

Community
Newsletter



Summer 2025-26



Showing off our biscuits

Residents at Dimboola Community Care were busy making biscuits and arranging flowers to enter in the Dimboola Show in October.

Meaningful Life partner Amy Cowell is pictured helping residents Chris and Billie to make delicious yo-yo biscuits.

Prosthetic and orthotics services now in Horsham

Monthly prosthetic and orthotics clinics have launched in Horsham and Stawell, bringing specialist care closer to home for communities across the region.

The new clinics, which started in July, are part of a broader initiative to improve access to essential health services through collaboration across our sites.

The prosthetic and orthotic clinic is a specialised service where patients are assessed, fitted, and supported in the use of devices that either replace missing body parts (prosthetics) or assist and improve physical function (orthotics).

These clinics provide ongoing care, adjustments, and rehabilitation support to help patients achieve optimal mobility, independence, and quality of life.

"While we have an established prosthetic and orthotic clinic in

"This means patients can receive high-quality care without needing to travel long distances, which is especially important for follow-up appointments and ongoing rehabilitation. "

Ballarat, our ability to share resources across our network has enabled us to extend these specialist services to Horsham and Stawell," said Chief Operating Officer Ben Kelly.

The clinics deliver essential prosthetic and orthotic care for a range of people including children, older adults, and those recovering from surgery or adapting to new devices.

They also offer long-term support for people following amputation or those living with neurological conditions such as cerebral palsy, many of whom require ongoing, lifelong management.

"Prior to these clinics, many patients in the region often had to travel to Ballarat for their

assessment and/or review appointments. We're now helping to improve access and reduce travel burdens for our regional patients," said Karina McAuley, Acting Clinical Manager of Prosthetics and Orthotics.

The prosthetic and orthotic clinics are already making a difference for local patients.

"We're seeing new referrals come in and familiar faces return for follow-up care," said Ms McAuley.

"It's exciting to see the impact these clinics are having already and we're ready to grow with the community."

To access the clinic, patients can self-refer. Referrals from both Grampians Health staff and external healthcare providers are also welcome.

All new referrals should be directed to the Ballarat Central Intake via email at: centralintakereferrals@gh.org.au or by phone at (03) 5320 6690.



Orthotist/Prosthetist Joellen McPhan with patient Lainey of Horsham.

Free sanitary products now available on site

New vending machines offering free pads and tampons have been installed across all of our campuses.

This important project, delivered through the Victorian State Government, ensures that essential sanitary products are readily available when needed, helping to reduce barriers to access and remove the stress of being caught without sanitary products.

Vending machines are now located in non-gender bathrooms across our Stawell, Horsham, Dimboola, Edenhope and Ballarat campuses.

At Dimboola, you can find the machines in the staff toilet located within the facility and also the visitors' toilet in the foyer.

Chief Redevelopment and Infrastructure Officer Veronica Furnier said the project represented an important step toward building a more inclusive and supportive healthcare environment.

"We're proud to support a program that helps create a more comfortable and equitable experience for everyone who visits our facilities," Ms Furnier said.

"By offering free pads and tampons in convenient locations, we're helping to normalise menstrual health, reduce stigma and ensure that no one is placed under unnecessary stress because they don't have access to essential products."

The initiative aligns with Grampians Health's ongoing commitment to improving accessibility, dignity and wellbeing for all staff, patients, and visitors.



Dimboola Campus Manager Jacqui Inches is pictured with one of the vending machines.

Grampians Health has employment opportunities across all of our campuses
Discover employee benefits and career opportunities

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



Wimmera Cancer Centre offers cold cap treatment

A new scalp cooling system that reduces chemotherapy-induced hair loss is now available at Wimmera Cancer Centre.

Scalp cooling or 'cold capping' is an effective way of combating chemotherapy-induced hair loss and can result in a high level of retention or completely preserve the hair.

Cancer Centre Manager Carmel O'Kane said patients who requested the cold cap treatment in the past, had to travel to Ballarat because it was the nearest oncology clinic to provide the service.

"It's going to be a great comfort to many patients knowing they can get the cold cap treatment in Horsham, thanks to the generosity of community donations," Ms O'Kane said.

Ms O'Kane said hair loss was a common side effect of chemotherapy treatment.



Wimmera Cancer Centre ANUM Ivy Argallon is one of two oncology nurses at the centre who are trained to use the new Paxman scalp cooling system.

"Chemotherapy works by targeting all rapidly dividing cells in the body and hair is the second fastest dividing cell which is why chemotherapy drugs cause hair loss.

