



# Mercy Matters

Spring 2023

## Supporting NAIDOC Week

This year at Mercy Services we wanted to combine the celebration of NAIDOC Week in keeping with the commitment of the Sisters of Mercy to support the First Nations people. So, with the help of three amazing local companies, we were able to gift our staff with a beautiful mug and cookie. What a perfect way to start a conversation.

The message inside read: 'Mercy Services is committed to supporting all our clients, residents, families, volunteers and staff in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy and Catherine McAuley. This tradition now extends with such a significant national event as NAIDOC week.

The key message in this year's NAIDOC week is 'For our Elders.' The first line on the poster for this year reads 'Where there is Knowledge

there are our Elders'. How true a statement that is and one we can relate to so easily within our own families and community. As the whole country celebrates the rich heritage of our First Nations people, I hope you enjoy this mug and biscuit as a reminder of the history, culture and achievements of our local Wonnarua and Awabakal elders. To those First Nations staff with us, we hope this week is one that you celebrate and where you can be proud in your rich heritage that we all now can enjoy."

We were also once again very privileged to have several artworks on loan from Maree Simon, the sister of our colleagues Gary Simon and Daniel Simon, displayed at all our sites including a Message Stick.



# Mercy Services Education Fund

Mercy Services have had an Education Fund since 1999 to support participants of Mercy Services community programs to access education or equipment to support their education. Applicants must be engaged in study, with a plan to continue, and have been a client of Mercy Services for a minimum of six months. Their application must be sponsored by an employee of Mercy Services.

this way. Following review by the Education Fund Committee, he was given his laptop, noting his gratitude for the computer, but also that his commitment to his recovery was acknowledged and that Mercy Services believed in him.

In July 2023, a resident of Brighton House applied for funding to assist in the purchase of a laptop to enable his ongoing participation in a TAFE NSW course, Certificate IV in Mental Health. His goal was to complete the qualification and gain future employment in the community mental health field. It is important for clients to regain stability in life, with long term employment being his goal. He was very excited and grateful to be supported in



## Our Commitment to a Sustainable Future

We continue our commitment to working towards a more sustainable future, recently adding our first fully electric car, a Tesla Y, to the Community Transport fleet. After much research the team settled on the Tesla as it provided the greatest accessibility for our clients, making for a much sustainable and more comfortable ride.



## Meet our Client, Anita

*Anita Edmonds is a client of Mercy Services and has taken the time to share her passion with us.*

Anita has always been one to enjoy craft and art even from a small girl. Anita's real love is with painting and calligraphy but because of her hand shaking due to illness Anita ventured on to the craft side of making teddy bears. Anita's first teddy (pictured with Anita) was made in 2012 and was named Honey.

Anita, when feeling well enough, will put together a teddy bear within a week or two. All teddies have moving limbs as Anita says "it's not a real teddy unless its limbs move".

Anita will sell them, but at present she is unable to give a time on how long it will take due to being unwell at times.

Anita will make one for a new members of the family when they are born which is personalised for them, or she will give it as a present to friends or a business to show her appreciation and gratitude. Anita has made one for Biala Day Centre and Connect Hearing where he sits on the reception desk for all to see.

Anita has started on another Teddy project and hopes to finish him soon.



# What's been happening at West Wallsend

Since the last edition of Mercy Matters, the staff and clients have been busy celebrating Christmas in July, NAIDOC Week and the Horses Birthday!



