



Free Publication



Achieving great things together

Quality Account 2016-2017

Inside Stories:



The theme of the 2016-17 Quality Account is 'achieving great things together'

You will see articles in this report detailing how Rural Northwest Health has engaged with the community to ensure we are providing the right services in the right place at the right time.

By listening to our community we have been able to improve our services and provide high quality care.

Regular community meetings provide an opportunity for community members to voice concerns or suggest shifts in service models. There are also opportunities through feedback forums and lunches organised with residents, clients and their families.

This community engagement and working together has resulted in Rural Northwest Health being recognised as Victoria's best small health service for the second year in a row.

Front cover: The front cover represents connective communication through our rural community with our team and our clients. The picture shows memory support nurse Katie Ramsdale and volunteer community member Alison Whelan with Yarriambiack

Lodge aged care resident Max. Alison regularly visits the lodge and helps with the care of the residents. She is renowned for her soothing hand massages.

The team that worked on the 2016-17 Quality Account included Catherine Morley, Wendy Walters, Kerry Seater and Peter Miller.

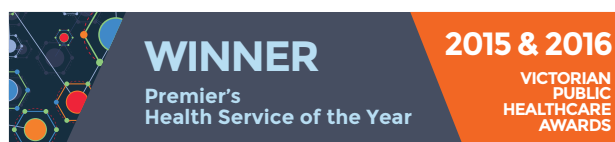
Photographs: Peter Miller, Nicole Christian and Wendy Walters

Editor: Peter Miller

The account is available to community members on Rural Northwest Health's website www.rnh.net.au or copies are available from the Warracknabeal, Hopetoun and Beulah campuses. Community members can contact Rural Northwest Health on 5396 1200 and a copy of the report will be emailed on request. Copies are available at various businesses in Hopetoun, Beulah, Brim and Warracknabeal.

Contents

Welcome	4	8-8-10 shifts	28	Chapter five: Come with us	
About Our Organisation	4	Betty Richardson awards	29	Joyce loves volunteering	42-43
Chapter one: What we've been doing well		Chapter Three: The launch of a new plan		New cancer rehab program	44-45
Beach holidays	6-7	New strategic plan	30	Art on display	46-47
A Stay of Examination	8	Learning basic cooking	31	The world wants to know	48-49
Hopetoun's new dining room	9	Diversity work group	32	Telehealth helps Jeremy	50
Award winning service	10-11	Play to Learn in Hopetoun	33	Taking recruitment to the world	51
Celebrating 150 years	12-13	The VERILY project	34	Yarri walk success	52
Making new memories	14-15	CARG in Beulah	35	Hopetoun community bus is back	53
Hopetoun's Australia Day	16	Wellbeing Coordinators program	36-37	Night art donation	54
District nursing boost	17	Chapter Four: How we have listened		Paella luncheon for carers	55
Palliative care recognition	18-19	Community driven decisions	38	Wellness garden begins	56
Chapter Two: Fishing for team results		Digesting feedback	39	Chapter six: Keeping you safe in care	
BRIGHT team health	20-21	Jen helps with recruitment	40	New hand hygiene system	57
Gamification	22-25	Day visitors discover talents	41	Graphs and data	58-59
Team respect	26-27				





CEO Catherine Morley and chair Leo Casey in front of the 2016-17 board of management, from left, Carolyn Morcom, Sally Gebert, Glenda Hewitt, Janette McCabe, Matthew Richardson and Julia Hausler. Absent: Professor Amanda Kenny



Welcome

On behalf of the Board of Management, the Rural Northwest Health team and our amazing community members, including our volunteers, our partners and our General Practitioners, we are very proud to present the Rural Northwest Health stories of 2016.

These stories demonstrate our vision of working together through change to provide innovative rural health services.

The year has been an amazing one and one that has allowed the team to progress to deliver a number of initiatives and events that support the community to understand and improve their health and wellbeing.

Rural Northwest Health has continued to engage with community members to inform us on how they would like services to be delivered, improved and the quality and standard that they expect.

The team knows that sometimes the service we deliver is not to the standard we expect and desire. The community feedback sessions, lunches and forums have allowed us to hear what is important and to make many simple and inexpensive changes that make a difference to the people we are privileged to work with.

The Board and Executive team encourage everyone to find the time to participate with us and assist us to be the best that we can be at delivering the Rural Northwest Health services that will assist you to be the best that you can be.

Please respond to our survey regarding the Quality Account 2016 - 2017 to ensure that the 2017 - 2018 account is bigger and better.



