New Online System to reduce paperwork for country patients

On 1 July 2016, a new online portal went live making applying for the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme (PATS) easier than ever before for country South Australians.

Country Health SA LHN Chief Executive Officer, Maree Geraghty said the online system will provide applicants and health professionals with a “one-stop shop” for all PATS information, including application criteria.

“While we always aim to deliver health services as close to people’s homes as possible, there are occasions when country residents need to travel for health care,” Ms Geraghty said.

“This is why it is so important to have PATS information easily accessible to assist people at a time when they are already facing the challenges of ill health.

“We have consulted on the new online system design with a wide range of health stakeholders and feedback has been very positive, particularly regarding the new, easy-to-use format for entering information.

“We understand that changing to an online portal may not be possible for all PATS users, so the paper-based system is available to all those who would prefer to stay with the initial claim format.

“By strengthening our PATS program, along with our continued investment in services such as the Telehealth Network and regional chemotherapy/dialysis units, we are ensuring people living in rural SA have access to high quality services.”

In the event that country South Australians and their carers require travel beyond 100 kilometers to see their closest medical specialist, PATS provides a subsidy to partially cover expenses associated with travel and accommodation costs.

Each year more than 16,000 people use PATS, lodging around 40,000 claims.

For more information, visit the online portal at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/pats.

NAIDOC 2016

NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee) is hosted not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australian communities from around the country. NAIDOC is held from the first Sunday in July until the following Sunday. It is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements and is an opportunity to recognise the contributions that Indigenous Australians make to our country and our society.
Across country health sites, events took place at Moonta, Flinders & Upper North region, Meningie, Port Augusta, West Augusta, Whyalla, Riverland, Waikerie, Lameroo, Pinnaroo, Mt Gambier, Penola, Bordertown, Kingston and Naracoorte.

NAIDOCs origins can be traced to the emergence of Aboriginal groups in the 1920s which sought to increase awareness in the wider community of the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians.

This year's theme is “The living narrative of our nation”

Songlines are the oldest living narrative of our nation, and was the focus for the 2016 NAIDOC Week celebrations.

The 2016 theme, Songlines - The living narrative of our nation, highlights the importance of Songlines to the existence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the Dreamtime describes a time when the earth, people and animals were created by our ancestral spiritual beings. They created the rivers, lakes, plants, land formations and living creatures. Dreaming tracks are sometimes called Songlines which record the travels of these ancestral spirits who 'sung' the land into life.

The National NAIDOC Committee encourages all Australians to explore and celebrate how, through Songlines, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain connected to Country and have been able to maintain and share sacred stories and ceremonies for tens of thousands of years.

The National NAIDOC Committee said the theme is one which will showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people histories and deep spiritual connection to the land.

"Through learning more about Songlines, all Australians can celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as the oldest continuing cultures on the planet”.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people used Songlines to navigate vast distances and map oceans, waterholes, rivers, birds, animals, plants and hunting grounds.

Vincent N Buckskin, Aboriginal Cultural Advisor, Transition Care Program, CHSALHN via email: vincent.buckskin@sa.gov.au

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