

Health services for cancer patients

This booklet will help you learn about the supports available to you, as a cancer patient, and how to access them.



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Doctors

Latrobe Community Health Service has four GP clinics in Gippsland, which operate during business hours.

You can book an appointment at Warragul, Morwell, Traralgon or Churchill to see a doctor about:

- General health check-ups
- Diagnosis and treatment for short-term illnesses like the flu, cold or fever
- Referrals to skin specialists, respiratory nurses or other health professionals
- Prescriptions for vaccines or immunisations (a clinic nurse may administer these)

There is also an after-hours medical service at our Moe site, which is a walk-in clinic.

Nursing

A Latrobe Community Health Service nurse can visit you at your home to help manage your health condition.

A district nurse can help you with:

- wound care
- stoma care
- managing medications
- checking your blood pressure, weight and heart rate
- other nursing care needs

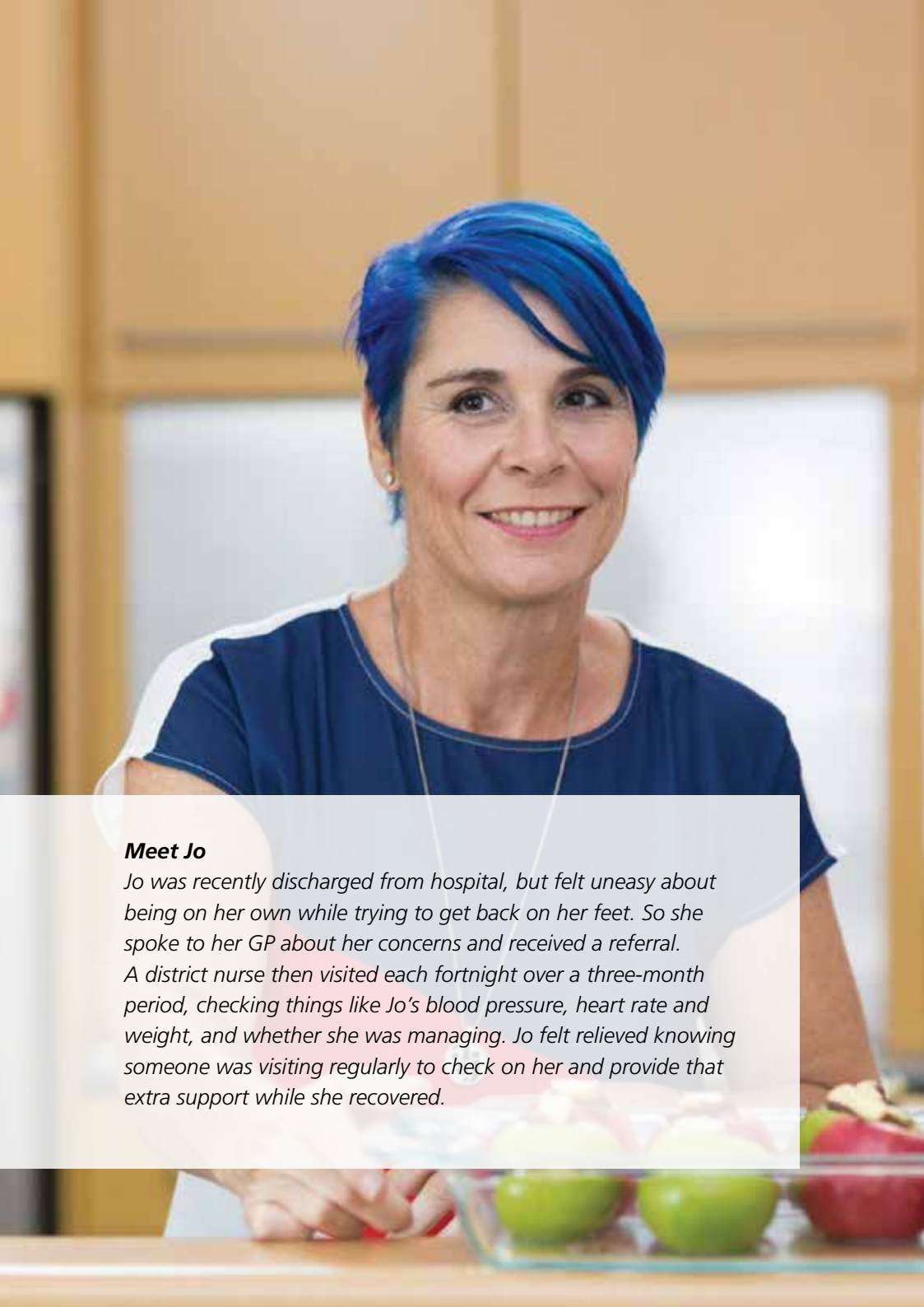
A district nurse can also help link you in with other health professionals and support services.

