

A smiling man with a mustache and glasses, wearing a straw hat and a red, white, and blue plaid shirt, is working in a garden. He is using pruning shears on a plant. The background is a blurred garden with green foliage and pink flowers.

THE RETIRED BLOKES' BOOK

INFORMATION FOR
YOU AND YOUR MATES

ABOUT THE RETIRED BLOKES' BOOK

Retiring and growing old will present major changes in your life.

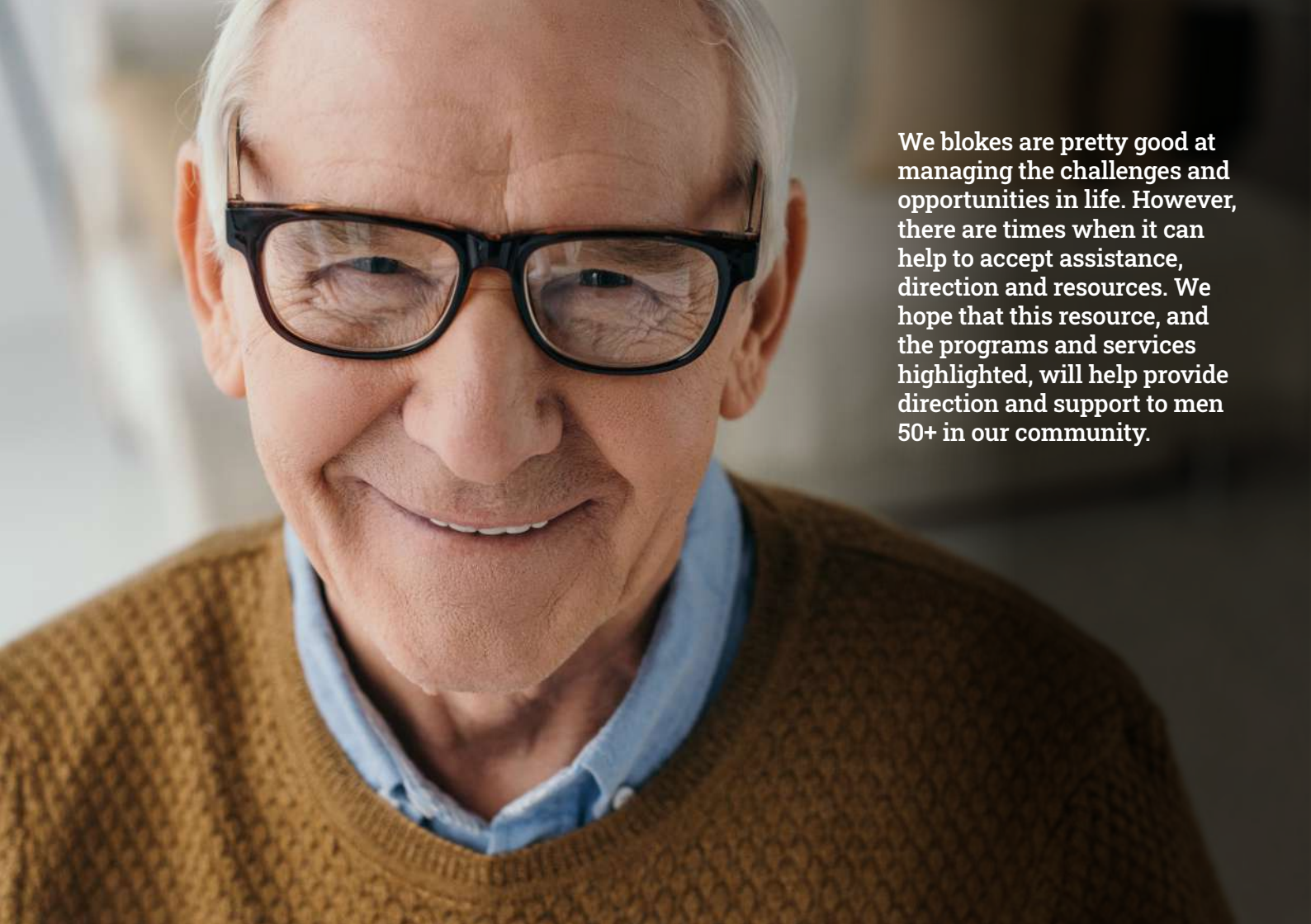
The Retired Blokes' Book is designed to help create a positive and fulfilling retirement experience whatever your circumstances.

The Retired Blokes' Book is a directory of services, contacts, support groups, and current information from services in your community. This book is a resource to help you plan for a meaningful retirement and make it one of the best chapters in your life.

TOMNET acknowledges Men's Resources Tasmania and the NSW Benevolent Society for allowing us to use The Blokes' Book concept. Thank you to the organisations who kindly shared their information.

Every effort has been made to provide accurate information in this publication. If you believe that we have omitted an important item or would like to be included in the next edition, please contact TOMNET at retiredblokesbook@tomnet.org.au

An online version of this booklet can be found at
www.tomnet.org.au/retiredblokesbook



We blokes are pretty good at managing the challenges and opportunities in life. However, there are times when it can help to accept assistance, direction and resources. We hope that this resource, and the programs and services highlighted, will help provide direction and support to men 50+ in our community.



About TOMNET

TOMNET is a community based, not-for-profit organisation that supports and promotes the well-being of men over the age of 50 years.

At TOMNET we:

- help men find their pathway to a meaningful retirement through our 'Retired Blokes Program'
- connect isolated men to peer networks of men who genuinely care about the welfare of each other and support each other through their life challenges
- hold weekly gatherings, events, interest groups and barbecue services to help men 50+ connect
- offer volunteering programs to support older men and disadvantaged youth in the community
- support men to age positively and to navigate aging by connecting them to timely information and local support services
- provide professional support for men doing it tough

TOMNET's mission and passion aligns with the QLD State Government's vision where older people are valued, respected, and actively supported to participate in their communities.

We are thankful for receiving the Queensland Government Age Friendly Program Grant, allowing us to develop this resource to be shared far and wide across QLD to support men 50+ in our communities.



This booklet and online version has been designed to be easily adapted to different local communities. If you are interested, please contact TOMNET on 07 4638 9080.

www.tomnet.org.au
Phone: 07 4638 9080 | Email: admin@tomnet.org.au

CONTENTS

Chapter 1		Chapter 2		Chapter 3	
Services Directory	7	Doing Retirement Well	27	Manage Aging Well	45
Crisis Support	8	The Challenges of Retirement	28	Challenges of Aging	46
Just Need to Talk?	11	Get Involved in Things		Living Independently	48
Accommodation	12	that Matter to You	32	Managing a Life-Changing	
Getting Financial Help	14	Some Tips to get Started	33	Diagnosis	49
Online Government Services	16	Steps to Finding the Life You Want	35	Surrendering Your Licence	50
Legal and Advocacy Help	17	For Couples	37	Managing Grief and Loss	52
Family and Relationships	18	Join a Mens Group	42	Managing Anxiety and Depression	54
Habits and Addictions	19	Create Your Own Mens Group	43	Becoming a Carer	56
Help in Rural Areas	20	Time to Take Action	44	Your Own Mortality	58
Aboriginal and Torres Strait					
Islander Organisations	21				
Other Organisations	22				
For Your Grandkids	23				
Older Blokes	24				



CHAPTER 1

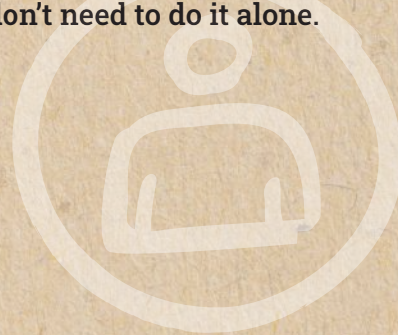
SERVICES DIRECTORY



CRISIS SUPPORT

If you are feeling suicidal and need immediate support, there are many services available for you to call and find the assistance you need.

