

ECHO GAZETTE

Helping our community enjoy independent lives in their own homes.

A few words from the CEO



The new year is underway, with traffic building up on the roads again as vacationers return to work.

The Support at Home program, now in its third month, is beginning to settle. However, some quirks of the Aged Care Act 2024 and Aged Care Rules 2025 are only now being discovered as the legislation is tested in practice. Please bear with us as we try to correctly interpret some of these things.

In this hottest part of the year, this Gazette features advice for older Australians on how to stay safe in hot weather. You may recognise some of the same strategies that were used by our parents and grandparents before air-conditioning and insulation.

May I wish you all a healthy and happy 2026.

Until next time ...

Stuart Diggins
CEO

SURVIVING THE HEAT

Heatwaves are one of the deadliest natural threats to older people in Australia.

As our bodies age they are less efficient at regulating temperature. If we take certain medications or have chronic health conditions, then heat-related risks can be increased.

Proactively using these strategies can keep you cool:

• Keep your home cool.

Close your blinds and curtains during the day to block out the sunlight and heat where the sun shines directly onto windows. Even if there is no direct sunshine on the glass the room will remain cooler. Where fly or security screens or doors are in place, open windows and doors at night to let in cooler air. This is also most effective in the early morning when the cooler easterly winds blow through Perth.

• Keep airconditioning or fans turned on.

A wet cloth in front of a fan can also create a cooler feeling – using the old Coolgardie Safe effect. Even fanning yourself with a small hand fan or a magazine to create air movement can make a difference. Where possible, you can also spend time in cool public buildings like libraries or shopping centres. Some local governments are also beginning to set up ‘cooling centres’ during heatwaves.

• Take cool showers or baths.

Place a damp cool towel or dishcloth on your neck, forehead or arms and legs. Even placing your feet in a bucket or tray of cold water can help where there is no airconditioning. This was very much the method of keeping cool in years gone by.

- **Wear light clothing.**

Garments that are lightweight, loose fitting, and light coloured, made of natural fabrics like cotton, can keep you cooler.

It is very important to stay well hydrated:

- **Drink fluids regularly, even if you do not feel thirsty.**

- **Drink water or diluted fruit juice.**

Add a water ice block or two if they are easily available.

- **Eat smaller, lighter meals.**

Cold meat and salads are preferred over cooked meals – an oven can increase the temperature in your home.

Plan your day around the heat:

- Do any necessary outdoors activities in the early morning or later in the evening.

- Stay inside during the hottest part of the day – usually 10:00am to 4:00pm.

- If you have to go outside, wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, and use sunscreen of at least SPF 30+.

Be alert for any signs of heat-related illness, such as

confusion, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, rapid pulse and headache.

Where possible, make daily contact with a neighbour, friend, or family member. A quick call is reassuring both for you and for them.

If you or someone you are with shows signs of severe heat stress (confusion, unconsciousness, severe cramps, or nausea), call 000 immediately for an ambulance.

People over 65 years old are at the highest risk from heat. Following some or all of these tips can help you better deal with our hot weather.

Public Holidays

Please notify us well ahead of time when you intend to be away from home on a Public Holiday – if you would normally receive an ECHO service on that day.

Under Support at Home, the cost of services on Public Holidays is quite high.

Where possible and convenient to you, we would prefer to help you reschedule the service rather than deliver it on a Public Holiday.



Complaints. Help us get it right.

ECHO understands that sometimes things happen – an event or the way something is handled – that you need to complain to us about.

We are always grateful to hear from you first, so we can investigate and work to solve the issue.

For complaints relating to ECHO's operations, your first call should be to ECHO's General Manager, Operations: Tania Duthie.

Call Tania on 9271 7011 or email her at tania.duthie@echocommunity.org.au

We need volunteer bus drivers, bus assistants and client transport drivers.

We need more volunteers to help us help others. • Drivers to drive and support our clients on our 12-seater buses. • Assistants to help with any client needs on a bus outing, or on our twice-weekly shopping bus expeditions to local shopping centres. • Client transport drivers using their own vehicle or one of ours. **If you, or someone you know, would like to help out, email volunteer.coordinator@echocommunity.org.au or phone 9271 7011.**

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