

Community Quarterly

Horsham Newsletter



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CEO Update

Winter
2026



Hello, and welcome to the *Community Quarterly* – your window into how Grampians Health is shaping healthcare across our region.

Every day, across every part of Grampians Health, our people are working to deliver on a shared vision: to be a trusted, progressive and innovative leader of regional and rural healthcare. That vision is about more than providing care when people need it most. It's about building a health service that our communities can rely on, one that listens, learns and continues to improve so more people can access the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

The stories in *Community Quarterly* help bring this work to life. They show how our teams are delivering high-quality care with a strong focus on consumer experience, supporting our people to thrive, and partnering with communities to improve outcomes. They also reflect the

values that guide us each day – compassion, collaboration, respect, accountability, and innovation.

Through this newsletter, we want to share more than updates from your local health service. We want to show how progress is being made across the region: through new and expanded services, stronger partnerships, dedicated staff and volunteers, improved access to care, and initiatives bringing healthcare closer to home. Each story is a reminder that while our communities are diverse and spread across a large region, we are connected by a common purpose – to provide safe, accessible and connected care that supports healthier, stronger communities.

This same commitment is evident in the way our Horsham campus continues to grow, support its workforce and strengthen care for the local community. In this Horsham edition, you'll read about the

opening of our new Horsham staff accommodation complex, a significant step in supporting workforce attraction and helping remove one of the key barriers to recruiting healthcare professionals to the region. We also celebrate Horsham's achievement of Baby Friendly Health Initiative accreditation and look back on the success of the second annual 'Love Your Mum' fundraising event.

Finally, winter has well and truly settled in now so please remember to get your annual flu vaccination, particularly if you are in a high-risk category. This is a simple way to help protect yourself and the community during peak flu season.

I hope you enjoy reading *Community Quarterly* and seeing our achievements and progress from the past three months – it is a privilege to serve you and the wider Grampians community.

Dale Fraser
CEO, Grampians Health

Welcome



We welcome everyone to our services. We acknowledge and respect the different backgrounds and experiences that people live with.



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we operate, the Wadawurrung, Djab wurrung, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples.



We recognise the voices and experience of all people with a lived experience and those who support them.



We support and provide equitable care for people of all cultures, backgrounds, sexualities, identities, and people with disabilities.



We acknowledge the impact of family violence and stand in solidarity with all victim survivors.



We are committed to providing safe and accessible healthcare for everyone.



Our Care

Physical therapy for Dimboola residents

Residents in Dimboola's Aged Care Community are benefiting from new physical therapy service delivered locally through Grampians Health.

This new service has been made possible thanks to the expansion of the allied health team in Horsham, enabling greater support across Dimboola, Stawell and Edenhope.

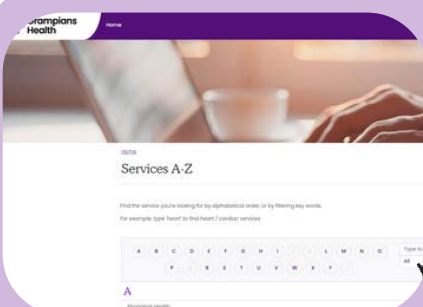
Focused on improving overall wellbeing, the service aims to maximise each resident's functional independence, safety, mobility and quality of life through evidence-based assessment, rehabilitation, exercise programs and the prescription of appropriate equipment.

Care is delivered by a skilled, multi-disciplinary team including allied health assistants, physiotherapists, exercise physiologists and occupational therapists.

Previously, mobility support relied on visiting clinicians through an external agency. By using our locally-based Horsham allied health team, the service is now more consistent, responsive and integrated — strengthening continuity of care for residents while also providing greater support and connection for on-site teams.



Grampians Health Physiotherapist Kate Oleinikov and Allied Health Assistant Julie Queale take Dimboola Aged Care Community resident Junette through a series of exercises.



Find your local services

Find your local service by visiting our website, www.gh.org.au

Services are listed A-Z to help you find what you need quickly.



LEARN MORE



Milestone referrals for EPC

The Grampians Early Parenting Centre (EPC) reached an important milestone in April, recording more than 1,000 referrals since opening its doors two years ago.

The centre, based in Ballarat, supports families across the region and continues to see strong demand for its services.

It provides free specialist care closer to home for parents needing support with sleep and settling, child behaviour, and parent and child health and wellbeing.

Families can access a wide range of support options including residential stays, day programs, phone consultations and specialised education.

Grampians Health Chief Operating Officer Ben Kelly said the milestone is indicative of the essential role the EPC plays in strengthening early parenting support across Western Victoria.

"Reaching 1,000 referrals in under two years demonstrates just how vital this service is for families," Mr Kelly said.

The EPC has also supported First Nations families, who represent five per cent of those accessing the service. The team continues to strive to create a culturally safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all families visiting the centre.

Vikki Doddamani, Nurse Unit Manager of the EPC, said the service continues to evolve as the needs of families change.

"We know that many families face barriers such as travel distance, isolation, larger family sizes and rising fuel costs," Mrs Doddamani said.

"Our vision is to meet families where they are. That's why expanding into outreach will be a major focus for us from this year onwards – so even if parents cannot get to us, we can bring support to their homes and communities."

"The EPC is delivering compassionate, evidence-based care that helps parents feel supported, confident and connected during what can be a very challenging time."

-Ben Kelly, Chief Operating Officer



Did you know?

Parents can self refer by visiting our website and completing the online self-referral form.

Grampians Early Parenting Centre opened in 2024 to provide free specialist care closer to home for parents needing support with their young children.



