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Ex-Services Club To the Rescue!

You may recall the frightful tornado storm that hit Armidale in 2021. We were lucky that we sustained no damage but we did have a power outage for many hours.

At this time, we arranged a contingency plan with the team at the Armidale Ex-Services club, to be able to utilise any spare freezer space they had should we need to relocate any frozen stock.

I was just finalising arrangements with CEO Scott Sullivan to start transporting our food when the power came back on.... Phew!

The reason I am recapping this story is that Scott offered to enter into an arrangement for us so that if we ever lost power or our equipment failed, we could call the Ex-Services Club and they would help us out if they could.

Well... when we returned to work after Christmas on 27th December our large walk-in freezer was very unwell and upon investigation by technicians we were advised that it was broken and needed a whole new compressor unit—that's the bit that does all the work!

We were to have no freezer for all our stock for at least a week—getting parts located and delivered at that time of the year is quite difficult... We waited 2 weeks !

So, I called Scott at Servies and that afternoon we ferried about 50 boxes and containers of frozen supplies into their upstairs freezer. Staff helped us unload the vehicles and trolley everything upstairs and stack into the freezer. Then when our freezer was fixed, they helped us bring it all back down again! Amazing effort and very generous of Scott, his staff and the Servies, to help out a community organisation in a time of need.

THANK YOU to the Ex-Services Club!





Kerryn Williams
Manager

More
than just
a meal

From the Manager's Desk....

Hello everyone, I hope you have all recovered from the silly season!

A few “thank-you’s” are in order for the lovely Christmas gifts we were able to share with our clients. Firstly thank you to our volunteers for delivering them along with the meals and other items... **Big THANKS** to Armidale Regional Council staff who raise funds every year to purchase these gifts and then to the staff who take the time to wrap them all up for a Christmas Surprise!

We received donated Lions Christmas Cakes again this year—thank you to the Armidale Dumaresq Lions and Ros Brady who organized these for us.

And to the company Renkitt who produce and distribute Glen 20 and Dettol products—they have been generous in their donation of hygiene products since the start of the COVID pandemic and many of you have received their goods previously. Once again, they gifted Dettol Wipes and cans of Glen 20 to all Meals on Wheels services to pass on to their clients (and volunteers) which is a great cost saver to many.

As you may know Meals on Wheels is funded by the Commonwealth government as an aged care provider in the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP). The Department of Health & Aged Care, who manages the program, continues to work through the scope of aged care reforms resulting from the Aged care Royal Commission. The Department recently announced the current CHSP funding arrangements would be extended for another 2 years - through to 30th June 2027. This does provide us with some income security until then but it prolongs the reform process which has been a work-in-progress for several years already.

And finally, a hearty **Congratulations** to the MOW volunteers (some retired) who received Awards on Australia Day this year. In Uralla, both Phyllis and Col Dade featured in the community awards, as did “*King of the Fairies*” Alex Sherrin – well done all! In Armidale, Gloria Cook is our Senior Citizen of the Year and our long-serving volunteer & previous President of our Management Committee, Mr Rick Mills was awarded the Order of Australia Medal. Rick’s service to Meals on Wheels was acknowledged as one of his many services to the Community. **Well Done** Rick (and Marg of course!)

Please take some time to digest the **food safety information** on the next page. This is becoming a very serious issue for us while we are trying our best to accommodate people’s wishes but we need your help and understanding.

Thank you. **Kerryn Williams, Manager**

In Memoriam

Our condolences and thoughts to the loved ones of the following clients whom we have been proud to serve whether it be for a long time or a short time, recently or a while ago, who have passed away in the last few months and are all sadly missed. **Other people who have also been involved in our service: Ann Croft (Uralla Driver)**

~ Margaret Gorman ~ Len Pearson (93) ~ Adrian LeStrange ~ Eric Partridge ~ Jill Egan ~ Ian Davis
~ Barbara Burton (91) ~ Ray Townsend (Uralla) ~ Kath Nixon (92) ~ Maurice (Bob) Hope (93)
~ Daphne Grills ~ Annette Schaefer ~ Keith Hiscox (96) ~ Katherine (Jean) Evans (97) ~ Jim Melville
~ Fay Harrison ~

Driver Reminders

Read instructions and meal labels: We still have instances where meals have been delivered to the wrong person. **This should never happen.** PLEASE take the time to read your instructions AND the meal labels! Similarly with the menus if you are handing them out. They are clearly labelled with the client's name and it becomes very confusing for the clients (and for us) trying to sort out when menus are given to the wrong person.

Collecting Money: It is OK to receive payments from clients. Clients have been asked to enclose payments inside an envelope and this is one of the agreed methods for receiving account payments. Just clip them into your folder and bring them back with you. If you are uncomfortable with doing this please speak to the office staff.

