

Read all about it!

What's News?



A Message from MCCS

Welcome to the Autumn 2025 edition of What's News?

For our older clients, we're sharing important updates about Support at Home, the Government's new approach to funding in-home care. We've outlined the key changes to help you understand what's ahead and how they may affect your care.

Rest assured, we're here to support you every step of the way so you can continue to live your best life with care at home.

You will also find information on our upcoming social outings — a great way to stay active, meet new people, and enjoy the cooler weather. Whether it's a peaceful nature walk or a fun group activity, there's something for everyone.

Inside this edition, you'll also find information on accessible outings in the Hunter, updates to our services over public holidays, and helpful health tips from our April Falls and Autumn clinical articles to keep you safe and comfortable at home.

Your feedback is always welcome, and we love hearing your experience and thoughts.

Thank you for being part of the MCCS community.

Sarah Twaddell

Regional Manager - Hunter
Maitland Community Care Services



Live your best life with care at home

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Want to keep up to date with our news & services via email?



mccs.org.au/email



Let's celebrate the incredible volunteers who strengthen our communities! This year's Volunteer Week theme, Connecting Communities, highlights their vital role in bringing people together and making a real difference.

As a not-for-profit, we are supported by many volunteers who help with administration, driving, social visits, and events. Their generosity and dedication help enhance the services we provide, ensuring you receive the best possible care and support

For 34 years, Glenn has been a dedicated Meals on Wheels volunteer, bringing meals and smiles to clients twice a week.



His knowledge of the runs makes him the perfect mentor for new volunteers, and his role as Santa at our Christmas party brings joy to all.



We're so grateful to have him on our team!

Volunteering is a meaningful way to share your skills and give back to the community. Even small gestures, like making a friendly call to check in on someone can have a lasting impact. If this sounds like you, our Volunteer Coordinator, Sarah, would love to hear from you on 0474 000 802.

Growing Our Team to Support You

We're actively recruiting new staff to improve service availability and reduce cancellations. Our growing team means more support, and fewer disruptions to your care.

We appreciate your trust, and can't wait to return to offering all our services soon.

Say Hello to Our New Support Workers!



Celebrating Women



International Women's Day (March 8) recognises the contribution of women, raises awareness of gender equality, and promotes women's rights.

Women make up around 80% of the caregiving workforce. They perform a vital role in supporting others, often while also caring for their own families. Their dedication and hard work are at the heart of the industry, ensuring people receive the care they need every day.

As we celebrate their invaluable work, let's keep marching forward, striving for a more equal and inclusive future for women, ensuring their efforts are recognised and supported.

An Update on Support at Home

From 1 July 2025, **Support at Home** will replace **Home Care Packages and Short-Term Restorative Care** funding.

Here's what's changing:

- ✓ **More support for equipment and home modifications:** Get up to \$15,000 for things like walking aids, ramps, and safety rails, without using your Home Care Package budget.
- ✓ **No cost for clinical services:** The government will fully cover nursing and allied health. You'll only pay for non-clinical services.
- ✓ **Fairer pricing:** Service prices will have limits, and there won't be separate admin or management fees.
- ✓ **More funding for higher care needs:** The highest level of funding (Level 4) will increase to \$78,000 per year.
- ✓ **Faster access:** Waiting times will reduce, aiming for an average wait of three months by July 2027.

If you:

- Have a Home Care Package,
- are on the National Priority System, or
- are approved for a package on 30 June 2025,

You will receive a Support at Home budget that matches your current or approved package level.

Good news! If you have unspent Home Care Package funds, you will keep them under the new system.

There will be temporary contribution rules for:

- Home care recipients
- People on the National Priority System
- Anyone approved for a package before 12 September 2024.

A "no worse off" rule means you **won't pay more** than under the Home Care Packages Program.

Commonwealth Home Support will stay the same until July 2027.

Want to know more?

Call us on 1300 578 478, or visit: health.gov.au/our-work/support-at-home/

Accessing My Aged Care Online

When you register with **My Aged Care**, a personal record is created with your consent.

Your Online Account lets you:

- Update your personal information.
- See if you've been approved for services.
- Print out referrals to services.
- See waiting times if you've been approved for a Home Care Package (soon to be Support at Home).
- Upload documents to appoint representatives.

