



Stawell Operating Theatre Nurse Unit Manager Sally Hamilton shows the new urology instruments to Foundation trustees Kevin Erwin, Graeme Ellen and Kerrie Rosenow.

Stawell Foundation donates urology tools

Our Stawell surgical output will be able to further increase thanks to a healthy donation from the Stawell Hospital Foundation.

The foundation donated \$28,000 towards instruments for performing urology operations, as part of a total \$36,580 donation to expand local surgical services.

Stawell Operating Theatre Nurse Unit Manager Sally Hamilton said the new instruments will make a huge difference to surgery by expanding current services as well as increasing surgical output.

"The new instruments are all essential for performing a range of urological procedures. It means we can now plan to implement a urology service in one theatre while using the second theatre for other operations," Ms Hamilton said.

"The instruments will help reduce surgical wait times for urology patients and local communities.

"It's a great win for us and we are very grateful for the support from the Foundation."

Foundation Chair Graeme Ellen said he was pleased that the Foundation was able to provide such high-end equipment to the theatre, knowing that it was going to make such an important difference for surgical care to our community and beyond.

"The instruments were part of a package donation that also included a new Telehealth cart for Stawell's Urgent Care and gym equipment for Allied Health services," Mr Ellen said.

Recognising Stawell's first Perioperative Novice Program graduates

A big shout-out to our first Stawell graduates of the Perioperative Novice Program, led by Clinical Nurse Educators Michelle Dunn and Alex Mathieson.

Delivered in collaboration with East Grampians Health Services (EGHS), last year marked the first time the combined program has been run at Stawell.

The six-month program provides a unique opportunity for staff who are new to the perioperative environment to gain essential skills and confidence, combining theory and practical sessions, as well as education from company representatives, offering a comprehensive introduction to perioperative nursing.

Congratulations to our recent graduates: Neen Neen Wai Ju, Kate Wills, Jennae Dibben, Roel Cabije, and Marnie Skiller.



Back L-R: Madison Purtill (EGHS Perioperative Educator), Alex Mathieson (CNE Perioperative), Neen Neen Wai Ju (Novice Student EGHS), Kate Wills (Novice Student GH), Jennae Dibben (Novice Student GH), Sally Hamilton (NUM GH Perioperative Department, and Michelle Dunn (CNE Perioperative).

Front L-R: Roel Cabije (Novice Student GH) and Marnie Skiller (Novice Student EGHS).

Join Grampians Health

Employment opportunities across the region
Discover employee benefits and career opportunities

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





*Stawell Medical Centre
Nurse Zoey Friend adjusts
the bed for Centre
Manager Kelly Lee.*

New bed for Day Centre specialist use

A generous donation has provided new treatment beds for the Stawell Medical Centre and Horsham campus.

The new fit-for-purpose beds provide improved patient safety and comfort while making the clinician's role of adjusting the bed much simpler and safer.

Grampians Health Complex Care Manager Pauline Amos said the beds were generously donated by Ballarat medical equipment manufacturer Alevo.

"The bed in Horsham will get daily use in a variety of programs such as stomal therapy, continence care and pain management," Ms Amos said.

"The previous bed used in this area had seen more than two decades of work so it was definitely in need of replacement and this one is much more adjustable.

"The bed features all electric controls for the multiple positions so it is much easier for staff to operate and it eliminates risk of injury from manual adjusting."

Stawell Medical Centre Manager Kelly Lee said the bed was being used for a variety of roles but it's key purpose would be for patient comfort during wound care.

"The bed's adjustable settings mean patients can sit or lie in the best possible comfort while nurses dressed their wounds," Ms Lee said.

"The bed is also quite maneuverable so we can use it in different rooms when necessary."

Ms Amos said Grampians Health was very appreciative of Alevo's generosity and both beds were already getting plenty of use.

Alevo Sales and Marketing Manager Jackie Haylett said her company was pleased to be able to support patient care in local communities.

"We are just pleased to know that Grampians Health will be able to make good use of the beds and that patients will be treated in the best of comfort," Ms Haylett said.

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.



Stryker chairs donation from Stawell Ladies Auxiliary

Stawell patients can now be transported around the hospital in extra comfort after the purchase of two Stryker wheelchairs.

A \$10,000 donation from Stawell Ladies Auxiliary has paid for the chairs, which are designed to provide more comfort and ease of use for both patients and nurses pushing them. The chairs are being used by Urgent/Acute Care and the Operating Suite.

Stawell Urgent Care and Simpson Wing Nurse Unit Manager Amy Yole said the Stryker chairs replaced the old wheelchairs they had been previously using.

"These chairs are far superior to a regular wheelchair," Ms Yole said. "For the patient they are much easier to get in and out of and for the nurse or orderly pushing them, they are much more maneuverable.

