



# BUCKETTS WAY

Neighbourhood  
Group Inc.



## FIRST MEETING OF CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE



BWNG'S Consumer Advisory Committee members Helen, Synthia & Lyn.

Last month BWNG's newly formed Consumer Advisory Committee held their first meeting.

Under recent reforms Consumer Advisory Committees will play a vital role in shaping aged care services by amplifying the voices of those who rely on them.

By bringing together consumers, families, and service providers, these committees help create more responsive, transparent, and person-centered care. Thank you, Helen, Synthia and Lyn, for giving your time.

## COVID-19 REMINDER

As we continue to navigate the ongoing presence of COVID-19, it's still important to prioritise your health and the health of others around you.

Here are a few simple steps to help you stay safe:

1. **Practice good hand hygiene:**

Regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds helps prevent the spread of viruses.

2. **Maintain Social Connections Safely:**

Stay in touch with friends and family through phone calls, video chats, or small outdoor gatherings. Wear a mask in indoor public places, especially where social distancing is difficult.

3. **Monitor Your Health:**

If you feel unwell or experience COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath), seek medical advice promptly. Your doctor may be able to prescribe anti-viral medication to help you.

4. **Get Vaccinated and Boosted:**

Stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. They are your best defence against severe illness.

5. **Keep BWNG informed:**

If you are experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms or test positive to COVID-19 please let our team know. You will still be able to receive services, but advising us allows our Support Workers to wear appropriate personal protective equipment. We need to make sure any sickness isn't passed on to our Support Workers and Volunteers, or other clients.

## GLOUCESTER MEDICO HOURS

Gloucester MediCo (The Medical Centre) will be closed from Monday 23/12/24 and will re-open Monday 30/12/24.

The Stroud practice of Gloucester Medico will be closed from Monday 23/12/24 and will re-open Tuesday 31/12/24

In the event of an emergency please call 000.

## HEALTHDIRECT HELPLINE Ph: 1800 022 222

*HealthDirect* is an Australian Government service providing free\*, trusted health information and advice, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

When you call *HealthDirect* registered Nurses will talk to you about your symptoms. They may offer you a call back, or a video call from a GP.

If your GP is closed and you need health advice after hours, *HealthDirect* can also advise where to go for help in your area.

The *HealthDirect* website [healthdirect.gov.au](https://healthdirect.gov.au) also has an online symptom checker to help you decide if you need to see a doctor, and what to do next.

# December 2024 Newsletter

## HOLIDAY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

If you find the holiday season challenging, you're not alone.

The holidays are often depicted as a time of joy, celebration, and togetherness, but for many of us, it can bring up a range of difficult thoughts and feelings.

It's okay to feel lonely, angry, anxious, stressed, sad or something else entirely. The most important thing is that you acknowledge your emotions and remember that your wellbeing matters.

If you find the holiday period challenging, here are some mental health resources to keep on hand:

**Mental Health Line**  
**1800 011 511**

**Lifeline**  
**13 11 14**

**Beyond Blue**  
**1300 22 4636**

**Dementia Support Helpline**  
**1800 699 799**

Please also visit:  
[headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au) or scan the QR code below with your smartphone.



Hospital emergency departments are also available during a mental health crisis.

## THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS SCALE EXPLAINED

We're dedicated to providing safe, effective personal and clinical care tailored to the unique needs, goals, and preferences of our clients. Our aim is to enhance both their physical and psychological health and overall well-being.

Research indicates that psychological distress tends to increase with age, impacting overall mental health. To assess this, the *Kessler Psychological Distress Scale* (K10) is commonly used. This scale measures general psychological distress based on responses to questions about negative emotional states experienced over the past four weeks.

The K10 includes 10 questions, each with five response options:

- None of the time
- A little of the time
- Some of the time
- Most of the time
- All of the time

Each response is scored from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time), resulting in a total score ranging from 10 to 50.

When interpreting K10 scores low scores indicate lower levels of psychological distress, and high scores indicate higher levels of distress.

The K10 is a screening tool, not a diagnostic instrument. When required BWNG Nurses assess a client's situation and determine if referral to a healthcare provider is necessary for further evaluation and treatment.

Scores above 24 after treatment may indicate the need for a specialist referral.

Effective treatment generally leads to a decrease in K10 scores, reflecting improved psychological well-being.

Our goal is to ensure that clients receive appropriate care and timely referrals to support their mental health and overall quality of life.

## TAKING CARE OF THE PEOPLE WHO TAKE CARE OF YOU



Two of our dedicated Support Workers, Leanne and Kim

As we head into the warmer months, we want to ensure that your Support Workers can continue to provide the best possible care for you in a safe and comfortable environment.

Please be mindful that they do a lot of travel and perform physical tasks in all weather. Turning on a fan or air-conditioning shortly before they arrive, allowing them to refill water bottles and wetting their cooling towels can prevent them overheating and help them stay energised and focussed.

These small actions can make a big difference in creating a comfortable and safe environment for everyone.

Thank you for your understanding and for helping us take care of the people who take care of you.



## PLAN AHEAD TO BEAT THE HEAT THIS SUMMER

Heatwaves or extreme heat events are defined as times of abnormally hot weather lasting several days. Heatwaves or extreme heat events can have a serious effect on people's health.

It is important you prepare early, plan for the first heatwave and protect yourself. Here are some tips to stay safe in the heat.

