

COMMUNITY UPDATE ACROSS THE TRACK



Community Update #51 April 1, 2021

COVID-19 vaccine: It's great news that we are finally rolling out the COVID-19 vaccinations in the Mallee Track catchment this week at our residential aged care facilities. We hope to have vaccines available for those in the 1b category soon – and will keep the community updated as developments occur. The COVID-19 vaccination is not mandatory, but community members are encouraged to have it.

Answers to key questions:

Is the AstraZeneca vaccine safe? Can people get blood clots? The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has said vaccines are vital in our fight against COVID-19, enabling Australians to protect themselves, their family, and their community. It's clearly stated there is no evidence the AstraZeneca vaccine causes blood clots. The AstraZeneca vaccine – along with all TGA approved vaccines – are safe and effective.

Why are Phase 1B people getting access ahead of Phase 1A? MTHCS is following the rollout of both the State and Federal Governments. People eligible in Phase 1A will have their two doses of vaccine administered seamlessly at the health service and within aged care facilities, ensuring maximum convenience and ease of access for all involved. It's important we follow the timetable as set by the State, alongside other Victorian health and aged care services.

Where can I find out my eligibility? The Department of Health has an excellent [Eligibility Checker](#), to help you find out which phase of the rollout you are in. If you are eligible, you will be able to view vaccination clinics and book an appointment online or via phone. If you are not yet eligible, you will be able to register your interest so that you can be notified when you are able to book. People can also call the National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccination Helpline on 1800 020 080.

How do I book in? Once you complete the eligibility checker, you will be taken to a page to find your nearest clinic to book an appointment. If you are unable to book online but have checked your eligibility you can phone the clinic during business hours.

Where can I find out more information on the vaccine rollout?

The Department of Health website is a useful resource. Visit <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines>

Harmony Week celebrates Australia's cultural diversity. It's about inclusiveness for everyone, respect and a sense of belonging. The designated colour for Harmony Day is orange, so some of our Ouyen Nursing Home nurses got into the Harmony Week spirit. *(Left to right) Ammy, Julie, Tincy and Sapana wore their traditional dress as an expression of their cultural backgrounds and enjoyed sharing their culture with residents, including Ruth and Harry Bunstun.*



Groups getting back on track: It's so exciting to have our important social, exercise and community groups gradually returning in our Mallee communities. Staying connected is so important! *Murrayville Planned Activities Group (right)* got together this week for the first time in more than a year – and Ouyen fitness groups are also on the way back, with our ladies very happy to be catching up and getting active again *(below)*. Please remember (and remind



those around you) that as things do open up, the onus comes back on us all to exercise personal responsibility for safe behaviours like hand hygiene and social distancing. Programs like hydrotherapy, exercise groups and community buses are returning, all with COVID-

Safe plans in place – before each group is able to return, we need to complete COVIDSafe planning for each. We are getting there, though, and we will keep you informed as each group gets back up and running.



Cross Border Commissioner visit:

Victoria's Cross Border Commissioner, Luke Wilson, dropped in for a visit this week. It was a great opportunity to explain some of the enormous and difficult challenges we faced as border communities during COVID-19, particularly at Murrayville. But it was also a chance to brief Mr Wilson about the broader challenges we face in the delivery of health services in our catchment.

Autism Awareness Day tomorrow: Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental disorder that can impact social skills, language and communication, increased sensitivity to sensory stimuli like noise, lights and smell, and manifest in rigid and repetitive behaviours. Autism is a spectrum disorder – that means each person with autism may present differently. It's a lifelong condition, but there are lots of different strategies that can help develop a child's emotional regulation skills, communication, social skills and independence. Some children need very little support, while others require more adjustments.

Two of our MTHCS Early Years team, Shauna and Bailee, were fortunate to attend an informative presentation at Swan Hill last week by Daniel Giles OAM, an Autism Self-Advocate and Public Speaker and his dad Daryl, who provided a parent's perspective. They learnt about Daniel's journey and perspectives of living life as a person on the Autism Spectrum. Autism Awareness Day is on April 2, and you can learn more about the latest research here: <https://www.cela.org.au/2021/03/19/latest-autism-research/>

Lois O'Callaghan, Chief Executive Officer, Mallee Track Health & Community Service

Contact us

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Working together:

Strong local partnerships help ensure MTHCS continues to offer the care and services our communities need. It's been a busy time recently, with many opportunities to meet with representatives from key partners, including both Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC) and Mildura Base Public Hospital. *Pictured left (top image), MTHCS Chief Executive Officer Lois O'Callaghan, MRCC Mayor Jason Modica and MTHCS Board member Phil Down* met to discuss the many ways MTHCS and MRCC work together, as well as other ways to develop and strengthen this relationship; and *(pictured left, bottom image) MTHCS CEO Lois O'Callaghan and MTHCS Board Chair Joy Lynch*



met with Mildura Base Public Hospital Board Chair Mary Rydberg and CEO Terry Welch to discuss ways to strengthen partnering arrangements in the provision of health.

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