Support is available when you are feeling stressed, anxious, angry or want to talk with someone about what you are going through, you don't need to do it alone.



CRISIS SUPPORT SERVICES

These support services are available 24/7

Emergency, Police and Ambulance 000

or go to your local hospital emergency department

Lifeline 13 11 14

Crisis Text 0477 131 144

Confidential telephone and text crisis support service

www.lifeline.org.au

MensLine Australia 1300 789 978

Telephone, online support and information for men

www.mensline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467

Nationwide service providing telephone and online counselling

www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Beyond Blue Support

1300 224 636

Support for people experiencing anxiety or depression

www.beyondblue.org.au

Open Arms

1800 011 046

Support for current and ex-serving Australian Defence Force

www.openarms.gov.au

Dardi Munwurro Crisis Line

1800 435 799

Confidential telephone crisis support for Indigenous Australians

www.dardimunwurro.com.au

Family Relationship Advice Line

1800 050 321

National call centre for Family Relationship Centres

Mental Health Access Line

1300 642 255

First point of call for public mental health services

www.qmhc.qld.gov.au



Need assistance in making a call?

National Relay Service

Allows people who are deaf, hard of hearing and/or have a speech impairment to make and receive phone calls.

Voice Relay number 1300 555 727

TTY number 133 677

SMS Relay number 0423 677 767

www.relayservice.com.au

Translating and Interpreting Service 13 14 50

www.tisnational.gov.au



JUST NEED TO TALK?

Many things worry older men. Health problems, loneliness, losing a partner, becoming a carer or retirement not turning out as you thought. Even lifelong issues become harder to deal with as you are no longer distracted by your job. You are not alone, and more older blokes are realising it's ok to talk to someone about what you are feeling. Talking really does help.

If you're unsure of what might work for you, speaking to your GP is a really good place to start.

GP's provide:

- Initial assessment
- Medical treatment
- Referrals to mental health specialist

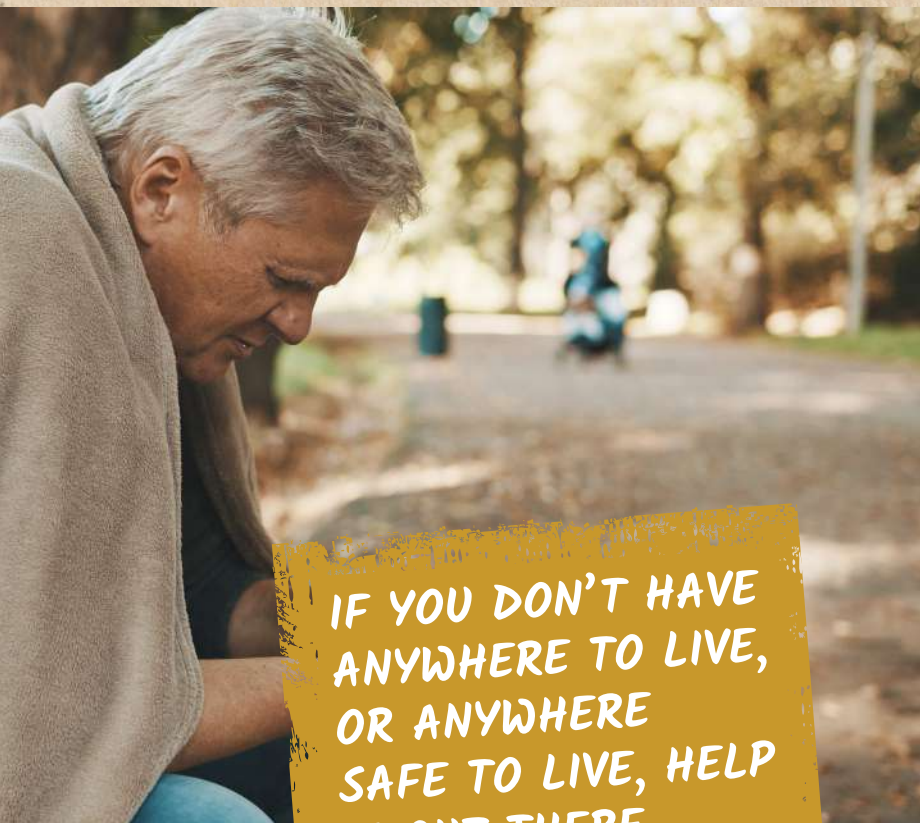


Find a Health Service Navigator 1300 012 710
www.hsnsupport.com.au

Free service to assist you to navigate mental health and other support services on the Darling Downs.

Find a Psychologist
www.psychology.org.au

Find a Counsellor
www.theaca.net.au

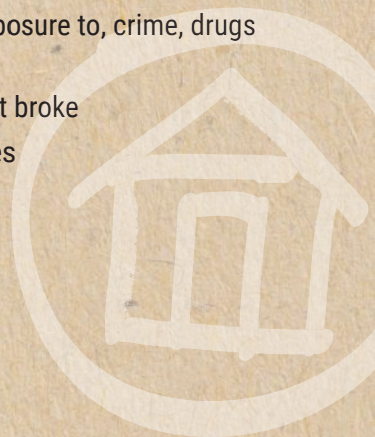


IF YOU DON'T HAVE
ANYWHERE TO LIVE,
OR ANYWHERE
SAFE TO LIVE, HELP
IS OUT THERE.

ACCOMMODATION

There are lots of reasons
someone might need
emergency accommodation:

- An unstable home life
- Family or relationship breakdown
- Eviction
- Risk of, or exposure to, crime, drugs or violence
- Just being flat broke
- Medical issues



ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

Homeless Hotline

1800 474 753

Information and referral service for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

www.qld.gov.au

Askizzy

A directory to assist you to search for nearby shelters, housing, food, health care and homelessness information

www.askizzy.org.au

Salvation Army Crisis Accommodation

07 4639 1998

Crisis and accommodation support

www.salvationarmy.org.au

OzCare Homelessness Hostel (men)

1800 692 273

Crisis accommodation for men

www.ozcare.org.au

Department of Housing and Public Works

137 468

Provide housing stability for vulnerable people

www.hpw.qld.gov.au

Toowoomba Housing Hub

07 4699 4400

Local organisations working together in the one space with you to help you find housing

1800 623 435





GETTING FINANCIAL HELP

For men who find themselves without money or food, pride often stands in the way of seeking help. The support groups listed here offer practical and material assistance, including food parcels, disaster relief, furniture and some counselling services.