LEARN MORE

www.gh.org.au/epc



Our Care

Dementia Support Group supporting loved ones of people living with dementia

Edenhope

Moments of magic

Berni Rafferty will do almost anything to make her mother, Trudy, smile.

It's increasingly rare to catch a twinkle in her eye or hear a carefree giggle from the once-vibrant and busy matriarch.

Trudy lives with two types of a cruel and degenerative disease of the brain: lewy body dementia and vascular dementia.

No longer able to express herself, or clearly comprehend her environment, Trudy spends much of her day walking laps of the shared spaces at Edenhope's Lakeside Living Aged Care Community. But something magical happened when members of Edenhope's Dementia Support Group performed a humorous Christmas pantomime for residents last year.

Trudy sat still in her seat. She was engaged. She smiled. And she laughed. "She sat in the front row and she laughed and laughed and I can't tell you how much joy that brought me," Berni said.

It sparked immediate plans for a follow-up performance; a whimsical Easter-themed re-imagining of 'Alice in Wonderland', featuring a dachshund museum, one very large fish and Lake Wallace parkrun.

Colourful costumes were complemented by the most important of ingredients: music. "The long-term memory holds onto music more than anything else," Berni said.

Berni could not have predicted that joining Edenhope's Dementia Support Group would result in such a powerful project.



Berni Rafferty shares a special moment with her mother Trudy, who found joy through music and performance.

"Music can bring most dementia-sufferers to life, and they get a big smile on their face."

-Berni Rafferty

"The support group has been wonderful – absolutely invaluable – because I really felt like I was the only person in the world dealing with this," she said. "I've made some close connections and, as a group, we're really making a difference."

Edenhope's Dementia Support Group, convened by social worker June Spencer, is open to all friends and loved ones of people living with dementia.



For more information on Edenhope's Dementia Support Group, contact the HUB on **5585 9830**

Choose the right care, at the right time



Knowing your healthcare options can help you get the support you need, when you need it.

Whether it's looking after yourself at home, visiting a pharmacy, seeing a GP, attending an urgent care clinic, or going to the emergency department, choosing the right service can help you get the best care for your situation.



LEARN MORE



24/7 haematology care now available

Grampians Health's haematology services have been expanded, now providing patients and clinicians across our sites with 24/7 access to a haematologist.

The move reflects strengthening specialist services across Ballarat, Horsham and Stawell, delivered by a growing team through outpatient clinics.

Clinics in Horsham are expected to increase within six months, with plans to introduce bone marrow biopsies to reduce travel to Ballarat.

Dr Swe Htet, Head of Haematology, said the service is designed to reduce health inequity and deliver timely specialist care.

"By providing round the clock support and expanding outreach services, we are reducing unnecessary travel for those in the region and ensuring patients receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time," Dr Swe Htet said.

"This means fewer unnecessary transfers, quicker access to treatment, and more patients being safely managed close to home."

"Our goal is to deliver the same level of specialist haematology care available in metropolitan areas."

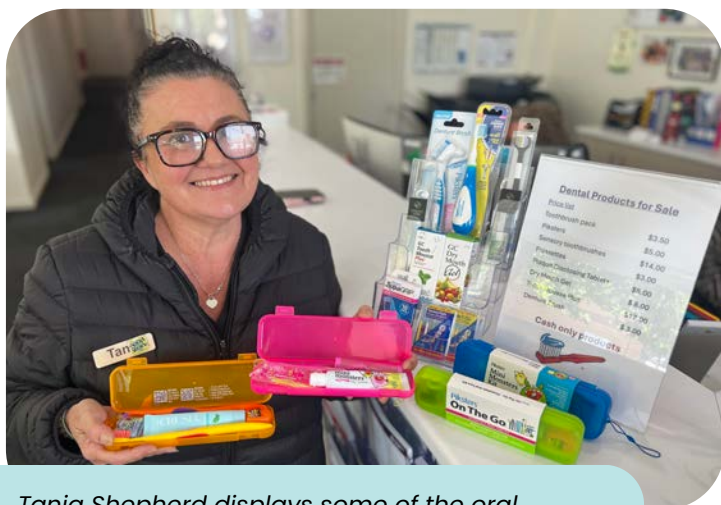
-Dr Swe Htet, Head of Haematology



The Grampians Health haematology team has grown over the past two years.

Edenhope

Oral health products available at HUB



Tania Shepherd displays some of the oral health products now available at the HUB.

A range of oral health products are now available at the Edenhope Health and Wellbeing HUB.

The products have been carefully selected to boost oral health in the wider Edenhope district, with a focus on children, cancer patients and older community members.

District Nursing Team Leader, Tania Shepherd, said there had been great developments in the oral health space, especially for vulnerable people.

The products available include specialised children's toothbrushes, tooth mousse and dry mouth gel.



Products can be purchased with cash at the HUB. For more information, contact the HUB on **5585 9830**



Our Care

Recognition for providing
high-quality stroke care.

Ballarat

Ballarat certified as Primary Stroke Centre



Grampians Health stroke team presented with stroke certification by the Australian Stroke Coalition.

Grampians Health's Ballarat campus has become a certified Primary Stroke Centre by the Australian Stroke Coalition.

Stroke Unit Care is one of the strongest evidence-based recommendations for improving outcomes for people having a stroke. Certification formally recognises our commitment to providing high quality stroke care across the region.

A Stroke Unit Certification is recommended by both the World Health Organisation and the Federal Government Heart and Stroke Plan to ensure a hospital meets nationally recognised standards for delivering timely stroke care.

The achievement follows focused service development, including the appointment of a new full time Stroke Coordinator – a position co-funded by the

River Birch Foundation and Grampians Health.

Head of Neurology, Dr Mandy Lau, said the team was focused on continuing to improve stroke care for our community and building a leading stroke service for our region.

