

ECHO GAZETTE

Helping our community enjoy independent lives in their own homes.

A few words from the CEO



With Easter now passed, the daylight hours are getting shorter and the weather cooler in the midst of autumn.

Ahead of winter, it's timely to note that our influenza and COVID vaccinations need to be covered. There appear to be some particularly nasty strains of influenza circulating already. This Gazette provides some information on recommended vaccinations for older Western Australians, according to the WA Department of Health.

There is uncertainty in the world as supply chains are being disrupted by the events in the Middle East. ECHO will continue to watch for medium-term impacts, particularly around fuel supplies.

We fervently hope there will be some form of resolution to avoid further disruption.

Until next time ...

Stuart Diggins
CEO

THE VACCINATIONS EVERYONE OVER 65 SHOULD GET NOW.

The WA Government, via the Department of Health, recommends which vaccines should be taken up by people over 65 years of age.

ECHO has reviewed this year's recommendations and we present them here for your serious consideration.

Influenza (Flu) vaccine is free again in 2026 for people aged 65 and over.

It is recommended that the best time to have the annual flu vaccination is in April and May, before the peak flu season. As people aged 65 and older are at higher risk of becoming very unwell from influenza, it is strongly recommended that

everyone in this age group is immunised against flu every year – even if they are normally healthy and don't get sick often.

Influenza can have severe consequences for vulnerable people and put extra pressure on our health system when hospitals are at their busiest.

COVID-19 booster vaccinations are noted to be the best protection against severe illness and can be given on the same day as the flu vaccine.

For anyone 75 years or older, it is recommended that a booster be given every six months.

For those 65-74 years old the recommendation is a booster dose at least once per year.

However, 6-month intervals are recommended for those with medical risk conditions.

Shingles (Herpes Zoster)

vaccine is recommended and free for people aged 65 and over. It is the Shingrix vaccine and is normally delivered in two doses, six months apart.

Pneumococcal disease

is a bacterial infection that can be especially serious in older people. It is spread by coughing, sneezing or touching contaminated surfaces.

This vaccine is recommended for non-Aboriginal persons over 70 years old and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 50 years old.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

is a highly infectious respiratory virus that can affect people of all ages but can cause serious illness in older people.

At this time, the vaccine will be made available from mid-May 2026 – free of charge only to people over 65 who are in residential aged care.

The vaccine has been shown to reduce the severity of RSV infections and the risk of serious complications such as pneumonia and bronchiolitis.

This vaccine is available privately, at a cost of approximately \$300.

None of these vaccines is compulsory, but protecting yourself against dangerous illnesses by vaccination makes good sense.

Support at Home Tips

Support at Home has brought significant changes to the price of services – and to your ability to carry forward package funding between quarters as Unspent Funds available for future use.

For this reason, a regular review of your budget and services with your ECHO Care Partner is a good idea.

In some instances, you may need to consider reducing the frequency or duration of services so your total support

program stays within budget across each quarter's funding. You should also consider the use of taxi vouchers for routine travel – saving your ECHO transport services for essential supported travel.

Public Holidays

The first half of the year contains the bulk of Australia's Public Holidays. Please notify us well ahead of time if you will be away from home on a Public Holiday – and you would normally receive an ECHO service on that day.

Our next Public Holidays are Saturday 25 April and Monday 27 April for ANZAC Day, and Monday 1 June for Western Australia Day.

Under Support at Home, services on Public Holidays are quite expensive. Where it's convenient, we would prefer to help you re-schedule that service to another day.



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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