



## CLIENT INFORMATION HANDBOOK

*We deliver quality services that link people to the community, to promote independence and inclusion*

PORT MACQUARIE/ KEMPSEY  
**(02) 6583 8644**

PORT STEPHENS  
**(02) 4984 7999**

Email: [transport@linked.org.au](mailto:transport@linked.org.au)

Website: [www.linked.org.au](http://www.linked.org.au)



Transport  
for NSW



REGISTERED  
NDIS  
PROVIDER



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## WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to Linked Community Services. This handbook has been designed to help you understand how to access our services and answer some frequently asked questions.

Our team of loyal staff and wonderful volunteers are here to help you. If we can be of any assistance give your local office a call.

## ABOUT US

Linked Community Services is a not for profit public company, which is registered as a:

- Public Benevolent Institution Charity
- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) provider
- Community Transport Program (CTP) provider
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider
- Community Visitors Scheme Program (CVS) provider

We have been serving the local communities in the Hastings, Macleay and Port Stephens areas for over 30 years providing over 65,000 trips each year.

## OUR MISSION

We deliver quality services that link people to the community, to promote independence and inclusion.

## OUR VALUES

- Respect for clients
- Respect for community
- Respect for culture

## WHAT AREA DO WE COVER

Linked Community Services provides transport services to Port Macquarie, Hastings, Kempsey and Port Stephens Local Government areas.



## SERVICES PROVIDED

Linked Community Services aims to assist you to get out and about. Destinations may include:

- Shopping
- Library
- Hairdresser
- Group Social Outings
- Individual Social Outings
- Doctor's Appointments
- Medical Treatments
- Podiatry
- Pathology
- Specialist Appointments
- Hospital visits

We provide individual transport both local and long-distance to keep you connected to your community, family and friends, to enable you to live an independent and active life.

Long distance transport could include medical trips to Coffs Harbour, Newcastle and Sydney. For out of area transport please contact the office.

Our group social outings include full and half day trips. Calendars are mailed out twice a year. If you would like a calendar, please call the office.

You can also view and download the calendars from our website [www.linked.org.au](http://www.linked.org.au).

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

We can offer transport services to anyone in the community. However, we offer subsidised transport to:

- Aged 65 years and over (over 50 years if you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander)
- The carer of a person who is frail aged or has a disability
- Isolated and unable to access public transport
- A person with a disability

At Linked Community Services all eligible clients will have access to our services without discrimination on the grounds of ability to pay, location, gender, ethnicity, Aboriginality, marital status, religion, sexual preference or disability.

## HOW TO BECOME A CLIENT

Please call your local office;  
**Hastings Macleay Area (02) 6583 8644**  
**Port Stephens Area (02) 4984 7999**

If you are over 65 years (50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) you may be eligible to receive government funded services through **My Aged Care**.

My Aged Care is a Commonwealth Government agency, whose Assessors will determine your eligibility for services and refer you back to Community Transport. You must be sure to ask specifically for Linked Community Services. We can assist you to register with My Aged Care.

If you are on a **National Disability Insurance Scheme Plan, Home Care Package** aged under 65 years (50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and have a disability you can register directly with Linked Community Services.

We will need to ask you a few questions in relation to mobility and other personal details to be able to complete your registration to ensure we provide you the right transport and vehicle for your needs.

## HOW TO BOOK TRANSPORT

After registering with Linked Community Services, just call the office between the hours 8:30 am to 5:00pm and speak to one of our Client Service officers. You will need to advise our Client Service Officers the time and place of your trip and any other arrangements you might have during the trip for example you may need to stop at the Chemist to pick up a prescription on the way back from your doctor's appointment.

We will always try our best to accommodate your needs, however due to the large number of requests we receive we may not be able to assist you at exactly the time you require or you may need to share a vehicle with other passengers. Alternatively, you can book online via our website [www.linked.org.au](http://www.linked.org.au).

## Seatbelts

Seatbelts must be worn. If you have a current medical exemption, please ensure our Client Service Officers at your local office has a copy prior to your trip.

## Additional Apparatus

If you require additional apparatus for your trip (e.g. wheelchair, baby seat) please inform our Client Service Officers when you book your trip. If you are taking an oxygen bottle please advise so we can ensure transport provided has a carry sling.

## CANCELLATIONS

Cancellation fees are applicable to all users of our services as follows:

- No Notice. Cancellation at door or the service user is a no show, 90 % of the fee is due
- Short notice. Cancellation occurs 3 hours or less of service delivery a minimum charge of 50% of the fee is due
- More than 24 hours prior to the service delivery, no fee is due

Where Linked Community Services cancels a service and cannot substitute or reschedule no fee will be charged.