"Certification reflects the dedication and collaboration of our multidisciplinary stroke team."

*–Dr Mandy Lau,
Head of Neurology*

"The Stroke Coordinator role is a key enabler – supporting timely treatment, earlier access to rehabilitation, and helping patients return home sooner," Dr Lau said.

"As we continue to improve our stroke service, our community

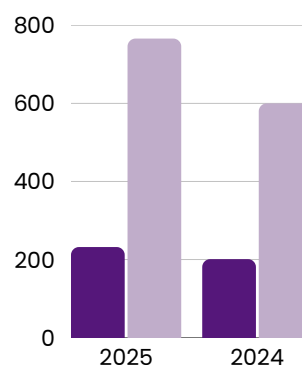
can be confident they're receiving high-quality, evidence-based stroke care right here, close to home."

The team is now working toward obtaining full four-year Stroke Unit certification later in 2026.

Grampians Health number of stroke presentations

Confirmed vs suspected

Confirmed
Suspected



Accredited support for Wimmera mums

New Wimmera mothers now have the added reassurance of knowing they are being supported by a World Health Organisation program while caring for their baby.

For the first time, Grampians Health's Horsham maternity program has achieved Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI) accreditation, marking a significant milestone for maternity and newborn care in the region.

This achievement reflects a strong commitment to providing high-quality, evidence-based care that supports mothers, babies and families to have the best possible start.

The accreditation follows 18 months of dedicated work across Grampians Health to guide staff, strengthen practices and prepare both our Horsham and Ballarat maternity services for assessment.

Ballarat has held BFHI accreditation for more than 20 years, providing a strong foundation of experience and leadership throughout the process. This collaboration has helped ensure consistency in care and a shared commitment to excellence across the organisation.

BFHI accreditation recognises health services that protect, promote and support breastfeeding while ensuring all families receive respectful, informed and compassionate care.

Horsham's BFHI coordinator Steph Wallis said the achievement reflected a true team effort.

"Becoming BFHI accredited is something of which the entire team should be incredibly proud," Ms Wallis said. "It represents months of collaboration and a shared focus on improving outcomes for families in our community."

The successful accreditation, achieved in December 2025, ensures families in the Horsham region can feel confident they are receiving care that meets international standards and supports them through pregnancy, birth and early parenting.



www.gh.org.au/maternity-outpatients



Steph Wallis and Annette Auld coordinated the successful campaign to gain the Baby Friendly Initiative for the Horsham campus.



Our Care

Hospital redevelopment reaches top height as local students envisage the future of healthcare.

Ballarat

Young imaginations on display as hospital reaches new heights

A vibrant new artwork at the Ballarat Base Hospital is offering a colourful glimpse into the future of healthcare through the eyes of local students.

Now on display near the hospital's main reception, the pieces – created by students from eight local primary schools – showcase imaginative visions of future healthcare, from innovative technologies to welcoming, patient-centred spaces.

The installation coincided with a major milestone in the \$655 million Ballarat Base Hospital redevelopment, with the main tower build reaching its full height of 44 metres in May, completing the concrete structure.

The tower – the final stage of the build – will house a new emergency department, theatre suite, additional inpatient and short stay beds, helipad and an expanded women's and children's hub.

Chief Redevelopment and Infrastructure Officer Veronica Furnier, Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison, CEO Dale Fraser, Minister for Health Infrastructure Melissa Horne and Built Senior Project Manager Matt Whittle.



Works will now focus on internal fit-outs, the new helipad, and installing over 1,100 facade panels. Once complete, the hospital will have capacity to treat at least 18,000 more emergency patients and an extra 14,500 inpatients each year.

Chief Redevelopment and Infrastructure Officer Veronica Furnier said each piece of the new artwork

"The redevelopment is about building a hospital that meets the needs of our community today while also planning for the future health care needs of our region."

-Dale Fraser, Chief Executive Officer

brightened the existing environment while connecting people to the future vision of the hospital.

"It's incredibly special to provide a platform for young people to share their perspectives and feel part of this once-in-a-generation redevelopment," Ms Furnier said.

"As we work towards completing construction of the hospital's new main tower in 2027, it's exciting to see that future reflected through the eyes of our young community members."



Project Manager Mark Powell, Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison, student Grace with her mum ED ANUM Sarah and Chief Redevelopment and Infrastructure Officer Veronica Furnier.



Shared specialist care closer to home

Patients with high-complexity pregnancies are now receiving specialist care closer to home through a new Virtual Hospital program between Grampians Health and The Royal Women's Hospital.

The program, launched in December, enables shared care for patients with highly complex cases, enhancing the specialist obstetric services already provided at Grampians Health while reducing the need for travel to Melbourne.

Chief Operating Officer Ben Kelly said the pilot had already improved access and outcomes for regional patients.

"While our healthcare service is well equipped to provide comprehensive obstetric care, the Virtual Hospital Model

complements our services, ensuring people from across the Grampians region can access high quality care no matter where they live," Mr Kelly said.

"This is made possible with both services given the ability to view live ultrasound feeds at the same time, something not possible with a standard video call."

Clinical Director Women's and Children's Services Dr Natasha Frawley said the program was strengthening collaboration and improving patient experience.

"This model enables us to work together, supporting faster decision-making, no matter the distance," Dr Frawley said.

"Complex pregnancies often require coordinated care and input from multiple specialists."

-Dr Natasha Frawley, Clinical Director Women's and Children's Services

The Virtual Hospital pilot forms part of the Victorian Government's broader plan to deliver more care in the home, reduce pressure on hospital beds and improve patient flow across the health system.

