

COVID-19 SERVICE UPDATE

A guide to our current service delivery

Updated 03/04/2020



To our clients, program partners, supporters and the broader community,

We want all country people to have a safe home, enough money to live on and strong, positive relationships.

Our commitment to country people has not changed, however some of our service delivery currently looks a little different due to restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Our public sites remain open at 29 Bridge Street in **Murray Bridge**, 5 Kealley Street in **Berri**, 22-24 Ferrers Street in **Mount Gambier** and 57-59 George Street in **Millicent**, along with the **Mount Gambier** Family Relationship Centre at 1 Helen Street.

Like many organisations and businesses, we have reduced the number of people at our sites – both staff and visitors – and are requesting people make initial contact via phone on 1300 ACCARE (1300 22 22 73) to discuss how we can provide support for their unique situation.

However, people in need of support, along with other visitors, can still drop-in, provided they comply with restrictions, such as answering questions about their potential exposure to COVID-19 and practicing expected social distancing and hygiene measures.

We hope to be back to normal as soon as possible so people can remain as long they need in our welcoming and safe spaces we have created in regional communities, however must comply with current expectations to keep our community centres functioning and our staff, volunteers, clients and other visitors safe.

Our dedicated team is using new ways of communicating, such as MS Teams for video conferencing, along with telephone calls, to continue to deliver services to clients and maintain contact as much as possible.

Please call **1300 ACCARE (1300 22 22 73)** for details on how specific services are operating in the current situation and advice on how our dedicated team across eastern regional South Australia can support you.

Shane Maddocks,
Chief executive officer
ac.care

Homelessness services (including Murray Bridge Reconnect Program)

These services in the Limestone Coast, Murraylands and Riverland are continuing with drop-in centres remaining open and staff also working with new and existing clients via phone and video conferencing to provide support. Referrals are still being accepted. If you need help out of hours, please call the Homelessness Gateway on 1800 003 308.

Emergency relief

We continue to provide emergency relief, including assistance with food, fuel and some other necessities at our public sites. Food packages are provided through our partnership with FoodbankSA, while other donated food and goods from various businesses can also be collected subject to availability.

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Financial counselling

Our financial counselling team continues to provide services and can offer important advice on how you can manage your finances in these challenging times, particularly if your situation has recently changed.

Foster care

Our dedicated foster care team continues to support our network of dedicated carers across eastern regional South Australia who have welcomed children and young people into their hearts and homes. However, we always need more carers and continue to welcome new applications from families, couples and individuals to join our network of carers and are progressing assessment processes, despite many of our staff currently working from home.

Therapeutic Strength Based Care (Residential care)

Our 24/7, staffed residential services for children and young people in care continue to operate as usual, complying with special government regulations.

Mount Gambier Family Relationship Centre

The centre remains open, however we prefer people call 1800 880 913 to seek advice from our staff on the most appropriate service for their particular situation. Our diverse team of counsellors continues to work with existing and new clients, with in-person contact restricted and appointments largely taking place via video conferencing and telephone. We provide specialist services based on dispute resolution and family mediation and our counsellors are also available to work with families, couples, youths and other individuals across a broad range of personal and relationship issues.

Aboriginal services

Our programs in the Riverland and Murray Bridge are continuing where possible, however some of our group programs have had to be suspended in the current circumstances as we assess and implement new ways of delivery while restrictions are in place. We continue to provide drop-in and ongoing support for new and existing clients with high risk needs in Murray Bridge and Berri.

Minya Porlar Creche

Our crèche in Murray Bridge continues to operate and offer an important service for parents, with this facility and others being regularly reviewed in line with the latest government advice.

Centrelink and Service SA agency

Our Millicent office continues to operate and provide connection to a broad range of ac.care services, along with an agency for government services, with restrictions on the number of people on-site at any time.

Adult Community Education

Unfortunately we have had to temporarily reduce this service while we assess online delivery options.

Family preservation, reunification and support

These services are continuing, with face-to-face contact restricted and many of our staff working remotely, but using alternative forms of communication to engage with clients

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Communities for Children Murraylands

Our facilitating team continues to work with our community partners around how our group activities can be modified, potentially for online delivery. Ongoing support is being offered via phone and email contact where required. Please contact our community partners direct for details about their services.

Limestone Coast children's contact service

Our supervised children's contact and changeover service has been limited to the 70-72 White Avenue premises in Mount Gambier, but cannot be provided at other sites currently due to staffing and social distancing requirements. We are working through other mediums, such as video conferencing, to facilitate supervised contact with children in some circumstances.

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