### Drink plenty of water

- Drink plenty of water even if you do not feel thirsty (unless your doctor usually limits your fluids) – check the colour of your wee – if it's pale you're drinking enough.
- Avoid alcoholic, hot or sugary drinks including tea and coffee. If you go outside, carry a bottle of water with you.

### Keep your body cool

- Drink cold drinks and eat smaller cold meals such as salads and fruit.
- Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes made from natural fibres like cotton.
- If you must go outside apply sunscreen and wear a hat.
- Plan your day around the heat. Try to stay out of the sun and avoid being outdoors between 11 am and 5 pm.
- Put wet towels or cool packs on your arms or neck, put your feet in cool water or take a cool shower or bath.

### Keep your house cool

- Cool your house by closing windows and shutting curtains or blinds through the day.
- Have your home air-conditioning (if you have it) serviced before summer.
- If you don't have air-conditioning at home, try to spend time in a cool place like a library or shopping centre.

### Prepare early and plan for the first heatwave of summer

- Listen to weather updates regularly, or keep an eye on the Bureau of **Meteorology's (BOM) Heatwave Service** for heatwave forecasts. (<http://www.bom.gov.au/australia/heatwave>) or scan this QR code with your smartphone:
- Know whom to call if you need help.
- Follow your doctor's advice if you have any medical conditions.
- If you feel unwell, seek medical advice from a doctor or nearest hospital.
- Know where to find your emergency kit in case of a power failure.

### Keep your food safe

- Make sure food that needs refrigeration is properly stored (between 0°C and 5°C). Defrost foods in the fridge, not on the kitchen bench.

### After the heat has passed

- Continue to drink plenty of fluids so your body can get back in balance.
- Take time to rest and recover as coping with hot weather can be tiring.
- Go to your GP if you feel unwell after the heat has passed.
- Open windows and doors to let your house cool down.

### Important telephone numbers

- In an emergency – call 000
- For advice on medications and their effect in hot weather – talk to your GP
- For general health advice – call Health Direct on 1800 022 222. This is a free 24-hour health advice phone line staffed by Registered Nurses.

For more information visit [Plan ahead to beat the heat - Beat the heat \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://Plan ahead to beat the heat - Beat the heat (nsw.gov.au)) or scan this QR code with your smart phone:



## THE COTTAGE CLOSED FOR PAINTING

BWNG's disability services activity centre known as The Cottage will be temporarily closed to undergo much-needed painting.

The closure will take place 6 -13 January 2025.

During this time, access to The Cottage will be closed to ensure the safety of everyone and allow the work to be completed efficiently.

We understand how important The Cottage is to our clients and their carers, and we appreciate your patience during this time. This refresh will give our space a brighter, more welcoming atmosphere that we can all enjoy once it reopens.

## COOL PLACES TO ESCAPE THE HEAT

If you don't have air conditioning at home, don't worry! There are safe, cool places right in your community where you can find relief without pressure of a purchase:

- Gloucester Bowling & Recreation Club
- Gloucester Library
- Club Gloucester

As well as escaping the heat, spending time in these venues is a great opportunity to engage with the, enjoy free resources such as books, newspapers and Wi-Fi.



## FREE CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH WITH VICKI AND FRIENDS

For several years now local resident Vicki Harris has organised a free Christmas Day lunch for local people spending Christmas Day on their own.

If you will be without friends or family this Christmas, please call and book to join Vicki and friends for some company over lunch, at Gloucester CWA Hall (108 Church Street Gloucester).

Please note:

- For catering purposes bookings are essential.
- Bookings close Thurs 19/12/2024 Please advise of any special dietary requirements.
- This lunch is only for those who will be alone on Christmas Day.
- This is an alcohol-free event.

For more information or to reserve your seat, call Vicki Harris ph: 0458 006 330

## LOCAL PHONE DIRECTORY

We have copies of the last ever Gloucester Advocate local phone directory available. If you would like a copy please ask your Support worker or pop into our office.

## THE BWNG GIVING TREE

The generosity and community spirit of Gloucester have been truly uplifting in support of the 2024 BWNG Giving Tree. We are incredibly grateful for the many donated gifts we've received.

The BWNG Giving Tree is an opportunity for everyone to help make the holiday season a little brighter for local families and community members doing it tough this Christmas.

First launched in 2017, the campaign has collected over 1,000 gifts from community members, organisations and businesses.

Gloucester Men's Shed has been a regular and valued supporter of the BWNG Giving Tree. Men's Shed raises money for the campaign,

which they use to purchase gifts. This year they are donated over \$400 worth of new toys!

We were also pleased to join forces with Ray White Gloucester and their seasonal charity initiative, *A Little Ray of Giving* for this year's campaign.

Through this initiative Ray White offices across Australia and New Zealand partner with philanthropic organisations like BWNG to collect donations of food, clothes, Christmas gifts and new toys. For the past decade, this initiative has provided some much-needed support and care to families that struggle over the demanding holiday period, while allowing Ray White members to give back to their local communities.

Additionally, we extend our gratitude to Gloucester's Regional Australia Bank, which has acted as a main street drop-off point for donated gifts to BWNG's Giving Tree since 2022, and MidCoast Council who also collected gifts and pantry items.



Graham of Gloucester Men's Shed & Jeanette of BWNG.



Tyler, Kristy, Kirby and Eleanor of Ray White with Amber and Jeanette of BWNG.