



Meals on Wheels
Southern Highlands

Newsletter

Summer 2021

Resilience and flexibility is the key

To say 2021 has been a bit of a roller coaster ride would be an understatement. That being said, we're seeing very positive signs that a 'new normal' is evolving where we can live a little more comfortably and freely within our network of family, friends and community. People have proven to be amazingly resilient and flexible, meeting and triumphing over all manner of challenges. Challenges never stop, but if we're flexible and solutions focused as we have been, we have a much better chance of leading the life we desire.

For what has been a challenging year for many we wish you a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year season full of love, joy and peace. We encourage you to share that love, joy and peace with others.



Happy to work around you.

We'd like to think flexibility is one of the cornerstones of our service. Being flexible means, we can tailor the menu and deliveries to individual needs down to almost the minutest details, giving our clients the meals they want, enjoy and can look forward to. Flexibility is especially important in the warmer months. For instance, when volunteers deliver meals it's important there's someone at the delivery address who can place the meal in the fridge or freezer immediately. (See our article on Keeping festive foods safe for more details.)

If you know you won't be home when the volunteers are due to deliver, all you need to do is contact the office and we can make other arrangements. We're happy to deliver earlier or later, or if you won't be around that day we can deliver extra meals on another day. Yes, we are that flexible, and we're happy to do so. Or if you're out at appointments you may prefer to collect your meals from our offices. We're happy to do that as well. The main thing is to keep in touch so we can give you the service and choices that work for you. We enjoy being 'more than just a meal'. We love seeing your smiling faces and having a chat too.



More
than just
a meal

Advocacy and why it may work for you

We wanted to take a moment to advise and remind you about Advocacy, what it means and how it could work for you and your loved ones. Below is an excerpt from our Client Hand Book. If you'd like to know more about advocacy, please contact the office on 4869 4032.

'An advocate is a person who (with consent) promotes and represents the rights and interests of the client.

Clients may use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf. This may be a family member, friend or advocacy service. Advocates will be accepted by Meals on Wheels as representing the interests of the client.

Advocates may be used during assessments, reviews, and complaints or for any other communication between the client and Meals on Wheels.

Advocacy and information services perform a crucial role by helping people to make informed decisions about their lives.'

If you would like someone to be your advocate, ask them to read this next section, as it relates specifically to them.

'Guidelines for advocates

If a client of Wingecarribee Food Services Co-operative Limited has asked you to be their advocate, this means they would like you to act on their behalf in their dealings with the Service. You may be a family member or friend of the client or a member of an advocacy service.

Being an advocate may mean your attendance or involvement will be required during assessments and reviews of the client's situation and the services received, or if the client wishes to communicate.

As an advocate of a client we ask you to be aware of the following and ensure that:

The client has given their written authority for you to act as their advocate;

The service is aware that you are acting as the client's advocate;

You always act in the best interests of the client;

The client is aware of any issues and developments in relation to the services they receive and which you, as their advocate, may be involved in;

The client is kept informed of any developments;

You be familiar with the contents of the client's handbook and the details of the client's care plan;

You encourage the client to provide feedback to you about the services they are receiving;

Advise the service about any changes in client circumstances and any concerns about changing client needs;

Be prepared to relinquish the role of advocate should the client wish this.'

This next section relates to both you and your proposed advocate.

Advocacy

We ask our clients to complete an "Authority to Act as an Advocate Form" when they wish to appoint or change their advocate. Clients are free to change their advocates whenever they wish, however, we request a new Authority Form be completed each time so that service staff are always clear on whom the client's advocate is.'



More
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Vitamin D deficiency is common in our 'sunny country'

By Corinne Cox (Advanced Accredited Practicing Dietitian, Meals on Wheels NSW)

Most of us have heard that we should spend some time in the sun to “get some vitamin D” but what does this actually mean? How do we get Vitamin D from the sun, and why do we need it?

What does Vitamin D do for health? Vitamin D is best known for its role in building healthy bones and teeth, because it helps your body to absorb calcium. Vitamin D contributes to muscle strength and a deficiency can impact on bone health and can lead to osteoporosis. Recent research suggests that vitamin D may also have benefits in supporting the immune system, helping maintain healthy skin and muscle strength.

Doesn't the sun help us get Vitamin D?

Yes. Our skin can make vitamin D when we spend time in the sun – but we need to spend at least 5 minutes with some skin exposed to the sun on most days for this to occur. In the winter months it should be longer e.g. 15 minutes as the UV index is generally lower. Clothing and sunscreen stop the sun from being able to do its work, so wear short sleeves, roll up your trousers and avoid sunscreen for this short time each day.

