



CARING COMMUNITY – Stakeholder Rob Collins (left) and case manager Ian Eyles discuss an Australian first introduced by Care Connect.

## Care for specific needs

**BARRIERS** are being broken down with the introduction of Australia's first aged care packages specifically designed for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex older adults.

Care Connect has the support of the Department of Health and Ageing to tailor existing government packages to suit the community in south-east Queensland.

The department offers Community Aged Care, Extended Aged Care at Home and Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia.

"We worked in partnership with Healthy Communities (the lesbian,

gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex peak body for Queensland) to successfully gain Commonwealth funding to support these specific packages," said Care Connect chief executive officer Paul Ostrowski.

Traditionally, he said this community had been invisible in terms of aged care tailored to their needs and sensitivities.

"Care Connect recognises that many gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people come from a marginalised community group," Paul said.

Care Connect's trained staff and case managers understand specific issues,

such as fear of discrimination, and for those in relationships, not having their partner recognised and acknowledged as their chosen decision maker.

"Our hope is that those who are at risk of not being cared for can now feel comfortable getting appropriate support provided in a sensitive manner," Paul said.

The packages offer a plan of support and care for older people living at home.

All packages are individually co-ordinated and help older adults remain active in their communities.

■ Care Connect, phone 1800-116-166, [www.careconnect.org.au](http://www.careconnect.org.au)