Leo Casey
Chairman



Catherine Morley
CEO

About our Organisation

Rural Northwest Health is a Victorian public sector health service created under the Health Services Act and responsible to the Minister for Health, The Honourable Jill Hennessy, MP.

The population for Yarriambiack Shire was 7088 (ABS, census 2011). Rural Northwest Health covers the northern part of the Shire and shares the southern part with West Wimmera Health Services. Between our three campuses at Warracknabeal, Beulah and Hopetoun, we provide a comprehensive range of acute, aged and primary health services to the local community.

The key focus of Rural Northwest Health is caring and supporting people to be healthy and living a full life. Our logo represents this by the carer reaching out and embracing its community over the broad horizon. Our team members provide care and programs that offer wide-reaching community support and a warm and comforting approach.

Rural Northwest Health is committed to achieving the best health for the Wimmera Mallee community. We recognise our clients / residents' total needs in order for them to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. We believe that our clients/residents are entitled to quality health care that respects their dignity, beliefs and rights, regardless of their cultural, spiritual or socio-economic background.



Vision

Moving together through change to provide innovative rural health care.

Mission

Rural Northwest Health will provide accessible, efficient and excellent care to our community within the Wimmera Mallee Region.

Volunteering

Please complete and return this form to Rural Northwest Health, Dimboola Rd, Warracknabeal, 3393 or contact administration on 5396 1200.

Family Name

Given Name

Address

.....

.....

Post Code

Phone

Email

What are you Interested in?

☐

Representing consumers on hospital committees or working groups

☐

Being a voice for the community

☐

Volunteering in Aged Care

☐

Volunteering in Day Program

☐

All of the above

A special seaside memory

"It felt like a real holiday for the residents and at times for the team as well. It's just so nice to have that sea change and experience it in a group like that."



Nurses Gary Bellis and Katie Ramsdale take a resident for a swim.



Nurses Katie Ramsdale and Irene Perry enjoy the ocean.

Yarriambiack Lodge residents soaked up the sun and the sea during their five-day visit to Ocean Grove last summer.

Residents swam in the ocean with their carers, dined at Barwon Heads Hotel, dabbled with the gaming machines and relaxed in their holiday home during a memorable week.

The busload included volunteers Lola Lynch and Joy Hadley and Rural Northwest Health team members Irene Perry, Gary Bellis, Wendy Kingdon, Dana Kotkamp and Katie Ramsdale.

Katie said the residents hadn't stopped referring to the weekend.

"They had such a good time, they still talk about it now," Katie said.

"We went out every day on little sight-seeing trips or to go shopping," she said.

"It felt like a real holiday for the residents and at times for the team as well.

"It's just so nice to have that sea change and experience it in a group like that."

Katie said residents went swimming along the beach and their sheer joy at doing so was impossible to hide.

"The surf club had a special wheelchair for taking disabled people into the water so we asked if we could hire it for one of our less ambulant residents," she said.

"But when they saw what we were doing they gave us the chair for free.

"They even wheeled it down to the beach for us."

Katie said the meals were another nice change for everyone.

"We stayed at a two-storey holiday house with a big kitchen so we cooked a few meals but we also dined out or ordered takeaway," she said.

"Gary cooked everyone breakfast every morning and the residents loved that too."

The holiday home was the same one used by Hopetoun campus residents and team members for each of their beach holidays.

"It's a lovely home with plenty of room for everyone and the residents loved staying there," she said.

"It certainly created a bit more work for the team because we didn't have the usual equipment available to us in Yarriambiack Lodge.

"But it was a real team effort from everyone to make it work and the hard work was worth every minute.

The experience for everyone was so special and I don't think any of us will ever forget it."

Hopetoun rides the ferry

Residents and team members from our Hopetoun campus enjoyed a bonus ferry ride during their latest beach holiday.

The Hopetoun campus team initiated the beach holiday program and won a national Better Practice Award for their idea in 2015. Now in its third year, they have added to the experience each time and residents look forward to the next holiday from the day they return from the previous one.

A kind donation from a resident's family provided the funding to cover the return ferry ride from Queenscliffe to Sorento where they spent the day in warm sunshine. Everyone enjoyed morning tea on the ferry trip over and took in the views of the bay on the way back.

Other activities during the holiday included visits to the beach, shopping and a big party.

Organiser and activities coordinator Norma Decker said a special day for everyone each year was visitors' day.