"Hair damage caused by chemotherapy can be alleviated by scalp cooling. It works by reducing the temperature of the scalp by a few degrees

immediately before, during and after chemotherapy.

"Scalp cooling is not always effective though. It can depend on factors like the specific chemotherapy drugs and dosage and the patient's hair type," Ms O'Kane said.

Patients having chemotherapy can request cold capping by discussing it with their oncologist.

Bathroom upgrades

Two bathrooms in Dimboola's acute ward have been refurbished, providing modern and improved facilities for users.

The upgrades, completed in September, included plumbing, electrical and maintenance work, along with the installation of new vinyl flooring in each bathroom.

This refurbishment ensures the campus facilities continue to meet the needs of the community and reflects our commitment to delivering the best possible care, closer to home.



Dimboola Care Community Manager Amy Elliott admires the completed work.

Launching Australia's first mobile clinical trials unit

In an Australian first, Grampians Health has launched a dedicated mobile clinical trials unit bringing research, innovation, and care directly to Western Victorian communities.

The initiative solidifies our commitment to ensuring every Australian, no matter where they live, has access to the right treatment at the right time.

"Our mobile clinical trials unit will help close the gap for our regional and rural patients who face poorer health outcomes, by bringing the latest clinical research and therapies directly to them – delivering care closer to, or even at, home," said Professor Matthew Hadfield, Chief Medical Officer.

Each trial and patient will be assessed for mobile clinical trial suitability with the aim to reduce

“ Every kilometre our mobile clinical trials unit travels represents greater access, better outcomes, and stronger communities for our people in regional and rural areas, reducing the stress and burden on patients and their families. ”

the travel burden experienced by community members.

The unit is equipped with medical technology that can deliver components of care related to diverse clinical trials on-site, enabling people to participate in research without the frequent need to travel to a regional or metropolitan hospital for treatment.

Hamilton grandfather, Barry Baulch, will be among the first clinical trial participants to receive innovative treatment and care via the new mobile clinical trials unit – and he can already

see its immeasurable benefits.

"You go through so much with cancer already without adding the extra stress and burden of travel," said Mr Baulch.

With Grampians Health currently the only regional Victorian centre running this Phase I oncology trial, Mr Baulch and his wife Bev have travelled hundreds of kilometres in the five-hour round trip from their Hamilton home to Ballarat.

Currently, the couple spends up to two days each week in Ballarat at Ballarat Regional Integrated Cancer Centre (BRICC) receiving treatment.

Soon, Mr Baulch will be able to receive some of the trial-related care at home, thanks to the mobile clinical trials unit.

The mobile clinical trials unit also features artwork from First Nations artist, Darlene Rumler.

The artwork, 'Woven Art', pays tribute to and acknowledges the Traditional Owners of South-West Victoria, tied together and linked through history, kinship, Country, and connections, learning together and paying tribute to healing in modern, contemporary and traditional methods.

To learn more about Grampians Health research and clinical trials, visit research.gh.org.au.



Barry Baulch is pictured alongside the mobile clinical trials unit.

New unit helps streamline maternity care



Yandilla Nurse Unit Manager Michelle Coutts shows the new Dräger neonatal ventilation unit to WHCG Foundation chair Graeme Hardman.

Wimmera Base Hospital's newest neonatal ventilation unit has provided an important change for our midwives with maternity teams.

Wimmera Health Care Group (WHCG) Foundation purchased the Dräger ventilation unit for the Yandilla ward as part of a \$115,000 donation made earlier this year. Yandilla Nurse Unit Manager Michelle Coutts said a lot of background research was done prior to purchasing the Dräger unit.

"The Dräger unit has better functionality and a better interactive screen than the previous unit, but more importantly it is the same cot that Ballarat's maternity team uses," Ms Coutts said.

"This is very important because among the team, we have several midwives who transition between the two campuses. This means from a training and education perspective there is a clear familiarity with the equipment.

"We have also done the same with the latest ventilator we purchased – it's the same model as Ballarat's."

Ms Coutts said having the same brand also made things easier with troubleshooting and maintenance.

"It's just made things more efficient all round. This particular unit will remain in the nursery and is being used for stabilisation but also for full intensive resuscitation when necessary."

"We are very grateful to the Foundation for their continued and generous support. They are providing a real comfort for both parents and our team, knowing that our babies have the best equipment possible."

Foundation president Graeme Hardman said his committee had donated several items to maternity services at the Horsham campus in recent years, including birthing beds and cribs for Yandilla and an ultrasound for Horsham Maternity Clinic.