Some neighbourly advice

As we're opening up more and more, people including our wonderful volunteers, are coming in and out of our offices more frequently, which is fabulous to see. Consequently, there's a bit more traffic than normal. One of our neighbours has asked if we can remind everyone there are residential driveways along the lane and to be mindful they may be pulling out of their driveways at any time. So please, next time you're going down the lane, drive carefully, give way to our neighbours and wave to say “hi”.

Flexible Christmas meals – plan now!

Our staff and volunteers are taking a well-deserved break over Christmas with our last delivery day being Christmas Eve Friday 24 December. We open again on Monday 10 January 2022.

If you're a client and staying home, we can deliver extra meals in the last week we're open to cover the time we're closed. If you're going away or have any changes to your orders please let us know and we can accommodate. If you have any concerns with storing extra meals in your freezers, again please get in touch and we can make alternative arrangements. We're more than happy to fit in with you and your Christmas plans.

Getting enough time in the sun is as simple as walking from your office to get lunch, hanging clothes on the line, or chatting to a neighbour outdoors for a few minutes. To avoid getting sunburnt make sure that you avoid the sun in the middle of the day when the sun is hottest.

Who is at risk of vitamin D deficiency?

People who spend a lot of time indoors or are confined to chairs or bed such as the frail aged may be at risk of Vitamin D deficiency. Studies have found that nearly one-third of adults in Australia have vitamin D deficiency, and this rate is higher at the end of winter, and in southern parts of Australia.

Can I get Vitamin D from food?

Vitamin D is only found in a few foods – it occurs naturally in eggs (the yolk part) and oily fish such as salmon, sardines and tuna. In Australia margarine has added Vitamin D, but generally we don't get enough vitamin D from our diet alone.

If you are concerned about your vitamin D status, speak to a health care professional such as your GP or dietitian.

Royal Commission Recommendations Social Support Category

NSW Meals on Wheels Position Statement

There is a document prepared by NSW Meals on Wheels about our response to the Royal Commission findings. I have included a summary conclusion of that document. If you would like further explanation, a full copy of the document or would like to raise anything please get in touch.

'Conclusion

The vast majority of older people receive low level supports, particularly Meals, Social Support and Transport, in their homes for many years, often without ever needing more intensive supports such as Home Care Packages or residential care.

Supports to keep people well-nourished, socially engaged and active in their community are important factors in avoiding malnutrition, hospitalisations, social isolation and further dependence on health resources.

The future design and funding of the Support at Home program should integrate the Social Support Category with other categories into a system that will be needs-based, rights-based and have equity of access for all older people.

Meals on Wheels NSW welcomes simplification of this access

This approach is inherently person-centred. It ensures that food security informed by the nutritional requirements of people over 65 years and First Nations people over 50 years, underpins an outcome-based model of service delivery...

Interested in becoming a Volunteer?

Contact Debbie on Tel: 4869 4032

Keeping festive foods safe

By Corinne Cox (Advanced Accredited Practicing Dietitian, Meals on Wheels NSW)

There's so much yummy food at Christmas and you don't want to throw away good food. So how can you enjoy it, safely, for as long as possible. Here are a few handy healthy rules.

Keep cold foods cold, and hot foods hot! Bacteria can grow in foods that are in the 'danger zone' of between 5-60 degrees Celsius. That's a pretty wide danger zone.

Keep food in the fridge until it's ready to be consumed.

If food has been out of the fridge for less than two hours it's safe to eat and put back in the fridge. Food that's have been out of the fridge for up to 4 hours are generally safe to eat, but must be thrown out after 4 hours.

Have a separate esky for drinks if you're entertaining to allow the fridge to stay at the correct temperature (less opening and closing the fridge door).

Stay safe and enjoy the season!

The 'no cook' Christmas pud!

If you're looking for something healthy and Christmassy to prepare this year why not try this delicious recipe. Enjoy them as mini cakes, or top them to make tiny puddings – either way, these raw treats pack a punch of festive season flavour.

Raw Christmas Pudding Ball Recipe

PREP TIME 15 MINS

SERVES 20-24

DIFFICULTY EASY

Ingredients

8 medjool dates
8 moist dried figs (hard stem tip removed)
1 cup raw almonds
Zest of one orange
1/3-1/2 cup currants
1/3 cup pecan nuts, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon fresh mixed spice (my blend is cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg & cloves). Fresh spices are essential for this recipe's Christmas flavours.
Optional topping and decoration
Organic white chocolate or yoghurt buds, melted
Edible raw cacao butter, melted
Scraped vanilla from 1/2 vanilla pod

Method

In a food processor, chop almonds to a coarse meal. Add dates, figs, orange zest and mixed spice, process until mixture forms a mass/ball.

