

RESTORING INDEPENDENCE CLOSE TO HOME

How flexible local support helped one resident remain connected to her community

The following is the story of one of our clients who has chosen to remain anonymous.

In early 2024, an older local resident approached the Tambellup Community Resource Centre (CRC) seeking support. At the time, she was receiving services through the Home and Community Care (HACC) program, which was transitioning their clients to a new aged care provider. Having heard that the CRC was running a program called Staying in Place, she contacted us to ask whether we might be able to assist her. She expressed a strong desire to have choice and control over her services, rather than being automatically transferred to a new provider.

The CRC welcomed her into the Staying in Place program and continued the cleaning service she had been receiving. She became the CRC's first client requiring ongoing and continuous support, and it later became significant that her needs could be met locally, by people she knew and trusted.

During the first few months of her involvement in the program, a decline in her confidence and wellbeing became noticeable. The Staying in Place Coordinator observed that she often appeared tearful and withdrawn, particularly when discussing her late husband or health concerns.

It became clear that the client's needs were evolving. Her eyesight was deteriorating, and she was no longer able to drive, even around town. This loss of independence led to increased social isolation and loneliness. She became reliant on family members, who live approximately an hour away on a farm, to attend appointments, and on neighbours for short trips into town. For someone who had always been actively involved in community life, this change was particularly difficult. It also became apparent that the client was struggling to prepare meals for herself.

“I wouldn't be able to get my ready-made meals delivered if it wasn't for this.”

— Staying in Place Client

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As her circumstances changed, the Staying in Place program was able to adapt alongside the client. Services and supports were tailored to meet her individual needs, and products were carefully selected to suit her preferences. Where possible, we sourced samples and trial options to ensure she felt comfortable and confident with the supports being put in place.

With the support of the client's package and the Staying in Place program, she was able to purchase a magnification lamp, enabling her to continue activities she enjoyed, such as crocheting. The client was also able to purchase a powered Shoprider scooter, which became a turning point in her independence and connection to the community.

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“It has helped me keep my independence.”

— Staying in Place Client speaking about their Shoprider scooter

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Today, the client is regularly seen travelling along the main street on her scooter, stopping in at the post office, CRC, and local deli. She attends craft mornings and monthly lunches, participating in conversation and having a laugh with others. She confidently visits the CRC to order ready-made meals and engage with staff and community members. The client now feels comfortable discussing health concerns with the Staying in Place Coordinator and is no longer embarrassed to speak openly about her needs, including personal care products and other health issues.

This case study demonstrates how a locally delivered, flexible aged care program can respond to changing needs, preserve dignity, and support older residents to remain connected to their community. For this resident, Staying in Place has not only provided practical assistance but has restored confidence, choice, and quality of life. As she simply puts it,

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“You are lovely people who have helped me a lot.”

—Staying in Place Client

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The client's new Shoprider scooter which has allowed her to re-gain independence.