In addition to maternity care, the program includes virtual wards for patients recovering from heart failure and cardiac conditions, as well as remote monitoring and specialist consultations – supporting more Victorians to safely recover at home.



Creswick mum Shelley (pictured with son Evan, Grampians Health CEO Dale Fraser and Member for Ripon Martha Haylett) was among the first to benefit from the pilot program.



Our Partners

Stawell

Y-Zetts reunite and celebrate



Grampians Health CEO Dale Fraser with past Y-Zett members.

A unique band of Stawell women reunited in May to celebrate their inspirational body of work in supporting health in the region.

In doing so the group – known as the Y-Zetts – announced they were disbanding, after more than 50 years of fundraising for the Stawell Hospital.

The Y-Zetts formed in 1975 with a clear goal of providing an alternative avenue for raising funds for the hospital.

The group used a variety of activities to raise upwards of \$1 million over the years and provided the hospital with an extensive range of equipment for various departments.

Founding member Meg Blake OAM was fully committed to the group from day one.

“Our original idea was to provide an alternative way of

“We were a big group of mates who felt we were too young to join the auxiliary and wanted to try fresh ideas for fundraising.”

*– Meg Blake OAM,
Y-Zetts founding member*

raising funds for the hospital, other than what the Ladies Auxiliary was doing at the time,” Meg said.

What started out as a young and enthusiastic team has dwindled in numbers in recent years, resulting in the group folding after reaching its 50 year milestone.

“We are all getting a bit older and for many of us, it’s just too much,” she said.

“The younger members of our group have stayed involved by joining up with the Ladies Auxiliary, but we just haven’t had enough new members to keep things going.

“It’s important now that we continue to support the Ladies Auxiliary and the Foundation so the Stawell campus can constantly upgrade its equipment and help care for our community.”

Chief People Officer Claire Woods said groups like the Y-Zetts had played a vital role in supporting Stawell’s health service over many decades.

“The funds they have raised have made a real and lasting difference. On behalf of Grampians Health, I sincerely thank the Y-Zetts for their remarkable contribution.”



Edenhope's cycling team raise \$11,000+

Edenhope's 2026 Murray to Moyne team smashed its fundraising target, raising more than \$11,000 for the local health service.

Thanks to the efforts of the 12-member team in March and the generosity of the community, the funds have been used to purchase a new treatment chair, an Elk lifting cushion (read more on page 13) and a second centrifuge (blood spinner) for the Edenhope campus.

Team leader Chad Eastwood said the team was overwhelmed by the level of support received.

"We were getting updates about donations on the road, and it definitely helped keep the legs going," he said.

"As always, people were really generous and got behind us all the way."

- Chad Eastwood, Edenhope Murray to Moyne team leader

Acting Campus Manager Sade Obagbemi said the new equipment would provide lasting benefits for patients, residents and staff.

"This specialised modern treatment chair will be far easier and safer to use and, importantly, a lot comfier for patients," she said.

The Murray to Moyne Cycle Relay sees teams ride from Echuca to Port Fairy via Stawell and Hamilton, raising funds for health services and community projects across regional Victoria.



Edenhope's 2026 Murray to Moyne team.

Discover how fundraising helps create meaningful change

Inspired by one of the fundraising stories featured in this edition of *Community Quarterly*?

Visit our website to learn more about how you can get involved, fundraising.gh.org.au



LEARN MORE

Reach
your local
fundraising
team here





Our Partners

Community fundraising continues to deliver support to our local hospitals.

Edenhope

Community donations lift Lakeside Living residents

A new lifting device, funded by community donations raised by Edenhope's Murray to Moyne cycling team in March, is already improving outcomes at the Lakeside Living Aged Care Community.

The \$5,300 'Elk lift' inflates in stages, gently helping a person up from the floor.

The project was identified as a priority by the team, who wanted a quick and comfortable way to respond to resident falls.

"Even though we really try to minimise it as much as possible, it's a reality that older people have falls," Clinical Care Manager Laurence de Luna said.

"There are so many factors that can cause people to fall, including

declining mobility, medical conditions that bring dizziness, postural drop, blood pressure issues, or cognitive impairments."

Laurence, dubbed the 'falls champion' by her peers, is responsible for assessing falls risk, prevention and response in Edenhope. She was therefore delighted when the compact, portable Elk lift was delivered.

"We don't want to strain our staff or cause them any injuries when they are assisting older persons, so we have always used a hover jack," she said.

"This Elk lift is much more convenient and easier to use, which means it's much nicer for the older person too."



Clinical Care Manager Laurence de Luna (right) and Registered Nurse Grace Goco demonstrate how to use Lakeside Living's new Elk lift.

Stawell fundraiser a great success

Stawell



Members of the Stawell Hospital Auxiliary, putting on the annual Soup, Sandwiches and Slices event.

The Stawell Hospital Auxiliary's annual Soup, Sandwiches and Slices fundraiser in June raised around \$3,000, providing a significant boost for the local hospital.

The event had a fantastic community turnout! A big shout out to the Auxiliary volunteers for their hard work and dedication in putting on this fundraiser, and thank you to all who came, donated and helped make it such a success.



Renewed partnership to support local nurses and midwives

A renewed partnership between Grampians Health and Federation University is set to strengthen the future of nursing and midwifery across our region.

Announced on International Nurses Day (12 May), the updated agreement focuses on helping more students train, work and build their careers close to home. It brings together healthcare services and education providers to improve training opportunities, strengthen research, and support ongoing professional development.

A new jointly funded academic leadership role will work closely with healthcare teams to enhance learning, support research and ensure best-practice care is delivered across the region.

Did you know?

Since 2020, more than 11,600 clinical placements have been delivered locally

By supporting local students and professionals, the partnership helps ensure communities continue to benefit from skilled, compassionate nurses and midwives.

