

Winter 2026



Bethel
Home Care

Bethel Home Care CONNECTIONS

Live the life you choose



This winter, we feature a new initiative for Bethel Home Care, the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS).

Read about how you can become a volunteer. Alternatively discover how you can benefit from the program yourself by receiving regular visits from one of our volunteers.

Tired of plain porridge? In Recipe Corner, discover how to keep porridge invigorated throughout winter.

And please remember, we are only a phone call away. Stay cosy, safe, and connected this winter.

Margaret Pistevos, General Manager mpistevos@abh.org.au



Ashfield Baptist Homes *Caring for life*

Living Well

Be Part of the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS)*



Bethel Home Care, part of Ashfield Baptist homes, has been caring for older adults in our community for over 75 years.

We were recently awarded a very special opportunity to partake in the ACVVS. This volunteer scheme is designed to provide quality visits for home or residential care ACVVS recipients to improve quality of life and alleviate loneliness and isolation. From July onwards, as well as being able to offer these visits to our clients and the community, we are looking for volunteers who can dedicate one hour each fortnight to spend time with others. For recipients it's a chance to see a friendly face, have a good chat, read together, play games or just share a cuppa and a biscuit. Volunteers are matched with older individuals, either in residential care or living at home, for regular visits.

If you are retired, semi-retired, or somewhere in between and have a little extra time on your hands, this rewarding opportunity might be just what you are looking for.

**Funded by the Australian Government.*



How do I sign up to volunteer?

Please contact our ACVVS Coordinator at Bethel Home Care on 02 9797 3600. Family members, and friends can also sign up to volunteer with you.

There are a few mandatorys for volunteers. These include:

- You must be over 18
- Complete national police check
- Complete induction training in subjects like preventing elder abuse, confidentiality etc.
- Commit to a visit of a minimum of 2 hours per fortnight (ensures consistency and builds trust).

For older people and their families, ACVVS offers reassurance that someone is there to brighten their week and provide consistent social support. Getting involved is easy. Whether you'd like to volunteer or access the program for yourself or a loved one, our Coordinator will guide you through the process and find the right match.

What skills are required?

No special skills are required, just empathy, a desire to help others, reliability, and a willingness to listen.

How do I organise a visit from a volunteer for myself or a loved one?

If you would like to receive a visit from a volunteer, register your interest with our Bethel Home Care ACVVS Coordinator on 02 9797 3600. There is no charge for these visits.

Do you need to be a Bethel Home Care client to receive these services?

No. Please feel free to share this opportunity with your friends and family. You don't have to be a Bethel Home Care client to avail of this opportunity.

For more information visit health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-volunteer-visitors-scheme-acvvs



MEET CARE PARTNER *Vicki*

Tell us a little about yourself

I was born in the former Yugoslavia and moved to Australia in 1988 with my husband and our then two-and-a-half-year-old daughter.

Before migrating, I studied History at Belgrade University and planned to become a historian. Political unrest in Yugoslavia changed my path. My hobbies included amateur theatre and radio, which sparked a lifelong love of storytelling and community connection.

Since arriving in Australia, I have dedicated over 35 years to aged care, in a variety of roles. I began working as a cook at Ashfield Baptist Homes while completing qualifications in Dietary Practices and Commercial Cooking.

Top: Outside Bethel Nursing Home, where she worked as a cook from 1989 to 1991. Middle: Vicki with her husband and 3 children in 1993 in Newcastle. Bottom: Vicki with her family leaving the former Yugoslavia for Australia.





After moving to Newcastle, I continued working in residential aged care before returning to Sydney in 2002, where I completed a Certificate IV in Aged Care and a Diploma in Community Services.

What other roles have you held throughout your career?

As well as bringing up our three children, I have worked as a Support Worker, Activity Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Carers Respite Coordinator, Case Manager, and Team Leader. Before joining Bethel Home Care, I spent 10 years with Wesley Mission.

What are your passions?

I am passionate about positive ageing. Older people have such rich knowledge and life experience to share. I enjoy history, food, and cooking, and I value meaningful conversations and community connections.

How long have you worked with us?

I have been with Bethel Home Care for five months and feel grateful to work with such a dedicated and welcoming team. I already feel part of this special community.

Above: Stage performances. Below left: Vicki, third from left, traditional dancing in Yugoslavia. Below right: Postcards from Vicki's home town.



Recipe Corner

Porridge reinvented – cozy twists on a humble bowl

When it's cold outside, there's nothing more comforting than a bowl of hot porridge. Here are some creative ideas to make porridge exciting all winter long.



Spiced Apple Crumble Porridge

Stir in a tablespoon of stewed apples, sprinkles of cinnamon and nutmeg. Top with your favourite crunchy granola, more cooked apple and toasted almonds.

Chocolate Banana Indulgence

Stir in a teaspoon of cocoa powder. Top with sliced banana and peanuts

Apricot and Walnut Delight

Stir through a tablespoon of chopped apricots in juice. Top with chopped walnuts and a sprinkle of brown sugar.

Tropical Dream

Make with canned light coconut milk instead of water. Add a tablespoon of chopped pineapple. Top with sliced almonds or toasted coconut.

Carrot Cake Porridge

Add a teaspoon each of finely grated carrot, sultanas, chopped walnuts and honey. Top with a dollop of Greek yogurt and dash of cinnamon.

Very Berry Boost

Stir through a tablespoon of your favourite warmed berries. Top with a dollop of mixed berry yogurt.

Wintry Word Search

Search up, down, backwards, forwards, diagonally. There are 12 hidden words in all.



B	L	A	N	K	E	T	L	Y	T	T	U
S	K	J	P	O	D	D	L	T	M	P	M
M	K	H	T	M	R	A	W	S	Z	O	A
S	F	D	S	V	Y	R	E	O	L	R	O
P	O	F	R	A	C	S	W	R	L	R	C
N	T	U	O	L	B	Y	L	F	Y	I	O
I	C	Y	P	S	B	R	R	W	Z	D	C
O	W	E	R	T	Y	I	O	O	X	G	X
C	O	Z	Y	U	P	R	P	W	T	E	K
Q	U	I	E	L	W	V	N	B	O	G	R
T	K	V	S	N	E	T	T	I	M	N	R
F	I	R	E	P	L	A	C	E	T	R	S

TIME FOR A CHUCKLE!

What's a snowman's favourite kind of party?

A snowball.

Why did the coat break up with the scarf?

Because he was too wrapped up in himself.



Staying connected

General emergency
ambulance, fire, police **CALL 000**

Bethel Home Care: 0428 358 944

CONNECTIONS: jeconomos@abh.org.au

Local library _____

Local council _____

Doctor/GP _____

Family/Friend emergency _____

Other important numbers _____

1. _____

2. _____

Your Care Partners



Darcy



Elora



Vicki



Bandana

Bethel Home Care

T: 02 9797 3600

E: bethelhomecare@abh.org.au

W: bethelhomecare.org.au

or search Bethel Home Care

If you would like to contribute to Connections, please contact jeconomos@abh.org.au

Acknowledgement of country

Ashfield Baptist Homes acknowledges the Wangal People as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our company is located and where we conduct our business. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.