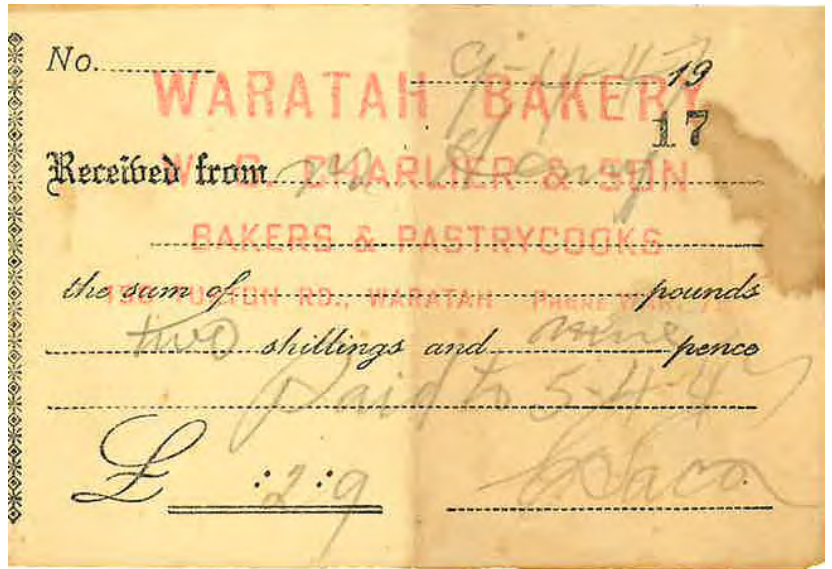
# The Way Things Were ...

Recently, one of our clients, Peg Paton shared with us a receipt she kept from when she was young.

As a teen, Peg used to have to collect and pay for the family bread from the bakery nearby when they lived at Warratah.

Peg recently found this receipt among some old papers and brought it in to share with fellow clients who joined in the conversation about the way things were.

The staff wondered how a receipt could survive 76 years. These days they fade and can't be read a few weeks later! Thank you for sharing Peg.



# Hunter Homeless Connect Day



On Wednesday 9 August 2023, McAuley Outreach staff participated in the Hunter Homeless Connect Day at Broadmeadow.

Many organisations were in attendance, and it was a great 'one-stop shop' of services for the community.

McAuley Outreach staff gave out pamphlets and information about our outreach counselling service and the Holyoake program for women. It was also a great networking opportunity for staff to see what other services are available in the Newcastle area.



# Stronger Standards, Better Aged Care

A fact sheet for older Australians



Most people know what good care feels like. Staff are friendly and respectful, and they respond to your individual needs. You are well cared for by people who know their job. You have people to talk to about the things that matter to you. The organisation providing your care is well managed.

To make sure providers are delivering good care, we assess their performance against a set of [Quality Standards](#).

In 2021, the Royal Commission recommended that these Standards be strengthened. The Commission recommended improved clarity and measurability, and a stronger focus on areas including food and nutrition, dementia, governance, diversity and clinical care.

In response, the Department of Health and Aged Care has drafted a revised set of [Standards](#). These Standards will be implemented in July 2024.

**We want to make sure you know what to expect from your aged care experience. We also want you to know what you can expect from us if your experience doesn't meet your expectations.**

## Stronger Standards, Better Aged Care program

To help us support you to understand the new strengthened Quality Standards, we are implementing the Stronger Standards, Better Aged Care Program.

The aims of the program are that older Australians:

- are confident about their rights and what they can expect from their provider
- know how the Commission can help if something isn't right.



Australian Government  
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Engage  
Empower  
Safeguard

## What will the program involve?

As part of the program, we will:

- improve the way we work with older Australians, families and carers
- change the way we assess the quality of aged care provided
- make our requirements, processes and resources easier to understand, and be more transparent and consistent.

## Strengthened Quality Standards pilot

We are currently conducting a pilot to test how the draft strengthened Standards will work in practice. As part of the pilot, you may be asked to speak to us about your experiences. This will be voluntary and anonymous, and you can let us know if you do not want to be involved.

If you choose to participate, we will ensure that the care or service you receive will not be affected. More information on our pilot project can be found on our [website](#).

## When will the program start?

The changes to the way we regulate will happen once the strengthened Standards are in place. This is expected to be July 2024.

Before then, our focus is on improving how we engage and communicate with you. We are working behind the scenes to improve our systems and processes to make sure we are ready for the strengthened Standards.

Importantly, we are working hard to make sure our staff are prepared.

## We want to hear from you

We value your questions, suggestions and feedback.