"That's a day when any relatives or friends of residents who happen to live in the Ocean Grove region can come and spend the day with us and catch up with their loved ones," Norma said.

Debbie Glen with Alison Perry



Debbie Glen, left, and Pauline Robins, right with Marg and Stan Holland.

The Hopetoun holiday group.





Wendy Walters
listens to Audrey read
the dinner menu in
Wattle.

A stay of examination

There is absolutely no doubting that Wendy Walters is passionate about residential aged care.

The Warracknabeal campus manager for aged care was the instigator behind the introduction of the ABLE model to support aged care residents – particularly those living with dementia. She is also one of the main reasons why the award-winning Wattle Crescent unit for people living with dementia continues to receive worldwide attention for its achievements.

Wendy continually emphasises to her team that they are here to make the residents feel at home and be as comfortable as possible. She also continually looks for ways to improve the level of aged care at Rural Northwest Health.

The fact that Wattle Crescent is already a world leader in dementia care - and that Rural Northwest Health has an enviable reputation throughout Victoria for its quality of care - is not satisfaction enough for Wendy. This year she took the bar to a new height by literally putting herself in the resident's slippers.

Wendy booked herself in for respite care in Yarriambiack Lodge for three days and two nights to gain a true insight into the everyday care our residents receive. She slept one night in a shared room and one night in a single room in the memory support unit, ate the meals and joined in the day-to-day activities.

To identify as close as she could to a resident's indisposition, Wendy put corn in her shoes. She said that this was to help her gain an understanding of what it might be like to move around while

suffering arthritis.

"I wanted to have some degree of disability to deal with and the corn seemed a good idea though it was quite painful by the end of the day," Wendy said.

"I also used a walking frame because for many of our residents, it's the only way they can remain ambulant," she said.

"The experience proved very valuable and gave me a great insight into living in residential aged care."

Wendy said there were a few things where she saw a chance for improvement.

"There are just little things that I picked up on but they could make a significant difference to the everyday life of a resident," she said.

"One of the biggest things for me though was the importance of visits from family and friends.

"I was really looking forward to a visit and when it came, I was taken out to YarriYak Café for a cup of coffee and it just meant so much to me."

Wendy came up with the 'sleepover' idea after attending a conference in America where architects spoke of spending a day in aged care to get a better idea how to design purpose-built homes for the elderly. Upon completion of her stay, she reported her experience to CEO Catherine Morley and intends to publish notes from a diary she kept while in residence.

Wendy said the experience was an invaluable one and she

would like to do it again.

"I'm considering doing it again later this year just to observe any changes," she said.

"I would also like to use a sleep-watch to monitor my sleep patterns while staying there.

"The residents and their relatives also thought it was great experience for a manager."

"I also used a walking frame because for many of our residents, it's the only way they can remain ambulant,"

Small extensions make big difference

The dining experience for residents at Rural Northwest Health's Hopetoun campus has been made so much more pleasant thanks to recent building extensions.

As part of a redevelopment plan, the dining area and kitchenette was extended in the open-plan room, providing more space for the comfort of residents. The extensions have also made things easier for team members.

Hopetoun campus manager Natalie Ladner said the extensions may have appeared to be minor but they had made a huge difference.

"The extra space has allowed room for a couple more dining tables and we have been able to spread the tables out more," Natalie said.

"Team members were often bumping chairs and bumping into each other when trying to manoeuvre the residents around at meal times but now they have plenty of room," she said.

"Everyone used to run into each other during meal preparation in the kitchenette as well but that issue has also been resolved.

"Even the lounge seems more spacious and it's particularly noticeable when we have special events and birthday parties."

Redevelopment at Hopetoun has also included renovations to houses occupied by permanent team members.



Back to back best

For the second consecutive year, Rural Northwest Health has won Victoria's Small Health Service of the Year.

Rural Northwest Health CEO Catherine Morley accepted the Premier's award at a gala function in Melbourne and was accompanied on stage by board chair Leo Casey, vice chair Sally Gebert and executive members Wendy Walters, Wendy James and Ngareta Melgren.

Ms Morley said the award was testament not just to the team members, board members and executive but the communities of Warracknabeal, Hopetoun and Beulah.

"There is no doubt we have an amazing team at Rural Northwest Health and everyone works toward the same goal of being the best we can at keeping our community healthy and looking after our residents and clients," Ms Morley said.

"But it takes more than a board, an executive and managers and team members to achieve what we do," she said.

"We engage heavily with our community and the families of our residents and clients to make sure they are holding us to account

and making us the best we can be.