Please note this is not an emergency service.

How do I see a district nurse?

- Self-referral
- GP or medical specialist referral
- Family and friends can also refer

You may be asked to pay for this service depending on your circumstances.



Meet Jo

Jo was recently discharged from hospital, but felt uneasy about being on her own while trying to get back on her feet. So she spoke to her GP about her concerns and received a referral. A district nurse then visited each fortnight over a three-month period, checking things like Jo's blood pressure, heart rate and weight, and whether she was managing. Jo felt relieved knowing someone was visiting regularly to check on her and provide that extra support while she recovered.



Meet Alexandra

Alexandra was concerned about a choking reaction she seemed to get each time she tried to eat, and felt it was only becoming worse. She spoke to her GP who referred her to a speech pathologist, who was able to determine the cause of the reflux and helped Alexandra swallow properly again. Alexandra was also able to talk to the speech pathologist about her pronunciation of certain words and learnt techniques that gave her the confidence to say these words aloud again.

Exercise

Regular exercise and leading an active life helps you maintain good health and fitness.

We understand everyone has different needs and abilities, and so we offer a number of different options. Following an assessment we can recommend the best option for you.

An exercise physiologist can create an individual program for you, which can guide you through the types of physical activity suitable for you and your health condition. This also allows you to exercise independently.

Nutritional advice

You might need to see a dietician to help you:

- Manage your weight gain or loss
- Reduce discomfort
- Limit your tiredness
- Improve eating habits

Referrals are only needed for advice about food allergies or intolerances; otherwise you can simply book an appointment.

Speech pathology

If you have trouble speaking or swallowing, a speech pathologist might be able to help.

Speech pathology can assist with:

- swallowing problems such as gagging or choking
- difficulty understanding or using language
- pronunciation
- voice problems
- managing saliva issues such as dry mouth or drooling

Koorie support

All of our services at Latrobe Community Health Service are available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our staff have participated in cultural awareness training and understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Continence support

If you have trouble controlling your bowel or bladder, one of our continence advisers can help you:

- Learn strategies to manage bladder problems and prevent leakage or incontinence
- Control your bowel function
- Access continence aids through external providers
- Manage your catheter
- Educate your carer

Occupational therapy

An occupational therapist can help you:

- Keep your independence after cancer
- Limit your fatigue or tiredness
- Return to work
- Do daily activities after treatment

Lymphoedema practitioner

Lymphoedema is the swelling of body parts, especially the arms and legs. It occurs when there is too much protein-rich fluid, which the body's vessels can no longer drain.

Radiotherapy, steroids used in some chemotherapy programs, surgery and other medical conditions can cause Lymphoedema.

Seeing a Lymphoedema practitioner early can:

- Prevent unwanted problems
- Help you look after your skin
- Reduce risk of infection
- Highlight recommended exercises

These services are available to people who work, live or study in Latrobe City. We also prioritise our services for people on low to medium incomes and holders of a concession card.

We can also visit the home of people with eligible referrals through the Department of Veterans' Affairs.



Meet Jack

Recovering from a long hospital stay, Jack felt as though he was constantly tired and lacking in energy. He had hoped to return to work once he had recovered. So he saw an occupational therapist who helped Jack achieve that goal. Together they worked on a plan that focused on limiting Jack's fatigue and building his strength through different exercises.

Withdrawal and recovery

We offer many different services related to alcohol and drug withdrawal, education and counselling.

Seeking help may seem confronting, as there are a lot of services and options to understand.

When you first ask about drug treatment services in Gippsland, a support worker will speak with you to understand your background and your treatment needs.

This is called 'intake and assessment'. In Gippsland, if you are aged over 24, the Australian Community Support Organisation (ACSO) runs the intake service.

ACSO will refer you to the right services for more thorough treatment.

If you are 24 or under you can call us directly on 1800 242 696. Otherwise call ACSO on 1300 022 760.

Counselling and psychology

You may want to learn effective stress management skills, change unwanted behaviours or regain control of your life.

