



JP gets behind the wheel

When Lake Wallace parkrun members found their storage shed decked out with shelves and hooks, they instantly knew who was responsible.

It was the same man who quietly collected wood and lit the fire in the early hours, before everyone arrived. The same man who did a course check, fixed a flag holder and put a billy on the boil for all to enjoy.

'Volunteer' is far from a new title for 80-year-old John Perry. Affectionately known as 'JP', he has driven the support bus for Edenhope's Murray to Moyne team for almost 30 years.

And now, JP has signed on as a volunteer driver for Grampians Health.

JP joins a list of other Edenhope volunteers who drive Lakeside Living residents and community members to health appointments in Horsham, Naracoorte, Ballarat and beyond.

It was a role JP played, informally, for a late mate. JP witnessed how vulnerable and dependent his friend became in the last few months of his life.

"He paid hundreds of dollars to get to Horsham in a taxi once, and I wasn't going to let him do that again," JP said. "I took him to appointments here, there and everywhere; that's what you do for your mates."

It is a kindness JP will now extend to other vulnerable members of the community.

"Yeah I suppose I see the need there," he said. "If people need a hand, you do your best."

ARE YOU OUR NEXT

VOLUNTEER?

If you, or someone you know, is interested in volunteering, please call 5381 9347 or email Kellie.McMaster@gh.org.au

Scan the QR code to complete the Expression of Interest form



First free flap surgery performed

A significant surgical milestone is enhancing our scope of surgical expertise.

Grampians Health has achieved a surgical milestone in completing the first free tissue transfer surgery under the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgical Services at Ballarat Base Hospital.

Free flap surgery, also known as free tissue transfer, is considered one of the most advanced techniques in reconstructive surgery. It involves moving tissue – such as skin, muscle, or bone – from one part of the body to another, reconnecting blood vessels under a microscope to restore circulation.

The ability to perform such surgery locally is a major step forward for regional healthcare.

Conducted by Consultant Plastic Surgeon Dr Amir Tadros, and supported by dedicated

theatre staff, anaesthesia services, and ward nurses, this advanced reconstructive procedure involved transferring a free gracilis muscle flap from a patient's right thigh to reconstruct a severe crush injury to the patient's left fourth and fifth toes.

This milestone follows other major recent developments at Grampians Health, including the first emergency surgery using a surgical robot and the opening of a new operating theatre in Stawell last year.



Patient Clinton Plover (third from right), and Consultant Plastic Surgeon Dr Amir Tadros (centre), with the surgical team that assisted in the first free flap surgery at Ballarat.

New machine a (caffeine) hit among residents

Cafe-quality coffee is now available at the touch of a button for Lakeside Living residents, with the arrival of a new coffee machine.

Whether residents are craving a cappuccino, long black or a hot chocolate, the easy-to-use machine is accessible in the dining area at all times.

The purchase was enabled through a Lifestyle and Dining grant provided by the Commonwealth Government, for improved dining and meaningful life activities.

Nurse Unit Manager, Lady Anne Vidal (pictured left, with Healthcare Worker Majo Philip), said residents were abuzz about the installation "the best part is that it promotes independence for our residents, who can use the coffee machine without staff member assistance," she said.



Former nurses converge in Edenhope

It was like stepping back in time as a group of retired nurses returned to the Edenhope campus for a special afternoon tea in February.

Several of Therese Burgess' former nursing colleagues converged at the Elsie Bennett Community Centre to celebrate her retirement.

Therese took on permanent night duty in 1986, and after four decades of night shift at Edenhope Hospital, Therese enjoyed a period of well-deserved long service leave, before officially retiring on February 15.

"All in all, it's been a fantastic journey," Therese said of her nursing career. "Thank you to everyone here for being a part of it."

Campus Manager Tricia McInnes thanked Therese for her remarkable service, in a speech.

"There are few families in the area who haven't been cared for and supported by Therese, whether it was in hospital or in the community," Ms McInnes said.

"Therese was always so generous with her time and knowledge, and so her influence continues to shape the culture and work ethic of our team.

"Forty years of service is a remarkable achievement and we thank Therese for her invaluable contribution."

"Having done a lot of night duty opposite her, I didn't realise how hard it was until I stopped," Ms McInnes said.

"She managed to do it easily, still getting to golf and other activities during the day; it's a credit to her."



Former Edenhope nurses returned to the campus for an afternoon tea, to celebrate Therese Burgess' retirement.



Tricia takes extended leave after 27 years

Grampians Health's Edenhope campus will have a new face, temporarily, with Campus Manager Tricia McInnes taking long service leave through 2026.