You can access this record through your My Aged Care Online Account via myGov.

For more information:

myagedcare.gov.au/how-use-your-online-account



Public Holidays

Our office will be closed, with only essential services taking place.

Friday
18 April
Good Friday

Saturday
19 April
Easter Saturday

Sunday
20 April
Easter Sunday

Monday
21 April
Easter Monday

Friday
25 April
Anzac Day

In an emergency, please call 000.

April Falls: Staying Safe This 'Fall'



There are better ways to prevent falls!

'April Falls' is a reminder to prioritise safety and reduce the risk of preventable falls. With simple precautions, we can make our homes safer to lower the chances of accidents, including:

- **Remove trip hazards:** Keep floors clear of clutter, loose rugs, and uneven flooring.
- **Improve lighting:** Ensure hallways and stairways are well-lit, and consider night lights in key areas.
- **Install grab rails:** Place grab rails in bathrooms and along stairs.
- **Wear good shoes:** Avoid slippery soles and opt for sturdy, well-fitting footwear.

Exercise plays a vital role in preventing falls by building up your body's strength, balance, and flexibility. When you move regularly, your body is better able to respond to changes in your surroundings, making daily activities less risky.

Try adding simple exercises into your routine, such as walking, stretching, or balance drills. With time, these activities can boost your confidence and help you feel steadier on your feet.

Social Events

Your Social Support Coordinator Deborah



Deborah has created a great calendar of social outings and events to help you connect. Get out and enjoy!

Group Guidelines - Enjoying Activities Safely Together

To make sure everyone has a safe and enjoyable time, please follow these simple Group Guidelines when joining our activities.

Health & Hygiene

Please answer all screening questions honestly. If you're feeling unwell, or if someone in your household is sick or waiting on test results for an infectious illness, please stay home.

Wash your hands regularly or use hand sanitiser. Cough or sneeze into a tissue (or your elbow) and dispose of tissues properly.

Follow Staff Instructions

Our staff and volunteers are here to help. Please follow their directions, including any safety measures like mask-wearing or seatbelt use.

Stay with the Group

We encourage you to enjoy the activity together. If you need to step away (for a phone call or restroom break), just let a volunteer know so we don't worry.

Activity Levels

We offer a variety of outings, from relaxed gatherings like lunch, movies, bingo, and morning tea, to more adventurous activities that may involve extensive walking, stairs, or uneven surfaces. Choose what suits you best!

Comfort Breaks

Scheduled stops allow time for restroom use, so please take advantage of these to help us stay on schedule.



Live your best life with care at home



Maitland Community Care Services is dedicated to supporting stroke survivors on their journey to recovery. Our **ESTEEM Program** provides a nurturing environment that promotes physical, cognitive, and social enrichment for stroke survivors.

STROKE RECOVERY PROGRAM



4932 5755



esteem@mccs.org.au



mccs.org.au/strokerecoverymaitland



Our 10-week program is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10.00 am to 12.30 pm at Kurri Kurri Hospital Day Centre



Art Workshop For First Nations Australians

Come and join us for a yarn, get creative and make art inspired by your heritage.

**Fridays, 9:30 am to 1:30 pm
at Rutherford**

A FREE Social Support Group activity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care clients.

Includes:

Art supplies, morning tea, and lunch. Just bring yourself, and have a go!

Transport available
Call 4932 5755 for more details

Ready to join in the fun?

For bookings or information, call us on 4932 5755.



Your feedback matters to us

We want to hear from you! Your comments help us improve and provide better care and support.

Whether it's a compliment, suggestion, or concern, we're here to listen:

- **Call us:** (02) 4932 5755
- **Email us:** admin@mccs.org.au
- **Submit feedback online:** mccs.org.au
- **Contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission:** 1800 951 822 or agedcarequality.gov.au/contact-us

Staying Well in the Cooler Months

As the cooler months arrive, it's essential to take proactive steps to maintain your health and well-being. Respiratory viruses, such as the flu, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), become more prevalent during this time.

1

Stay Up to Date with Vaccinations:

Ensure you have all recommended vaccinations, including the annual flu shot and COVID-19 boosters. Vaccinations are a crucial defence against severe illness.

2

Practice Good Hand Hygiene:

Regularly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing, or touching your face. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.



