March - June 2022

travellersaid.org.au

Travellers Voice

Making events and attractions more accessible and inclusive.

This magazine is produced with the generous support of V/Line

Travellers Aid

CEO Update

What better way to kick off 2022 than at one of the most exciting sporting events of the year – the Australian Open.

Working closely with Tennis Australia and Yarra Trams, we were able to make this event more accessible and inclusive for guests by providing access and egress support to people with disabilities and others who were experiencing mobility challenges.

Our volunteers have returned with fresh enthusiasm, and we also welcome many new volunteers who have proven to be an invaluable part of the team. Whether driving a buggy at Seymour and Southern Cross Stations or providing mobility assistance at iconic Melbourne events such as the Australian Open and Moomba, our staff and volunteers make a tangible difference to people's participation in their communities, and it shows in the glowing feedback we have received.

With the introduction of our new Time Out program, we continue to expand our services across metropolitan Melbourne and to larger regional centres throughout Victoria. The Time Out program will provide respite and support to the many dedicated carers across Victoria so that they can have some time out to attend to their own personal needs. With one in eight Victorians providing unpaid care for their loved one, this is a valuable program for carers who can be assured that their loved one will be treated with the utmost dignity and respect while they take a little time out for themselves.

> **We look forward to making a broader connection with the people we serve as well as our partners during the coming months.**

As we return to the events and social occasions that have been missed over the past couple of years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our service offering has expanded. Travellers Aid is proud to be present at many major events and Melbourne attractions, ensuring that they are inclusive and accessible to everyone in our community.

We hope to see you soon.

Elias Lebbos | Chief Executive Officer

Access & Inclusion at the Australian Open 2022

Between 17 – 30 January 2022, Travellers Aid volunteers and staff assisted 221 tennis fans, providing buggy and wheelchair assistance, personal guidance, directions and other general information.

Travellers Aid's Access and Inclusion Service has meant that many more tennis fans could attend where previously they may have stayed away, concerned about the physical challenges they would face getting to and from Melbourne Park.

"Thank you for all your volunteers' assistance over the 4 days I attended the Australian Open 2022.

I was hesitant in attending the event this year due to a mobility issue.

After my experience on day one, knowing that this service was available, I believed that I could comfortably attend the AO as we had planned –it being the 20th year of my attendance.

I had the pleasure of interacting with your volunteers', who made me feel that nothing was too much effort, without the presence of this personalised assistance/ service from the Travellers Aid volunteers I doubt that my experience at AO22 would have been such a positive one. Thank you, Travellers Aid!!! You made a huge difference.

Thanks for

- *your smile*
- *your willingness to help*
- *thinking of others before you think of yourself"*

– Monica

Time Out Program

Travellers Aid is delighted to share with you an innovative new program we have available in metropolitan Melbourne and selected regional centres, including Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Seymour and Traralgon.

With one in eight Australians caring for a family member or friend in an unpaid capacity, providing respite is an important part of caring for those who care. Respite enables the carer to take a break and recharge while they are confident that their loved one is engaged in an activity they enjoy.

> **The Time Out program provides respite for unpaid carers who look after parents, partners, adult children, or other family members, so that they can have some time out to attend to their own personal needs.**

Here's how it works:

- Using public transport, we can accompany people to and from attractions, events, appointments, or other day-to-day activities either as an added support for the Carer or as the replacement Carer.
- We will meet the care recipient, who may have travelled with their carer into a regional centre or into metropolitan Melbourne and accompany them on fun and flexible activities.
- Activities will be tailored to individual preferences and will include a range of options such as visiting a local attraction; enjoying an art gallery or museum; attending a music concert or the theatre; experiencing the ambience of a local park or a regional zoo; attending a local farmers' market or the Queen Victoria market.
- We are able to provide limited personal care such as meal assistance.
- Our services are provided with the highest level of care, respect and dignity.

All Travellers Aid Volunteers and staff delivering the service are screened and suitably trained.

For more information email **BookNow@travellersaid.org.au** or call (03) 9068 8187

Yarra Trams Disruption

Earlier this month, Travellers Aid provided a wheelchair assistance service along Swan Street, Richmond during upgrades to the number 70 tram line.

Working with our partner Yarra Trams we ensured that people could navigate the disruptions as seamlessly as possible, especially those in the community who have mobility challenges.

During some hot weather and with problematic access issues, our nimble volunteers once again proved themselves to be responsive to changing needs, providing peace of mind to Yarra Trams customers, and allowing them to carry on with their planned journeys with as little disruption as possible.

MOOMBA

Travellers Aid are partnering with Moomba and the City of Melbourne to create an accessible and inclusive festival. Our friendly staff and volunteers will provide communication, meal and mobility assistance as well as mobility equipment hire from 10am – 10pm from Saturday to Monday.

Travellers Aid will also distribute Sunflower products to those who require them as the City of Melbourne launches the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower initiative, assisting those with hidden disabilities. The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a discreet way to communicate that the wearer may need some additional support, help or a little more time. Fast becoming a globally recognised symbol, Travellers Aid is happy to support people with hidden disabilities to gain better access to assistance when they require it. If you would like to stop by our Marquee and collect a sunflower lanyard, you are more than welcome.

We will also offer a safe, stress-free space for anyone who requires somewhere to self-regulate and calm. It is a pleasure to be involved in such a fun and vibrant Melbourne event and we look forward to seeing you there to discover the magic of Moomba!

Companion Service at Queen Victoria Market

The Travellers Aid Companion Service has been supporting people to participate in the community for over 10 years with volunteer companions assisting people to appointments, social activities, events and attractions, work and education.

We were delighted to expand this offering during 2021 and early 2022 to enable people with mobility challenges to enjoy the iconic Queen Victoria Market. During the summer months, Travellers Aid in partnership with the City of Melbourne, was able to support people with mobility challenges, sensory disabilities, intellectual disabilities, physical or mental health issues or people who just feel more comfortable with someone walking beside them.

The Summer Night Market is a highlight of the Queen Victoria Market's offering, and we were excited to be there to aid in creating a safe, comfortable, and fun environment for people who wanted some support as Melbournians gathered to enjoy good food, drinks and entertainment.

Site Services and Hours

Our services continue to operate as usual with COVID-safe regulations in place. Here's how we can help you at our Travellers Aid sites:

Southern Cross Station

- Connection Assistance (buggy, wheelchair and guidance)
- Mobility Equipment Hire
- Companion Service
- Crisis Travel
- Personal Care
- Backpacker Services
- Station Lounges – Internet access, mobility equipment recharging, shower facilities and more.

Opening hours:
6.30am – 9.30pm, 7 days a week

Personal Care Opening hours:
11am – 5pm, Monday to Friday and
11am – 4pm Saturdays and Sundays

Phone: (03) 9670 2072
Email: scs@travellersaid.org.au

Flinders Street Station

- Mobility Equipment Hire
- Companion Service
- Personal Care
- Luggage Storage
- Backpacker Services
- Station Lounges – Internet access, mobility equipment recharging and more.

Opening hours:
8am – 7pm, 7 days a week

Personal Care Opening hours:
8am – 7pm, 7 days a week

Phone: (03) 9068 8187
Email: fss@travellersaid.org.au

Seymour Station

- Connection Assistance
- Companion Service

Opening hours:
8.30am – 6.30pm, Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 5793 6210
Email: seymour@travellersaid.org.au

V/Line Connecting Communities

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