

SUPPORTING BRISBANE'S SENIORS THROUGH COVID-19

Burnie Brae is living its vision of community, connection and care.

Burnie Brae is a not-for-profit community organisation based in Chermside, QLD, with a mission to build strong community connections by providing quality health, lifestyle and care services to seniors and younger people living with a disability. During this time of COVID-19, Burnie Brae has been committed to providing new ways of delivering these core values to the community.

Burnie Brae has rolled out pre-configured tablets to their day respite centre clients, in partnership with Aurous and thanks to generous government funding. The tablets are set up with easy to use buttons for the major apps needed, come with data, and are supported by staff and volunteers. Day respite centre clients are now able to group chat with their friends from respite during a regular weekly chat time, and they can chat with friends and family using video chat at any time.

A full online activity timetable has been developed, including weekly entertainers, exercise groups, bingo, trivia, gardening groups and craft. Each client is matched with a volunteer who contacts them on a weekly basis, providing much needed connection and support.

Burnie Brae are planning towards the expansion of the distribution of tablets beyond their day respite clients, by putting them into the hands of other vulnerable seniors in Brisbane. These seniors will be able to use them to assist their ability to exercise from home, access telehealth services, video call loved ones and take part in Burnie Brae activities online.

Burnie Brae CEO, Kevin Rouse said, "Together we are traversing unprecedented times: we are navigating something new to us all, on a global scale. The values of community, connection and care are the common threads that run through all that we do."

"As members of the Burnie Brae Family, we are standing with our members and clients as we face the challenges before us. We will get through this and we will get through it together."

Burnie Brae members are embracing the new online delivery of activities. Here's what members and activity participants, Jim and Jean had to say, "Thank you Lee and to Burnie Brae for their help and support at this strange and difficult time. It was good to have a phone call by staff some time ago to see if we were coping and were safe and well in our lockdown. Thank you once again for all the care to all of us. We look forward to our next lesson."

Online and Zoom options for members include: Zumba, Art, Matwork Pilates, Functional Fitness, Ballroom Dancing, Line Dancing, Gypsy Rumba and Clogging. And to make it easier for those who may not necessarily be technology savvy, the Burnie Brae team have created a series of [Burnie Brae blogs and tutorials](#) to help, such as the popular 'How to join & use Zoom'.

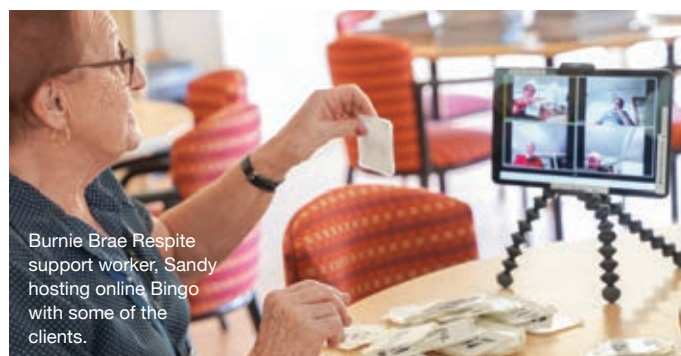
Our Healthy Connections team of degree-qualified exercise physiologists have been busy putting together a series of home exercise videos for gym and community members to follow at home, available on YouTube. Options available include Functional Fitness, Theraband, and Core and Mobility workouts. [Healthy Connections - at Home](#) Facebook group member, Wendy, says, "Thank you Tyler and everyone involved in setting this up. I love that I can log in and exercise whenever I feel like it."

The Healthy Connections staff are also regularly calling clients, providing one-on-one visits in the client's home and offering telehealth appointments, as well as creating interesting and relevant [Health Connections blogs](#), geared towards seniors, encouraging them to keep moving and active.

At Burnie Brae, it really is about being in this together. ■

Beth Kitson is Marketing Team Leader, Burnie Brae.

For more information visit www.burniebrae.org.au



Burnie Brae Respite support worker, Sandy hosting online Bingo with some of the clients.



The team from Burnie Brae, ready to deliver iPads to the day Respite clients. L-R: Moira, Sandy, Nick, Erik, Tony, Sally, Beth, Maddie, Karen and Karma.