

## **Cootamundra Can Assist receives crucial funding**

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### Local News

Cancer support network Can Assist has been given a timely financial boost with vital funding from [greenslips.com.au](https://greenslips.com.au).

The funding will benefit cancer patients across the shire who rely on their cars to travel to and from treatment.

Can Assist Cootamundra provides practical and financial support to cancer patients across the shire by paying for medical expenses and now, thanks to the [greenslips.com.au](https://greenslips.com.au) donation, CTP greenslips for some clients.

Currently, the branch has 300 clients on their books and between 25 to 35 people are assisted each month. "If it wasn't for Can Assist, there are people who could not afford their treatment," said Branch Treasurer, Colleen Flynn.

Branch President Beverly Withers, a retired nurse who knows first-hand the financial and emotional impacts of cancer, said the funds from [greenslips.com.au](https://greenslips.com.au) "will make a huge difference".

"We have found that many people are very humble and self-conscious about asking for help. If they know we are getting assistance from [greenslips.com.au](https://greenslips.com.au) they will be more willing to ask for assistance from Can Assist," she said.

"And if we can take the stress of financial challenges away, then they can concentrate on their treatment and recovery."

Colleen, a cancer survivor herself, said such tangible support is vital, particularly because "there's always travel involved".

"We're 100km away from radiation treatment and often people have to go every day for six weeks - that's a 200km return trip each day," she said.

"In addition, we have some clients with really serious cancer diagnoses who have to travel to Sydney, Melbourne or Canberra for treatment. It will be wonderful to give clients' money towards their car costs.

"To be able to pay for their greenslip takes a load off their mind, and we already have several people we can help immediately with these funds."

Last financial year, Can Assist Cootamundra spent \$80,000 assisting local cancer patients, with the community donating almost \$40,000.

"That's what our fundraising does," Colleen said.

"We are busy filling the gap but we always make sure we have a contingency so we never have to say no to a client who needs assistance.

"Serious sickness is scary in the country and financial assistance from Can Assist can mean the difference between eating that week or not."

### **Supporting locals**

What sets Can Assist apart from other charities is that all money raised locally stays local. The branches are funded entirely by local donations and fundraising events, and corporate support such as [greenslips.com.au](https://greenslips.com.au).

"We run a local barbecue trailer every two weeks and do a lot of cooking and catering," Colleen said.

"But we need younger people with new ideas for fundraising. The town supports us - they're amazing - but we're having trouble reaching everyone. We're always looking for new ideas on how to reach our communities."

**More awareness (and volunteers) needed**

The Can Assist Cootamundra branch, which is run entirely by local volunteers, suspects there are more cancer patients in the community who need help - and they're keen to support them.

"We are sure there are people who need our assistance but haven't asked us," Colleen said.

"We can't approach a patient, they need to approach us," she said.

"So, it's important to get the word out there about Can Assist and how we can help."

But that's not all, they're also keen to see more volunteers join the branch.

"We're always looking for volunteers, particularly younger ones. At 67 I'm one of the youngest, while some of our original volunteers are in their 80s," Colleen said.

Adds Beverley: "We need extra help. We need people to step up. We've been going for 38 years and the community needs us and we need the community."

**For information about donating or volunteering with Can Assist Cootamundra, call 0413 937 943. For further information about how to support Can Assist, visit [www.canassist.org.au](http://www.canassist.org.au).**