

Productivity Commission Submission

Our program, Volunteer Home Visitors (VHV), offers Social Support for frail aged and people with a disability who live in their own home. This support is provided by volunteers who are recruited, trained and supported by the organisation. This is currently a HACC funded Program.

The support provided by this program is a lifeline for the majority of clients who use it. For many the program provides their only social contact.

85% of clients have no other way of accessing shops (supermarket, pharmacy, banks).

100% of clients respond that they benefit from their participation with the program.

Without this support significant health issues arise such as: malnutrition and associated illnesses, depression, anxiety.

A trip to the shops with a volunteer (2 hours once per fortnight) can result in:

- Improved mental health
- increased general mobility (opportunity to exercise)
- community involvement/engagement
- maintenance of good nutrition

One story:

I had a referral from a client who had a change in her health resulting in her suffering permanent chronic pain.

This meant that she no longer is able to drive or continue to visit her son with a disability in his group home. Without these important freedoms the client became very isolated and depressed. Her standard of living was significantly reduced. Her mental and physical health declined.

Her link with a Volunteer Home Visitor resulted in exposing that she had not left the house for many months.

The client was linked up with a range of social support services.

These are: a local community lunch, shopping transport, medical transport and home visiting, church social group.

With the gradual introduction of these supports this client has “blossomed”. The setting up of social networks has meant a great change in her outlook. Where she was previously very depressed she is now positive and looks forward to the social events that “keep her going”. Her confidence has grown; her physical health has improved. She is now able to have her son visit her regularly due to both her mental and physical health improving as a direct result of increased quality social contact and engagement in her local community.