3

Consider a Face Mask in Crowded Places:

A face mask provides extra protection against viral illnesses and is recommended in crowded places.

4

Maintain Respiratory Hygiene:

When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or use your elbow if a tissue isn't available. Dispose of used tissues and perform hand hygiene afterwards.

5

Avoid Sharing Personal Items:

Avoid sharing cups, glasses, and cutlery with sick people. Regularly wash or wipe down utensils and surfaces with a household cleaner that contains soap or detergent.



6

Stay Home if Unwell:

If you're feeling unwell, stay at home (when possible) to prevent spreading illness to others. If you need to go out, consider wearing a mask.

7

Avoid Crowded Spaces and Ensure Good Ventilation:

Avoid crowded spaces. Organise get-togethers in well-ventilated areas to reduce the risk of respiratory infections.

8

Plan with Your Doctor if at Higher Risk:

If you're at higher risk of severe illness, make a plan with your doctor to manage your health during the cooler months.

Source: [health.nsw.gov.au](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

Following these steps can help protect yourself and those around you from respiratory illnesses during the cooler months. Stay healthy and take care!

Life's Too Short To Stay At Home

Newcastle and the Hunter region offer a growing number of accessible experiences, making it easier for everyone to enjoy our beautiful region from the beach to the sky.

Whether you're looking for a relaxing day by the ocean, an immersive cultural experience, or an exciting adventure, there are plenty of inclusive options to explore.

Visit Bar Beach

Newcastle's stunning coastline is becoming more accessible, with Bar Beach leading the way.



Cooks Hill Surf Club offers a range of equipment and facilities to help people with disabilities enjoy the sand and surf, including:

- Beach-friendly wheelchairs for adults and children.
- A beach power wheelchair for experienced users.
- Beach matting and ramps.
- A hoist and slings to assist with transfers.
- An internal lift from the street to the beach level.

Depending on surf conditions, these services may also be available at Horseshoe Beach, a calm harbour beach. **Bookings essential, contact (02) 4925 2828 for more information.**

The Bathers Way

The Bathers Way is a stunning six-kilometre coastal walk that stretches from Merewether Ocean Baths to Nobbys Beach. Accessibility has improved along this route, ensuring more people can enjoy the ocean views and fresh sea air. Upgrades include smoother pathways, accessible seating, and better signage.

Float Away in A Hot Air Balloon

Seeking an unforgettable adventure? The Hunter Valley is home to NSW's first accessible hot air balloon!



Operated by Balloon Aloft, this incredible experience allows everyone to take to the skies in a specially designed balloon basket featuring a wide door for easy entry, and customised seating and seat belts.

Newcastle Transport: Supporting Hidden Disabilities



Not all disabilities are visible, and Newcastle Transport has joined the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Initiative to offer discreet support to those who need it.

By wearing a sunflower lanyard, passengers with conditions such as autism, chronic pain, or dementia can signal to staff that they may need extra assistance, more time, or understanding while travelling on trains, buses, ferries, and light rail services.

Pick up yours for free at the Newcastle Interchange Concierge desk or by emailing sunflower@transport.nsw.gov.au.