Church groups of various denominations and many men's groups also offer assistance.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

St Vincent de Paul – Financial Support Services 1800 954 122

Providing both emergency relief and ongoing assistance
www.qld.vinnies.org.au

Askizzy

A directory to assist you to search for nearby shelters, housing, food, health care and homelessness information
www.askizzy.org.au

National Debt Helpline 1800 007 007

Free service for people dealing with a broad range of financial concerns
www.ndh.org.au

Seniors Card 137 468

Concessions on a variety of goods and services (government services, transport, and shopping)
www.qld.gov.au/seniorscard

Indigenous Call Centre (Centrelink) 1800 136 380

For assistance with Centrelink

Rural Farmer Assistance Hotline 13 23 16

Farmer Assistance (Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm)
www.servicesaustralia.gov.au

Gambling Helpline 1800 858 858

www.gamblinghelponline.org.au/take-a-step-forward/chat-counselling



ONLINE GOVERNMENT SERVICES

myGov (my.gov.au) is the self-service central online access point for Australian Government services. You only need one login and one password to access myGov.

- Medicare
- Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
- Centrelink
- Australian JobSearch
- My Health Record
- My Aged Care
- Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

If you need help to create an account, contact myGov support on 13 23 07 or visit www.humanservices.gov.au



LEGAL AND ADVOCACY HELP

Hassles with legal matters can be a lot easier to manage if you know where to go for advice and assistance.

Elders Abuse Helpline

1300 651 192

Free, confidential advice and support if you're concerned that you or someone you know is experiencing elder abuse. This includes financial, emotional, physical abuse and neglect
www.eapu.com.au

Seniors Enquiry Line

1300 135 500

Statewide information and referral service for a wide range of issues
www.seniorsenquiryline.com.au

Legal Aid Queensland

1300 651 188

Gives legal help to financially disadvantaged Queenslanders about criminal, family and civil law matters
www.legalaid.qld.gov.au

Queensland Law Society

1300 367 757

To find a solicitor or law firm to help with your legal issue, use the QLS online search tool
www.qls.com.au

TASC National

07 4616 9700

Seniors Legal and Support Service
www.tascnational.org.au

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Service

07 4659 7822

Legal services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Queensland
www.atsils.org.au

COTA QLD

07 3316 2999

Advocacy on behalf of QLD Seniors
www.cotaqlld.org.au



FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Family Relationship Advice Line

1800 050 321

For families affected by relationship or separation issues
www.familyrelationships.gov.au

Relationship Australia

1300 364 277

Relationship support services for individuals,
families and communities
www.relationships.org.au

CatholicCare Social Services

1300 477 433

A broad range of professional family and
relationship counselling services
www.catholiccare.services

Family Violence

1800 737 732

Support is available for people experiencing
violence and abuse
www.1800respect.org.au

Kids Helpline

1800 551 800

Online and phone counselling service for
young people aged 5 – 25 years
www.kidshelpline.com.au

HABITS AND ADDICTIONS

If you're struggling with a destructive habit, like gambling, smoking, drugs or alcohol, you don't have to deal with it alone. There is support available to help you break the cycle of addiction or dependency.

ADIS (Alcohol and Drug Support) 1800 177 833

Confidential support services for alcohol or drugs (24/7)
www.adis.health.qld.gov.au

Family Drug Support 1300 368 186

Parents/Carers and family members can call for information, referral and counselling (24/7)
www.fds.org.au

Alcoholic Anonymous Australia 1300 222 222

Support for those having trouble with alcohol
www.aa.org.au

Al-Anon Family Groups

1300 252 666

To help families and friends of alcoholics
www.al-anon.org.au

Smoking

137 848

Contact Quitline for help to quit smoking
www.quitqhq.initiatives.qld.gov.au

Gambling Help

1800 858 858

Support for anyone affected by gambling
www.gamblinghelponline.org.au



HELP IN RURAL AREAS

Seniors Enquiry Line

1300 135 500

Statewide information and referral service

www.seniorsenquiryline.com.au

Are You Bugged Mate?

Helping country blokes talk about mental health and suicide

www.areyouboggedmate.com.au

Virtual Psychologist

0488 807 266

Text message support service

www.virtualpsychologist.com.au/rural-remote

Drought and Farmer Assistance Hotline

13 23 16

Specific advice and support for those living in drought-affected rural and remote communities

www.qld.gov.au/health/mental-health/rural

Rural Aid Australia

1300 327 624

Provides farmers with financial assistance and counselling

www.ruralaid.org.au

Rural Neighbourhood and Community Centres

Care Goondiwindi Association **4670 0700**

Charleville Community Support Service **4654 1307**

Chinchilla Community Support Service **4662 8528**

East Creek Community Centre (Toowoomba) **4639 2755**

Granite Belt Community Support Service **4681 3777**

Laidley Community Centre Service **5465 1889**

Lockyer Information and Neighbourhood Centre **5462 3355**

Millmerran Community Support Service **4695 1829**

Murilla (Miles) Community Centre **4627 2027**

Myall (Dalby) Community Network Centre **4662 0152**

Roma Community Hub **1300 007 662**

Tara Neighbourhood Centre **4665 3508**

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ORGANISATIONS

Carbal Medical Services (South West QLD)

07 4639 7300

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community
Controlled Health Care Organisation
www.carbal.com.au

Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement Co Ltd (South West QLD)

07 4632 0338

Aboriginal Community Health Service for Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander and Non-Indigenous communities
www.goolburri.org.au

QLD Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services

13 74 68

Legal, family and social support, driving and
transport, health, and staying active
www.qld.gov.au/atsi

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Toowoomba)

07 4659 7822

Legal services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander people across Queensland
www.atsils.org.au

Indigenous Call Centre (Centrelink)

1800 136 380

For assistance with Centrelink



OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Defence Community

Mates for Mates

1300 462 837

Providing physical, psychological and social support services to the Defence Community
www.mates4mates.org.au

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

CatholicCare (TRAMS)

1300 477 433

Refugees and migrants assistance
www.catholiccare.services/trams

Multicultural Australia

07 3337 5400

Supports newly arrived refugees, international students, people seeking asylum and migrants
www.multiculturalaustralia.org.au

LGBTI Community

QLife

1800 184 527

LGBTI peer support and referral for people wanting to talk about a range of issues including sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships
www.qlife.org.au

People with a Disability

NDIA

1800 800 110

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides all people with a disability the information and connections to services in their communities
www.ndis.gov.au

FOR YOUR GRANDKIDS

Being a grandparent has its joys, but it's also normal to worry about grandchildren. It can help to remember that your grandchildren are being raised in a different world than when you were that age. However, if you feel they need extra support, there are services available.