Linked Community Services will endeavour to meet set pick up and drop off times, however there may be occasions where some delays may occur due to circumstances beyond our control.

Linked Community Services may waive the cancellation fee in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Operations Manager / CEO.

## COST OF TRANSPORT

For our CHSP and CTP and other subsidised services we request that you provide a contribution for your trip. This is to assist us in continuing to provide the subsidised services to the community.

## CHANGING NEEDS

We provide an individualised service based on your needs and from time to time your needs will change. This could be a simple change of address, or it may be if your health or disability improves or deteriorates. You are encouraged to let us know when things change, to help us meet your needs.

## WAR VETERANS TRANSPORT

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides reimbursement to Community Transport to transport War Veterans to attend medical appointments. Veterans with a Gold Card can use our services free of charge ([medical appointments only](#)). You will be asked to sign the authorisation form carried by the driver.

## ABORIGINAL TRANSPORT

Aboriginal Transport provides affordable & reliable transport services to community groups & individuals within the Hastings Macleay and Port Stephens Local Government Area.

Individual & Group Transport to cater for shopping, medical, cultural and social outings.

### **Who can use this Service?**

Aboriginal people who:

- have difficulty accessing public transport
- aged over 50 years
- People with a disability that affects their mobility (permanent or temporary)
- Carers

## HOSPITAL TRANSPORT

The Hunter New England Local Health District provides funding to enable us to provide subsidised transport to and from hospital for isolated and transport disadvantaged persons in the Port Stephens Local Government Area

# COMMUNITY VISITORS SCHEME

The Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) is a National Program funded by the Australian Government Department of Health that aims to enrich the quality of life for our older community. The CVS program is a free service.

## Eligibility and referrals

**Residential Aged Care Facility:** Residents of Residential Facilities are eligible for a Community Volunteer visit. Referral can be made by the Residential Facility Staff Members or by the Resident's Family.

**Community Home Visits:** to receive a visit from a Community Volunteer the person must be in receipt of a Home Care Package. Referrals can be made by the Home Care Package Provider or family of the older community member.

### What is a Community Visitor Volunteer?

A Community Visitor Volunteer plays a pivotal role in improving the quality of life of our older community through ongoing companionship and friendship providing social connection to enhance their quality of life.

Our Community Visitors Scheme Coordinator carefully matches the Resident, Group or Home Care Client to a Community Visitor Volunteer who has similar interests so that the friendship can grow and the connection engaging and positive.

The Community Visitor Volunteer is required to visit or make contact on a fortnightly basis; however weekly visits or contacts are encouraged.

### What Do Community Visitors Do?

As a Community Visitor Volunteer, you spend time with your Resident, Group or Care Client engaging in activities that you enjoy, these can include: Reminiscing, Watching TV, Reading a Book, Listening to Music, Enjoying Morning Tea, Massages, Individual or Group Video Chats, Going for Walks, Bingo, Carpet Bowls, Reading Groups, Bus Trips etc.

### Like to Know More

If you would like to become a Community Visitor Volunteer or know someone who may benefit from a Community Visitor Volunteer visit, contact our Community Visitors Scheme Coordinator Christie Korvema on 0448 295 147 or [ckorvema@linked.org.au](mailto:ckorvema@linked.org.au)



# CHARTER OF RIGHTS

Every client of Linked Community Services has the right to:

1. safe and high-quality care and services;
2. be treated with dignity and respect;
3. have their identity, culture and diversity valued and supported;
4. live without abuse and neglect;
5. be informed about their care and services in a way they understand;
6. access all information about them self, including information about their rights, care and services;
7. have control over and make choices about their care, and personal and social life, including where the choices involve personal risk;
8. have control over, and make decisions about, the personal aspects of their daily life, financial affairs and possessions;
9. their independence;
10. be listened to and understood;
11. have a person of their choice, including an advocate, support them or speak on their behalf;
12. complain free from reprisal, and to have their complaints dealt with fairly and promptly;
13. personal privacy and to have their personal information protected;
14. exercise their rights without it adversely affecting the way they are treated
15. to have fees determined in a way that is transparent, accessible and fair
16. to have fees reviewed periodically and on request when there are changes in financial circumstances
17. not to be denied services due to inability to pay fees for reasons beyond their control

