



Respite and Permanent Residential Aged Care

Information Book

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INTRODUCTION:

Mallee Track Health and Community Service (MTHCS) provides a range of services including community and district nursing, a broad range of community and allied health services and early childhood education and services. In addition, acute medical care, urgent care and residential aged care are provided at Ouyen and Sea Lake. Our catchment covers an area of 18,000 square kilometres across the Mallee in North West Victoria.

Our aged care homes are approved and certified by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care to provide residential aged care. We aim to meet all the requirements of the Aged Care Quality Standards and are certified under the applicable Quality Management System as an accredited health care provider.

As Flexibed Units incorporating aged and acute care, the Ouyen Service Centre located at 28 Britt Street Ouyen, and the Sea Lake Service Centre located at 33-43 McClelland Avenue Sea Lake, provide permanent residential aged care and respite care. The Ouyen Service Centre has 30 beds and Sea Lake has 20 beds.

Pattinson House Hostel, located at 63 Hughes Street Ouyen has 20 residential care beds.

This information has been put together to answer many questions often asked about these services. The Director of Nursing Sea Lake, Nurse Unit Manager Ouyen and Nurse Unit Manager Pattinson House are available to supply further information that you may require.

Our values & behaviours

Accountability	Excellence	Compassion	Teamwork	Integrity	Transparency
VALUE					
We define our expectations and are accountable for our actions	We set high standards and continually strive to improve on them	We treat everyone with care, respect and dignity	We work collaboratively and in the spirit of partnership	We endeavour to do the right thing in all circumstances even if no-one is watching	We are open and honest and embrace positive change
BEHAVIOURS					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We keep our word and do what we say - We own our actions and behaviours - We look for solutions not someone to blame - We hold others to account for poor behaviour and attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We continuously strive to improve by acting on feedback and being open to new ways of doing things - We take initiative and have the courage to question what we do - We are professional in every way, always 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are person centred and deliver a positive experience, every time - We demonstrate care, kindness and empathy - We are flexible, compassionate and offer to help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are responsive to each others' needs - We seek opportunities to break down silos - We respect others' values and opinions - We treat others as we would like to be treated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are honest and reliable - We protect and care for our reputation and build community trust - We value diversity, and are not judgemental - We respect privacy and confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We base decisions on fact, not rumours - We share our knowledge and learning - We embrace change and have a 'can do' attitude - We don't hide or ignore issues but tackle them directly

These values and behaviours were developed by employees from across MTHCS in 2019 over a series of workshops and interviews.

OUR RESIDENTS

We provide high quality aged care through the provision and adoption of the most current nursing practices developed, researched and implemented in long term aged care settings. By prescribing to such high nursing care standards, we are committed at all times to promoting maximum individual independence of all residents while concurrently providing the highest standards of care.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Mallee Track Health and Community Service (MTHCS) recognises that the transition from one place of residence to another for a person can provide feelings of unsettlement, equally amongst family members and close friends as it does for the person seeking admission into our aged care homes. MTHCS is committed to providing the psychological support required to residents' families and friends as they adjust to the transition of their loved one into care. We encourage family members and friends of residents to continue to be involved with the resident and their lifestyle. Through the continuous rapport with family and friends, we are striving to provide the most appropriate and individualised care for each resident.

OUR STAFF

Staff work together to provide people of all ages with access to quality, person centred care. We aim to display a courteous, caring attitude to residents and their visitors. Staff maintain their level of care and knowledge via multiple training methods. Trained and experienced nursing staff, in consultation with the resident and their family, ensure that care needs are met 24 hours a day.

Staff are very aware that the aged care home is the residents' home and every effort is made to respect every residents' privacy and dignity and to meet individual needs. At the Ouyen and Sea Lake Centres, a registered nurse is rostered on duty 24 hours a day to oversee the care delivered to residents. In addition to this registered nurse in charge, supplementary nursing staff are rostered to care for the residents as required to meet nurse/patient ratios. At Pattinson House our Health Care Workers are ready to assist 24 hours a day, with an RN onsite 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday and RN support from the main service centre 7 days per week.