Tricia joined Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital in 1999 as a Registered Nurse, taking on roles as After Hours Coordinator, Nurse Unit Manager and Director of Nursing, before stepping into the Campus Manager position in 2023.

At the close of March, Ms McInnes will take nine months' leave.

"My husband retired last year, so we've decided to do a trip around Australia while we're able-bodied," she said. "I'm excited about having a decent holiday – I think the longest break I've had, since I started, was six weeks."

With her second and third grandchildren due in the coming months, Tricia is also eager to embrace her grandmother role.

"Hopefully this gives someone local an opportunity to step up and take the reins," Tricia said.

"I will miss the Edenhope camaraderie; we're a unique team and have always maintained our special culture."

It was this culture that inspired Ms McInnes to apply for the campus manager role initially.

"Hands-on nursing is actually what I love most, but I felt a kind of responsibility to keep things going and represent our team," she said.

"It was a calling of sorts, and there are others who are absolutely capable of taking that on in my absence."

Join Grampians Health

Employment opportunities across the region
Discover employee benefits and career opportunities

www.gh.org.au/careers-and-training



Melanoma nurse appointed for the region

Inbal Ross has been appointed as the region's first dedicated Melanoma Nurse.

The role is funded by the Melanoma Institute of Australia and the Australian Government.

Since commencing, Mrs Ross has been instrumental in setting up the Melanoma Supportive Service and enhancing specialised care for melanoma patients across our sites. Her role includes providing care support for those diagnosed with melanoma, assisting with relevant education and coordinating care between medical and surgical teams.

Australia has the highest melanoma rates in the world,

and it is the third most common cancer in Australia.

Inbal's appointment marks a significant advancement in local cancer care. This is particularly the case for communities in the Grampians region, where residents are 22% more likely to develop melanoma and face higher rates of advanced-stage diagnoses.

Having already supported more than 70 patients, the role focuses on closing gaps in melanoma care rather than duplicating existing melanoma services.

"Melanoma care can be complex to navigate, especially for patients who are diagnosed with stage II- III Melanoma," said Mrs Ross.

"We've developed clear guidelines and prioritised education, coordination, and emotional support to ensure patients receive holistic care close to home."

For melanoma-specific information, visit melanoma.org.au/for-patients/

People diagnosed with melanoma can also access free specialist support through Melanoma Patients Australia, a national organisation dedicated to reducing the impact of melanoma and supporting individuals and families throughout their care journey.



Inbal Ross, the first Melanoma nurse appointed for the Grampians region.

Locally-led home dialysis service begins

A new home dialysis service has launched at Grampians Health.

The launch of this new service marks a major milestone since becoming an independent renal health hub - improving access to kidney care across the region.

Previously managed through Royal Melbourne Hospital, the new locally-led model allows patients to receive their full home dialysis care through Grampians Health, with clinical management and support based in Ballarat.

The service supports communities across the Grampians Health catchment, including Horsham, helping patients stay closer to home while receiving safe, high-quality care.

"We're now delivering a complete home dialysis service here at Grampians Health," said Shaun Finlayson, Home Dialysis Team Leader. "If patients become unwell, they can be treated locally instead of travelling to Melbourne."

The service currently offers home peritoneal dialysis, with plans to introduce home haemodialysis in the coming months.

Patients are trained to manage treatment at home, supported by the Grampians Health renal team using remote monitoring and local follow-up as needed.

"Home dialysis gives people flexibility and independence," Mr Finlayson said. "It allows them to fit treatment around their lives, whether that's work, family or other commitments."

Home visits are scheduled when required, and patients can contact the team by phone, email or video for advice and problem-solving.

"Our aim is to be there when patients need us, without intruding on their lives," Mr Finlayson said. "Once they're trained, they manage their own treatment. We're a safety net and a partner in their care."

"People on dialysis make a huge commitment. Our role is to support them in a way that fits their lives, not the other way around."



Shaun Finlayson, Home Dialysis Team Leader, pictured with a Baxter Homechoice Claria automated peritoneal dialysis (APD) system designed for home use.



Invitation to have your say

We're reshaping our community newsletters!

Share your feedback to help shape the future of our community newsletters. We're refreshing how we share stories and updates across the region, and we want to make sure our newsletters reflect what matters to you.



Community Health Exercise Programs



Join Community Health Nurse, Cath McDonald, at one of our weekly community exercise classes.

The Community Exercise Programs cater to all ages and fitness levels.

A small fee applies for these programs.

For more information, visit www.gh.org.au/services/exercise-programs/ or contact the Health and Wellbeing Hub on 5585 9845.