We also want to know how you'd like to hear about our work and, importantly, how we can help you.

If you have suggestions, or you'd like more information on the Stronger Standards, Better Aged Care program, you can contact us by:

**Email** [agedcarereform@agedcarequality.gov.au](mailto:agedcarereform@agedcarequality.gov.au)

**Phone** 1800 951 822

**Post** Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, GPO Box 9819, in your capital city

**Web** [agedcarequality.gov.au/about-us/stronger-standards-better-aged-care-program](https://agedcarequality.gov.au/about-us/stronger-standards-better-aged-care-program)



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## Find the help you need with myagedcare

If you're finding it harder to do the things you used to, you might need a bit of support at home. The Australian Government's myagedcare phone line and website can help you to:

### Access services to support you with:

- **Transport**  
(e.g. appointments and activities)
- **Household jobs**  
(e.g. vacuuming and preparing meals)
- **Modifications to your home**  
(e.g. hand rails, ramps)
- **Nursing and personal care**  
(e.g. help getting dressed, help shaving)

### Find information in one spot on:

- **Different types of services**  
(in home support, short-term care, aged care homes)
- **Your eligibility**
- **Your contribution to the cost**
- **Organisations that provide aged care**

Connect with myagedcare on [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or call **1800 200 422**

\*1800 calls are free from land lines; calls from mobile phones might be charged.



medicare

# 60-day prescriptions

## Frequently asked questions



### What is the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme?

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) is funded by the Australian Government to subsidise the cost of more than 900 prescription medicines.

When you buy a medicine listed on the PBS, the cost is shared between you and the Government. The amount you pay the pharmacist for each prescription is called the co-payment. In 2023, the maximum you pay for most PBS medicines is \$30. If you have a concession card, the most you pay is \$7.30.<sup>1</sup>

### What are 60-day prescriptions?

From 1 September 2023, many people living with an ongoing health condition will be able to buy 60 days' supply of selected PBS-listed medicines for the price of a single prescription.<sup>2</sup> This will reduce the amount people pay for medicines and, for those on only 60-day prescriptions, it will mean fewer visits to the doctor and the pharmacy.

It is estimated that the 60-day prescription option will save Australians **more than \$1.6 billion** over the next four years.

### When is this happening?

60-day prescriptions are being introduced gradually in three stages over 12 months. From 1 September 2023, 60-day prescriptions will be available for nearly 100 medicines, with more medicines added in stages.

By September 2024, 60-day prescriptions will be available for **more than 300** out of approximately 950 medicines listed on the PBS.

### How do I get a 60-day prescription?

If your medicine is listed for 60-day prescriptions, you can ask your doctor or health professional whether this option is suitable for you. They will use their clinical judgement to decide whether your condition is stable and suitable for a new longer prescription of 60 days. You can still use your existing 30-day prescriptions as normal.

<sup>1</sup> Unless there is a brand price premium. A brand price premium is an additional payment to the manufacturer of a specified brand of a PBS medicine. Brand premiums are only permitted where an alternative, premium free, TGA registered brand is available on the PBS for substitution by the pharmacist. Patients should speak to their pharmacist to discuss dispensing of premium-free alternatives.

<sup>2</sup> If you are a Medicare card holder and do not have a concession card, your saving will be lower if the dispensed cost of the medicine is less than the \$30 PBS co-payment. Pharmacies can offer discounts for medicines that cost less than the \$30 PBS co-payment. The size of the discount is at the discretion of each pharmacy and can vary over time. Discounts can be applied to medicines available for 30-day and 60-day prescriptions, and the cost is variable between pharmacies. A patient with a Medicare card but no concession card will pay no more than the maximum General Patient Charge for their medicine as shown on the PBS schedule ([www.pbs.gov.au](http://www.pbs.gov.au)).