WHO TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Any questions that you may have regarding the operation of the facility or services provided to the residents, can be directed towards:

The Ouyen Nurse Unit Manager, available on (03) 5092 1111 Monday to Friday during business hours.

The Sea Lake Director of Nursing, available on (03) 5070 2155 Monday to Friday during business hours.

ACCOMMODATION

MTHCS Ouyen provides accommodation with single and two bed rooms, all with ensuite bathrooms. Built-in wardrobes and shelving are a feature of each unit. A vanity unit is located in the ensuite. Call buttons are located beside the bed, in the toilet and in the shower to summon assistance.

MTHCS Sea Lake provides accommodation with single units. Built-in wardrobes and shelving are provided in each room. Call buttons are located beside the bed and in the ensuite.

All rooms have individual reverse cycle air conditioning.

Residents are invited to bring their own doona/bedspread or favourite pillow to create a more personal setting, preferably machine washable or family will be responsible for laundering. A small piece of furniture may be brought with the resident if it is suitable, for example a personal chair. Family photos and other mementos can also contribute to the home-like environment.

MEDICAL CARE

The resident's Doctor will continue to provide care following admission to the aged care home. Referral to appropriate specialists is made as required by the attending Doctor. The resident has the right to refuse treatment at any time. They should understand the nature of the procedure or treatment and possible discomfort and risks and the nature of his/her condition to ensure client participation in planning care.

The resident has the right to consent or refuse disclosure of medical information as outlined in the Privacy Brochure.

SERVICES

MTHCS offers a comprehensive range of services to residents. In addition to providing services from within our facility, we also provide access to a wide range of services operating within the wider local community. The following are services offered to residents in our residential aged care homes:

PHYSIOTHERAPY

The Physiotherapist completes an assessment on admission and then annually. If requested by staff or the Doctor, an assessment will be completed and any treatment assessed as necessary for the resident will be implemented.

PODIATRY

A Podiatrist will complete an assessment on admission and then visits every six (6) to eight (8) weeks for those residents with an assessed need. A nurse trained in the care of feet is also available for basic nail care.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

The Occupational Therapist will visit upon staff or Doctor's request to do an assessment and implement any treatment or supports as necessary for the resident.

LEISURE AND LIFESTYLE ACTIVITIES

MTHCS provides a diverse range of activities within our activities programs. The activities provided endeavour to take into account individual interests and preferences. Shortly after admission into the facility, one of our activities staff will introduce themselves to both the resident and their family members/significant other person, and will talk about the resident's leisure and activity interests. This will help them complete a Social, Spiritual and Cultural Profile for the resident.

Residents may be asked to meet the personal costs of outings. Family and residents will be consulted prior to the outing re: costs.

HAIRDRESSER

A local hairdresser visits regularly and attends to residents' needs as required. Prices are negotiated with the hairdresser and are paid directly to them. Alternatively, Residents might like to make their own arrangements.

CLOTHING & LAUNDRY

A full laundry service operates at no additional cost to residents. This service will wash all clothing items that can be accommodated by a standard machine cycle and tumble dryer. Items requiring special care (e.g. woollens) need to be attended to by the family.

All clothing must be clearly but discreetly labelled on admission with sewn labels/marker pens for preference, with the resident's name. This is the responsibility of the family and the facility will make regular checks of clothing. If purchasing new items of clothing please ensure these are well labelled prior to placing in resident's cupboard.

Please check items regularly as no responsibility is accepted for lost clothing not labelled. Residents generally require frequent changes of clothing and therefore it is important to ensure residents have an adequate supply of clothes for day to day use. Clothing should be adequate in size, design and material to accommodate ease of dressing and undressing. The provision of residents' clothing (including underwear) remains the responsibility of the family.

Petal back clothing is optional, however it is recommended when residents lose mobility and dexterity. Brochures are available from the Director of Nursing (Sea Lake) or Nurse Unit Manager (Ouyen).

RECOMMENDED CLOTHING LISTS:

These lists are to assist residents and family members only and are not compulsory. The lists are a recommended minimum requirement of suitable clothing often found most appropriate for residents residing within long term residential care facilities. Individual residents may require more. Staff will notify the family representative if more items are required.