"We are pleased to be able to provide continued support to Grampians Health's Horsham and Dimboola campuses," Mr Hardman said.

Celebrating our 2025 Life Governors

Our newest Life Governors were recently celebrated at an event in Ballarat, where we recognised 20 staff members and 7 community members from across the region for their outstanding commitment, dedication, and support to Grampians Health.

Life Governorship is an honour appointed every year by our Board of Directors. It is awarded to people who have made a substantial difference to our health service, through community service, philanthropy, or other valued contributions. It is also awarded to staff members who reach an incredible 40 years of service.

This year's event was held at The Goods Shed in Ballarat on 29 October, where most of the new Life Governors received their award.

Local presentations are scheduled for Horsham and Stawell over the coming months for those who were unable to attend the event.

Horsham volunteer Pat Uytdehaag receives her Life Governor award from Board Chair Rob Knowles.



Congratulations to the following Wimmera community members who have been recognised as Life Governors for 2025:

Elaine Morrison – member of the Wimmera Base Hospital Ladies Auxiliary. Elaine has been a member of the Wimmera Base Hospital Ladies Auxiliary for the past 14 years, the last 8 of those as Treasurer.

Marie Aitken – past Deputy Chair of the Grampians Health Board. Marie was most recently the Deputy Chair of the Grampians Health Board, a position that she held since 2021. Prior to this, she was the Board Chair of Wimmera Health Care Group and played an integral role in the amalgamation to create Grampians Health.

Pat Uytdehaag – member of the Wimmera Base Hospital Ladies Auxiliary. Over the last 21 years Pat has helped the Ladies Auxiliary raise money which has been donated back to the Horsham and Dimboola hospital in excess of \$1.1 million.

Congratulations to our staff who have been recognised as Life Governors for 2025:

- Angie Spencer – Director of Nursing, QEC (Ballarat)
- Bev Penberthy – Ward Clerk, 4 South (Ballarat)
- Bruce Rentsch – Clinical Nurse Educator Graduate Transition Program (West) (Horsham)
- Cheree Scown – Senior Mental Health Clinician (RPN) (Ararat)
- Elizabeth Woodward – Ward Clerk, 3 South Surgical (Ballarat)
- Fiona Williams – Care Coordinator/Liaison Nurse, Booking Office (Ballarat)
- Fiona Wynd – Food Services Assistant (Stawell)
- Jillian Watkins – Clinical Nurse Educator, Mental Health
- Judith Wood – NUM / Oxley (Horsham)
- Helen Easson – Clinical Nurse Specialist / Dialysis (Horsham)
- Leanne Best – Enrolled Nurse L1, Bill Crawford Lodge (Ballarat)
- Leonie McLoughlin – Environmental Services Assistant (Stawell)
- Louise Ward – Patient Services Assistant, Environmental Services (Ballarat)
- Marice O'Brien – Graduate/Post Graduate Coordinator, Mental Health (Ballarat)
- Mick Hovey – Handyperson (Ballarat)
- Rodney Jackson – Cleaner, Environmental Services (Ballarat)
- Roxanne Tucker – Safe Systems & Performance Lead (Horsham)
- Sandra Waterhouse – Psychiatric Enrolled Nurse L2, Steele Haughton (Ballarat)
- Sharyn Watson – Administration Assistant – Engineering (Ballarat)
- Sue Flockhart – Director Infection Control (Ballarat)

Unveiling our inaugural Intercultural Action Plan

Grampians Health's first Intercultural Action Plan has been launched.

The plan reinforces our broader commitment to delivering high-quality, consumer-centred care, workplaces where people can thrive and partner with communities to improve health outcomes.

CEO Dale Fraser said the Intercultural Action Plan would help position Grampians Health as a healthcare service that listened, learned and led with inclusion.

"By aligning our intercultural priorities with our strategic goals, we are strengthening our vision to be a trusted, progressive and inclusive healthcare service," Mr Fraser said.

"It is a timely and strategic response to the evolving cultural landscape of both our workforce and the communities we serve."

The framework provides clear direction for building a culturally safe and capable organisation. 

As of April 2025, about 25% of Grampians Health staff were born overseas, representing over 100 countries worldwide. The largest groups include staff from India and the Philippines.

The Intercultural Action Plan consolidates existing and future initiatives under three key priority areas of Safe and Inclusive Workplace; Community Connections, Representation and Accessibility; and Cultural Change.

Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Committee Chair Veronica Furnier said the plan supports Grampians Health being an employer of choice for culturally diverse candidates and ensures all staff feel respected, safe and included.