"They are designed to push easily on any surface, including carpet."

Ms Yole said she was very grateful to receive the chairs and thanked the Stawell Ladies Auxiliary.

"Fundraising groups like the Auxiliary are very important to us because they make sure we are using the latest equipment which is great for the medical team and provides better health outcomes and comfort for our patients," she said.

Chief People Officer Claire Woods also thanked the Ladies Auxiliary for their continued support.

"One of the goals of the voluntary amalgamation was to ensure money raised in a particular community would be spent on that community's health service and that has always remained the case," Ms Woods said.



Stawell Ladies Auxiliary members Judith Burke and Mavis Evans with one of the two new Stryker chairs.

Staying strong and independent at every age



Exercise physiologist Jade Ralph.

Maintaining strength, balance and mobility plays an important role in supporting independence and overall wellbeing within the community.

Exercise Physiologist Jade Ralph works with people recovering from injury, managing long-term health conditions, or simply wanting to remain active. Her role involves prescribing tailored exercise programs designed to improve strength, balance and functional movement.

While physical changes naturally occur over time, strength and balance can be maintained and improved with appropriate support. Simple activities such as short walks, light resistance exercises, and gentle balance practice at home can make a meaningful difference to mobility and confidence.

Falls remain one of the most common reasons older adults attend hospital. Targeted strength and balance exercises can help reduce risk and improve stability. Even small gains in leg

For more information about available services and how to access them, please contact Allied Health, 5358 8531 or visit www.gh.org.au/services/exercise-physiology/

strength can assist with everyday tasks such as getting out of a chair, climbing steps or moving safely around the home.

Exercise physiology services also support people living with chronic conditions including arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and osteoporosis.

Appropriately prescribed exercise can help manage symptoms, improve energy levels and contribute to overall health.

Exercise programs do not need to be intense or complicated to be effective. The focus is on safe, achievable movements tailored to individual ability, with steady and sustainable progress over time.

Community-based programs can provide both structured support and social connection, helping participants build confidence while staying active.

Anyone who has noticed changes in strength or balance, or who would like support managing a long-term health condition, can access allied health and community rehabilitation services.

Allied Health Exercise Programs



GP or self-referral accepted

MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS

Better Balance
2:45pm - 3:45pm

10 week exercise and education program. Balance and strength exercise focus to meet goals and prevent and reduce falls risk.

WEDNESDAYS

Cancer Wellness Program
9:45am - 11:30am

10 week exercise and education program. Individual exercise prescription with a focus on strength and fatigue management for those who have completed active cancer treatment or are receiving ongoing cancer treatment.

Tai Chi for Health
11:00am - 12:00pm

10 week exercise program. Gentle program focussed on improving flexibility, strength, balance and reducing falls risk. 12 Tai Chi movements are taught over the duration of the program.

Everything's all Greene thanks to Lisa



A valued member of our health service since early 2019, Lisa Greene has provided dedicated administrative support across Allied Health and Oncology.

Last year, Lisa also took on the Administration role for the Gynaecology Clinic, further expanding her contribution across services. More recently, she stepped into an additional role as one of two Ambulatory Care Administration Coordinators – a testament to her experience, reliability, and commitment to supporting both staff and patients.

When asked what she enjoys most about working at Grampians Health, Lisa says, "It's the people." Being part of a supportive team and contributing to positive patient experiences each day is what makes her role so rewarding.

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.

Netballer locum turns team leader

Physiotherapist Tara-Sky Long dipped her toes in our Stawell campus' 'pool' a few times before taking the plunge.

On three occasions. Tara took on a three-month locum contract before her colleagues finally found her weakness. Tara liked netball and a good social time and Stawell had a club to help fulfill those needs.

After a decade of service, Tara has worked in multiple clinical and non-clinical roles, including Team Leader and Management.

She has been instrumental in important projects and now Tara job shares the Deputy Physio Manager West role, managing the PT team across our West campuses.

Tara is a calm, proactive and efficient leader in the Allied Health team and tackles challenges head on.

She is very caring and supportive of her team, assisting new team members to link in with community groups such as netball and fire-fighting competitions.

Tara recently received her 10-Years Service Award from Chief Operating Officer Ben Kelly.



*Tara-Sky Long (right),
pictured with Physiotherapy
Manager/West Hayley Crute.*

ARE YOU OUR NEXT VOLUNTEER?



We are looking for people to volunteer and assist in our hospital and aged care community.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in volunteering with Grampians Health Stawell, please contact Leah Ferguson at Leah.Ferguson@gh.org.au or 5320 6931.

Scan the QR Code to submit an expression of interest or visit www.gh.org.au/volunteer for more information.