MTHCS recognises that some listed recommended clothing items may be in complete contrast to a resident's normal dress style and code.

As all clothing must be of a suitable nature to minimise risk of injury to both staff and residents, modifications may be necessary to alter existing garments accordingly or it may be necessary to purchase new clothing that is a suitable size, design and fabric to accommodate ease of dressing and undressing.

RECOMMENDED CLOTHING LIST (at a minimum)

Night wear:	Winter	3
	Summer	3
Underwear:	Singlets	4
	Underpants	8
	Socks	6 pair
Footwear:	Slippers	2 pair
	Comfortable shoes	1 pair
Shirts:	Summer shirts/blouse	3
	Winter shirts/blouse	3
Dress/ Pants:		3
Jumpers:		3
Jacket for outings in winter		1
Sun hat:		1

TOILETRIES & CONTINENCE AIDS

Basic toiletries are provided but relatives are free to supply alternatives if the resident has particular preferences. Incontinence aids, appropriate to meet the individual needs, are provided at no cost to the resident.

MEALS AND MEAL TIMES

Meals are prepared in the kitchens at MTHCS Ouyen and Sea Lake and delivered ready for eating prior to each meal time. Meals are prepared fresh on a daily basis to meet the residents' needs. There is a four weekly rotating menu which is reviewed by the Hotel Services Coordinator in conjunction with a qualified dietitian.

Meal times are:

Breakfast: 7.45 – 8.45 am

Morning tea: 10.00 am

Lunch: 12.30 – 1.30 pm

Afternoon tea: 3.00 pm

Dinner: 4.45 – 5.30 pm

Supper is served at 7.30 pm to any resident who would like it.

Food may be brought in for individual consumption by family/friends, but staff reserve the right to check that perishable foods are fit for consumption in accordance with food safety regulations.

TELEVISION & RADIO

Residents are welcome to bring their own entertainment devices such as a television, I pad, laptop, blue tooth speaker. There is free access to WiFi throughout the homes and staff can help with setting up streaming services that residents may have personally subscribed to, eg: Foxtel, Netflix, Spotify etc.

Residents need to be aware that if noise is excessive from television/radio, they may need to use earphones/earplugs to minimise disturbance to other residents.

ELECTRICAL ITEMS

All items need to have an electrical safety check and tag attached prior to use upon admission. These items will be checked at 12 monthly intervals by MTHCS maintenance staff without cost to the residents.

TELEPHONE

Residents are welcome to have their own mobile phones. Alternatively, relatives/friends are welcome to ring the aged care home at any time. It is advisable to ring and notify the staff in advance to allow time for staff to ensure the portable phone is in the resident's room.

SOCIAL & HOSPITAL LEAVE

Relatives are free to take residents on social outings. It is requested that staff are notified when leaving the premises and given an estimated time of return. Staff are to be notified of the resident's return

All residents are entitled to take up to 52 days per financial year of overnight social leave away from the aged care home without impacting their right of occupancy.

Hospital admissions do not incur any restrictive limits for length of stay away from the home.

The resident's usual fees remain payable throughout any period of hospital or social leave.

SECURITY OF TENURE

Every effort is made to ensure residents move into the most appropriate room – reflective of their care needs and personal requirements. They have right of occupancy, or security of tenure, in that room, which is valid from their time of admission to their departure. As circumstances change, however, it may be necessary to move a resident from one room to another for bona fide medical or other care needs. Any such move would be made in consultation with the resident and their family prior to the move.

MTHCS will consider a Resident's request to change rooms, although we are not obliged to facilitate a change of room. Residents are free to move out of the home at any time, be it to re-locate to another care environment or return home to live with their family. MTHCS has an obligation to ensure your new home is safe and appropriate for your care needs.

PETS

Personal pets are not permitted to be kept at either the Ouyen or Sea Lake Service Centres, however, arrangements can be made to have your pet visit by contacting the Director of Nursing (Sea Lake) or Nurse Unit Manager (Ouyen).