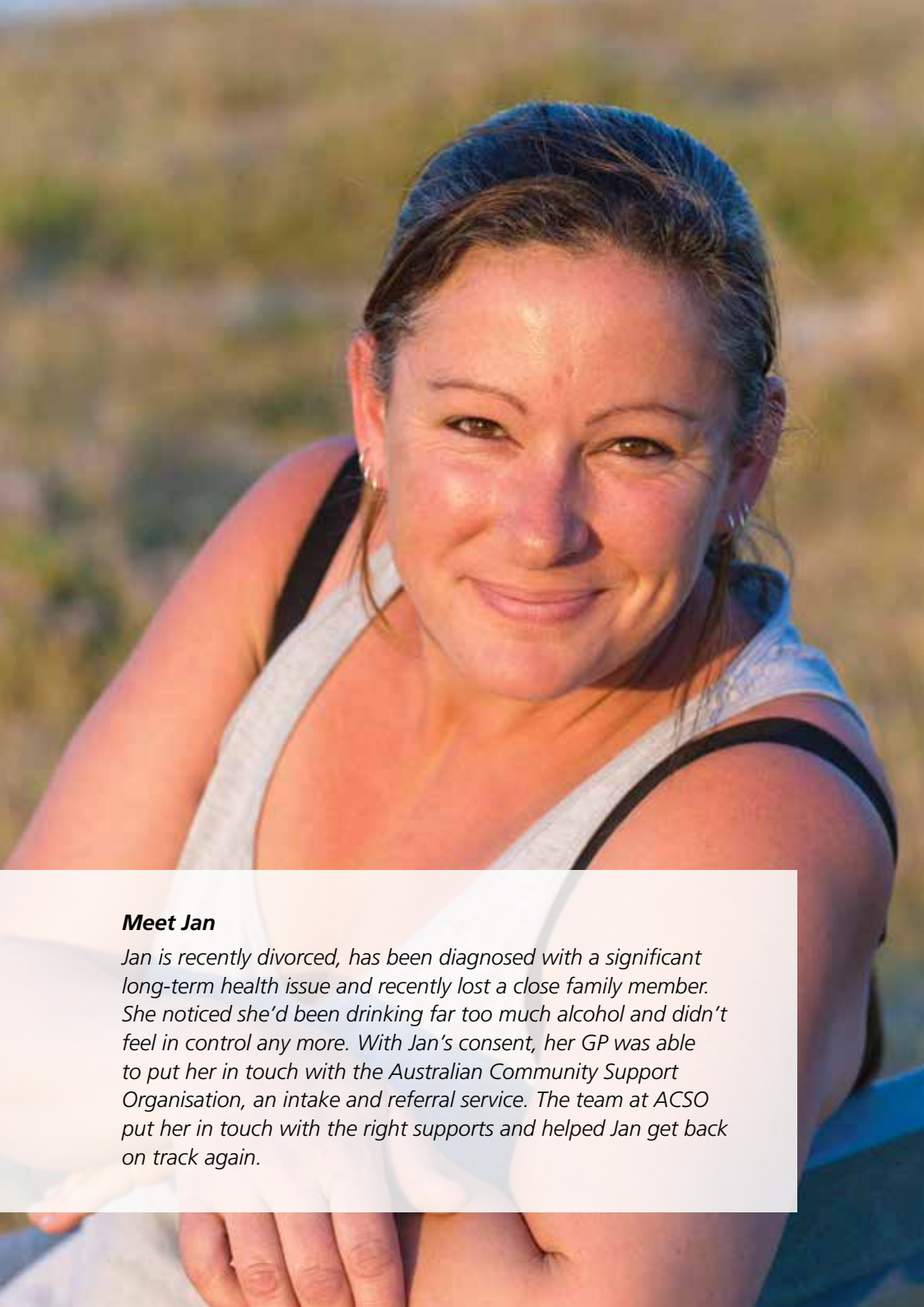
A counsellor can help you deal with:

- Stress
- Illness
- Grief and trauma
- Anxiety and depression
- Boosting self-esteem
- Communicating more effectively

You can self-refer to see a counsellor.

