

Silver Threads

NEWS & UPDATES FROM SILVER CIRCLE HOME SUPPORT SERVICES
& HCS HOME CARE SERVICES



Taking Control of Your Future

Taking control of your future

We all have definite preferences about how we want to manage our finances, our medical treatment and lifestyle choices. In most cases we are able to make those decisions and manage our own lives without any assistance.

But any of us, regardless of age or state of health, can find ourselves in a position where someone may need to act on our behalf and carry out our wishes. Accidents and illness can happen without warning!

Plan ahead

Legally appointing a person (or persons) to make lifestyle, medical or financial decisions on your behalf is a way that you can plan ahead. You can also say who you want to make these decisions for you and how you want these decisions to be made if you are not capable of making these choices for yourself. Enduring powers of attorney (also known as Enduring Guardianships/ Enduring Power of Guardianship) can be used to allow our wishes about finances, health care or lifestyle to be communicated to doctors, family and significant others.



Why 'Enduring'?

The word 'Enduring' means that the person you appoint as your agent, guardian or your decision maker can continue (or begin) to act for you if you become temporarily or permanently unable to make your own decisions. Ordinary or general powers of attorney will cease to operate if you lose your mental capacity.

Selection of your decision maker

Selection of who will act on your behalf is an important decision in setting up a written statement of your wishes. You need to discuss this with the person or persons you want to appoint and make sure they are agreeable and understand the type of choices you would like them to make.

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CEO Message

Welcome all to the final edition of Silver Threads for 2005.

The year has been a full one for us all. Since the last newsletter, we have been successful in our tender to continue providing the Home Care Services for the City of Greater Shepparton. This continues our 8 year association with council and reinforces the company's commitment to the Hume region. Congratulations to Richard Heywood and his team at Shep!

We again had 3 finalists in the Victorian Community Service and Health Industry Training Awards, in the categories of *Lifelong Learner* and *Trainee of the Year*. These finalists demonstrate the dedication and abilities of so many of our support staff and they also paid tribute to the first class training staff in the Silver Circle Training Institute, who supported them in their return to study.

Ramsay Health Care has had a busy few months, acquiring the Affinity Group of hospitals and working with the ACCC regarding divestment of a number of them. The decision was finalised just in time for the new managers to attend the annual Ramsay Managers Conference in Sydney in September. This was a great success, welcoming the new hospitals, reiterating the company's commitment to aged and community care, (following misrepresentation in recent media reports), and collectively reviewing the principles of the "New Ramsay" going forward.



Libby Saunders

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HOME CARE SERVICES
MEMBERS OF RAMSAY HEALTH CARE

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It is also important to consider whether the person has the ability to, for example, manage your finances or has an understanding of your preferences for health care treatments or the type of lifestyle you would be comfortable with. As you need to make separate documents to cover each of these areas you may choose to appoint different people for each of these. You may also choose to appoint more than one person as your attorney, in which case, select people who you believe can cooperate with each other and work together in your best interests.

Who can make an Enduring Power of Attorney/Enduring Guardianship

Anyone over 18 years of age can make a power of attorney as long as they are capable of understanding what the document entails and the effect of the power of attorney (or equivalent). The person needs to be seen as being 'capable', that is to have an understanding of the consequences of their decisions. If there is any doubt of the person's ability to make this sort of decision it is wise to seek medical advice from the local GP as to whether there needs to be any further investigation.

Can you change your mind?

There are many reasons why you might want to change or revoke a power of attorney (or equivalent). It might be that your relationship with your decision-maker has changed or that your circumstances are different or the person you have chosen is no longer appropriate for the role. You can change or revoke it as long as you have the mental capacity to understand what you are doing at the time you revoke/change it. You also need to let your decision-maker/agent know of any changes.

Where can you get advice?

Information about setting up Powers of Attorney (or equivalent) and forms are available through your local Legal Services Commission, Guardianship Tribunal or Office of Public Advocate (see below for contacts).