"It also strengthens our engagement with multicultural communities and embeds their voices in how we plan and deliver services," Ms Furnier said.

"Ultimately, the plan will also help to normalise diversity and inclusion as core elements of how we work – not as add-ons – with a focus on building a culturally capable, accountable and empowered workforce."

The Intercultural Action Plan was developed through extensive consultation with staff and community representatives and will continue to evolve through ongoing engagement and feedback.

The Plan is available in English, English as an Additional Language (EAL), Hindi and Filipino.

To read the Intercultural Action Plan visit:
www.gh.org.au/publications



Chief People Officer Claire Woods, Director Financial Accounting, Revenue & Systems Amarjit Saini, Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Committee Chair Veronica Furnier and Associate Nurse Unit Manager Serena Ogbuokiri celebrate the launch of our first Intercultural Action Plan.

Nina's passion carries her to the pinnacle of nursing

Our newest Nurse Practitioner has a long-standing passion for ensuring the older population receives the best care possible, tailored to their needs to optimise quality of life.

When Nina Roberts learned that her unit had lost its Nurse Practitioner, she decided to make a career-defining commitment to further her studies.

"It was 2020 and at the height of COVID-19 when I started my studies toward my Masters of Advanced Clinical Nursing – General Medicine," Ms Roberts said.

"Once I completed that, I went on to complete my Masters in Gerontology so that I could provide specialist care in Wyuna. It was a five-year commitment, but I am so happy that I was able to do it."

Nina said her new role had aided in creating a direct link between access to timely geriatrician input when older persons are admitted to the hospital, with the aim to reduce the potential complications that can occur due to lengthy admissions.

"With Grampians Health, the Horsham campus now has direct access to geriatric care.

"The added support of the Nurse Practitioner means the Wimmera's aged community can feel safer because chronic conditions can be assessed



Nina Roberts checks on Transitional Care Program patient Dianne Schorback.

more efficiently and a plan of care can be created to fulfil a better lifestyle.

"I'm able to give families timely updates on a patient's medical condition. For example, if their loved one is recovering from a stroke, I can have good conversations around what the stroke recovery is looking like and what the trajectory of the rehabilitation is.

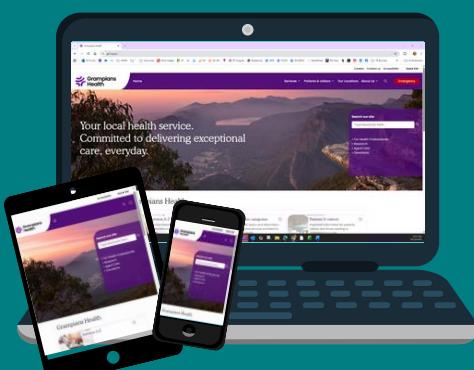
Ms Roberts also provides support to Wyuna's Transitional Care Program.

This includes general overview of the program, overseeing patients, ensuring they've got the correct follow-up appointments and that the GP will receive information regarding the patient's admission.

"I really would love for another nurse to read this and think 'Yes! I can do it. I can be a Nurse Practitioner,'" Ms Roberts said.

"Living in regional Victoria does not limit access to the pathway of becoming a Nurse Practitioner. Studying my Masters in Advanced Clinical Nursing/Nurse Practitioner was achievable as the learning platform was delivered completely online, reducing the need to travel to study.

"There will be times when it will feel difficult, but the end result is so worthwhile and extremely important in supporting the health of our community."



Our new website is now live!

Grampians Health's new website brings five sites into one, consolidating and streamlining information for our communities.

Key features include: search by service or care category, location info across all sites, comprehensive career and training info, and an easy feedback process.

Visit us at gh.org.au

Celebrating achievements at AGM

Board members, staff and community members gathered on 26 November to review Grampians Health's progress throughout 2024-25 and look forward to future milestones, as part of our 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Held at the Ballarat Base Hospital, Board Chair Rob Knowles outlined our achievements over the last year, including:

- new Strategic Plan 2025-29
- continued collaboration across campuses
- women's health clinics launched
- Stawell's new operating theatre
- continued progress on the Ballarat Base Hospital redevelopment and YPARC Centre
- new Horsham pharmacy.

Special guest speaker Jennie Courtney, CEO of Women's Health Grampians, gave a powerful presentation on the 16 Days of Activism and gender-based violence, and how we can harness the spirit of activism to advance gender equality.

Dale Fraser, CEO of Grampians Health, said the AGM was an important opportunity to acknowledge the dedication of staff and the progress that had been made in delivering equitable healthcare across western Victoria.

