



21 JUL, 2022

One less cost for patients, thanks to Can Assist

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By Tahlia Sinclair

Cancer patients in Nyngan will have one less cost to worry about thanks to a partnership between Can Assist and website greenslips.com.au. The organisations have paired together to provide funds to patients to pay their green slips, to ensure they are able to afford to have their cars on the road.

Can Assist Nyngan president Lynette Webster said the closest cancer facility to Nyngan is in Dubbo, a four-hour round trip away.

"And if clients have to travel to Sydney for treatment, that's a very long trip. You need a car when you live out here, everything is about travel, even to go shopping. People depend on their own cars, it provides independence and privacy when you need it most. When you're having treatment, you don't want to sit on a bus, so private transport is very important."

The COVID-19 pandemic has stymied Can Assist's ability to raise funds for their patients. The pandemic, on top of drought, flood, and the mice plague, has made it even harder for people in the community to survive financially.

"Any assistance is greatly needed, so these funds, which will help pay for patients' green slips, will be a wonderful help to them and

their families. Clients often give up their jobs when going through treatment and they don't have sick leave or annual leave, so having one less expense is a big relief.

"It really helps clients' mental health," said Ms Webster.

As locals well know, all money raised in Nyngan by Can Assist stays in Nyngan to support local patients, rather than going into a state-wide or national fund pool.

Ms Webster said that the direct support of city-based organisations and corporations to regional branches is essential. "It is great to know there's funding from greenslips.com.au and that they have thought of the people in rural and regional NSW who need to travel. It's such a good feeling," Ms Webster said.

But one isn't enough; though grateful for the funding, Ms Webster would like to see

even more corporates come on board in greenslips.com.au's footsteps.

"I don't think many people in the city understand how people in the bush have to travel to access treatment, and the stress that's involved.

"The cost of cancer is expensive. In a farming community, some of the farmers who have cancer don't want to leave their farms. People in the country are likely to die earlier because of the burden to travel to treat-

ment." As the cost of living keeps increasing, and regular trips to regional centres such as Dubbo become less affordable, Ms Webster said Can Assist can't stretch their funds as far.

"People in rural areas simply don't have the money to donate while trying to afford day-to-day necessities."

Ms Webster hopes that the funds and better awareness of Can Assist will help bring more patients to them.

"Some people won't ask for help because they're too proud, but a little encouragement goes a long way. It's all confidential, and we urge cancer patients to contact us if they need help."

Founder and owner of greenslips.com.au, Stephen Treacey, said he knows firsthand the importance of having a vehicle for rural and regional cancer patients.

"We've seen and heard about the practical and emotional impacts on the people they support, and the timely nature of it.

"We're proud to support Can Assist's rural and regional cancer patients with the cost of their green slip.

"Can Assist's powerhouse of volunteers and unique fundraising model, with all money raised locally staying local, ensures donations make a tangible impact with those who need it most."



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Can Assist Nyngan volunteers.



Lyn Webster, Mim Pateman, and Scott Barley. Photos supplied.