Remove mixture from food processor, mix through pecans and currants with your hands.

Roll heaped teaspoons of mixture into bite-sized balls. Refrigerate until firm (10-15 mins).

Once firm, decorate the balls like tiny Christmas puddings by dipping them into the melted white chocolate/ yoghurt buds or spread topping on with a teaspoon. Top with a dried cranberry



**More
than just
a meal**



Patrick's story – “Hello fellow workers!”

How long have you been volunteering at Meals on Wheels...?

Well, once I retired I thought this will be great. Then within a week I was so bored I had to find something to do. So, I started volunteering here 'bout a week after this place opened, around 10 years ago. My wife and I were on the road first, dropping the meals off. She got a job at Lifeline and I stayed on here. Now I volunteer in the kitchen.

Have you always lived in the area?

All my life. Minus 3 years at Moree. I'm 77 now.

What do you enjoy about volunteering here?

I love coming here, I volunteer Monday and Fridays. It gets me out of the house and I just enjoy myself. I catch up with all the local gossip, which isn't much. See who's run off with who and who's keeping who happy. Better than sitting watching the TV with my eyes shut.

What would you miss if you couldn't come

here?

I think I'd be dead by now; the boredom would kill me. Even at home my wife says, “you can't sit still”. I've worked on farms most of my life, but all the farms I've worked on, they're all hobby farms now. They've all been sold off.

What sort of work did you do before came here...?

I was a stone mason for 25 years. The company was based here in Moss Vale, but it was for jobs in Sydney. Our first job was in the Town Hall fixing up bits and pieces. Same with St Mary Cathedral. You know that wall all around Centennial Park? We replaced all that too.

I then worked for a refrigeration company. After that I was a contract water driver. Then it was time to quit. But apart from that, I've had a pretty simple life.

Do you have any other hobbies?

I help a couple of old girls on their little hobby farms, fix up their fences and that. Mainly it's just for something to do! I cannot sit still. My wife says “you'll never be in the restaurant business because by the time you've taken your last mouthful, the plate's gone!”

I believe you have a saying in the morning when you come in...?

Yes, I say "Good morning fellow workers!"

You say you were born in the area, tell us about your early life.

I'm from Hopewood Farm, you've probably never heard of it. I'm one of the original Hopewood fellas. It was about 800 acres. Go up Centennial Road, and once you get past Craigieburn all that land up to the old highway used to be Hopewood. It's where that winery is now. If you keep going up there's a big dairy, big silos. We used to milk 200 cows...

People lived on the farm?

Orphans, you know, from the war.

Oh... how long were you there for?

All my early life, from when I went as a baby. Got my first job when I was 15 was at North Star, a wheat place about 50 mile west of Moree. I only stayed there for about two years because of my asthma and all that sort of thing, with the wheat and the dust. I haven't had many jobs actually.

How was life at Hopewood?

Bloody hard. Hard physical work. That's why most of the boys have got crook backs. Picking up rocks chopping thistles. This is when you're kids, six year olds... We all had to work, girls and boys from toddlers to bigguns. We got nothing for nothing, we had to earn it. They're were vegetarians at Hopewood. They didn't believe in eating meat or going to doctors. I didn't start eating meat until I was about 20.

What was the first meat you ate?

A sausage!

And how did that taste?

Beautiful... I've been eating them ever since.

Did you ever try to find your birth parents...?

I found my mum, or she found me. She wrote this letter and I said to my wife "oh struth, who do we know in Maryborough in Queensland". We were happy to get together with her every five years, mainly for our boys' sakes. Because they eventually asked me who their grandmother was. They knew my wife's mother, but not mine.

And what about your father?

I don't even know his name. I never worried about that. I've done this long without him I can do another few years. I'll live to 80 because the doctor told me that. I'm 77 now...

Make good use of those next 3 years! Did she have any other children?

No. I was the only one. She had three sisters who actually didn't know a thing about me. One was a nun. From what we can work out she was in her late teens when she got pregnant. She worked at the hospital whenever they needed someone. Cos she wasn't married, they could shift her around.

If you had any advice to give any young people these days, what would you say to them?

I'd say "Get off your backside and work." I've taught my boys this, and this I believe in. Something for nothing is worth nothing. Cos I always taught them if you get off your backside and get it yourself you'll appreciate it more because you earned it.

Are you happy with how life turned out?