"This past year has been transformative for Grampians Health," said Mr Fraser.

"The expansion of services, the investment in infrastructure, and the reforms we have implemented are already making a tangible difference in the lives of our patients and communities.

"Our focus now is on delivering our 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, which will strengthen partnerships and ensure inclusive, accessible and high-quality care for all."

A recording of the AGM is available upon request. The full 2024-25 annual report can be accessed at: www.gh.org.au/publications



CEO Dale Fraser leads the AGM proceedings; and guest speaker Jennie Courtney, CEO Women's Health Grampians.

ARE YOU OUR NEXT VOLUNTEER?

Grampians Health Dimboola is looking for people to volunteer in the following areas:

Volunteer Drivers

Palliative Care

Community Friendship Program with Dimboola Nursing Home

If you, or someone you know, is interested in volunteering with Grampians Health Edenhope, please contact Kellie McMaster at Kellie.McMaster@gh.org.au or 5381 9347.

Scan the QR Code to fill out an Expression of Interest form.



Staying safe in times of high heat

Helping each other to stay safe during times of high heat is the key approach of the **Heatwave H.E.L.P** project, now underway, as we prepare for the hot weather likely coming our way this summer.

Runs of hot days together – heatwaves – are becoming hotter, longer and starting earlier in the season.

High temperatures can be fatal, and more people die from the effects of heatwave than all other natural events combined.

That's why many local and regional organisations are working together to support all who live and work in **Horsham, Northern Grampians and Hepburn local government areas** to prepare for and stay safe during heatwaves.

Severe or extreme heat can cause potentially fatal health problems such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke, trigger sudden events like heart attack or stroke, or worsen existing medical conditions like kidney or lung disease, and mental health conditions.

Everyone is at some risk, and some people are at more risk of illness on hot days and during heatwaves than others.

Local and regional organisations involved include:

- Grampians Public Health Unit
- Grampians Community Health
- Western Victoria Primary Health Network
- local GPs and pharmacies
- local clubs and volunteer agencies
- Ambulance Victoria
- Goolum Goolum and Budja Budja Aboriginal Cooperatives
- Grampians Health
- East Wimmera Health Service
- Central Highlands Rural Health
- Horsham Rural City, Northern Grampians Shire and Hepburn Shire Councils
- ABC Victoria
- local staff of government departments
- education providers, aged, disability and welfare service providers
- community members



The word **"HEAT"** helps us remember who is at higher risk of harm from heat.

H	H is for home and living conditions . Includes people who live alone, and/or without access to air-conditioning or ways to get cool.
E	E is for environment . Includes people who work or play sport outdoors on hot days, and those who don't know about weather warnings because of language barriers or other reasons.
A	A is for age and underlying conditions . Includes babies and older people, and expectant or breast-feeding mothers. People with heart, circulation, lung, kidney conditions, diabetes or a mental health condition are at higher risk.
T	T is for taking certain medications , such as for anxiety or other mental health conditions, and some blood pressure tablets. These medications can dehydrate you. People taking these medications should talk to their health care provider so they can know how to stay safe and well on days of severe heat.

Simple actions can save lives during severe heat – and the word **"SAFE"** is a good way to remember.

S	S is for staying cool and drinking enough water . Keeping a cool wet towel around your shoulders can be enough to ensure your core body temperature stays within normal limits.
A	A is for avoiding being outside during the heat of the day .
F	F is for phoning family and friends . Checking in on neighbours, new arrivals and others can be lifesaving.
E	E is for being aware of emergency information and alerts on very hot days. Listen to the ABC (our national emergency broadcaster) or download the Vic Emergency App.



Contact Us

Acute Care

5363 7100

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

Medical Centre

5363 7111

The medical centre is colocated with the Dimboola Hospital and nursing home.

Appointments required except in the case of emergencies.

Payment is required for consultations, however all pensioners, children under 16 and health care card holders are bulk billed.

Telehealth

5363 7100

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

Dimboola Nursing Home (Care Community)

5363 7100

Supporting residents to maintain their connections within the wider community.

Day Centre

5363 7159

A supportive environment for our older community and people with dementia and/or disabilities to maintain personal independence and provide support for their carers.

Allied Health (Horsham)

5381 9333

- Dietetics
- Occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Speech pathology
- Social work
- Dental and Prosthetic Clinic

Feedback

5320 4014

Suggestions, concerns, thanks and complaints.

Call, email, or visit our website to complete a feedback form.

grampianshealth.org.au

feedback@gh.org.au