COVID Precautions: COVID is still extremely present in the community and remains a serious threat to the health of our clients and also to other volunteers and staff. Please wear a mask during deliveries, maintain sanitizing and hand-washing practices—you all know what to do!

Please do NOT attend deliveries if you have had COVID until you test negative and have no symptoms.

Please contact the office!!!

It's really important that drivers contact the office immediately if there is any issue with the delivery of meals - if ANY of the following occurs please call us straight away—do not wait until you return:

- if the person does not respond;
- if we have made a mistake with packing the meals—no item or wrong item is listed;
- If the client has left an esky out but this is not on the instructions.

Things to report when you return to the office:

Observations or concerns about a client's welfare

Change to delivery instructions/directions - either at the request of the client, or something you notice which we could change to improve our directions.

YOUR role in Food Safety for our Clients

We give our clients a set of guidelines around food safety and the delivery process. If our drivers are not adhering to the same guidelines, this inconsistency can cause confusion. These are the instructions given to our clients about how they need to handle our delivered food items:

Soup: Kept in freezer until needed (not to be kept after the use-by-date on the lid), to be reheated and consumed immediately after reheating.

Smoothies: Delivered chilled to be consumed immediately

Desserts, Salads & Sandwiches: Delivered chilled and should be consumed within 24 hours

Chilled Meals: Are packaged and prepared to be re-heated as an evening meal on the day it is delivered. Clients should store the chilled meal in the refrigerator until ready to re-heat.

Frozen Meals: Kept in freezer until needed (*not to be kept after the use-by-date on the lid*), then thawed in the fridge for 24 hours before use, or reheated straight from the freezer until steaming hot. Client should eat meal immediately after heating.

Hot Meals: Should be eaten IMMEDIATELY after delivery, unless put in the refrigerator straight away to completely cool down and be reheated later. For food safety reasons we can NEVER leave hot meals sitting out! **If a client never eats their hot meals at lunchtime, they need to contact the office to have chilled meals delivered instead.*

The Client is Not Home

Clients who are not going to be home are asked to call the office in advance to let us know. Mostly they do and we can add a note to your delivery instructions indicating what we have arranged. Unfortunately, sometimes we are not contacted by a client and they might just leave out an esky. If our drivers are leaving food unattended without reporting it to the office staff, we have no idea if the client is safe and well. We have had several incidents where an esky was left out but when the driver opened it, the food delivered the day before was still inside! This is why we have to follow-up with our clients EVERY TIME!!

ARMIDALE / URALLA MEALS On WHEELS INC.

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E-mail: info@aumow.org.au

Office Hours:

Mon to Thurs - 9am to 3pm

Fridays - 9am - 2pm

Closed on Public Holidays



We are a registered Charity
under the Australian Charities
& Not-for-Profits Commission
(ACNC).

Management Committee:

Simon McMillan - President

Maryann Munsie (Uralla) - Vice President

Judy Fisher - 2nd Vice President

Carole Peacock - Treasurer

Natasha Little (Uralla) - Secretary

Committee Members: Sandra Stroud / Barbie Connah

David Breusch / Helen Dennis / Victor Raszewski

Kerryn Williams - Manager (*ex officio*)

Armidale Uralla Meals on Wheels gratefully
receives funding from the federal government
under the Commonwealth Home Support
Programme (CHSP).

From the President

Page 3 of this issue of our Newsletter is devoted to reminders about your role and responsibilities, as a volunteer driver. Please take the time to read this information and put it into action.

Armidale/Uralla Meals on Wheels is a community organisation that has been serving our communities' needs for nearly 60 years. Our enduring success has been due to the diligence of **our staff and volunteers** in following the policies and procedures that have been developed through many years of experience. These days, much of what we do is mandated by outside agencies (e.g., food safety, financial viability, duty of care, etc.) This also means that we are required to provide training, instructions and rules for our staff and volunteers, and to do this regularly and well. Your **Page 3** forms part of that package.

Another version of **Page 3** is being sent to a third important group - **our clients**. It contains reminders about storing food and what to do if they do not expect to be home when one of our drivers is likely to call. It is very important that our clients follow these instructions which are all related to food safety - their safety. We go to a lot of trouble to make sure that our meals and other food items are delivered safely and we are reminding clients of their food safety requirements.

Simon McMillan

Closure Dates March & April

We will be closed on **Friday 1st March** due to the Armidale Show.

Friday 29th March is Good Friday and **Monday 1st April** is Easter Monday—both are public holidays on which we will be closed.

We will be closed on **Thursday 25th April** for ANZAC Day and the next day, **Friday 26th April** to give our staff a long weekend before we head into winter.

Our menus will indicate these closures for our clients to pre-order extra frozen meals for these days.