Oh, yeah... Hopewood sent me around the world. Have you got a week, I can tell you about it? [Patrick has so many stories, too many to mention here, but all quite fascinating. If you ever meet him ask about his trip around the world and his ferry ride to Manly.

Do you ever see the others who lived at Hopewood?

We have a reunion every year. They're family. Originally there were 86, now it's down to 35 or 40 of us. We usually have it at Hopewood itself. It's a wedding place now, but this year, because of Covid we had it at our home. There were only about 20, because people couldn't come through the borders. Most of them now are either pushing up the daisies or they're bringing their grandkids.

How come you're so positive?

Well you just have to. You can't worry about what's going to come. Overall I'm quite pleased with my life.

Good for you. I'm sure MOW are pleased to have you as part of the team.

I enjoy coming here. If I didn't come here, I'd probably be pushing up the daisies myself now. Here is better. One girl just told me this morning. Don't ever take Fridays off, cos that's when she works!

(And with a little chuckle, Patrick went to clean all the pots that were stacking up in the kitchen.)

A letter from Richy Khuda

Hi Everyone,

My name is Richy Khuda. I am a social work student doing my Masters at the University of Wollongong. I got an opportunity through my university to do my placements at Meals on Wheels Moss Vale. I started my placements in mid of the year and now it is about the end of the year and I am about to finish my placements at MOW. It was a wonderful experience being the part of such a dedicated and hardworking team. In this year of uncertainty due the Covid-19 and

lockdowns, the MOW ensured to provide their food and services to the people of the Southern Highlands. It was a great experience working with Debbie, and all the MOW team. I believe that it is important for the team to have a manager that can help the team coordinate and work together without any conflicts. I feel that Debbie was one of the best managers I have ever worked with. Her connection and attachment with her clients and her work is the thing I would like to put in my future practice as a social worker. I learnt a number of skills while working with the MOW team members and volunteers. I never felt like I was a student working here, instead felt like being a part of the team. I learnt the skills of working in a team, being empathetic towards others, understood the system around working of the organization, and doing some research work. I got a chance to interact with some amazing people throughout my placements who told me about their experiences volunteering and living in the southern highlands. I was also able to interact with most of our clients regarding the emergency readiness program that MOW is doing with the other service providers for the safety of the people living in the Highlands.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you,

Kind Regards,
Richy Khuda.





Message from the Manager

2021 is now coming to an end and it's certainly been an interesting year. We've seen the best in people and sometimes the not-so-best. However, as a service I am extremely proud of our staff and volunteers. Throughout the year, we never missed a delivery day and we never ran out of food or volunteers to deliver meals. Extraordinary effort from everyone.

We've also had an incredible amount of support from our great community over the year, plus the joy of meeting the needs of our wonderful clients. We thank our merry band of volunteers and acknowledge each and every one of you who've made this service happen. Without volunteers this place would not be able to work. We've also enjoyed welcoming a number of new volunteers to the fold this year and sadly farewelled a few. We wish you all the very best.

Looks like we won't be having a Christmas party this year. We will, however, have a gathering for all the current serving Meals on Wheels Southern Highlands volunteers in the New Year. We hope it will be easier for you all to attend at that time.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge volunteers Sean, Rod and Merrill, also Judy, Francis and Russel who have assisted with the daily collection and distribution of donated items from Aldi. By doing this, not only are we saving items from landfill, we're also assisting many of our clients, volunteers and even other charities. It's going so well we're now looking to grow this team. We use our van to collect from Aldi each weekday morning usually from 7am to 8am. If you like the idea of helping people, reducing landfill and are happy to donate an hour of your time, this could be for you. Let's talk!

Over the next couple of years, Aged Care Government funding will go through an overhaul. This will result in some changes to funding models and program names. I'm pleased to say, with the information that's been released, we are well positioned to continue services as you know them and there should be no impact on us. This is largely thanks to the good governance and financial management of our board. So a big shout out and thanks to our board members.



Even though the year ahead is looking brighter and communities appear to be creating a 'new normal', we will continue to serve our clients delicious and nutritious meals in a Covid safe manner. Now events are happening again we're doing more catering. If you have any events or catering needs, such as school farewells, a group Christmas party, or even a wedding... don't hesitate to get in touch.

Lastly, we're having a planning day early 2022 and are looking for client representatives to come along in person. We'd love you to meet with our planning committee, including our board members, and share ideas, experiences and suggestions. After all, you are the ones who have firsthand experience of what it's like to be a client of Meals on Wheels. If you think this might interest you please get in touch with me. We always love to hear from you at any time, but for this day we're really looking for clients who can talk with us in person. Of course this event will be well catered for!

Kind Regard's



Debbie Smith