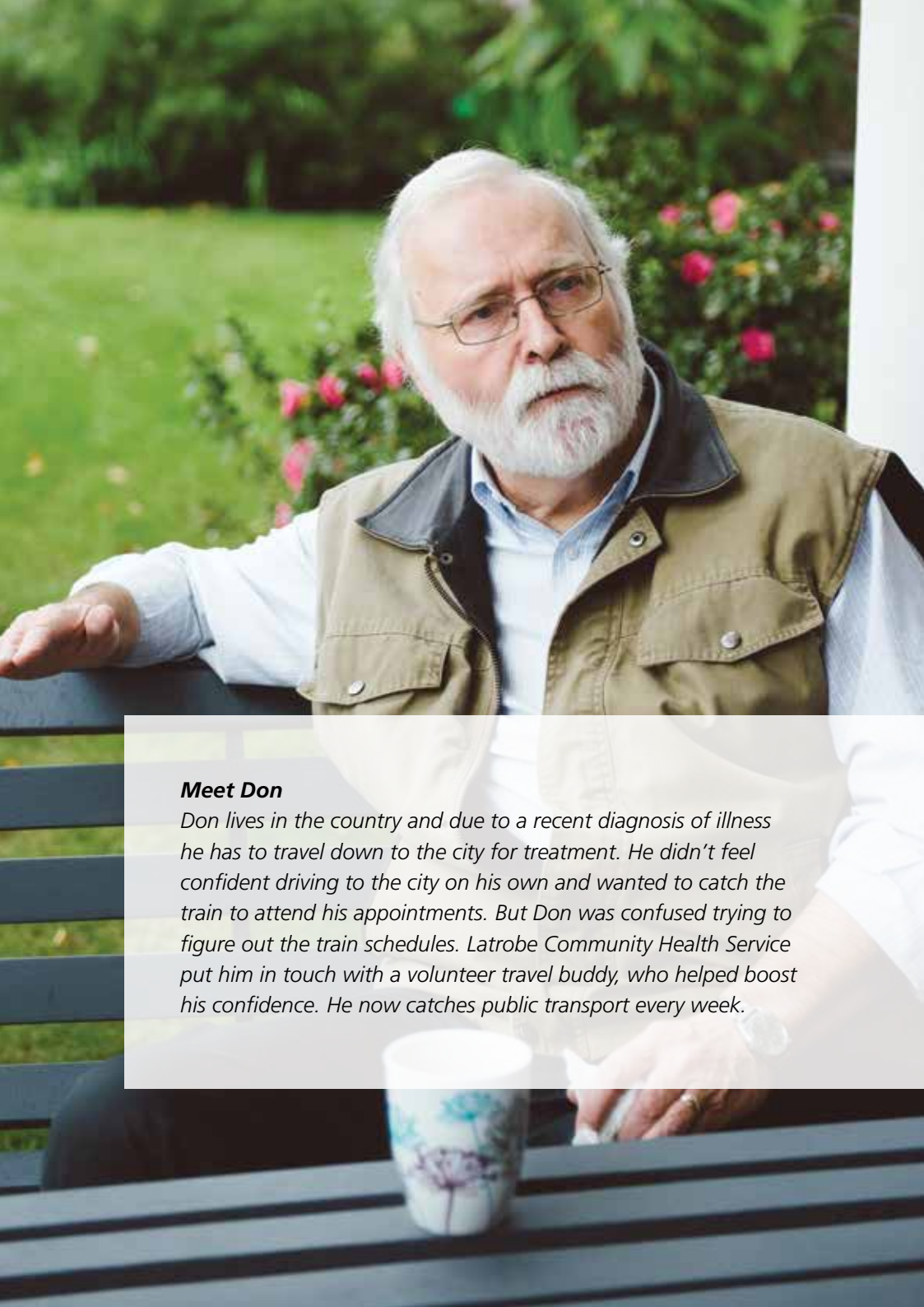
Psychologists, who can work closely with your doctor, can help you:

- Deal with anxiety and depression
- Trauma
- Coping with illness
- Family issues



Meet Jan

Jan is recently divorced, has been diagnosed with a significant long-term health issue and recently lost a close family member. She noticed she'd been drinking far too much alcohol and didn't feel in control any more. With Jan's consent, her GP was able to put her in touch with the Australian Community Support Organisation, an intake and referral service. The team at ACSO put her in touch with the right supports and helped Jan get back on track again.



Meet Don

Don lives in the country and due to a recent diagnosis of illness he has to travel down to the city for treatment. He didn't feel confident driving to the city on his own and wanted to catch the train to attend his appointments. But Don was confused trying to figure out the train schedules. Latrobe Community Health Service put him in touch with a volunteer travel buddy, who helped boost his confidence. He now catches public transport every week.