Youth Services

Headspace

1800 650 890

Provides early intervention through youth mental health services (12-25 years)

www.headspace.org.au

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800

Information and advice for common issues affecting kids and teenagers

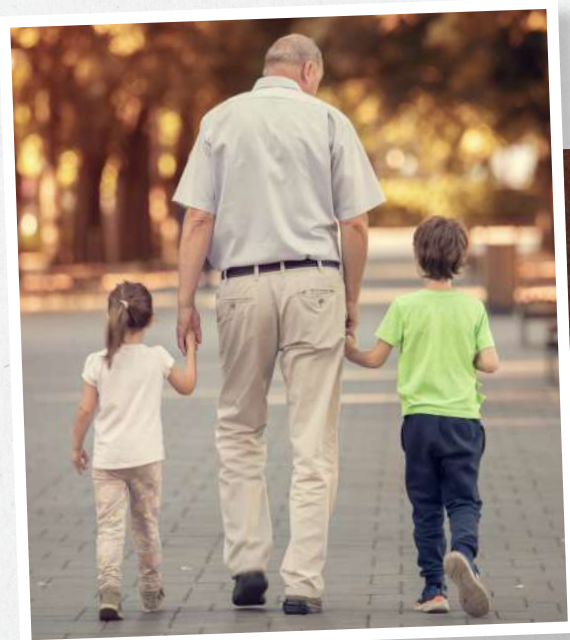
<https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling>

Beyond Blue

1300 22 4636

For helpful contact, online forums and websites to support young people

www.beyondblue.org.au



OLDER BLOKES

Seniors Enquiry Line

1300 135 500

Statewide information and referral service
www.seniorsenquiryline.com.au

Seniors Card

137 468

Concessions on a variety of goods and services
(government services, transport, and shopping)
www.qld.gov.au/seniorscard

Health Advice

Healthdirect Hotline

1800 022 222

Speak to a registered nurse about your health concerns

13 HEALTH

13 43 25 84

Provides health advice to Queenslanders by a registered nurse

Chronic Disease Prevention and Management

Cancer Council Australia

13 11 20

Information and support service for people affected by cancer
www.cancer.org.au

Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

1800 220 099

Supports men and their families affected by prostate cancer
through information, support groups and awareness programs
www.prostate.org.au

Heart Foundation Helpline

13 11 12

Information and support for people with heart
disease or have had heart attacks
www.heartfoundation.org.au/helpline

Parkinson's Australia

1800 644 189

Information line for people seeking support
www.parkinsons.org.au/find-support

MND Australia**1800 777 175**

Information and support for those diagnosed
with motor neurone disease

www.mndaust.asn.au

National Dementia Helpline**1800 100 500**

Information and advice for people living with dementia

www.dementia.org.au/helpline

National Continence Helpline**1800 330 066**

Support for bladder and bowel control problems

www.continence.org.au

Hearing Australia**134 432**

Provider of government-funded hearing services

www.hearing.com.au

Sexual Health**1300 303 878**

Healthy Male is a provider of information for men's health

www.healthymale.org.au



Free Health and Lifestyle Services

Get Healthy (QLD)

1300 806 258

An information and coaching service supporting individuals to reach their health goals

www.gethealthyqld.com.au

My Health for Life

13 74 75

Healthy lifestyle program to reduce the risk of chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke

www.myhealthforlife.com.au

The Change Project

13 74 75

Provides Toowoomba residents with a wide range of low-cost activities to encourage a healthy and active lifestyle

www.tr.qld.gov.au (search the Change Project)

Subsidised Transport Options

Community Transport

1800 200 422

To find out eligibility and a list of providers contact My Aged Care

www.myagedcare.gov.au

Council Cabs

Provides affordable transport for seniors and people with a disability

Contact Black and White cabs (Toowoomba)

1300 811 394

Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme

13 74 68

For eligible patients to access specialist medical services

www.qld.gov.au/health/services/travel/subsidies



CHAPTER 2

DOING RETIREMENT WELL

THE CHALLENGES OF RETIREMENT

While some men do retirement well, many are unprepared for the changes retirement brings.

Without a plan, some men struggle with the loss of their role, identity, purpose, sense of contribution and achievement their career gave them.

It's not uncommon within two years of retirement when the 'to do lists' are done, many start to wonder what's next.

If this is you, you are far from alone.

Your retirement phase may span decades. For many men, it can be hard to know where to start and what to plan after a structured career. This chapter will help you plan what to get involved with and how you can stay connected to the community.





STRUGGLING WITH RETIREMENT? NEED NEW IDEAS? OR JUST NEED TO TALK?

TOMNET's "Retired Blokes Program" may be the answer you are looking for. Trained facilitators discuss your current retirement plans and help you find your own pathway to a meaningful retirement. This service can be face-to-face (Toowoomba only) or via telephone or video conferencing.

Call TOMNET 07 4638 9080

**"I WISH I'D COMPLETED THIS PROGRAM
MUCH EARLIER IN RETIREMENT, I
WOULD HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED TO
GET INVOLVED MUCH EARLIER ON."**

Stan, 78

THE EMOTIONAL IMPACTS EXPERIENCED IN RETIREMENT

- Feeling lost
- A sense of disconnection
- Losing your social network
- Relationship challenges
- Losing meaning in your life
- Struggling with changes at home
- No sense of achievement
- Losing self esteem
- Losing structured routines





SUICIDE RISK IN OLDER MEN

Retirement can trigger a range of emotions, some of which can lead to depression, anxiety, anger, and suicidal thoughts. It's more common than you think.

With one man over 65 dying by suicide every day in Australia, retirement can present many challenges.

Suicide Call Back 1300 659 461

Call MensLine Australia 1300 789 978

'A DESPERATELY SAD PATTERN EMERGED. IT WAS A PATTERN THAT SPOKE TO MULTIPLE LITTLE LOSSES – A LOSS OF CONTROL OVER EXTERNAL FORCES IN MY LIFE, A LOSS OF MEANING, OF RELEVANCE, OF CONNECTION, OF BELONGINGNESS, THAT CULMINATED IN A CRUSHING LOSS OF SELF'.

Anonymous, 73



GET INVOLVED IN THINGS THAT MATTER TO YOU

Think about the changes retirement will bring: what your lifestyle will be, how you will spend your time and most importantly how you will remain connected to your community.

Think about planning your retirement the same way you planned your career. Ask yourself, what would you like to achieve and how are you going to achieve it?

Just because you retire doesn't mean you retire from life. It means finding new and flexible ways to maintain a dynamic and meaningful life. Let's help you find one.



SOME TIPS TO GET STARTED

- If you are **GETTING READY TO RETIRE**, give serious thought about transitioning to part-time work and get involved in new things before you retire.
- **HAVE A DISCUSSION WITH YOUR PARTNER** to make sure your retirement vision aligns. Spend time together, but also make time for yourself.
- **CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING** and sharing your skills and life experiences with others.
- **TRY SOMETHING NEW.** Is there something you're interested in, but never had the chance?
- **WRITE YOUR NEW RETIREMENT BUSINESS CARD** e.g. volunteer, artist, traveller, volunteer driver, club member, gardener, mentor.
- **KEEP CONNECTED** with family, old friends and your community. While it's tough finding a new network of mates, it's important as loneliness can have a significant impact on your wellbeing. Try as many new groups as you can e.g. interested in reading, join a library group. Hobbies or interests? Join a club and help out.
- **PLAN TO STIMULATE YOUR BRAIN.** The saying is true, if you don't use it, you lose it.
- **KEEP PHYSICALLY FIT.** Walk, join a local parkrun, swimming, or try a new sport. Contact your local council for activities promoting health and fitness.
- When you retire, it is normal to **TAKE TIME TO ADJUST.** The transition period can feel daunting and overwhelming and produce a sense of loss as you close the work chapter of your life.
- **TAKE ACTION ON YOUR PLAN AS SOON AS YOU RETIRE.** Many men will tell you there is a two year honeymoon period before the novelty begins to wear off. If you sit in your chair waiting for it to happen, over time it will erode your confidence making it very hard to pick yourself up.