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

MTHCS encourages residents where possible to maintain their involvement with the community organisations they are members of or associated with whilst living in the community. We support opportunities for visits to our homes, for example visits by Clergy, school and community groups such as the garden club.

MAIL

Mail is delivered by staff to the resident's room when it arrives at the service centres.

NEWSPAPERS

Residents or their representatives are responsible for arranging the supply of newspapers, magazines etc for the resident with the newsagency (Ouyen) or supermarket or Mallee Printers (Sea Lake) and paying their accounts. Papers are delivered to the aged care homes and distributed to the residents by staff.

SAFE PATIENT HANDLING - NO LIFT

Mallee Track Health and Community Service has adopted a 'No Lift' policy to protect staff and residents from injury. In order for the 'No Lift' policy to be implemented safely and effectively, it is requested that residents' own furniture be kept to a minimum.

If a resident wishes to use their own chair, it will be required to be of a suitable height and style to suit the needs of both the resident and carer.

All clothing must also be of a suitable nature to minimize risk of injury to both staff and residents. Please refer to the “recommended clothing list” on page 7. Catalogues containing specially made suitable clothing can be obtained for residents’ perusal on request.

FEEDBACK

MTHCS encourages all residents and their family, representatives and friends to offer feedback on the care and services received. By receiving feedback, we are able to address issues that may well have escaped our attention, but which may be of paramount importance to the residents. Your feedback is valued and important to help us continue providing the best possible care.

Feedback can be provided verbally to staff or managers, or by completing a “Consumer Complaint/Feedback” form available from ward or reception staff. We welcome comments on the MTHCS web site (www.mthcs.com.au) or facebook page, and you can share your story on Care Opinion (www.careopinion.org.au or PH 1300 662 996). Please contact staff if you need assistance accessing these resources or providing your feedback.

An appointment can also be made with the Executive Director of Nursing or Chief Executive Officer to address any issues or make either positive or negative comment/suggestions, or to escalate any concerns you feel have not been addressed.

All concerns expressed by residents, their family members or friends are treated with the strictest confidentiality. A complete and systematic approach is employed for all grievances.

If you would prefer to speak to someone independent of MTHCS, the following services may be of assistance to you:

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
www.agedcarequality.gov.au/contact
Telephone 1800 951 822

My Aged Care
www.myagedcare.gov.au
Telephone 1800 200 422

Elder Rights Advocacy (ERA)
<https://elderrights.org.au>
Telephone 1800 700 600 (not mobiles)

Office of the Public Advocate Victoria
www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au
PH: 1300 309 337

RESIDENT/FAMILY MEETINGS

Resident/Family meetings are conducted regularly. The purpose of these meeting is to provide a forum where residents and their family members/representatives have the opportunity to comment on matters relating to the aged care home and be involved in decision-making regarding it's operation. All residents, their family members, representatives and volunteers are welcome to attend these meetings.

The date of the next meeting is displayed on the main notice board. Notice of the meeting will be sent to each family representative.

EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

MTHCS has plans for emergency situations that may occur at any time to ensure the safety of residents and staff. The plans for Residential Aged Care include 'Shelter in Place' during emergencies such as bushfire.

You may prefer to be with your family during such an emergency. Please notify staff if this is your wish. You and your family will need to have a plan that includes them collecting you from the facility during such emergencies. If you would like more information about our emergency plans please speak with the Director of Nursing (Sea Lake) or Nurse Unit Manager (Ouyen).

SMOKING

MTHCS prescribes to a no smoking policy. No smoking is permitted within the building and grounds. Residents who wish to quit will be offered support. Entry to the Nursing Home will be deemed as agreement to abide by MTHCS Smoke Free Policy.

ALCOHOL

Residents may consume a limited amount of alcohol unless such consumption is contrary to medical advice or results in behaviour infringing on the rights of other residents.

Visitors are not permitted to consume alcohol on the premises unless it is part of a celebration or activity that the residents are participating in. Some alcohol is provided by the home for special celebrations. All other requirements must be purchased by the resident or family.

Family members are asked to notify the Registered Nurse in charge when bringing alcohol onto the premises. This will then be labelled and stored securely.

