**Home Support Services Changes Information**

Horsham Rural City Council has made an in-principle decision to withdraw from delivering home support services. If a change to a new provider occurs, council has committed to ensuring the interests of clients, families and carers, staff and the community are met. Please note there will be no immediate change to services.

**What is happening?**

Subject to Commonwealth Government and Sate Government approval, council will invite expressions of interest from suitably skilled and experienced providers who have a desire to deliver the suite of Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) that council is currently contracted to deliver. A similar process with the State Government Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC PYP) service will occur.

**Why is this happening?**

There has been significant reforms in the aged and disability service industry including:

 a need for government to find the most efficient and effective model of service to meet the very dramatic increase in demand for aged care and disability services;

 a commitment by government to introduce a standard national approach to the delivery of aged care and disability services;

 a shift to a model where the consumer controls their own care, including who will deliver it, when and where.

These reforms highlight that council’s current home support service will be unable to adapt to meet these requirements without significant change and cost.

Exiting at this time gives council an opportunity to influence future provision to best support our community through the expression of interest process.

**When will the change occur?**

There is no set timeframe to complete the withdrawal from home support services, as the expression of interest process will largely determine this outcome. However, likely timeframes are by April 2020 an expression of interest will have been advertised and at least preliminary assessment of expressions of interest underway, to enable council to make a determination on its ongoing role later in 2020.

**How will the change occur?**

Council will run an expression of interest process that will identify suitably qualified and skilled service providers. At every stage, the process will be underpinned by council’s overall guiding principles of:

 Ensuring equity of access to services based on need and regardless of geographic location

 Providers demonstrating a strong safety system to protect both staff and clients

 Providers holding a similar ethos or values as council, e.g. a commitment to the health and wellbeing of our community and a commitment to reinvesting back into the community

 Providers demonstrating a commitment to quality care with proven results through Commonwealth Aged Care quality processes.

If a preferred provider is identified, council will be in a position to confirm its in-principle decision and provide notice to the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments of its intention to relinquish its contracts for direct delivery of service. The Commonwealth and Victorian Governments will undertake their own due diligence processes and hold ultimate responsibility for appointing a new provider.

**Will my service change?**

There should be minimal changes. Services are to be delivered under the same Quality Standards that council must abide by. Specialised service providers may have different ways of supporting service delivery. It is anticipated any changes would be a “value add”.

**Will staffing change?**

Council is unable to guarantee the current carer arrangements. Our highly skilled staff are well sought after and will have many employment opportunities within our community due to a significant increase in funding to the aged and disability sector. Staff are supported by a number of employment conditions and council is committed to working closely with staff through this process.

**Will my fees remain the same?**

The delivery of services under the HACC PYP and CHSP programs must be compliant with the relevant funding body’s fee guidelines. It is expected that the fees would remain the same.

**What is council’s ongoing role?**

Council will continue its role in strategic planning and advocacy to ensure the community has equitable access to services, and that clients living in the more rural parts of our shire will not be disadvantaged. Council will also provide individual client advice and support and will assist in connecting our most vulnerable people to the service system.

**Do I need to do anything?**

You do not need to do anything. Council will keep the community and all interested parties informed at each stage of the process. Should council determine after the expression of interest process to exit service delivery, clients will be supported to change across to the new provider(s) selected by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments or other service of their choosing.

**Where can I find more information?**

To assist clients and their families understand the changes, what is happening and why, information sessions will be held as follows:

Thursday 20 February: 10.00am Horsham Rural City Council Civic Centre, 18 Roberts Avenue Horsham

Thursday 20 February 5.30pm Horsham Rural City Council Civic Centre, 18 Roberts Avenue Horsham

Thursday 20 February 7.00pm Horsham Rural City Council Civic Centre, 18 Roberts Avenue Horsham.

Clients and families are encouraged to attend an information session, where staff will provide a short presentation followed by the opportunity to ask questions.

If you are unable to make one of these meeting or would like to speak to someone directly please contact Council on 53 829 777 and asked for Mandi Stewart (Manager Community Services and Emergency).