WHAT'S YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

WHAT'S YOUR IDEAL SITUATION?

HOW DO YOU GET THERE?



STEPS TO FINDING THE LIFE YOU WANT

Having time in retirement often helps us reflect on what we truly value in life.

One of the challenges finding opportunities that align with what matters to you and your desired lifestyle during retirement.

Often thinking about all the opportunities can be overwhelming and many men feel a sense of being 'stuck', unsure of which direction to follow. By working through the following steps, you will find clarity around the direction you would like to take.

Step 1: what matters to you

Step 2: examining your skills and passions

Step 3: allocating your time

Step 4: connecting to your community

Step 5: putting it all together

**Let's get started on creating your
meaningful retirement!**



STEP 1: IDENTIFY WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

A great way to start is to identify what is important to you.

Do you want to learn new things, have new experiences, do you want to find your passion or improve your health? You might decide giving back to the community is a priority or staying connected with family and friends is important.

Understanding what matters to you is essential in helping you find the right opportunities to be involved in.



Here are some examples of what might matter to you in retirement.

- Mentoring others
- DIY projects
- Learning new skills
- Starting a business
- Spending time with friends
- Writing a book
- Travelling
- Time with your partner
- Volunteering
- Learn a musical instrument
- Find a hobby

For more examples go to www.tomnet.org.au/retiredblokesbook

FOR COUPLES

Retirement can be difficult for men and their spouses who are not prepared for the transition. It is a time for honest and open communication with partners.

Some suggestions:

- Talk about your individual goals and expectations.
- Identify what you enjoy doing together.
- Encourage each other to pursue personal interests.
- Are there new activities you both may wish to try?
- Encourage each other to find your own network of friends.
- How will roles change at home?
- Can you create individual spaces in your home?
- Plan on how you will adapt to changes in your income.
Discuss and set spending and lifestyle expectations to reduce any financial pressure.

Consider how you will cope in each other's company full time – what strategies will you both adopt to ensure this is a positive experience?



STEP 2: EXAMINING YOUR SKILLS AND PASSIONS

Write down your ideas/thoughts for each of the following questions to help you identify your skills and passions.

- What skills do you have to offer?
- What strengths do you have?
- What aspects of your career did you enjoy the most? e.g. Mentoring staff, being part of a team, creating projects, helping others, working on projects?
- Is there anything new you want to learn or have put off learning?
- Is there anything you have tried in the past, and thought you would like to experience again?
- What activities give you energy?
- What key things do you value?
- What would you like to spend most of your time doing?

It can also be helpful to think of things you want to limit.

- What physical activities do you not want to do?
- Do you want to limit demanding mental challenges?

This exercise is designed to help remind you of what aspects of your career you found satisfying. It's important to find new opportunities which will give you a similar sense of achievement.

What am I good at?

What interests me?

What can I share with others?

**Your skills
and
passions**

What am I passionate about?

What can I offer that
other people need?

Can other people help me
with this?



STEP 3: YOUR TIME

The next step is to think about the time you have available and how you would like to spend it. A great exercise is to create your ideal calendar.

Grab a calendar and block out your 'non-negotiables', your prior commitments, the time you will spend with your partner and family, your leisure time and your free time.

Once you have your time blocked off, you will have a better understanding of how much time you have for things like volunteering or giving back, or participating in interest groups, and also how much 'free time' you want to dedicate to doing other things.

You are retired after all!

STEP 4: CONNECT TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Based on your skills, strengths, and vision, these suggestions will help you brainstorm options within your own community.

Mentoring

Bridging the gap between youth and the older generation is one of the most rewarding pursuits. Many schools have opportunities for mature people to mentor and offer a friendly face to talk to. Connect to your local school and ask if they have a program.

Disability groups

Contact your local disability action group and enquire if any of their programs require Volunteers.

Volunteer in Aged Care

Support older men isolated in Aged Care Facilities by providing social contact. Talk to the Activities Coordinator at each facility. Male residents value the opportunity to share their stories and still feel connected to the outside world.

Local Charities and Hospitals

Many local charities and hospitals require volunteers to sort donations, serve customers, drive collection trucks, or even fundraise. Organisations such as Meals on Wheels, Lifeline, St. Vinnies, and food banks are staffed by volunteers and are very rewarding and fulfilling activities.

Telephone Support

Why not donate your time calling isolated members of your community? Organisation's such as St Johns Ambulance (Community Calls Service), OzCare and BlueCare offer many telephone support programs who call those who are lonely or isolated. It's a wonderful way to give back.

Your Local Regional Council

Local regional councils have community engagement officers who keep up to date with the happenings in their community. They are great sources of information regarding volunteering or community events that need help. Call your local council and ask to speak with them regarding any opportunities that may be on offer.

Neighbourhood and Community Centres

Neighbourhood centres provide a range of opportunities to get involved. Search for one in your local area using the link below.

www.qld.gov.au/community/your-home-community/groups-in-your-community/neighbourhood-community-centres

For more information on local clubs and volunteering opportunities go to 'Get Involved in Your Community'.
www.tomnet.org.au/getinvolved



JOIN A MENS GROUP

Mens Groups

Search for a local men's group that aligns with your values. Many provide opportunities for social contact and fellowship with other blokes, but also encourage volunteering within the community. Mens groups may offer barbecue services to help at, fundraising raffles, or opportunities to support isolated men in the community through telephone support or home visiting. Check out TOMNET as an option www.tomnet.org.au



Mens Groups to get involved in

TOMNET (The Older Mens Network Inc) 07 4638 9080

Provides opportunities for mateship, volunteering, information, support and the Retired Blokes Program.

www.tomnet.org.au

Mens Shed Australia

1300 550 009

Find a mens shed in your area

www.mensshed.org

Mens Group Online

An online community of men supporting men

www.mensgrouponline.com.au

Circle of Men

0490 105 715

Volunteer Male Companionship Program to support and nurture men living in aged care.

www.circleofmenqld.com

CREATE YOUR OWN MENS GROUP

In what ways can you support older men in your community?

Why not create a network of men who genuinely care about each other, whilst also providing support to other men within the community.

Activities your men's group could be involved in include mentoring youth, fundraising, barbecues, visiting isolated men in residential care, assisting local groups to support the homeless, or using your skills to teach others.

There are several steps to creating your own group and ensure your group starts off on the right foot.

Ideas to brainstorm:

1. **Where will you meet?**
2. **What is your Code of Conduct for Members?**
3. **What expectations of Members will there be?**
4. **How will we support older men?**

It is important potential Members are given a choice to be involved. Fostering an environment where men share their experiences and emotions in a positive environment is critical to the success of a men's group.