Volunteers

Latrobe Community Health Service is fortunate to have a wonderful team of volunteers dedicated to supporting us while supporting you.

A volunteer can help:

- Take you to and from appointments
- Navigate your way through our service program
- Check in on you or help with other activities

Transport buddy

A transport buddy can help you read and understand public transport route maps and schedules, catch the right bus or train and travel independently.

People aged 16 years and over and who wish to use public transport can access their own travel buddy.

Emergency relief

You might be struggling to put food on the table or can't afford to pay for crucial prescription medication.

You might also be unable to heat or cool your home, and find yourself homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

We offer emergency relief for people in crisis, and who live in Latrobe City, at our Churchill, Moe, Morwell and Traralgon sites.

We can provide:

- food and pharmacy vouchers
- material aid, including sleeping bags and winter coats

If you need long-term help, we can also advocate on your behalf and refer you to other services like counselling. We will do our best to ensure you get the support you need in a way you feel comfortable with.

Home Care Packages

If you are aged 65 and older, you may be able to access a home care package.

This means you can stay at home, independently, for longer while still getting help with things like:

- House cleaning, washing and ironing, gardening, basic home maintenance
- Home modifications related to your care needs
- Transport to help you with shopping, visit your doctor or attend social activities
- Personal care, such as help showering or bathing, dressing and getting around
- Nursing, allied health and other clinical services
- Hearing and vision services
- Care coordination and case management.

