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# STAYING CONNECTED

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As you are probably aware, social support groups and other community-based activities that bring people together are being reduced due to the risks around spread of COVID-19 (novel corona virus).

We are being asked to practice physical distancing and to stay at home, other than for essential things like:

- to shop for food and other necessary goods and services;
- to access medical services or provide care-giving;
- to attend work or education (where you can't do those things remotely); and
- for exercise.

You may also leave your home in an emergency or if required by law.

## How can you stay connected?

Having a conversation can be a simple but important way to stay connected.

Think about how you can interact with others without putting your health (or theirs) at risk.

Can you speak to your neighbours from over a fence or across balconies?

It is important to be able to hear or see someone to chat whenever you can.



## Use the Phone

Take the initiative to call other people to check in with them regularly.

You could make a contact list of friends, family or neighbours to call and check in daily or every few days or send text messages.

# Who else can you talk to ?



FriendLine is a national support line for anyone who needs to reconnect or just wants a chat. All conversations with FriendLine are casual and anonymous and friendly volunteers are ready to talk about anything and everything.

**Call 1800 424 287.**

The support line is open on:  
Tuesday to Thursday from 6pm–8pm  
Saturday & Sunday from 2pm–5pm



Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria is the leading not-for-profit organisation representing the interests and rights of people aged 50+ in Victoria.

If you have any questions you can phone their Information Line on **1300 13 50 90**. You can call between Monday to Friday, from 9.30am–4.00pm. Or email them at [askcota@cotavic.org.au](mailto:askcota@cotavic.org.au)



Seniors Online is a Victorian Government website for older Victorians to share news, information on services and how you can get involved.

Find this information on their website at [www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au](http://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au)

Or if you have any questions, you can call them on **1300 797 210** from Monday to Friday (9am– 5pm).

## Disability Information Helpline

The Disability Information Helpline provides information for people with disability who need help because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

You will speak to a person who will listen, find information and/or services to help you. The Helpline can assist families, carers, support workers and services, too. Phone: **1800 643 787 (free call)**

It is available:

- Monday to Friday 8am – 8pm
- Saturday & Sunday 9am – 7pm

The Red Cross can help you connect with people while you are at home.

**TeleYarn:** A social telephone call to provide friendship and connection, including cultural connection for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people.

To speak to someone locally about this service call **0400 113 069**.

**TeleCross Service:** A daily phone call to check on your well-being.

**COVID CONNECT:** A new telephone outreach service to support people who are feeling isolated. Register at [www.connect.redcross.org.au](http://www.connect.redcross.org.au)

To find out more call the Red Cross on **1300 885 698**.



# Community Visitors Scheme

The Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) is a program that arranges volunteer visits to older people to provide friendship and companionship.

It is usually a face-to-face visiting program however given we are all staying at home they will now be offering support over the phone or via the internet.

The service is available to anyone receiving government-subsidised residential aged care, Home Care Packages or are on the waiting list.

The CVS providers across the Grampians region are:

- **Elders Rights Advocacy**  
Phone: 0427 736 618
- **Aurous-** Phone: 1800 287 687
- **In Great Company (FerosCare)**  
Phone: 1300 736 930

If you receive services under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), you may also be able to access the CVS via Aurous Plus. Its a program that provides you with an easy to use mobile device that comes pre-connected to the internet. It includes a weekly chat, via video conferencing, with a volunteer. Call Aurous to see if you are eligible - 1800 287 687.

## How can I be part of this?

You can access this program in a number of ways:

- Your service provider can refer you;
- A friend or family member can contact a provider on your behalf; or
- you can call them yourself.

To find out more about the program and if you have questions, call the CVS Coordinator for Victoria on **1800 042 138**, or email them at [cvs@ms.org.au](mailto:cvs@ms.org.au)

## Or perhaps you could volunteer to call others?



To find out how to become a volunteer, call the CVS Coordinator for Victoria on **03 9845 2729**, or email them at [volunteer@ms.org.au](mailto:volunteer@ms.org.au)

Or you can contact your local Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) provider and ask them.

Visit the Ballarat  
Neighbourhood Centre where  
you can join a Chatty Cafe, a  
community lunch or one of our  
many other fun activities.

Call us on **5329 3273** or  
scan the QR code below to find  
out what activities are coming  
up or for our contact and  
location details.

**Whats On**



**Contact BNC**