The goal is to foster genuine mateships, which will engage Members to participate and commit long term.

TOMNET has a practical guide to help you establish a men's group in your local community.

Contact TOMNET on 07 4638 9080 or visit www.tomnet.org.au/setupagroup to download the step-by-step guide.



STEP 5: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

There are three critical success factors for a meaningful life in retirement

1

Finding a new purpose to align with your life values

2

Finding out how to best use your valuable skills

3

Staying connected to others in the community

Volunteering is a great way to achieve all three critical factors, research also indicates it's good for your health. Many organisations offer flexible hours to volunteer as much, or as little as you want.

TIME TO TAKE ACTION

Now that you have given each step some thought, it's time to take action.

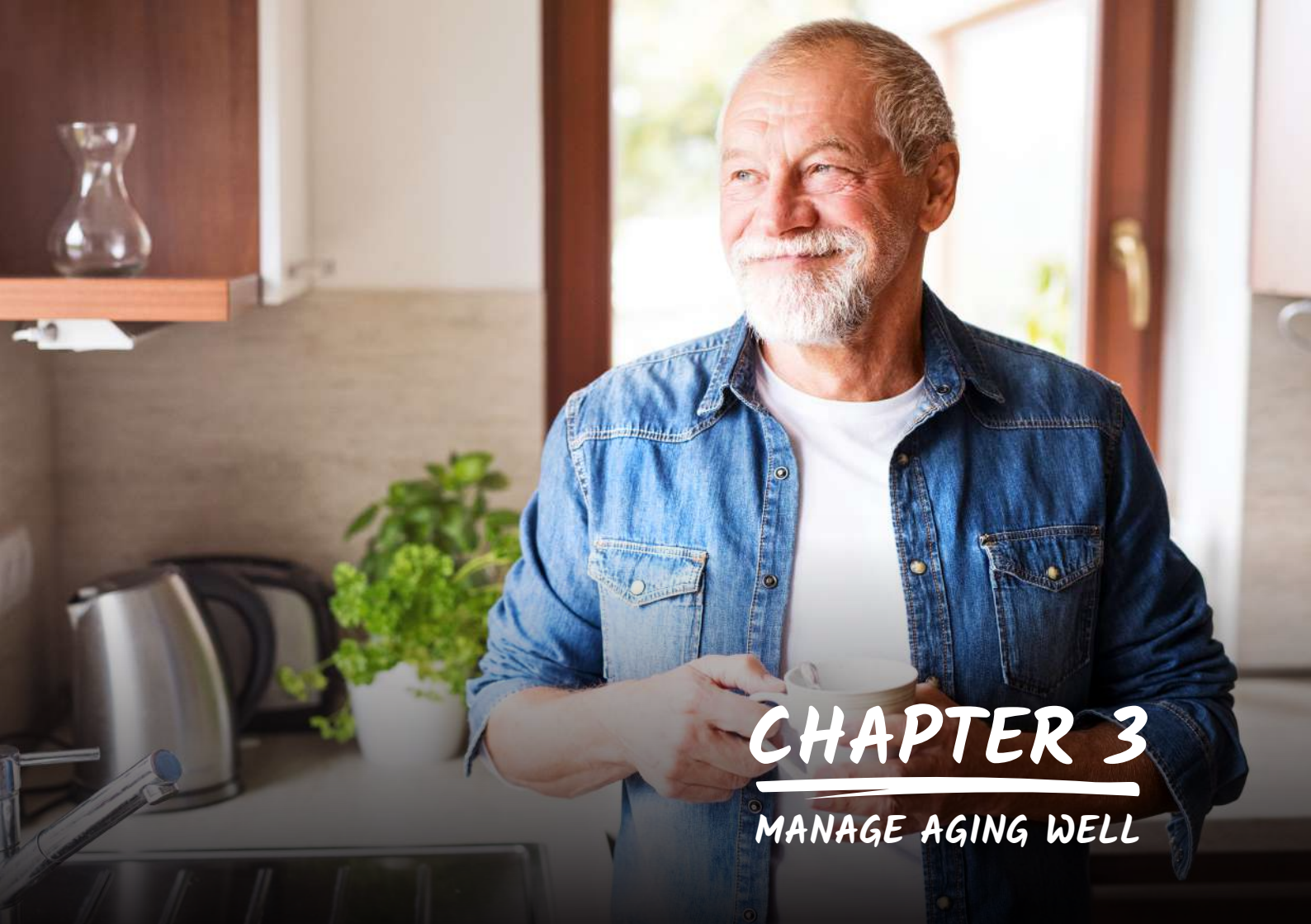
This is often the most challenging part as it requires a degree of bravery to step outside your comfort zone. Try one or try many options until you find something that reflects who you are. Also remember, new experiences and new mateships often take time to feel comfortable.

It's important to take action on your plan as soon as you retire. It's up to you, not your partner, or your family.

The most rewarding chapter of your life awaits, take the step to a meaningful retirement.

Still undecided? We've helped many blokes like you find a pathway to a meaningful retirement.

Just give us a call at TOMNET 07 4638 9080 or www.tomnet.org.au



CHAPTER 3

MANAGE AGING WELL

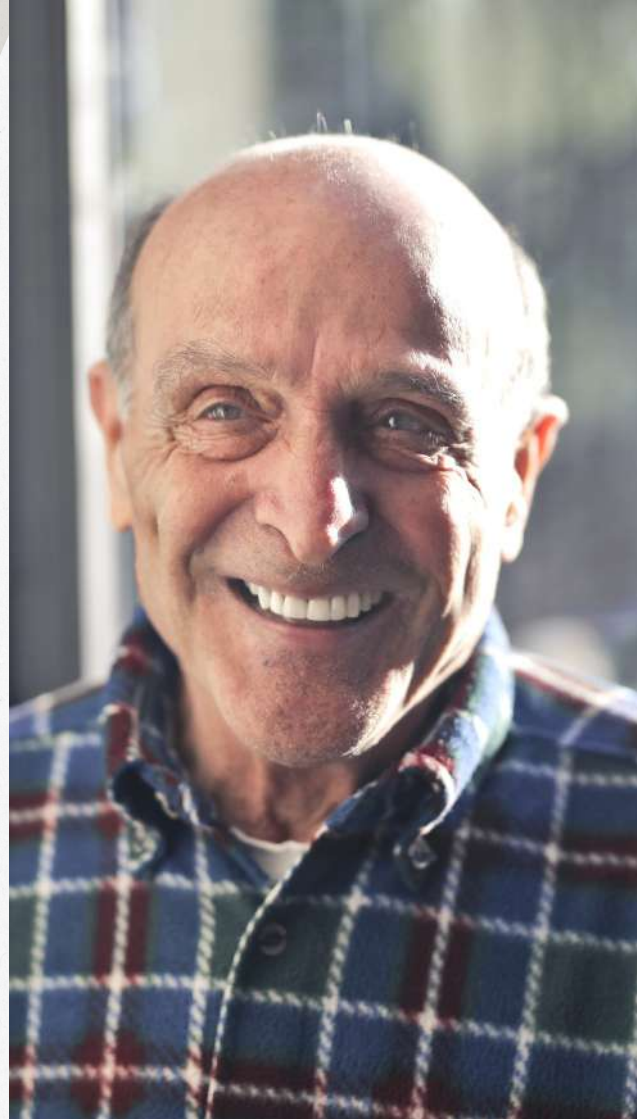
CHALLENGES OF AGING

This section is a guide to navigating the different challenges faced and provides steps that can assist you to age in the best possible way.