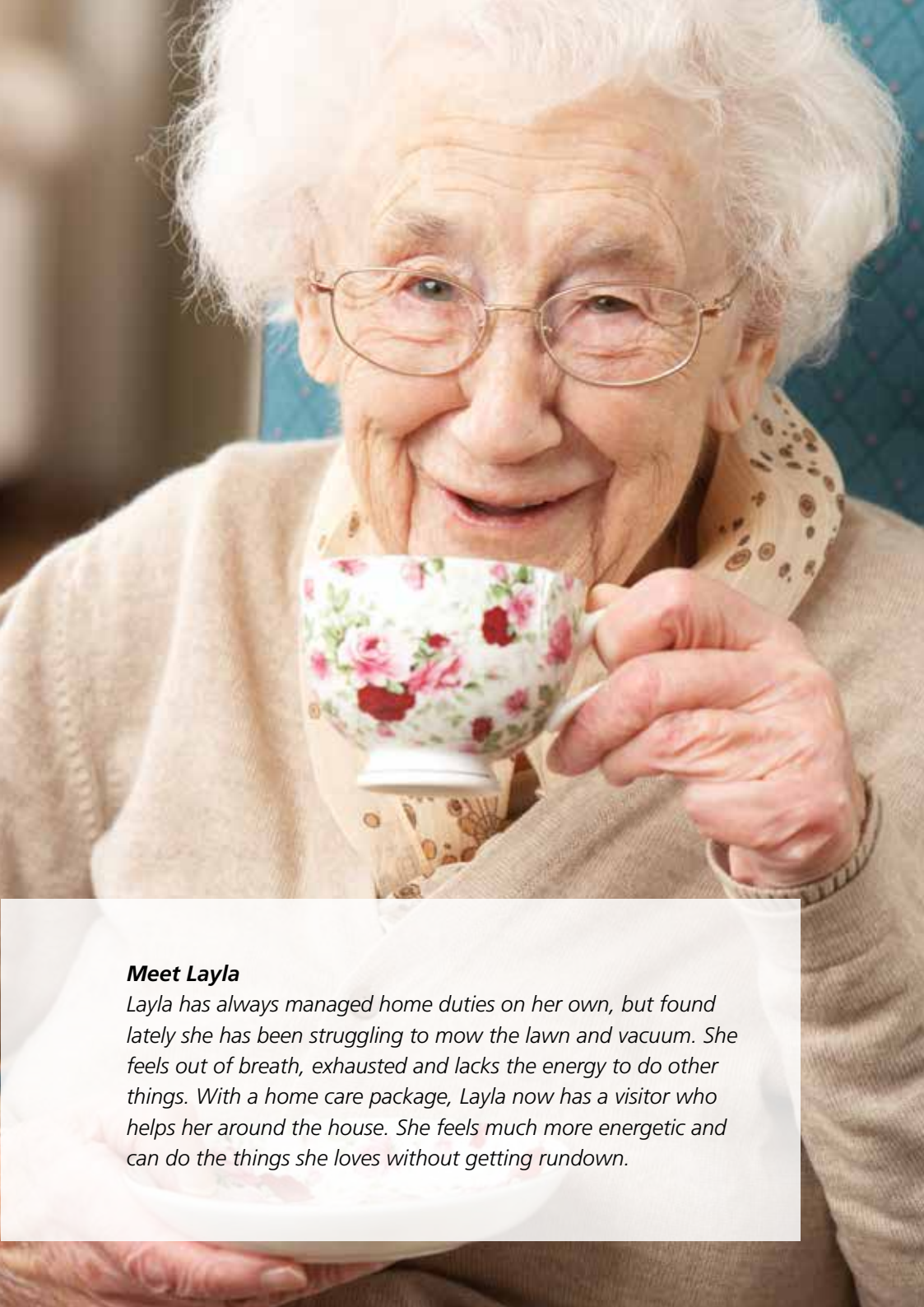
Carer support

If you have someone who cares for you, they may be eligible for carer respite.

This can look like:

- Respite at home, during the day or after-hours
- Respite at a residential aged care facility
- Respite at Mayfair House, a three-bedroom, supported accommodation in Traralgon
- Leisure activities for you or the person you care for
- Young carer camps
- Day programs, camps, and other accommodation support

If you look after someone who needs at least 20 hours of care a week for an extended period (at least six months), you can receive a carer's payment.



Meet Layla

Layla has always managed home duties on her own, but found lately she has been struggling to mow the lawn and vacuum. She feels out of breath, exhausted and lacks the energy to do other things. With a home care package, Layla now has a visitor who helps her around the house. She feels much more energetic and can do the things she loves without getting rundown.

External services

Pharmacy

Whether you can't get to the pharmacy as often as you need to, or you'd like some guidance when taking your medication, it might be worth checking in with your local pharmacy to see what help they can offer.

Most pharmacies will deliver medication to people in their area who are unable to leave the house.

- Ask your doctor to phone or fax prescriptions to the pharmacy and leave the written orders with you, so you have a copy to give to the person who delivers the order.
- You can pre-arrange this service with your pharmacy.

A Home Medicines Review is worthwhile if you'd like to make sure you're getting the best from



your medicines, are using them correctly and storing them safely. Your local pharmacist might be able to provide this, but talk to your doctor first to see if you're eligible.

Worried about forgetting to take your medication? Easily get confused about when to take which tablet?

A Webster-pak can help you keep track of all of your medication and what time of day to take it. The packet is a sealed, weekly calendar with blister compartments that store your medication.

It is always worth speaking with your pharmacist to find out how else they can help you manage your medications.

Travel assistance

If you have to travel 100 kilometres or more to get to specialist medical appointments, you can receive a subsidy of up to .21c per kilometre.

This doesn't include travel to clinical trial appointments.

To be eligible you must:

- Live in a designated rural health region
- Receive specialist medical treatment
- Only claim the route between your appointment and home

An accommodation subsidy of up

to \$45 per person per night is also available.

Download a claim form at vptas@dhhs.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 737 073 for more information. Your application form must be signed by an approved medical specialist.

Support groups

Sharing with others can help you feel less alone and better able to manage the impact of cancer.

Cancer Council Victoria can connect you with free, confidential support groups that meet in person, online or over the phone.

Holiday breaks

Getting away and spending quality time with loved ones is a great way to relax and recharge.

If you're affected by cancer and the financial strain it brings, Cancer Council Victoria can help with a one off break at no cost.

You can access this if you are:

- Having cancer treatment
- Within 18 months of completing treatment

Holidays are usually offered for two to four nights.

Legal, financial or work issues

If you or someone you love has cancer and needs workplace, financial or legal advice, Cancer Council Victoria can help.

Professionals volunteer their time to deliver these programs for clients who cannot afford to pay for advice about:

- Legal issues
- Financial planning
- Small business accounting
- Workplace advice

Useful numbers

Police, fire and ambulance
000

Cancer Council Victoria
13 11 20

Lifeline Gippsland
13 11 14

Quitline
13 78 48

ACSO
1300 022 760

Victorian Patient Transport
Assistance Scheme
1300 737 073

Latrobe Community Health
Service
1800 242 696





Latrobe Community Health Service sites are located across Gippsland to provide a broad range of health and wellbeing services for you and your family.

To find out which services are available at the Latrobe Community Health Service site closest to you, **phone 1800 242 696** or visit www.lchs.com.au