The partnership also brings broader benefits, including stronger local employment opportunities and improved access to care.

The initiative highlights the value of training and working in regional areas, where professionals can develop a wide range of skills while staying connected to their community.



LEARN MORE

www.gh.org.au/careers



Federation University nursing students Rhyley Bath, Mrudula Wilson and Amelia Jarvis with Federation University Vice Chancellor Professor Duncan Bentley and Grampians Health CEO Dale Fraser.



Our Partners

Delicious treats, health education and entertainment, raising money for local health.

Horsham



Grampians Health Yandilla Nurse Unit Manager Michelle Coutts, ICU Nurse Verity Fereday, Horsham Site Manager Maree Markby and Regional Liaison Midwife Sherryn Elworthy.

Mums event raises \$45k in a day

Horsham's second 'Love Your Mum' event proved a massive success, raising \$25,000 for Grampians Health's Yandilla maternity unit at Horsham and a further \$20,000 for Royal Flying Doctors Services.

The charity event – held on Mothers Day (10 May) – is the combined creation of hard-working Horsham philanthropist Robyn Lardner and big-hearted culinary queens Maria and Teresa Marchesini, with a cast of supporters giving their time and energy to support local health.

Full-time paramedic and part-time performer Molly Magee entertained the 130-strong crowd with her vocal-guitar talents and MC Emma Clarke kept the raffles and spot prizes flowing.

Answering questions from Emma, Grampians Health Horsham Site Manager Maree Markby and Royal Flying Doctor Service Head of Philanthropy Sue Parkes spoke about the services they provide to the community and the constant need for donations to ensure safe care.

Robyn Lardner said the event committee raised \$15,000 for the Yandilla ensuite, with an anonymous donor providing a further \$10,000, while another anonymous donor contributed \$500. A further \$20,000 was also raised for the RFDS.

"My sister Teresa and I were blown away with the generosity of people and this is why we do what we do, wanting to help within our community where possible," Maria Marchesini said.

"The generosity from the community and support from businesses was overwhelming."

*– Maria Marchesini,
Culinary Queen*

"Fortunately, we love cooking and love sharing with people. This is the second time we have hosted this event and we are overwhelmed with the support received from 64 businesses, allowing us to increase our fundraising options and also give away another 30 gifts provided by mainly local businesses."



Research trial supporting survivor-led trauma-informed recovery

Left Write Hook is an innovative research trial exploring a novel, trauma-informed approach to recovery for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and gendered violence.

Delivered locally by the Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA), Left Write Hook is a peer-led, survivor-designed program combining expressive writing with non-contact boxing. Sessions focus on grounding, body awareness, safe emotional expression, and rebuilding personal agency and connection.

The Ballarat program commenced in April and is part of a large-scale randomised controlled trial led by the University of Melbourne and funded by the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).

Previous pilot research has reported improved wellbeing and reduced symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress among participants.

Running across multiple Victorian sites, the trial examines whether combining creative expression with physical movement improves mental and physical health and helps survivors reclaim a sense of agency.

The current trial compares outcomes between those completing the full program and a boxing-only group to understand the added value of expressive writing.

CASA has partnered with Women's Resource Information and Support Centre and Ballarat Community Health to promote the trial to eligible participants.

The trial is free and open to female-identifying and gender-diverse adults aged 18+ in Victoria who have experienced childhood sexual abuse or gendered violence.

Through such partnerships, Grampians Health continues to support trauma-informed care that recognises the long-term impacts of sexual violence and the importance of survivor-led healing.

[LEARN MORE](https://ballaratcasa.org.au)

<https://ballaratcasa.org.au>



Ballarat CASA Clinical Services Coordinator, Erin Houlihan; Manager, Katrina Bevelander; and Counsellor/Advocate, Narelle Lynch.



Our Partners

A local cycling team has raised huge funds to support vital health services.

Ballarat

Velorats raise nearly \$35,000 for Ballarat



Velorats raised funds to support the purchase of a dedicated Home Dialysis vehicle.

Ballarat's Velorats cycling team raised just shy of \$35,000 through this year's Murray to Moyne Cycle Relay, held in March, continuing their strong partnership with the Rotary Club of Ballarat West in support of local healthcare.

Now in their fourth consecutive year fundraising for our Ballarat campus, the Velorats have built a reputation for backing projects that deliver real, local impact.

This year's funds are supporting the purchase of a dedicated Home Dialysis vehicle – an essential resource that will expand access to life-sustaining treatment for patients across the region.

Velorats Captain Ross Huntington said completing this year's ride reminded the team why they continue to get involved.

There's nothing quite like the Murray to Moyne," Mr Huntington said. "Riding over 500 kilometres as a team, through the day and night, really puts into perspective what people in our community are going through."

Shaun Finlayson, Nurse Unit Manager – Home Dialysis at Ballarat, said the impact of this year's fundraising will be felt directly by patients receiving care at home.

"A dedicated home dialysis vehicle will allow our team to provide more timely and flexible support to patients across a large regional catchment," Mr Finlayson said.

"It means we can deliver training, equipment and urgent assistance when it's needed, helping patients safely manage their treatment at home.

"That kind of support improves independence and reduces hospital visits whilst making a real difference to quality of life."



Addressing inequities in healthcare access



Matthew Hadfield, Dr Anna Wong Shee, Professor Vincent Versace and Associate Professor Kevin McNamara accepting the Deakin Partnerships in Practice Award.

A collaborative research initiative addressing inequitable access to health and education for regional and rural Australians has received recognition.