BEHAVIOUR

Good communication between you, your family, friends and staff can help to provide you the care and services that best meet your needs. All people involved in aged care – consumers, their families, visitors and staff must respect and be considerate of each other.

You should respect the rights of staff to work in a safe environment and any kind of violence, harassment or abuse towards staff or others will not be tolerated.

By signing a Resident Agreement for entry to aged care, you agree to, among other things, abide by our rules of occupancy and behaviour protocols.

PENSIONS / RESIDENTS' MONEY

MTHCS encourages residents (or their significant other person) to manage their own affairs. Where this is not possible, MTHCS refers residents to 'State Trustees'. Information regarding the financial management of an individual's affairs can be sought from State Trustees on (03) 9667 6444 or Free call 1300 138 672.

VALUABLES / SPENDING MONEY

MTHCS discourages the practice of leaving valuables or large amounts of cash in the home. MTHCS will not take responsibility for the loss of valuables or money despite all endeavours to maintain and promote a secure environment. Residents and/or their family members who choose to leave valuables in the home may do so after exonerating MTHCS from any responsibility.

Residents often require some spending money (petty cash) for the purchase of small items or services such as hairdressing and outings. Residents whose family/authorised representatives are not local may contact the Aged Care Finance Officer through reception at the Ouyen Service Centre (03 5092 1111) or Sea Lake Service Centre (03 5070 2155) for information about our resident trust account process.

FEES AND CHARGES

MTHCS operates under the same authority that controls all Aged Care homes in Australia, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. MTHCS assesses and charges daily care fees and other accommodation payments in accordance with the Aged Care Act 1997 and associated legislation.

As a Multi-Purpose Service, MTHCS fees and charges are slightly different to other aged care homes. Your income and assets will also affect the fees and charges you will be asked to pay and fees may vary from person to person. Information about fees and charges at MTHCS can be provided by the Aged Care Finance Officer (Ouyen and Sea Lake) on 5092 1111. General information is available from My Aged Care (1800 200 422, (www.myagedcare.gov.au) or Centrelink Aged Care Fee Assessments and Services (1800 227 475) or Department of Veterans' Affairs (www.dva.gov.au/aged care costs)

ACCOUNTS

Aged care fees are payable in advance. Accounts are processed on a monthly basis and are posted/emailed to the person nominated as responsible for paying the account. Payment is due prior to the end of the month and may be paid at MTHCS reception at Ouyen or Sea Lake, between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm. EFTPOS is available at both centres.

Payment can also be made by Cheque through the mail, Electronic Funds Transfer (internet banking) or Centrepay Deduction.

Residents should not provide cash or their bank account and PIN details to any person to pay their accounts for them, unless that person is their duly authorised representative.

All account enquiries should be directed to the Administration Office, Mallee Track Health and Community Service, Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 5.00 pm (excluding public holidays) on (03) 5092 1111.

PRESCRIPTIONS and PHARMACY ACCOUNTS

Prescriptions are stored at each Service Centre and are sent to the respective Pharmacy for dispensing as necessary. Items will be delivered upon dispensing to the aged care home. Pharmacy Accounts are billed directly from the pharmacy to the resident and payment is to be made directly to the pharmacy by the resident or their representative.

VISITING HOURS

MTHCS encourages family and friends to visit residents as often as possible. However, to ensure residents have adequate time for rest and attending daily needs, visitors are preferred between 11.00 am and 8.00 pm. Visiting at meal times is especially welcome, allowing positive interaction to take place.

VOLUNTEERS

MTHCS is grateful for any volunteer input that we receive. Volunteers are welcomed into the aged care homes and can assist residents in many different ways. If you would like to be involved formally as a volunteer on a regular basis, please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator, who will make the necessary arrangements. The Coordinator is based at the Ouyen Service Centre and can be contacted on (03) 50921 111.

FRIENDLY VISITING

This service is available for any person who has relatives who are distanced or unable to visit regularly. Please ask Nursing staff to arrange service if required or contact can be made with the Volunteer Coordinator on (03) 50921 111.

