

MEDIA RELEASE



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COVID-19 challenges demand quick thinking to keep vulnerable safe

Local organisations looking after the elderly and vulnerable have been forced to adapt quickly to maintain essential services to those who rely on them.

Not-for-profit YellowBridge QLD helps more than 5,000 people across the Toowoomba region who are elderly, have disabilities, live in community housing or are experiencing homelessness.

With so many vulnerable people relying on them for support, YellowBridge has been determined to keep as many of their services running during the COVID-19 pandemic and self-isolation requirements.

“It is really hard for many of our clients, especially those who are elderly or have high needs for disability support,” YellowBridge chief executive officer Penny Hamilton said.

“The current conditions have forced us to make significant changes to our normal operations, but our staff are positive and determined to make the best of very challenging circumstances,” Ms Hamilton said.

YellowBridge, who employs nearly 150 people, closed its main office last Friday and all of its office staff are now working from home.

Front-line workers in disability support, home care and garden maintenance continue to help clients in the community but under stricter hygiene and social-distancing requirements.

Last week’s order by the government that people over 70 years of age should self-isolate at home prompted YellowBridge to find ways to help its senior clients who lived alone.

“Getting to the shops and chemist is a little harder for elderly people, especially when they should be restricting their outings for their own protection against the virus,” Ms Hamilton said.

“We have introduced a new shopping service for elderly clients. We’ll do their groceries and collect their medication and deliver it to them as a contactless service,” she said.

“It is another way we can help them to stay safe but not miss out on food and important medication.”

YellowBridge has also established a friendly phone chat service for lonely or isolated seniors. Anyone who registers will receive a regular call from a YellowBridge staff member to check they are okay and have a friendly chat.

“What the world and our local community is experiencing at the moment is tough, but we are not going to let that get us down,” Ms Hamilton said.

“Our core value is ‘connecting lives’ and that is exactly what we are going to continue to do, however we can.”

To register for YellowBridge’s support, phone 1300 882 764.

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