# SERVICE USER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. A Service User should provide reasonable notice if a service is no longer required.
2. Service Users should act in a way which respects the rights of other Service Users and Team Members.
3. Service Users need to take responsibility for the results of any decisions they make including the choice not to make a decision.
4. Service Users must utilise seatbelts and other vehicle safety devices as directed by authorised Team Members.
5. Service Users should respect the confidentiality of information about other Service Users and Team Members which they may obtain whilst using services.
6. Service Users should inform the Service of any significant change in their circumstances, e.g. health status, mobility decline.
7. Passengers must not be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol and must be reasonably presented (i.e. hygienic and without provocative messages or logos on clothing).
8. We ask that areas concerning culture, politics, religion, etc. be treated with due discretion by all concerned and that clients refrain from swearing.
9. If a Service User continually refuses to abide by their responsibilities, they may be exited from the Service.

# CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Your confidentiality will at all times be respected. However, we do have to give your name, address and phone number to the driver taking you to your appointment.

## What information do we collect about you?

We keep your name and contact details on your client record. Other details such as information about your health are recorded and reviewed regularly.

## Why do we collect your information?

The information we collect helps us keep up-to-date details about your needs so we can care for you in the best possible way. We also use the information to better manage and plan the services we provide.

## Who else sees your information?

All information is kept strictly confidential and is only accessed by authorised staff. As part of our client induction, we ask for your permission to use personal information in our statistical reports to government. At no time are you individually identified in these reports.

## What say do you have in what happens to your information?

You have a say in what happens to your information. We rely on the information you give us to help provide the right care for you. It is your right not to share some of your information or restrict access to your client record, but it may affect our ability to provide you with the best possible services. Talk to us if you wish to change or cancel your consent.

## How will your information be protected?

We are committed to protecting the confidentiality of your record. The privacy of your information is also protected by law. We treat your information in the strictest of confidence and store it securely.

## Can you access your information?

Yes, you have the right to request access to your information and to ask for it to be corrected if necessary.

# FEEDBACK

As a way of improving our services to the community, Linked Community Services welcomes all feedback. Any feedback, suggestion or complaints helps us to identify problems and improve our service. A Feedback forms are available in our office, from your driver and can be downloaded from the website: [www.linked.org.au](http://www.linked.org.au).

Linked Community Services will resolve all complaints in a confidential manner and the service you receive will not be compromised in any way.

There are some instances where there is a legal requirement and/or duty of care to provide information to a third party for example if there is the potential for harm to self or others or if there are legal implication inherent in the complaint.

You have the right to use an advocate (family member, friend or advocacy service) and we can assist with finding someone to represent you if needed.

## Procedure

- In the first instance, clients are encouraged to raise their complaint with the team member or supervisor responsible for delivering the service concerned.
- If the client is not happy to discuss the issue with the team member or supervisor responsible for delivering the service concerned, they or their advocate may contact the Operations Manager by phone on 6583 8644 or in writing, PO Box 1796, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444 or via email at [transport@linked.org.au](mailto:transport@linked.org.au)
- If the complaint is about the Operations Manager, the complainant may choose to go directly to the CEO or Chairperson of the Board of Management by phone on (02) 6583 8644 or in writing to PO Box 1796, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444 or via email at [info@linked.org.au](mailto:info@linked.org.au)
- At the end of this process, the outcome will be discussed with you and we will ask for feedback as to your satisfaction with the resolution and any improvement to the overall process you may be able to suggest.
- You have the right to appeal any decision(s) made.
- If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may raise the issue with the Chairperson of the Board. To arrange this, phone 6583 8644 or write to The

Chairperson of the Board of Management PO Box 1796, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444. Please mark the envelope CONFIDENTIAL.

**If you are not satisfied with the resolution of your complaint, you may contact:**

### **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**

- Phone: 1800 951 822
- Web: [www.agedcarequality.gov.au](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au)
- Mail: GPO Box 9819, in your capital city

Make sure your letter includes

- your name, address and telephone number
- the date you are lodging your complaint
- details of your complaint, including specific dates of events and relevant comments
- the name of the aged care home or service and the state/territory in which it is located
- the name of the person receiving aged care that your complaint relates to.

### **The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission**

- Phone: 1800 035 544
- Web: [www.ndis.gov.au/](http://www.ndis.gov.au/)

### **Ombudsman NSW:**

- Web: [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au)
- Phone: 1800 451 524
- Email: [nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au)

Please note: All 1800 numbers are free calls from fixed lines; calls from mobiles may be charged.

