learn about the accessibility features (features that make them easier to use) of different phones

You can access this service by calling

Ph: 1800 442 300, or

sending a text to:

0438 454 413, or

by visiting their website:

[accessibletelecoms.org.au](https://accessibletelecoms.org.au)

or by scanning this QR Code.





## SUPPORT AT HOME: THE COMING AGED CARE REFORMS

As covered in our January Newsletter the *Support At Home* (SAH) program is scheduled to replace Australia's current aged care program from 1 July 2025.

Eight funding classifications will apply once SAH comes into effect. This will allow for increased levels of care, and more options for older people who need higher levels of support to be able to stay living in their own home.

### Classifications and levels explained

The funding framework under the SAH program will consist of:

- Eight ongoing SAH funding classifications, with higher levels of support available than before
- Two short-term care pathways (Restorative Care Pathway and the End-of-Life Pathway)
- Three additional funding tiers for Assistive Technology and Home Modifications (AT-HM)

The budget amounts for each level will be confirmed by the Department before SAH commences on 1 July 2025, but quarterly budget amounts are expected to range from approximately \$2,750 for Level One support, to approximately \$19,500 for Level Eight support.

### Restorative Care Pathway

A new feature under the SAH program older people will have access to is the *Restorative Care Pathway*, which focuses on the use of allied health services (e.g. Physiotherapists, Dieticians, Chiropractors) to reverse or slow difficulties that are impacting everyday life. This extra support will be available for up to 12 weeks with ability for a 4-week extension. This is a lot longer than was available under the old Aged Care program.

### End of Life Pathway

The new *End-of-Life Pathway* under SAH will give older people who have an expected three months or less to live, access to a higher level of services.

This aims to help them stay at home for as long as possible. Obviously, this prognosis may occur suddenly, so people needing this can be referred for a high-priority assessment to access extra support through the End-of-Life Pathway as quickly as possible.

This may seem like a lot to take in, but these changes aim to make aged care in Australia simpler and fairer and reduce wait times, which is good news for everyone.

If you would like to read more about the Support at Home program you can subscribe to regular aged care updates through the EngAged newsletter at [www.comms.agedcareupdates.net.au](http://www.comms.agedcareupdates.net.au) or by scanning this QR code with your smart phone.

