

Hello again,

It feels not so long ago that I wrote the last newsletter!

As we enter May, and the weather is noticeably cooler, my team of staff members and volunteers continue to promise a warm reception at our various locations and events.

Our volunteers continue to deliver a smile when they deliver meals or welcome you to a Group event, and I am sure this brightens up your day. And our staff continue to provide exciting programmes for our Group Social Support clients which have you forgetting about the cooler temperatures outside.

I do hope that those who do not already go to one of our groups will accept my invitation to join one of the various groups which operate so to beat the biggest issue facing all of us - loneliness. While we think we are fine alone, we do need to have social contact to provide us with fulfilment and enjoyment of life.

In Ulladulla, there are three groups operating. There are the Monday and Thursday groups one week and the Wednesday group the next. As well as specialist groups in Scrabble and Card making each month. In Moruya, there are three groups operating each week (Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday). For all these, there are exciting programmes set, but before each one is developed the teams are always interested in what you enjoy doing, so please continue to make sure you let your thoughts be known.



For those who are not presently taking part, I invite you to come and have a trial day. See what the folk do when they are together, and I am sure you will quickly become 'one of the family'.

On the meals front I am continuing to hear of providers who are recommending other services above our meal options. This is disappointing especially as there is no 'personal time' associated with any of their deliveries. Our volunteers are happy to spend a few minutes with you, to check quickly on your welfare and to assist you to organise the meals in your freezer. With a smile and some chatter, they share some of your day.

I recently saw a televised advertisement for one of those providers and the clients was saying that their meals were subsidised through their package. The same happens for our 'sale' of meals to our clients. Don't let the chatter change your mind without speaking to us.

I am pleased when I hear from clients about the pleasant visits when volunteers call. I am also delighted to hear from clients about the way our team take the orders and spend some time chatting over the phone with you. Each of these is another opportunity to break the loneliness of the day.



I am thinking about how we can do more on this front. There have been articles written about regular phone calls assisting people. I know that the Red Cross have had *Red Cross Calling*

for several years, and maybe we could develop something like this within our organisation. I would be interested in your comments either through a phone call to me (44744464) or by telling a staff member or volunteer what you think. Your message will get back to me.

NSW Meals on Wheels has also developed a programme called **ACT!**. This is about preparing for natural disasters and assisting those who are at home, often alone, to be prepared for anything which may come along. In Eurobodalla we were a pilot group for the programmes development and thought it to be worthwhile. I am looking at the possibility of having some volunteers trained in the programme so to visit clients and assist you to be 'Be Prepared'. Again, if you think this may be interesting and of assistance, please let me know or a staff member or a volunteer.

Last year, Southern Shoalhaven Meals on Wheels was assessed by the Aged Care Quality Commission. As we were in transition mode, there were several things we were marked down on. The Commission sent two more people to visit on 18th April. I was away in New Zealand so for all of us it was a surprise visit. But thanks to the team in the office, especially Suzy, while doing her regular work, provided what they wanted. We now wait for their comments.

I will be shortly providing feedback to the Commission on the notification process (*a letter arrived by email at 4.41pm on Friday 12th April; a letter to clients was included and there was no way this would reach clients before the 18th April, nor was there time to prepare all the documents required*). But they were nice as they looked at our records, spoke to clients and volunteers at the Thursday group, all to gain an understanding of what we are doing.

One area they were asking about was the Feedback we get. We have always held Forums, sent Newsletters, and sought comment through Surveys. The next Survey is already prepared for Clients. It will be sent out on 3rd June and is to be returned by 1st July. The report will go to the Board on 22nd July. For volunteers their Survey is also prepared and will go out on 24th June and is to be back by 22nd July. The report will go to the Board on 19th August.

The Board is also being surveyed on how well they see they are filling their role. This self-evaluation report will go to the Board soon.

All of this is part of our Continuous Improvement programme as Continuous Improvement is one of our four values. The others being Empathy, Honest and Commitment.

I also have Forums for clients and volunteers where you can meet with me to discuss any matter concerning our operation and to give comments on what we could do better or add to what we are doing. The request for a new name for our organisation was part of that process.

This Newsletter feels a little dull, but it is important for us all to be on the same page and to know what is happening within our Cooperative.



If you have anything you wish to contribute remember my number (44744464) and my email (manager@eurobodallamealsonwheels.org.au) But smiles and ending loneliness are important as is Feedback and ideas for our future growth.

**Forum dates,
venues,
and times**

Thursday 16 May
Client Forum,
Moruya office, 10am

Thursday 22 May
Volunteer Forum,
Moruya office, 10am

Tuesday 4 June
Client Forum,
Ulladulla office 2pm

Friday 26 July
Client Forum,
Sussex office,
11.30am

Alan Russell
Manager
May 2024