The Deakin University Faculty of Health Partnerships in Practice 2026 award for regional and rural research was jointly awarded to Grampians Health and Deakin Rural Health for their collaborative initiative, the Centre for Australian Research into Access (CARA).

CARA co-directors, Grampians Health Director of Research Development/Affiliate Associate Professor Deakin Rural Health, Dr Anna Wong Shee, and Deakin Rural Health Director, Professor Vincent Versace accepted the award with Grampians Health Chief Medical Officer, Matthew Hadfield and Deakin Rural Health Deputy Director, Associate Professor Kevin McNamara at an official ceremony in Melbourne in May.

By making access gaps more visible, this work can help translate research into planning, policy and practice.

CARA is helping turn research into practical action by identifying and understanding barriers to healthcare access for rural and regional Australians.

By using advanced computing and geospatial mapping to calculate travel time and distance metrics, CARA can map exactly how distance and travel time impact a community's access to care.

Professor Matthew Hadfield said the award highlights the importance of collaborative research.

"We are proud to work alongside partners who share a commitment to evidence-based care and stronger health outcomes for the region," he said.

"This partnership helps address access-related health disparities between rural, regional and metropolitan Australians ensuring communities in our region can access the care they need, closer to home."



research.gh.org.au



Our People

Dimboola

Seven decades of calming care

Breanna Eldridge was born for nursing. The Grampians Health Care Community Manager at Dimboola has reached 20 years of caring for residents and acute patients.

The day she received her award, Breanna's mother Susie Barber was also at the ceremony – not just as a proud parent but to be recognised for an incredible 50 years of service.

Mother and daughter share more than a profession. Both are known for their calm presence in times of crisis – a quality that has defined their long-standing commitment to compassionate care. Colleagues also recognise their kindness, professionalism and dedication to delivering high-quality healthcare.

Susie began her nursing career in 1975, training in Horsham before spending her entire working life in Dimboola. From hospital wards to district nursing, she eventually spent three decades as a practice nurse at the local medical centre.

Reflecting on her career, Susie said she valued working alongside dedicated doctors and witnessing the evolution of local healthcare facilities.

"I was so proud when Breanna announced she wanted to be a nurse," Susie said.

"It's been wonderful having her nursing. I hope she does it for 50 years like me."

"I'm very proud of Breanna, she's achieved a lot and we are both very happy working in the Dimboola community."

- Susie Barber, Registered Nurse

Breanna credits her mother as her greatest inspiration: "I've always looked up to her," she said.

"I admired the fact that she was so caring and involved in the community and I wanted to do the same. I used to visit her at work when I was a student and I worked alongside her in the medical clinic with my first job after school in an administrative role."

After training at Wimmera Base Hospital and gaining experience in critical care, Breanna has divided her career between Horsham and now Dimboola, where she helps lead the aged care community.



Together, Susie and Breanna represent 70 years of service, setting a powerful example of dedication, skill and heart in rural healthcare.



Dimboola staff reaching service milestones

Our Dimboola campus has celebrated service milestones
for two dedicated members of staff.



Kellie Laverty was presented with her service award by General Manager Aged Community Care, Rachel Fishlock and Chief Operations Officer, Ben Kelly.

Enrolled nurse Kellie Laverty has celebrated 15 years of service at Dimboola's Aged Care Community.

Kellie revels in all the characteristics that make a great nurse, but her compassion and fun-loving nature stand out above all. Her qualities also make her a great friend and colleague.

Kellie is a proven valued team member, and has taken on additional roles such as No-Lift Champion, OVA trainer and a mentor to new staff.

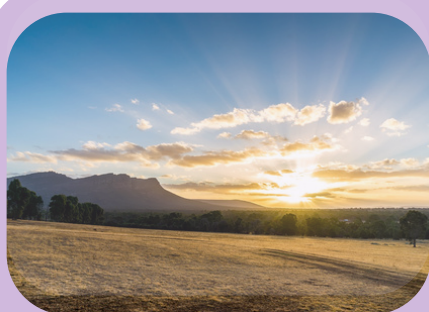
Dimboola High Care ANUM Lulu Puthayath Kuiakose has reached 10 years of service with Grampians Health.

A dedicated team member, Lulu is a warm, welcoming presence who likes to support and settle new staff to help them feel part of the team.

He has a great sense of humour and creates true moments of joy in his interactions with the residents.



Lulu Puthayath was presented with his service award by General Manager Aged Community Care, Rachel Fishlock and Chief Operations Officer, Ben Kelly.



Living local, working local

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LEARN MORE





Our People

Recognising our volunteers – an invaluable part of our community.

Region wide

Celebrating our volunteers

National Volunteer Week (19–25 May) presented a fantastic opportunity for us to celebrate our incredible volunteer teams; to recognise and thank those who generously give their time to support our patients, staff, and communities.

This year's theme, *Your Year to Volunteer*, served as a reminder of the important role volunteers play and the meaningful difference they make every day across our health service.

Celebrations took place across all campuses, providing an opportunity to connect, reflect, and celebrate the extraordinary contribution of our volunteers.

We were privileged to hear from a number of inspiring guest speakers at some of these events. At Ballarat, Dr Jessie Harman OAM spoke about the powerful impact of volunteering on both individuals and communities, while also sharing her own connection to volunteering. At Stawell, John Pye reflected on his experiences giving back through environmental and social justice initiatives. At Horsham, Dr Peter Carter, (Head of Unit, Emergency Department) shared a personal story about the difference a volunteer made to him during a time of need, offering a powerful reminder of the impact volunteers have from a patient's perspective. Teams at Edenhope and Dimboola shared a cuppa and a chat as part of the week's celebrations.