SCAN HERE

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 the 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 patients left fourth and fifth toes.

Patient Clinton Plover, who underwent the surgery, expressed his gratitude for the care he received.

"The team at Grampians Health have been excellent and the recovery hasn't been too bad either. It's reassuring to know that such advanced surgery can be done here in Ballarat, close to home, without the stress of travelling to Melbourne."

This 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.



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.

'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.

DID YOU KNOW...?

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



Research Operations Director Ashleigh Clarke (left) and Clinical Research Manager Rebecca Gurnett (right) with Dimboola Campus Manager Jacqueline Inches.

"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."

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





Improved psychology care for Wimmera cancer patients

There's been strong demand for a new client-facing psycho-oncology service introduced at the Wimmera Cancer Centre last year.

The Grampians Health Psychology Department started the service for Wimmera's cancer patients with clinical psychologist Sue Titcumb making regular visits to Horsham.

Director of Psychology Dr Sarah McKinnon said the psycho-oncology service based in Ballarat had been working to provide in-person services to Wimmera Cancer Centre for a few years.

"We've been providing a Telehealth-based service but this is not always suitable for all people so we are thrilled to have commenced the

in-person services in 2025," Dr McKinnon said.

"I'm here to support these patients directly in relation to their cancer concerns and any overlap with their mental health and wellbeing," Ms Titcumb said.

"The purpose is to help those who are really struggling with that overlap of physical health and mental health and how we can help them adjust to the impact of cancer in their life.

"Also if they are experiencing difficulties due to their cancer treatment, like side effects, or if their cancer is impacting on their relationships at home.

"I'm dealing with more specific mental health concerns like depression, anxiety, panic disorders and sleep difficulties. If those issues have emerged since their cancer diagnosis, that's when they come to see our team."

HOW TO ACCESS:

Wimmera Cancer Centre patients wishing to use the psychology service should speak to their cancer resource nurse or inquire at the centre.

“I think patients find that seeing a psychologist in this setting is less confronting and that it's just part of their medical care. They have that feeling of 'well this is part of my team'.”

Midwifery services continue to expand

Wimmera mothers can access a dedicated midwife through their antenatal and postnatal periods under a new program.

Midwifery Antenatal and Postnatal Service (MAPS) ensures continuity of care, providing a positive and safe environment with the support of 10 midwives recruited to the program at Horsham Maternity Outpatients Clinic.

“Under MAPS, women will be introduced to a **named** midwife who will provide antenatal care and education, postnatal home support and care for up to 10 days post birth,” Horsham Maternity Services Manager Jane Rentsch said.

“Everyone who is booked at the Maternity Clinic in Horsham will come under the MAPS program regardless of their level of risk.”

“Grampians Health opened the [Horsham Maternity] clinic just over three years ago now and the services here have grown significantly

since then,” Mrs Rentsch said. “We are very excited to now offer a new continuity of care program.”

Deputy Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officer Meredith Theobald said the MAPS program was promoting a service that provided quality maternal and neonatal outcomes based on best practice.

“The introduction of MAPS has been the result of thorough and collaborative planning and is another example of Grampians Health delivering care that is responsive to local community needs,” she said.

DID YOU KNOW...?
We deliver around 250 babies annually in Horsham

Horsham Maternity Outpatients Clinic team members outside the McLachlan Street entrance.



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**

Helping Communities Thrive

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

Urgent Care

5358 8500

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

5358 8517

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

Stawell Medical Centre

5358 1410

Open Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.30pm

Residential Care

5358 8502

At Macpherson Smith Residential Care residents are provided with 24 hour nursing care and comprehensive Allied Health services.

X-ray & Radiology

5358 8680

- CT
- Ultrasound
- General Radiology
- Interventional
- Radiography

Oncology

5358 8556

Treatment available Tuesday to Thursday. Oncologists are available at the centre each week for appointments.

Surgical Services

5358 8524

Open Monday to Friday, 7.00am to 3.30pm

- General surgery
- Gastroenterology
- Orthopedic
- Ophthalmology
- Gynaecology
- Ear, nose and throat

Community Services

- Hospital Admission Risk Program: 5358 8604
- District Nursing: 5358 8546
- Memory Support Nurse: 5358 8551
- Post Acute Care: 5358 8618
- Transition Care Program: 5358 8535
- Social Support Group: 5358 8523

Allied Health and Community Rehabilitation

5358 8531

Services can be provided in the hospital, at home, or at one of our facilities. Services include:

- Physiotherapy
- Exercise Physiology
- Dietetics
- Occupational Therapy
- Social Work
- Speech Pathology
- Podiatry
- Diabetes Education
- Allied Health Assistants



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 more detail on accessing our services please visit www.gh.org.au