Checklist for setting up Powers of Attorney/Guardianship

1. Formulate and express your wishes.
2. Consider which area/s of your life you would like to plan for – financial, lifestyle or health care.
3. Discuss this with your potential decision maker/s (and family and important friends) and make sure they understand your wishes.
4. Get some legal advice or a kit from your local Legal Services Commission, Guardianship Tribunal or Office of Public Advocate (see below for contacts) on how to complete the document, who needs to sign or notarise it and where it needs to be stored
5. Make sure your agent and significant others have a copy or know where it is kept.



For more information

NSW

- **Guardianship Tribunal** phone 1800 463 928 or visit www.gt.nsw.gov.au
- Brochure - 'Planning for your Future' available from Guardianship Tribunal see above

SA

- **Public Advocate** phone 1800 066 969 or visit www.opa.sa.gov.au
- **Legal Services Commission** of SA phone 1300 366 424
- Booklet - 'An Enduring Power of Guardianship: A Do It Yourself Kit' available from Legal Services and Commission Information SA phone 08 8204 1900

VIC

- **Office of the Public Advocate** phone 1800 136 829 or visit www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au
- **Victorian Legal Aid** phone 03 9269 0234
- Booklet - 'take control- a guide to posers of attorney and guardianship' available from Office of Public Advocate or Victorian Legal Aid (see above)

For information on services and financial options phone Silver Circle Information and Advisory Service on 1300 66 00 22

CEO Message *Continued from page one*

We will continue to explore opportunities with the hospitals and Aged Care Facilities to provide support at home to individuals and families, before, during or after admission, depending on their requirements.

The Adelaide service has gone through its software transition and we thank clients, purchasers and staff for their patience during this change process.

Finally, Gerry Naughtin, founder and CEO of Silver Circle who took 12 months leave last October to pursue his PhD, has decided to continue his new direction. While retaining a very strong interest in and support for the work being done at Silver Circle, he feels after

14 years it's time to pursue his studies and work in aged care policy development. We are sorry to lose his ongoing involvement with the company. We thank him for creating the company and his amazing energy and vision in its development, but respect his decision. We wish him every success in the future.

On behalf of all staff I extend season's greeting for the coming festive and summer period.

Libby Saunders, CEO



The Eyes have it



For most of us, sight is something we take for granted. We use our eyes every day without giving it much thought, until something goes wrong.

Glaucoma is a common and serious eye disease that can 'sneak-up' if it is not detected and treated early; causing vision loss or even blindness in some cases.

Early detection is the key to minimize sight disability.

It is estimated that around 300,000 Australians have some form of glaucoma. Don't wait for symptoms, if you are aged over 40 ask for a glaucoma test every couple of years. The tests are simple and painless - ask your family doctor for a referral to an eye specialist or visit your local optometrist. **For more information on glaucoma call Glaucoma Australia on 1800 500 880.**

SERVICES

Vision Australia – blindness and low vision services (NSW & Vic)

Vision Australia formed by the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, Vision Australia Foundation, the National Library and Information Service, and the Royal Blind Society in NSW is the largest blindness organisation in Australia.

Vision Australia services are designed to help people make the most of any remaining sight, continue living independently, safely and confidently in their own homes and lead happy and fulfilling lives. They provide help

with reading, handling money, managing medications, pouring a cup of tea, walking to the shops, participating in recreation activities and many more aspects of daily life.

Anyone can make a referral as long as the person being referred is aware of it. To make a referral or for more information, phone 1300 847 466 (1300 VISION) or visit www.visionaustralia.org.au.

The Royal Society for the Blind (RSB) South Australia

The RSB is a not-for-profit organisation providing services to South Australians who have a severe vision impairment. The RSB assists with daily routine tasks, as well as provide highly skilled training such as computer, education and vocational assistance.