TUESDAY

9.30am: Group Exercise at Apsley RSL

11.15am: Group Exercise at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

4.00pm: Hatha Yoga at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

WEDNESDAY

8.30am: Men Only at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

10.30am: Lifestyle Program at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

4.45pm: Pilates at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

THURSDAY

8.45am: Group Exercise at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

5.00m: Yin Yoga at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

FRIDAY

8.30am: Men Only at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

Sophie returns to work with new title



The helm of Edenhope's acute ward has returned to work, bearing a shiny new title: mum.

Nurse Unit Manager Sophie Robertson and husband, Tanner, are proud parents of a now-active 13-month-old, Tommy.

Sophie is back on site Tuesdays and Wednesdays (and soon, Thursdays), to complete the administrative side of her management role. While she has thoroughly enjoyed maternity leave, Sophie is excited about her return to work.

"It's nice to be using my brain again," Sophie said. "The best part has been seeing everyone and socialising again, I've just slotted straight back in."

Tommy's first year of life was marred by allergies, and lip and tongue ties, which took time to identify and manage.

While the allergies weren't expected, Sophie was most shocked by her response to motherhood.

"I had no idea how much you could love somebody," she said. "He's so cheeky and outgoing and confident; we just love him so much."

'Life-changing' clinical trials van hits the road

Grampians Health's ground-breaking clinical trials van hit the road in February, stopping in at Dimboola, Edenhope, Stawell and Horsham.

The van is set to visit patients across rural Victoria, making it easier to access clinical trial therapies and treatments closer to home.

Research Operations Director, Ashleigh Clarke, and Clinical Research Manager, Rebecca Gurnett, spent a week visiting our western campuses to collaborate with local teams and prepare for regular visits.

"It was fantastic to be on the road and make our final preparations to welcome rural and regional trial participants into the van," Ashleigh said.

"The van is equipped with the medical technology needed to provide elements of care for our clinical trials on-site.

"It's a game-changer in terms of accessing cutting edge research and innovative treatments, reducing the need for participants to travel long distances for the same services to be delivered."

Edenhope's Nurse Unit Manager Sophie Robertson said, "when you need specialist care, you're travelling back and forth all the time and it's absolutely exhausting, on top of what you're already dealing with.

"This van will save so much time, travel and cost for people, who are often dependent on others to make those trips as well."

DID YOU KNOW...?

Grampians Health is involved in about 100 clinical trials, making it the **largest clinical trials unit** in regional Victoria.

Find out more about our clinical trials and research at research.gh.org.au/clinical-trials/



Clinical Research Manager Rebecca Gurnett (left) and Research Operations Director Ashleigh Clarke (centre) meeting with Edenhope Health and Wellbeing Hub team members Tania Shepherd, Narelle Hempel, Jess McIntyre and Marnie Baker.

Support your 2026 Murray to Moyne team



Edenhope's Murray to Moyne team members (from left), Chad Eastwood, Peter Irving, David Smith and Rob Kenna.

The annual Murray to Moyne (M2M) cycling event sees teams ride 520km, from Mildura to Port Fairy, in a bid to raise money for health services throughout Victoria.

Edenhope M2M teams have been involved for more than 30 years (since 1992), not only participating in the event but actively fundraising for our local health service throughout the year.

Our local M2M team continues to find innovative and engaging ways to involve the community in fundraising opportunities, to support Grampians Health Edenhope projects.

All money raised will be invested in equipment, projects and services at Grampians Health Edenhope.



To support your Murray to Moyne team, visit grampians-health-edenhope.raiselysite.com/ or scan the QR code.



Simple ways to stay well



As we ease into milder Autumn weather, it is timely to start planning for winter, when many nasty illnesses are more likely to be circulating in our communities.

Each winter, urgent care clinics, GP clinics, pharmacies and emergency departments see a sharp rise in people with serious illnesses.

Colds, flu and other vaccine-preventable diseases can hit harder in colder months, and without vaccination they are more likely to lead to severe symptoms, complications and hospital visits.

This seasonal surge puts pressure on health services and can mean longer waits for everyone who needs care

Vaccination is one of the simplest ways to reduce that risk. Vaccines are safe, many are free or subsidised, and most don't just lower your chance of getting sick – they significantly reduce how unwell you're likely to become.

Think about the last time you were really sick: the time off work, the exhaustion, the impact on your family.

Vaccination helps protect you from going through that again, while also helping keep our health services available for those who need them most.

DID YOU KNOW...?
Victoria had the second highest Influenza cases in Australia during 2025, behind NSW

10 tips to fight the flu

Flu symptoms can be very similar to the symptoms of COVID-19. Even if your symptoms are mild, get tested for COVID-19.