Some of the challenges are:

- Living independently and receiving support
- Managing a life-changing diagnosis
- Surrendering your licence
- Managing grief and loss
- Anxiety and depression
- Becoming a carer

The thought of venturing into older years threatens the very essence of masculinity. It raises concerns of losing your independence, fear of being a burden and even anger, shame, and embarrassment that you need to rely on others for help. However, aging is a normal part of life. Deciding to age proactively allows you to manage the aging process as best you can.



Aging inevitably comes with changes and often increased anxieties. Being prepared and planning ahead, will help you reduce the impact of stressful decisions made later in life.

When changes strike, many men do not know where to turn for help or have difficulty in reaching out for it. Give some thought to the following:

- What physical activities can you get involved in to manage your health proactively?
- Ask your doctor what preventive health measures you should do?
- Difficulty hearing? Don't put off having a hearing test.
- If you need to relocate, how will you get involved in your new community?
- While you are physically and mentally fit now, what might be your future care needs?
- Consider writing a list of the achievements and opportunities you have experienced in life. Focus on gratitude rather than regret if you are no longer able to do some things anymore. Be thankful you had the opportunity to do what you have in life.
- Have you planned for your own mortality? While it is a very difficult discussion to have, it makes a huge difference for loved ones, relatives and friends and can help you know that the ones you love will be looked after when you are gone.

Men typically do not, during their lifetime, spend much time or energy developing support systems outside of work and family which could help them adjust to changes later in life.



LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

Most people want to live independently in their own home for as long as they can. This may be done with the support of a partner, family, friends, or volunteer support.

Talk to your doctor about how to access government funded support services. Generally, your current and future needs will be assessed through the My Aged Care system if you qualify.

When these supports are not available or if your needs are too high, you may want to consider an aged care facility to access a higher level of support for day-to-day tasks and on-going care.

Whatever your situation is now, remember your needs may change as you get older, so being aware of what options are available is important. Consider setting yourself up to minimise the impact.



TIP: Be proactive in registering with My Aged Care as it may take up to 12 – 18 months to access the services you require. Sometimes an unexpected health crisis occurs, being in the My Aged Care system means you will be well positioned to access these services you need.

My Aged Care provides access to Australian Government funded aged care services.

Phone **1800 200 422** or search their website **www.myagedcare.gov.au** to find information on what supports may be available.

They provide information on:

- the different age care services available
- assessment of your needs, eligibility, and types of care
- referrals and support to service providers
- the costs associated with your care

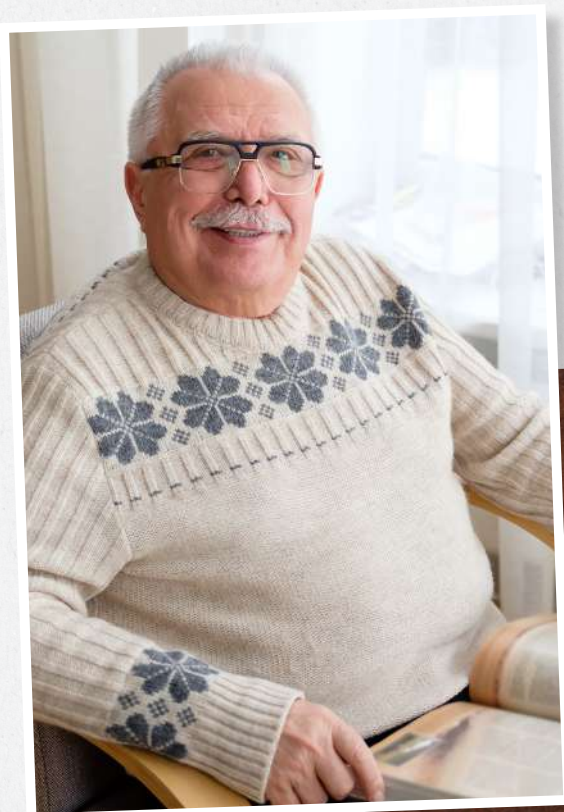
MANAGING A LIFE-CHANGING DIAGNOSIS

Receiving a life-changing diagnosis can turn your world upside down. One day everything is going fine, the next you are faced with life changing news.

How you deal with this can affect your recovery, long-term outcomes, and your relationships.

Here are some tips when dealing with a diagnosis:

- Give yourself time to process the news - it takes time to work through the different emotions and come to the point of acceptance.
- Have a support system - reach out to family, friends, and neighbours.
- Educate yourself – do as much research as you can about the illness, your treatment options and work closely with your GP. Perhaps seek a second opinion.
- Organise someone to talk to – this may be a call to Lifeline, a counsellor or psychologist, or call TOMNET.



SURRENDERING YOUR LICENCE

Making the decision to surrender your licence is one of the toughest aging decisions to make.

You may have driven your entire life and take great pride in your safety record, but as you age, it is critical that you realise your driving ability can change. You may feel shocked or overwhelmed at the prospect of losing some of your independence but keep your mind open to new possibilities to maintain an active, vibrant, and rewarding lifestyle without a car.

Some benefits of living without a car include saving money on the cost of car ownership which can pay for alternative transportation such as mobility scooters or taxis. Walking more, if you can, will improve your health, not just for your body but also your mind. Accepting rides from others can increase your social network. You may even enjoy life more without the stress of driving.

Talk to your GP regarding support that may be available including subsidised transport services, discount taxi services, and community transport options managed by local councils.

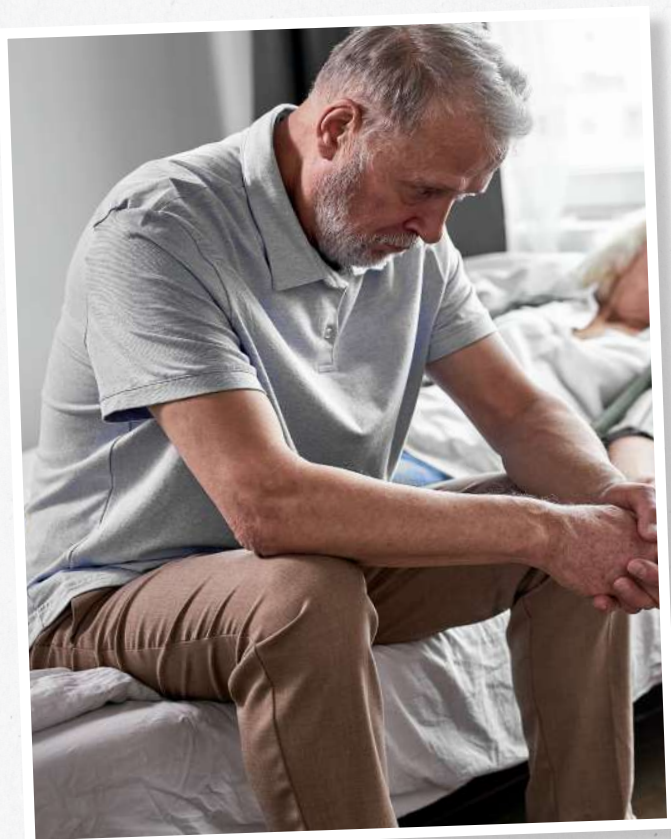


A photograph of an elderly couple with white hair, smiling and leaning on the dark frame of a car window. The woman is on the left, wearing a light-colored scarf, and the man is on the right, wearing a dark jacket. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