## **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

You have the right to feel safe and receive good quality service from Linked Community Services.



## What is an incident?

An incident is an act, omission, event or circumstance that harms, or has the potential to harm a person.

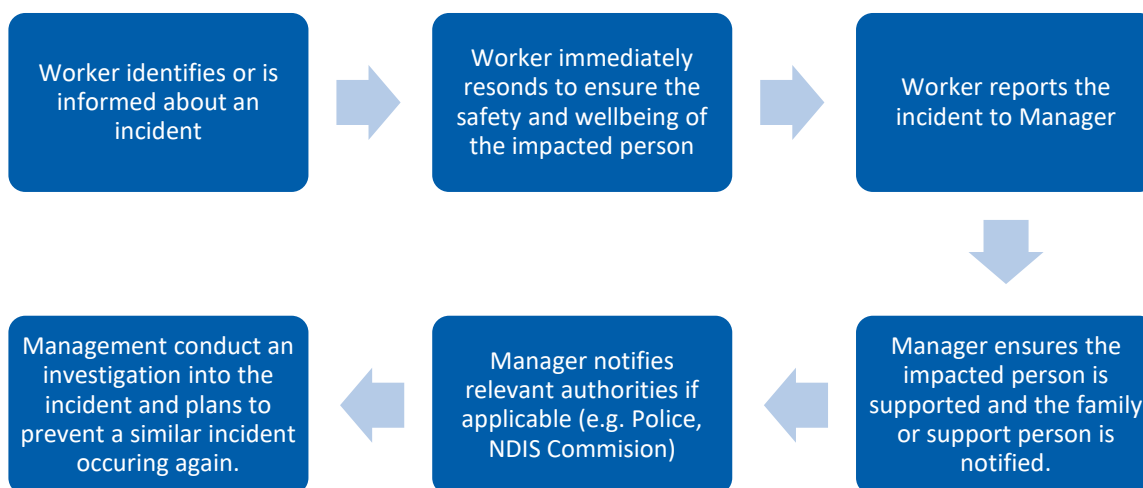
## How does Linked Community Services handle incidents?

Linked Community Services has the responsibility to act upon an incident that occurs in connection with the service or support you receive.

Our Incident Management System ensures that:

- If an incident occurs it is acted upon in a timely manner.
- If you are involved in an incident that you are supported and kept informed of how the incident is being handled.
- Workers are able to identify, manage and report on incidents and near misses.
- Incidents are documented and reviewed to be sure that they have been acted upon correctly and action has been taken to prevent the incident reoccurring.

In the case of serious incidents, including abuse or neglect, serious injury, death, unauthorised restrictive practice, unlawful sexual contact or sexual misconduct, Linked is required to report to relevant agencies including, but not limited to; Police, Child Protection Agency, Transport NSW, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.



## SERVICES TO ASSIST YOU

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, you may contact the National Relay Service or for vision impairment contact Vision Australia:

- Phone: TTY and Speak and Listen users: phone 1800 035 544 or TTY 133 677
- Web: [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)
- Web: [www.visionaustralia.org/](http://www.visionaustralia.org/)

For Non-English-speaking persons interpreter services are available through:

- Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS) on 131 450
- TTY users' phone 133 677

For Aboriginal persons assistance is available through

- Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) - 1800 334 944

## ADVOCACY

### What is an Advocate?

An advocate is a person who, with the authority of the client, promotes and represents the rights and interests of the people.

Clients may use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf. This may be a family member, friend or advocacy service. Advocates will be accepted by Linked Community Services as representing the interests of the client.

Advocates may be used during assessments, reviews, and complaints or for any other communication between the client and Linked Community Services.

Advocacy and information services perform a crucial role in by helping people to make informed decisions about their lives and help them to choose how they wish to engage with their communities.

### Where can I find an Advocacy or Information Service?

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

Web: <http://opan.com.au/>



Phone: 1800 700 600

The National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP).

Phone: 1800 700 600

The NACAP Program Guidelines (<http://agedcare.health.gov.au/support-services/national-aged-care-advocacy-program-guidelines>) provide further information regarding the delivery of the NACAP.

Disability Advocacy

Web: <http://da.org.au>

Phone: 1300 365





If you would like to know more  
about our service

**PLEASE RING**

**Port Macquarie Office**

26 Lord Street,  
Port Macquarie, NSW, 2444.

**(02) 6583 8644**

**Port Stephens Office**

1/24 George Road,  
Salamander Bay, NSW, 2315.

**(02) 4984 7999**