A heartfelt thank you to each of our volunteers for the time, energy and care they bring to their roles. We also acknowledge the staff who support and work alongside our volunteers across Grampians Health.

Our volunteers are an invaluable part of our community, and we are proud to celebrate them, not only during National Volunteer Week, but every day.



Stawell



Ballarat



Ballarat



Dimboola



Horsham



Edenhope

Did you know?

Grampians Health has 300+ wonderful volunteers who dedicate their time and support.



LEARN MORE

www.gh.org.au/volunteer



The new face leading Edenhope healthcare

When Sade Obagbemi walked the halls of Edenhope's Aged Care Community, Lakeside Living, for the first time, she was overcome by emotion.

She was taken back to her first experiences of the healthcare industry, caring for people living with dementia and supporting families through palliative care.

"There is no money that can give you the fulfillment that you get from caring for elderly people."

*– Sade Obagbemi,
Acting Campus Manager Edenhope*

"I was so grateful to find that passion in me; I found a sparkle in me at that time," Sade said.

It was only 13 years ago that Sade took on her first role in aged care.

Today, she is Edenhope's Acting Campus Manager as well as Acting Community Health Manager. Her appointment to these senior positions reflects Sade's drive to embrace a new identity in a new country.

Sade was a mother-of-three and successful accountant in Lagos, West Africa, before deciding to move to Australia.

Initially, aged care was just a flexible job to balance with family duties.



Sade Obagbemi will act in Edenhope's campus manager role through to December.

It quickly became Sade's life purpose.

"Providing care, giving people dignity and sitting with someone when they're dying – it is such a beautiful privilege," she said.

Passion fuelled her through seven years of nights shifts, while raising three children and studying to become a registered nurse.

About five years ago, Sade transitioned into management roles in Stawell and Edenhope. Although she and her family live in Hamilton, Sade stays in Edenhope a few nights every week.

"It breaks my heart to miss some of those moments, but I am proud to be a role model for my children," she said. "This is my purpose."

Region wide



Vale Rob Knowles

Grampians Health is saddened to report the passing of our Chair of Board of Directors, the Hon. Rob Knowles AO, in May.

Rob was a deeply respected leader whose life was marked by service, integrity and care for others. Rob will be deeply missed by the Grampians Health community and by the many lives he touched across the region and beyond.



Our People

New team members have strengthened Allied Health services in Stawell.

Stawell



Physiotherapist Alvin Santhosh and Occupational Therapists Skyla Campbell-Gordon and Lucas Woodrow have all joined the team at Grampians Health Stawell this year.

Massive boost to Stawell Allied Health

Our Allied Health team at Stawell has strengthened this year after gaining a massive boost from the inclusion of five new clinicians to the team.

Physiotherapist Alvin Santhosh, Speech Pathologist Joy Harwood, Dietitian Laura Fitzgerald and two occupational therapists Skyla Campbell-Gordon and Lucas Woodrow are all settling into Grampians living and the Stawell community.

For Skyla, she was keen to get a job at the campus after working there during placements.

"I really enjoy working here because Stawell offers so much more variety in disciplines, compared to a Melbourne hospital," Skyla said. "I also get to work off-campus occasionally too, so the variety is great."

Skyla is excited about living near the Grampians because she enjoys hiking and is keen to try rock climbing.

Alvin is also enjoying the change from city living: "Stawell is a beautiful place, and the people are

very nice which has made the move so much easier," he said.

Lucas has moved across from Adelaide and is looking forward to exploring the Grampians and nearby Black Ranges; while Joy has returned to the Wimmera after working 18 months in the Northern Territory. She was excited to return after having previously worked at our Horsham campus.

Chief Operating Officer Ben Kelly welcomed the new allied health cohort to Stawell.

"This significant increase demonstrates our commitment to growing the workforce in the region," Mr Kelly said.

"We are growing our capacity to deliver services at each campus."

- Ben Kelly, Chief Operating Officer



New accommodation complex completed

A new \$8.3 million staff accommodation complex has been completed in Horsham, in partnership with Elmstone Property Group.

The accommodation complex will help attract highly qualified professionals and support the growth of a strong, sustainable local healthcare workforce for Grampians Health.

All 36 serviced apartments have now been completed. The secured apartments feature self-contained living spaces with private bathrooms and kitchenettes. Four apartments have been purpose-built with accessible design features to support staff and families with additional needs.

Grampians Health CEO Dale Fraser said access to accommodation had long been a barrier to workforce recruitment in the region.

"Being able to offer high-quality, modern accommodation removes a major obstacle and puts Horsham in a much stronger position to welcome new staff," Mr Fraser said.

"This investment provides modern spaces that support our workforce to live, train and work locally."

*- Dale Fraser,
Chief Executive Officer*

The first staff have already moved in and are benefiting from the purpose-built facilities.

Tessa Van Veenendaal, an intern at Grampians Health who recently relocated to Horsham, said the accommodation had made the transition significantly easier.

"Moving to a new town can be daunting but having secure, fully equipped accommodation ready from the start has taken a huge weight off my shoulders," Ms Van Veenendaal said.

"It's allowed me to focus on my work and settle in quickly, without the stress of finding housing. The apartments are modern, comfortable and close to everything I need.

"It's also been great meeting other staff who are new to the area — it really helps you feel part of a community straight away."



The new accommodation complex provides modern, comfortable living for healthcare staff.



Grampians Health intern Tessa Van Veenendaal, Board member Anthony Schache and CEO Dale Fraser inaugurate the new staff complex.



LEARN MORE

www.gh.org.au/careers



Our People

More patients are receiving hospital-level care in the comfort of their own homes.

Ballarat
Horsham

Taking the hospital to homes

When nurse William Ho talks about care, he often starts with homes rather than hospitals.

