

Connect with flexibility

Home care service uses iPad access

GETTING the support you need to live independently – whatever your abilities – just got a whole lot easier in the Caboolture region, thanks to an innovative program, iCareConnect.

Developed by Care Connect, iCareConnect uses iPads and video conferencing technology to give people receiving home care services better access to support at the touch of the button.

But for Mount Mee's Neil Cook it has meant much more than easy access to Care Connect support workers.

"I'd given up reading novels," said Mr Cook, who has hereditary motor and sensory neuropathy, a condition similar to motor neurone disease, but which progresses more slowly.

The condition significantly affects his hands and feet, to the point where he has limited mobility and needs help



MAKING CHANGES: Neil Cook enjoys the ease of using his iPad.

PHOTO: VICKI WOOD

with personal care and dressing.

Mr Cook is unable to turn the pages of a novel. He has no sensitivity to hot and cold, or sharp objects, which means cooking, or even making a cup of tea for his wife Deb, is out of the question.

"Deb has to help me to dress – I can't put my socks on or do up my belt. I could possibly drive a car. But I just can't open the door, put my seatbelt on, put the keys in the ignition, start the car or turn it off when I arrive," he said.

But thanks to the iPad

supplied by Care Connect as part of the iCareConnect program, Mr Cook has become an avid reader again after signing up to the local e-library.

He uses iCareConnect to regularly meet with his client adviser, based an hour away in Banyo.

The video conferences supplement in-person meetings, and provide for much richer interaction than over the phone, involving up to three people, such as a client, client adviser and nurse.

"Thanks to iCareConnect I'm not just a name on a piece of paper – I'm a person," Mr Cook said.

"This technology enhances these meetings and also makes them much more flexible," he said.

Care Connect state manager NSW and Queensland Helen Carter said in addition to the iPad, Care Connect has supported Neil and Deb by providing access to an electric wheelchair, gardening and domestic help and travel support.

"Our role is to guide and support people so they can live the lives they want," Ms Carter said.

"We provide support tailored to each person's unique needs and goals and iCareConnect is another way that we can personalise our services," she said.

To find out more about the iCareConnect program, phone 1800 116 166 or email info@careconnect.org.au.