Easter Crossword

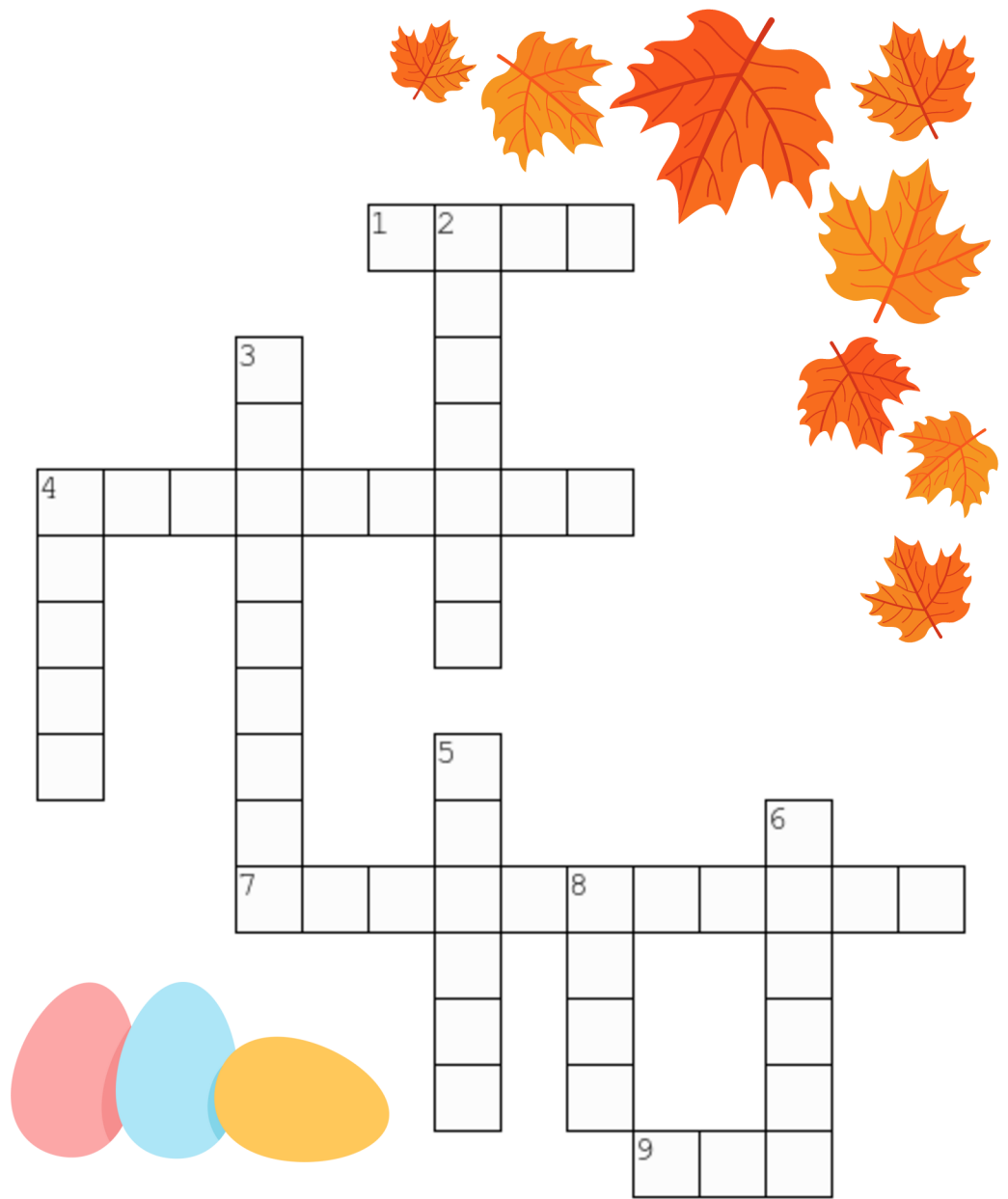


ACROSS

- The Easter bunny hides me!
- Dark, milk, white.
- In this mountainous European country, a cuckoo delivers Easter eggs instead of a bunny.
- Easter ___ Parade

DOWN

- The Easter bunny has its origins in this European country.
- Trees that drop leaves in Autumn.
- Baby chicken.
- The season after Summer.
- You put the eggs that you find into me!
- Most people eat this part of a chocolate Easter bunny first.



Important contact details

- My Aged Care 1800 200 422 myagedcare.gov.au
- Carer Gateway 1800 422 737 carergateway.gov.au
- The Older Persons Advocacy Network 1800 700 600 opan.org.au
- Seniors Rights Service 1800 424 079 seniorsrightsservice.org.au
- NSW Ageing & Disability Abuse Helpline 1800 628 221
- 1800 ELDERHelp (Elder Abuse) 1800 353 374
- Beyond Blue 1300 224 636 beyondblue.org.au
- Lifeline 13 11 14 lifeline.org.au
- Mental Health Line 1800 011 511 health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth

ADSSI Limited T/A Maitland Community Care Services

27 John Street, Maitland NSW 2320

E csoffice@mccs.org.au **W** mccs.org.au **P** 02 4932 5755



We are situated on Darkinjung, Wonnarua, Awabakal and Gringai lands and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these lands. We pay our respects to the Elders, past, present and future, and recognise their continuing connection and contribution to this land.

We affirm the right to equity, respect and fairness for all people.