Get the flu shot



Check your symptoms first



Cover coughs and sneezes



Keep surfaces clean



Self-care at home



Bin your tissues



Avoid sharing



Wash your hands



Know the symptoms of a cold versus flu



Don't rely on antibiotics



Visit Health Direct for full fact sheet to fighting the flu



Autumn healthcare tip

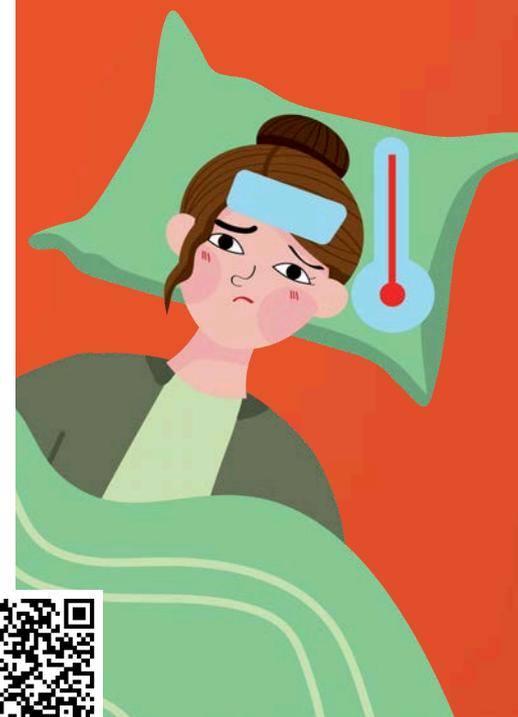
Speak with your Pharmacist or Doctor about vaccines appropriate for your age and level of wellbeing, for example:

Influenza

COVID

Shingles

Pneumococcal



JOIN OUR CONSUMER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM



Consumer Partner Kate Gale with Grampians Health Consumer Partnerships and Experience Acting Team Leader Kylie O'Halloran. Kate represents consumer perspectives on the Blood Management Governance Committee.

We believe the best way to strengthen our health service is by working alongside the people who use it. That's why Consumer Partners are so important.

Grampians Health is inviting consumers to partner with us to help shape our services and the care we provide.

You might have experience with Grampians Health as a patient, resident, client, carer or family member, or you may be a community member who may need our services in the future.

By sharing what matters most to you, Consumer Partners help guide meaningful improvements and ensure our services reflect the needs of the people and communities we serve. We welcome individuals of all cultures, abilities, ages, identities, and backgrounds.

Partnering with consumers and the community helps us deliver safer, more connected, and genuinely person-centred care.

Your voice plays a vital role in improving the quality and safety of Grampians Health services.

Consumers can partner with us by:

- Joining forums or focus groups
- Representing consumers on governance committees
- Supporting quality and safety improvement activities
- Providing feedback on patient information, policies and planning

To partner with us contact:

03 5320 4014

or via email at:

consumers@gh.org.au



**Scan code
for more
information**

Contact us

Grampians Health strives to deliver quality care for all our communities through safe, accessible and connected health services.

Urgent Care

5585 9800

Fully bulk billed medical service 24 Hours, 7 days a week.

If your condition is serious, or you are experiencing chest pains, you need to call 000 (Triple Zero) for an ambulance.

Acute Care

5585 9800

Provides 24 hour care, with care managed by our experienced nursing staff and visiting medical officers.

Residential Care

5585 9800

At Lakeside Living we provide, long term and respite care in a beautiful brand new facility overlooking Lake Wallace.

We also have one bedroom independent living units available for rent across the road from the Hospital.

Rural Outreach Program

1300 688 732

A free service. Our team of Outreach Workers can help when times get tough.

Elsie Bennett Community Centre

Social Support 5585 9825
Community exercises 5585 9845
Community Health Nurse 5585 9845

Telehealth

5585 9830

Have your appointment without leaving home, by linking with your clinician using a computer, smart phone or tablet.

Community Services

5585 9800

- Catering
- Laundry services
- Meals On Wheels -through the West Wimmera Shire

Health & Wellbeing Hub

5585 9830

Located in the main street of Edenhope. Services include:

- District Nursing
- Community Care Nurse
- In Home Care
- Post Acute Care
- Physiotherapy
- Diabetes Educator
- Cancer Resource Nurse
- Occupational Therapy
- Social Work
- Rural Outreach Program
- Mental Health Social Support
- Speech Pathology
- Podiatry
- Telehealth

Edenhope Medical Clinic

5585 9888

There is a medical clinic located onsite which is operated by Rural Doctors. Please phone them for an appointment or visit their website.

www.ruraldoctors.com.au



If you have a suggestion or an issue you want to raise, please contact us at feedback@gh.org.au

We are committed to working with the communities in which we live and we value your feedback.

For the full range of services and more detail on accessing the services please visit www.edmh.org.au