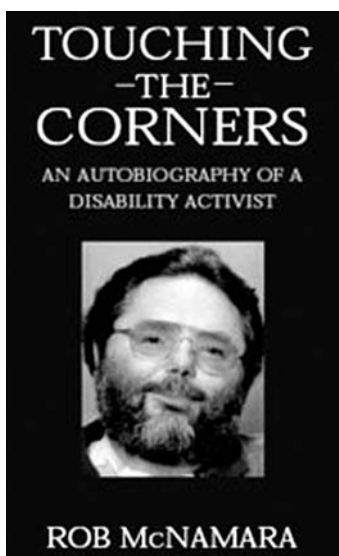
Services include

- Home support and counselling
- Employment and education services
- Braille and computer training
- Low vision assessment
- Recreational opportunities
- Braille and talking book library

For more information phone (08) 8232 4777 (Low Vision and Adaptive Technology Centres) or (08) 8232 2444 (Community Services) or visit website at www.rsb.org.au

Touching the Corners

An Autobiography of a Disability Activist - Rob McNamara



This book was launched recently at the celebration of DASSI's 21 years of operation. Rob was a man with muscular dystrophy whose story demonstrates and celebrates the possibilities of people with disabilities living ordinary lives, if given the opportunities to participate in the general community, like everyone else. Rob attended mainstream schools and Monash University in the late 60's and tackled

many of the discriminatory practices and barriers affecting people with disabilities. He worked, married and had a child. The book is available from "Action for Community Living" 03 9489 2999 or from www.touchingthecorners.com

National Relay Service (NRS) Clarification

(from the Companion Card Article Winter 2005 Silver Threads)

Thanks Ann-Maree, one of our readers, who pointed out that the NRS relays calls are between two parties, the person wanting to connect with the NRS needs to know the phone number of the organisation/individual they wish to speak to, as NRS needs that number to connect to the other party For more information on NRS contact for Voice 1800 555 660, TTY 1800 555 630 or visit www.aceinfo.net.au/Services/NRS/index.html

Safety Tip 1

Following the recent Community Safety Month, we have decided to include safety tips in Silver Threads. The Safety Tip for this edition is

Always check the identity of any service repair people or charity collectors when they come to your door, by checking their credentials and/or contacting their company.



Falling for it

Falls, slips and trips can certainly happen to anyone over a lifetime sometimes resulting in minor bumps and bruises. But falls can cause more problems as you get older or if you already have a disability. Making some simple changes to your lifestyle and environment can reduce your falls risk.

- Keep healthy by involving yourself in physical activity, healthy eating and a little sunshine
- Be involved in social activities with family, friends and your community
- Be sensible, recognise your limitations, do things safely and when necessary ask for help
- Manage your health problems and medicines well. Consult your doctor about how to do this.
- Make your home and surroundings as safe as possible
- Have a plan of how to help in an emergency
- Take steps to minimise any harm done if a fall occurs

(From 'Don't fall for it. Falls can be prevented! - A guide to preventing falls for older people' Dept of Health and Ageing)

Personal Alarms – If you are living alone and are at risk of falls or medical emergency then it may be useful to consider a personal alarm. These devices help you get assistance in an emergency. They are operated via a button on a pendant or wrist band that sends a message to the monitored base station. Staff at the base station then contact a list of prearranged contact people who are able to organise assistance.

There are some funded alarms available through some State governments, Department of Veteran Affairs or other programs. For more information contact **Commonwealth CareLinks** on **1800 052 222**. Silver

Circle also provides **private personal alarms**. For more information about **Home Alert** or other options contact the **Information and Advisory Service** on 1300 66 00 22.

Assessment and Home Maintenance- to make your home environment safer, consider getting an assessment from an Occupational Therapist. For your nearest Occupational Therapist or maintenance service contact **Commonwealth CareLinks** on **1800 052 222**. Silver Circle also has a **Home Safe** program for privately funded assessment and maintenance options, **phone 1300 66 00 22** for more information

Resources:

Commonwealth CareLinks Ph: 1800 052 222 or visit www.commcarelink.health.gov.au

Department of Veterans Affairs ph: 133254 or visit www.dva.gov.au

Booklet

'Don't fall for it. Falls can be prevented! - A guide to preventing falls for older people' available by phoning Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853

Plan your Holiday Season care needs

Will the holiday season ring changes to your care requirements?

Perhaps family members who regularly support you are planning a break. Or perhaps you are planning a holiday yourself.

If the holiday season will change your regular care schedule, please advise your HCS/Silver Circle service centre so they can adjust support workers' rosters and ensure your needs are met.

Silver Threads

Silver Threads is a newsletter by Silver Circle Home Support Services. Views expressed in it do not necessarily reflect those of Silver Circle management.

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HOME CARE SERVICES

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