VOTING / ELECTORAL ROLL / MEDICARE / CENTRELINK / DEPT VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Following admission into an aged care home, it is that necessary all relevant authorities be notified of your change of address, regardless of whether you still have a spouse living at home in the community. This includes removal from Electoral Roll if deemed appropriate. The alteration of a resident's address from their previous place of residence to MTHCS is the responsibility of the resident or their nominated next of kin.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

MTHCS strongly advises prospective residents to nominate a Financial Power of Attorney. It is extremely important that a Power of Attorney be nominated before the health status of an individual alters as this sometimes renders people ineligible from nominating the person of their choice to act on their behalf. We encourage appointment of an Enduring Power of Attorney, which allows the appointed attorney to continue to act on the resident's behalf if the resident subsequently ceases to have capacity to manage their own financial affairs. If an individual is unable to nominate a Power of Attorney due to their current health status, they are referred to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for the appointment of a Guardian (for decisions about where a person lives, with whom, health care and medical treatment) and an Administrator (for financial matters).

MEDICAL POWER OF ATTORNEY/ MEDICAL TREATMENT DECISION MAKER

MTHCS recommends that all people nominate an Enduring Medical Power of Attorney, or a Medical Treatment Decision Maker, so as any previously convened wishes for care, end of life care or refusal of care and treatment and can be implemented. Nominating a medical power of attorney also protects each resident of an aged care home, ensuring that no medical treatment or the prescription of medications is instigated without the prior approval and consent from your nominated party, if the resident is unable to make those decisions themselves

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

An Assessment by an Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS) and approval for respite or permanent residential care is required prior to admission for most aged care homes. If you are making enquiry for care at MTHCS and other aged care homes, you will need to register with My Aged Care (PH 1800 200 422) and request an assessment.

Whilst preferred, an aged care assessment is not essential for admission to care in MTHCS's aged care homes.

Enquiries regarding the availability of care and your care needs should be made to the relevant care manager (See "Who to contact for further information" on page 5). You will then be referred to the Aged Care Finance Officer to complete an Application for Admission and arrange a Resident Agreement.

ADMISSION CHECKLIST

In order to ensure the easiest and most comfortable transition into Residential care, we ask that you ensure you (or your family member(s) / representative / other) brings the following items with you on your admission day:

Medicare Card	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Pension Card	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Repatriation Card (Department of Veterans' Affairs-if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Pharmaceutical benefits Scheme (PBS) Card	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Ambulance Number	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Private health Insurance card (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Current nominated Doctor's name	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Doctor's telephone number	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Next of Kin	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Next of Kin's address and telephone number	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Nominated Funeral Director	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Nominated Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Name of Person responsible for paying account	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Address and telephone number of person paying account	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Enduring Power of Attorney (if completed)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Enduring Medical Power of Attorney (if completed)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Guardianship Administration board Orders (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Advanced Care Directive/Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

PRIVACY

Mallee Track Health and Community Service is committed to protecting your privacy. We are required by law to protect all your personal and confidential information such as information relating to your health and other personal details. We comply with all Victorian legislation relating to confidentiality and privacy, including, where relevant, the Health Services Act 1988 (Vic), the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic) and the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014, and in accordance with guidelines issued by the Health Complaints Commissioner.

This statement sets out policies for the management of health information at Mallee Track Health and Community Service (MTHCS).

Staff at MTHCS cannot use or disclose information of a personal nature, except to the extent that this is required, authorised or permitted under law or where you consent to release. All staff at MTHCS are trained and understand their obligations under the laws relating to maintaining your privacy. Policies at MTHCS are in place to ensure that only staff involved in your treatment access your health record. Staff at MTHCS will only collect health information that is necessary for them to perform their duties and functions. They will always try to do so in a fair, lawful and non-intrusive way. Wherever possible, the collection of information will be made directly from you rather than from third parties.

Staff at MTHCS will do their best to tell you if information has been collected about you from a third party. When you become a patient of MTHCS a medical record is made. It contains your name, address, contact details, health information and the treatment you were given.

