

Changes to aged care services in the City of Port Phillip

Frequently asked questions

City of Port Phillip has been a long-term provider of in-home and community services to older people in the community. We remain committed to supporting older people to age well in our City.

- *Your services will continue for now.*
- *Council will contact you before April 2026.*
- *You don't need to do anything right now.*
- *A new Council team will support you to choose a new service provider.*
- *You will still be able to access local Council programs, like Linking Neighbours and the Hop-on Hop-off bus.*

Why is Council changing its aged care services?

The provision of aged care support services has been a key service of Victorian local Councils for 40 years, with City of Port Phillip being a long-term provider of aged care services to older people in our community.

Unfortunately, policy reforms over a number of years, are making it increasingly difficult for local government, particularly smaller service providers like City of Port Phillip, to continue to operate sustainably in a market-based environment.

Council is committed to helping older residents live independently and stay connected to their communities.

In line with this commitment, we're proposing to increase our direct investment in Council-funded aged care services, with services designed locally to better meet the needs of our community.

We believe this proposal will allow us to focus on more flexible, locally tailored supports including for older residents who may not currently qualify for My Aged Care.

What in-home aged care services will Council no longer provide?

Services that will be transitioning to new providers under the Australian Government's *Commonwealth Home Support Program* include:

- Social Support Group Services (the Better Together Service)
- Transport to and from the Social Support Group services
- Delivered Meals (meals delivered to your home)

I am a client accessing these services; what do these changes mean for me?

There are no immediate changes to your regular services. We will continue to provide these services until we can transition each client to a provider of their choice through the Australian Government's *Commonwealth Home Support Program*.

You will be contacted individually by our transition team to start this process; you do not need to do anything now. Our transition team will contact you soon and support you through the transition period to ensure you are happy with your choice of provider and assist you to change if you are not.

What do I need to do?

At this time, there is nothing you need to do. We will be in touch before April 2026 to discuss these changes with you, and on an ongoing basis as the transition of your service takes place.

Who will my new provider be?

You will be able to choose your provider from a list provided to you by the Australian Government. The new provider will be a specialist aged care provider.

These specialist aged care providers will have a local presence, have a history of delivering quality aged care services and be able to meet the requirements under the Commonwealth Home Support Program and be able to offer a range of services.

We do not have a list of providers from the Australian Government at this stage but will keep you updated when we know more.



Will City of Port Phillip support me through these changes?

We heard our community's concerns about providing support for our older residents who may have a change in provider of services. As a result, we will set up a dedicated team to ensure a smooth transition for our clients as they move to the Australian Government's *Support at Home* program. This will ensure that clients are provided the same level of support and care they currently receive, and that City of Port Phillip can continue to be a central point of contact for questions and concerns during the transition period and beyond.

We will work closely with clients to support the transition to a provider of choice. We will also continue to assist older people in our community to connect to and navigate services and support that help them age well at home.

What services will City of Port Phillip continue to provide?

City of Port Phillip will continue to deliver community-based services such as the Hop-on Hop-off bus program, the Community Connector service and Linking Neighbours services.

We will also be delivering a new Positive Ageing Team which is a dedicated service to connect community with information, activities and services.

We will also continue providing our Seniors Festival program, working closely with our Older Persons Advisory Committee, as well as continuing our Linking Neighbours Program, and older adults programming in libraries, events and activities.

We have a strong and ongoing commitment to supporting older people, highlighted in our Positive Ageing Policy and the establishment of the Positive Ageing Team.

What will happen to the staff who are supporting me?

We have an amazing team of staff, who take great pride in what they do. We know that many of our clients have developed great relationships with our staff and will be concerned about their future.

Rest assured, we are providing a range of support to our staff, including pathways to employment with the new providers, upskilling opportunities, redeployment to other roles within Council and financial support options.

Why has Council made this decision?

Council has evaluated its need to respond to changes in requirements to provide aged care services funded by the Australian Government. These changes have required all Victorian Councils to assess their role in providing aged care services.

The key challenges for Council include:

1. Despite best efforts, Council continues to be unable to meet aged care service targets set by the Commonwealth Government. One of the challenges in meeting these targets is that only older people who have been assessed and deemed eligible for Commonwealth funding can access these aged care services. There is strong competition from larger and specialist aged care providers for the referrals and customers available, and it is difficult for Council as a small service provider to influence these.
2. The way the Commonwealth funds the aged care services Council provides is expected to change. Instead of receiving upfront funding, Council may soon only be paid for services delivered after they're provided. This is different from what Council thought was likely when it made changes in February 2024.
3. The Aged Care Act 2024 introduces a new approach focused on the rights of older Australians. It aims to improve the quality, safety, and accessibility of aged care. It also introduces a risk-based system for monitoring services, with stronger rules for providers. Breaking these rules could lead to financial penalties. While Council provides a quality service, to meet the new rules, Council would need to change how it runs aged care services and invest further in governance and compliance measures.

Who can I contact if I have questions about these changes?

Our team will be in touch with all clients via phone by April 2026 to discuss these changes in detail and provide next steps.

In the meantime, if you have questions or concerns, you can contact the team on positiveageinginportphillip@portphillip.vic.gov.au or phone (03) 9209 6882.