## 60-day prescriptions

### Frequently asked questions



#### What are the benefits of 60-day prescriptions?

- If your medicine is on the list and your doctor or health professional considers you eligible, you will only need to pay a single PBS co-payment for two months' supply of that medicine.
- People who pay the general co-payment of \$30 are expected to save up to \$180 per medicine per year. If they reach the PBS Safety Net, they will save even more.
- People whose PBS medicines cost less than \$30 will still save money, and the cost of their medicines will be further reduced if they reach the PBS Safety Net threshold.
- Concession card holders who do not reach the PBS Safety Net could save up to \$43.80 per medicine per year.
- With a 60-day prescription, patients may save so much on their medicines that they won't need the Safety Net. Others will reach the Safety Net later in the year, spreading their medicine costs out over a longer period. If patients hit the threshold later in the year, it means they have saved money throughout the year.
- As well as the financial benefit, the changes may save time and reduce travel costs for people in rural and remote areas who live far from their pharmacy.
- Some of the medicines available on 60-day prescriptions are PBS listed with five repeats, meaning this may provide up to 12 months' supply of medicine.
- It is expected that having more medicines on hand will support people to take their medication as prescribed with less chance of running out at home or when travelling.

#### What medicines are suitable for 60-day prescriptions?

The list of medicines that are suitable for 60-day prescriptions was decided by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, which advises the Australian Government on the listing of medicines on the PBS.

These include medicines for a range of chronic conditions, such as asthma, cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, constipation, chronic renal failure, Crohn's disease, depression, diabetes, epilepsy, eye drops for glaucoma and dry eyes, gout, heart failure, high cholesterol, hormonal replacement and modulation therapy, hypertension, osteoporosis, Parkinson's disease and ulcerative colitis.

You can download a document listing the medicines by clicking [here](#).

#### Why are some medicines not included?

Some medicines are not considered suitable for 60-day prescriptions if:

- larger quantities of a medicine could be a safety risk to patients and the community, or if a medicine is new and rare side effects may not be well known
- patients taking certain medicines require regular monitoring such as blood tests, or the dose of a medicine may need to be adjusted often, or where symptoms are unpredictable
- a medicine is prescribed for short-term management of symptoms in chronic diseases.

Your doctor or health professional will decide whether you are best suited to a 60-day or 30-day prescription according to their clinical judgement.

## 60-day prescriptions

### Frequently asked questions



#### Will this change affect the supply of medicine?

The 60-day prescription option is not expected to cause medicine shortages. People will still receive the same amount of medicine over a year, but won't need to visit the pharmacy as often to buy it.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) actively monitors and responds to current and anticipated medicine shortages. Medicine suppliers must inform the TGA if there is not enough medicine to supply normal demand in Australia over the next six months.

The majority of the over 300 medicines listed a suitable for 60-day prescriptions are not in short supply in Australia and the change will happen gradually over 12 months to allow a smooth transition.

#### What do patients and health experts think of this change?

The introduction of 60-day prescriptions for a range of PBS-listed medicines has been welcomed by patients' and doctors' groups, including the Consumers Health Forum of Australia, the Heart Foundation, the Lung Foundation, Breast Cancer Network, Rural Doctors Association, the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and many others.

#### Will my local pharmacy lose money and what will the Government do with the savings created by this change?

Australian pharmacies already do much more than processing scripts and have many other sources of income, such as administering vaccinations.

Every dollar saved by the Government will be reinvested straight back into community pharmacies. This funding will help to secure the ongoing strength of the sector and ensure our trusted pharmacists play an even larger role in the healthcare of Australians.



Scan this QR code for more information



# Salmon Patties

## Ingredients

- 1 can salmon, drained
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 1 tbsp dill
- 1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp, freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 large egg, beaten
- Salt, pepper
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra



*When you're wondering what to do with that tin of salmon, try these delicious patties.*

## Method

### Step 1

To a large bowl, add first 8 ingredients. Season with salt and pepper and mix until well incorporated.

### Step 2

Form into five, evenly-sized patties. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Cook patties in batches until golden and crispy, 3-4 minutes per side. Drain on paper towels. Serve over spinach with lemon wedges for squeezing.

# Spot the Difference

*There are six differences in the two images below. Can you find them?*