When Information is collected from you, you have the Right to Be Informed of the following:

1. Why it is being collected;
2. What law if any, requires it to be collected;
3. Who generally will have access to that information;
4. Staff will also explain the consequences for you if the information is not provided (Depending on your medical condition, it is our normal practice to share certain information with third parties. For example, your treating General Practitioner will receive a discharge summary from us).

Generally, information is collected for the purpose of providing care and treatment to you and for purposes directly related to providing such care and treatment.

- Your information may be disclosed to other health care providers for the purpose of providing further treatment to you.
- We may also use your information for purposes as are permitted under the privacy laws. Aside from where the law specifically allows your health information to be used and disclosed, MTHCS staff are not to use or disclose such information for purposes which are unrelated to the purposes for which they were collected without your prior consent.
- MTHCS staff will undertake everything possible to make sure that the information held about you is accurate, complete and up to date. Every time you attend MTHCS new information is added to your record.
- MTHCS is required under the Public Records Act 1973 as amended 2014, to hold some records for extended periods. We are required to keep medical records for 7 years after last attendance for adults, and for children until they reach the age of 25 years. The record is then destroyed using secure means such as shredding. From time to time audits of our records and data bases are conducted to ensure that the information being held is accurate and up to date.
- Our physical or paper records are securely stored and can only be accessed by authorised staff and we have comprehensive auditing procedures to prevent and detect unauthorised access and fraud.
- Access to our record keeping and computer systems is controlled and monitored. Only MTHCS staff and authorised external users have access to systems that their duties require.
- Any individual or organisation (such as an outside service provider), who is seeking access to health information held by MTHCS is required to sign a confidentiality agreement. For example, the external pathology provider is obliged not to release your health information except to MTHCS staff and your treating Doctor.
- You may authorise us in writing to release your information to a third party, for example your Solicitor, or Department of Veterans Affairs, in this case confidentiality agreement is not required.

- If you are unable to give permission for information to be released, then written permission will be obtained from your next of kin (spouse/partner, nearest relative over the age of 18), guardian, or person you have nominated to represent you.
- In certain situations your medical record may be reviewed by Clinical Auditors. This is done to monitor and reduce adverse events and to improve the quality of care.
- You may ask for access to information being held about you. However, there are some exceptions to this. For example, if the access to health information about you would unreasonably disclose information relating to others or where the information would otherwise be exempt from disclosure by law.
- It is also important to note that from time to time transfer of health information about you to organisations outside Victoria for the purpose of the provision of care or treatment to you may also be required. For example, you might be transferred to a hospital in Adelaide for further treatment and your medical record would be useful for the treating Doctor to quickly identify which treatments are likely to be safe and effective for you. This may only be done where you consent and where we believe that the recipient organisation is subject to binding privacy obligations that are substantially similar to the ones under which we operate, or where it is in your interests for us to do so (and it is impracticable to obtain your consent).
- You have the right to tell us that you do not wish to have any information released about your health status. We will respect your wishes to the extent permitted by law.
- Be reassured at MTHCS any suspected infringements of privacy will be thoroughly investigated. Disciplinary action is taken in cases where infringements of privacy are proven.
- If you have been transported to hospital via ambulance, ambulance personnel from Ambulance Victoria will have collected basic personal details (e.g. name, address, telephone number, date of birth and insurance or benefit card details if available), incident details and initial medical information required to ensure your safe transportation, effective treatment on arrival at the hospital and billing for ambulance services if required. This information is provided to the hospital upon arrival to ensure continuity of care. Your information is securely managed by both the hospital and ambulance services.

IF YOU

- want to have access to your health information we hold about you;
- believe information we hold about you is inaccurate and would like to request that it be amended; • want to know more about the type of information we hold, for what purposes and how we deal with that information; or
- have concerns that your privacy rights may have been infringed. Please firstly discuss this matter with the staff member assisting you or:

Contact the MTHCS Operational Freedom of Information Officer

Requests for access to your medical record can be made in writing to the Freedom of Information Officer, Mallee Track Health and Community Service.

A fee will be incurred and must accompany such requests. Payable to Mallee Track Health and Community Service.