

# MEDIA RELEASE

## New service to help older adults in need

19 January 2023

The aged care system can be complex, and some people find it more difficult than others to navigate it, to allow them access the services they need. Murray PHN is pleased to announce the appointment of 12 local providers of a new \$6.9 million care finder program across our region.

The service providers are:

Gateway Health	Housing for The Aged Action Group	Haven Home Safe
Mallee Accommodation and Support Program	Mallee Track Health and Community Service	Mansfield District Hospital
Mount Alexander Shire Council	NCN Health	Nexus Primary Health
Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health	The Salvation Army (Victoria)	Wintringham

*\*Details of areas in which each provider operates can be found at [www.murrayphn.org.au/carefinder](http://www.murrayphn.org.au/carefinder)*

The care finder program, which is currently funded until June 2025, is focussed on supporting senior Australians who need intensive assistance to help them understand and access aged care, to connect with other supports in the community and to stay connected with other services they need.

This program works with My Aged Care, but provides intensive face-to-face support, for people who might otherwise fall through the cracks, perhaps resulting in homelessness or poorer health and social outcomes.

The care finder program is part of the Australian Government’s response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. It is being delivered nationally through Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to improve integration between health, aged care and other systems, at a local level.

Murray PHN conducted consultations with the community and led a detailed regional health needs assessment before selecting a range of providers with capability and capacity to cover the needs of people across our 100,000 sq km catchment. Our region crosses 22 local government areas, has 44 public hospitals and 134 aged care facilities, seven Aboriginal-Controlled Community Health Organisations, nearly 2000 community nurses, and almost the same number of allied health professionals.

Murray PHN CEO Matt Jones said he was pleased to welcome the 12 new service providers to the care finder program, which incorporates the Assistance with Care and Housing (ACH) initiative, specialising in homelessness and housing navigation support.

“Many older people in our community have the benefit of family, friends or neighbours who can advocate for them when they need additional help in the house, with housing itself, or with getting aged care services,” he said.

“But for others, the lack of face-to-face support means that getting older can make it difficult for some people to access the services they are entitled to.”

“Care finders are not for everyone, so most people who are eligible, will be identified through assertive outreach and referral.

“These service providers will offer caring and personalised services for older people who may be accessing services for the first time.

“Using a model that includes “assertive outreach”, the skilled workers in these agencies will go out to people who might not realise the help is available; they will engage with people wherever they are; they will offer practical support at all times and will build trust with people by being reliable and flexible and going at a pace that works for the person they are helping.

“Just as a family member might help, care finders can help people understand what aged care and other services are available, set up an assessment and find and choose services” Mr Jones said.

Eligibility for the program, which is part of the Government’s aged care reform agenda, will include people who need help with one or more everyday tasks; are aged 65 years or older (50 years or older for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people), or are 50 years or older (45 years or older for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people) on a low income or at-risk of being homeless and have one or more reasons for requiring intensive support to interact with My Aged Care, access aged care services and other relevant supports in the community.

Reasons may include the isolation or absence of any support person; communication barriers, including limited English language or literacy skills; difficulty processing information to make decisions; resistance to engage with aged care; where there are current or future concerns for a person's safety, including possible homelessness and hesitance to engage with government and institutions due to past discrimination or trauma.

For more information visit: [murrayphn.org.au/carefinder](http://murrayphn.org.au/carefinder)

Others seeking aged care support who are not eligible for the care finder program, can visit [myagedcare.gov.au/](http://myagedcare.gov.au/)

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### **About us:**

*Murray PHN is one of 31 PHNs (Primary Health Networks) around Australia working to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care and service systems. Across our region, we work with general practitioners (GPs), community health, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), pharmacy, aged care and allied health practitioners, and with acute services such as hospitals, specialists and emergency care.*

*The role of PHNs is to help to support and integrate the work of these important services to ensure that the people get the right care, in the right place, at the right time. In the Murray PHN region, which covers almost 100,000 sq km of regional Victoria, we work to develop and maintain sustainable models of primary health care for our communities.*

### **Contact details**

For more details, including to request an interview with one of the new providers, contact Jackie Grant, Murray PHN Communications Specialist e: [jgrant@murrayphn.org.au](mailto:jgrant@murrayphn.org.au) or m: 0408 366 312.

### **Images of Matt Jones**

- [https://www.murrayphn.org.au/murray-phn-ceo\\_matt-jones\\_2021/](https://www.murrayphn.org.au/murray-phn-ceo_matt-jones_2021/)
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