DRIVERS 75 AND OVER

Everyone 75 and over who holds a Queensland driver licence must carry a current **medical certificate for motor vehicle driver form** at all times when driving and comply with any stated conditions.

www.qld.gov.au/seniors/transport/senior-drivers/safe-driving



MANAGING GRIEF AND LOSS

How does experiencing loss, maybe someone dying, impact on you?

This is hard for everyone but especially men, as the message usually given is “stay strong”. Men are good at hiding emotion, even when faced with difficult circumstances. If you can understand how men grieve, then this will allow you to be able to connect with your emotions.

Firstly, grief is different for everyone. There is no one way to grieve. We commonly see grief as sadness and tears, but there are many other ways to express emotion. Men can show their pain in ways like withdrawal, irritability, anger, thoughts of dying and substance use. You can experience many or even no signs of grief. There can be a period of intense or mild symptoms and the encounter of grief can vary regardless of the circumstances.

Men tend to isolate when it comes to grief. The best support someone can offer is to be available. You can talk when you are ready. One easy way is by doing a task together that is unrelated to the loss. This could be to go for a walk, drive or spend some time fishing. You may want to talk or just sit in silence, but it is the fact that someone is there. Men tend to get involved in activities that distract them from the hurt. This can be helpful but there does need to be time and space to process the pain so that the grief does not become more complex.

The loss of a partner will always be a challenging and difficult time. Unfortunately, the reality is a chapter of your life will close. It can be helpful to write a list of all the things you are grateful for in having the opportunity to share life together. This will allow you to reflect on the moments and experiences you value.



MANAGING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

With nine out of ten men likely to experience anxiety and depression in their lifetime, it is an issue many men don't want to admit or talk about.

Can you identify with any of the symptoms on the following page?

Everybody worries or gets anxious at some time in their lives – it is a normal and healthy reaction. However, the constant anxiety-provoking thinking and the accompanying physical symptoms of anxiety can be disabling, particularly if experienced over a long period of time.

SOME TIPS TO MANAGE ANXIETY



Slow breathing

Progressive muscle relaxation

Stay in the present moment

Healthy lifestyle

Take small acts of bravery

Challenge your self-talk

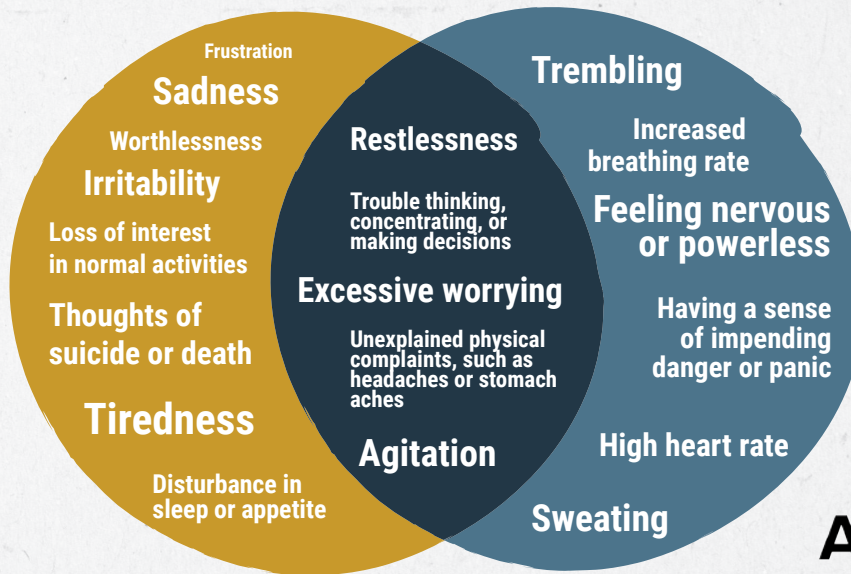
Plan your worry time

Get to know your anxiety

Learn from others

Depression

Anxiety



Anxiety.org

For further information visit the Beyond Blue website
www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/anxiety/treatments-for-anxiety/anxiety-management-strategies



BECOMING A CARER

Caring for a loved-one has its rewards, but also involves many challenges. It can be tough when the responsibilities are beyond your capacity to cope, if your partner is not getting better or their condition is deteriorating. If the stress of being a carer is not addressed, it is likely to impact your health, relationships and state of mind which can lead to burnout.

Tips to help you keep on top of your own health:

Keep up your own health care and medicines

Find a GP you feel comfortable talking to and who understands your caring role. Make sure you have regular health check-ups.

Seek help for depression

Depression can occur in carers. It is normal to have periods of bitterness, guilt, and sadness about your situation. If you're feeling miserable, anxious or stressed, this could be depression - talk to your GP.

Get emotional support

Caring for someone can be quite lonely and isolating. Finding someone whom you can trust and talk openly with - be it a relative, friend or a professional. This can prevent 'things getting on top of you'.

Take respite breaks

It's important that you allow someone else to provide temporary care while you have a break. Taking breaks will help to restore and refresh your mind and body, so you can continue caring.

WHERE TO GET HELP AND INFORMATION

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres

1800 052 222

Provides information, education,
counselling, and access to respite

Carers Queensland

07 3900 8100

Provides hands on support to carers
www.carersqld.com.au



YOUR OWN MORTALITY

Accepting mortality

It can be difficult to contemplate your own death but being able to accept the fact that someday you, too, will die may help you take opportunities in front of you now.

Observe and acknowledge your thoughts and emotions, helping calm you, making it easier for you to take steps toward living your fullest life.

Funeral planning

Think about what arrangements you would like after you die. While a challenging conversation, share your thoughts with your family and assist those that love you and want to be helpful. Consider helping write your eulogy.

Final thoughts

Often we reflect on past experiences, life choices and what could have been. It's ok and normal. Talking to someone may help you find clarity.

We all experience our lives in different ways. Sure, we'd all change a few things along the way, but cherish what you've achieved and know that you have positively influenced many during your life and your contributions are valued.





CONTACT TOMNET

PO BOX 7801
Toowoomba South QLD 4350
Telephone 07 4638 9080

www.tomnet.org.au
retiredblokesbook@tomnet.org.au
www.facebook.com/TOMNETinc



TOMNET is grateful for support from

Supported by



Design has been adapted from the original
Blokes' Book by Patrick Badger Design, Tasmania.

For this version, contact Duotone Design, Toowoomba QLD
hello@duotonedesign.com.au