As Manager of Grampians Health's Hospital Without Walls, William leads a team delivering hospital-level care in patients' homes and communities.

The service brings together Grampians Health at Home (GH at Home), Post Acute Care and Grampians Watch, helping patients receive treatment where they feel most comfortable.

Through GH at Home, eligible patients can return home sooner while continuing to receive the same clinical oversight they would receive in hospital.

Nurses, doctors, allied health professionals and pharmacists work together to provide coordinated care, with nurses travelling to patients instead of the other way around.

Today, GH at Home Ballarat can care for around 50 patients at a time, making it one of the health service's largest wards—just without walls.

The role requires highly experienced nurses who often work independently, assessing patients and responding to changing clinical needs in real time.



William Ho and his team provide hospital level care in patients' homes through Hospital Without Walls.

Patients may receive intravenous antibiotics, wound care, post-surgical monitoring, cancer treatments and allied health support, all from home.

For Mr Ho, the impact is clear. Over the past five years, the Home-Based Cancer Care stream has saved patients more than 150,000 kilometres of travel.

"We're reducing the burden on patients and families while helping people maintain their lives at home as much as possible," he said.

Originally trained in hotel management and human resources, William transitioned into nursing in 2017 and

"Regardless of where patients are, we should be able to provide hospital-level care to them."

*— William Ho,
Manager Hospital Without Walls*

discovered hospital-in-the-home care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now overseeing a growing service, he is helping drive new initiatives including a virtual discharge clinic, allowing some patients to return home while awaiting test results.

"Nurses are the backbone of the health service," Mr Ho said. "And there are so many different ways we can care for patients."



www.gh.org.au/at-home
www.gh.org.au/grampians-watch



Meet our people



Catherine Tischler
Horsham
Nurse Practitioner

Catherine Tischler is a recently endorsed Nurse Practitioner, the highest clinical qualification in nursing.

After moving from Geelong to Horsham more than a decade ago, Catherine built a career across aged care, district nursing, acute care and emergency medicine before specialising in renal care.

Passionate about supporting people with chronic kidney disease, Catherine has helped strengthen dialysis services in the region.

Her role enables her to provide more streamlined, patient-centred care while supporting improved access to specialist renal services across Grampians Health.



Kelly Kara
Ballarat
Senior Midwifery
Officer and Director
Women & Children's
Services

Kelly Kara brings more than 20 years of experience in maternity care, education and service to her position as Senior Midwifery Officer and Director Women & Children's Services.

Originally from New Zealand, Kelly has extensive experience across regional and tertiary health services, including helping establish a midwifery-led birthing unit in Christchurch.

Passionate about regional healthcare, Kelly is focused on improving maternity outcomes through continuity of care, workforce development and expanded service options for women and families across the Grampians region.



Erin Rongcal
Edenhope
Registered Nurse

Erin Rongcal brings diverse experience across aged care, hospital settings and agency nursing to her role at Grampians Health.

Originally from the Philippines, Erin spent eight years living and working in New Zealand before relocating to Australia to explore new career opportunities.

Since joining the team, she has embraced the close-knit community and relaxed pace of rural life.

Known for her gentle nature and commitment, Erin is passionate about making a positive difference in people's lives, even through small acts of care.



Our People

Our team is committed to delivering inclusive, high-quality healthcare.

Region wide



Jae-Ann Rule
Dimboola
Health care worker

Jae-Ann Rule joined the team at our Dimboola Aged Care Community just a year ago and has already made quite an impression on her colleagues and the residents.

In her role, Jae-Ann attends to the personal needs of the residents, including feeding when needed, hygiene duties and engaging with them at every chance she gets.

Jae-Ann loves her job, and being with the residents and seeing them happy. She also loves making them comfortable and safe in her care.

Jae-Anne said she loves learning about the residents' life before their care and understanding as much as she can about them.



Shirley Summerhayes
Stawell
Enrolled nurse

Shirley Summerhayes was recognised for her 45 years of service earlier this year to the Stawell Hospital and MacPherson Smith Residential Care.

Raised on a farm near Minyip, Shirley trained at Wimmera Base Hospital before working across Victoria, the Northern Territory and Queensland.

Since joining Stawell Hospital in 1981, Shirley has been a dedicated and dependable member of the team. She has embraced changes in healthcare and technology while maintaining a strong commitment to colleagues, residents, and aged care.



Carmen Simkin
Ballarat
Volunteer

Carmen Simkin has been a volunteer at Ballarat for more than 12 years, supporting patients and visitors as part of the Ballarat Regional Integrated Cancer Centre (BRICC) and the Welcome Team.

A former farmer, Carmen enjoys Tai Chi, Mahjong and reading with her long-running book club, The Bookworm. She is also proud to have been the first female elder in the Western District of the Presbyterian Church.

Carmen says the most rewarding part of volunteering is helping others and being part of a supportive team. She values the opportunity to give back to the community and make a positive difference in people's lives.

Helping Communities Thrive

Winter
2026

Contact Us

Main campuses / Hospitals



Ballarat Base Hospital

1 Drummond Street North
Ballarat, Victoria 3350
(03) 5320 4000

Edenhope Hospital

128-134 Elizabeth Street
Edenhope, Victoria 3318
(03) 5585 9800

Wimmera Base Hospital

83 Baillie Street
Horsham, Victoria 3400
(03) 5381 9111

Stawell Hospital

27-29 Sloane Street
Stawell, Victoria 3380
(03) 5358 8500

Dimboola Campus

32/36 Anderson Street
Dimboola, Victoria 3414
(03) 5320 6960 (Option 3 - Admission enquiries)
(03) 5363 7100 (to contact Care Community directly)

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