"We develop our services around the feedback we receive."

Ms Morley said the diversity of the programs developed at Rural Northwest Health were recognised throughout the industry.

We have some amazing community programs and organisational programs that are innovative across all areas," she said.

"But perhaps the most poignant moment was when the picture we provided went up on the screen with our nomination.

"It was a photo of team members and executive dressed up as jungle animals for a special 'safari style' staff training event.

"The room burst into laughter but the picture spoke a thousand words about the emphasis we place on having fun at

work, being there for everyone and making each other's day.

"It's why what we do works so well."

Rural Northwest Health won the award from other finalists West Wimmera Health Services and Kyneton Health Service.

"It's why what we do works so well."



Wendy James, Wendy Walters, Catherine Morley, Sally Gebert, Ngareta Melgren and Leo Casey with the award.

Stacey is the best

Newly graduated Hopetoun nurse Stacey Daly was recognised by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation for her achievements as a student nurse.

Stacey received a certificate and a \$200 cheque from the federation for winning the 2016 Student Nurse Award at Swan Hill's Sunraysia Institute of TAFE. The award recognises the student who, in the opinion of the faculty, exhibits attributes which are intrinsic to nursing practice.

The attributes include excellent communication and interpersonal skills, understanding of ethical and professional nursing and an appreciation of the concept of excellence in nursing practice.

Stacey was a graduate nurse with Rural Northwest Health at its Hopetoun campus. Originally from Ouyen, Stacey started a Personal Carer's Assistant course in 2013 while studying for year 12 and then transferred to Rural Northwest Health's Hopetoun campus to complete the course in 2014.

Soon after starting at the Hopetoun campus, Rural Northwest Health management offered Stacey the chance to train as an enrolled nurse. She jumped at the chance and has never looked back.

"I saw it as a great opportunity because it would present me with the career I really wanted from the start," Stacey said.

Stacey said she wanted to do more district nursing in the future because she loved the idea of looking after people while they were still well enough to be at home. She is now a medically-endorsed enrolled nurse with the world at her feet but she is happily developing that world in the Mallee.



Stacey Daly with Joan

She and her partner have bought a house in Hopetoun and started a family. Stacey loves working at the Hopetoun campus.

"The team is great and I get on well with everybody but I particularly love looking after all the residents there," she said.

"I love the fact that you know everyone and everyone knows you.

"But that's just being a typical country girl."

Stacey also won a Youth Award. Yarriambiack Shire, its Youth Action Council and Victorian Government presented her with an award for her achievements in health and wellbeing.



Kerry Seater and Katie Ramsdale ride the float.



From left, Lee Nikkelsen, Jodie Lardner and Leonie Saunders in the parade.

Dr Horton Visit

Dr John Horton visited Rural Northwest Health's Warracknabeal campus during the 150 year celebrations to inspect our memorabilia display.

Dr Horton was Birchip's doctor for 40 years and delivered more than 600 babies in that time.

He retired a decade ago.

Dr Horton also helped out at Warracknabeal District Hospital as an anaesthetist for when Dr Donald Liu was operating in the old theatre.

Their last operation together was 20 years ago.

Dr Horton is pictured catching up with Dr Liu in the memorabilia room, discussing old times.



Celebrating with the town

Warracknabeal celebrated 150 years as a township on the Queen's Birthday long weekend this year and Rural Northwest Health was one of many organisations to get join in the fun.



Maryann Conduit on the float.

Memory support nurse Katie Ramsdale headed a small committee to make sure the health service and former Warracknabeal District Hospital played a big part in the celebrations.

The committee built a float for the street parade, which was a feature of the weekend. Many team members took part in the parade dressing in uniforms from various eras and handing out information leaflets.

A display at the Warracknabeal campus was open to the public all weekend. The display showed memorabilia from the old hospital including surgery tools and maternity equipment.

The display also featured many photo albums and record books. Highlights from the weekend were published on Rural Northwest Health's Facebook site.



Katie Ramsdale and Peter Miller set up the memorabilia room.



Lee McCourt, Adrienne Morcom and Belinda Muller on the float.



Belinda McGrath
dances with Max.

Making new memories

Team members working in Rural Northwest Health's aged care have generated many new projects to make new memories for the residents.

Old Time Ball

Yarriambiack Lodge residents at the Warracknabeal campus literally had a ball with an evening of old time dancing. With live music provided by Ararat musician Jan Murphy, residents danced with team members and family members in the main function room.

Many team members danced in fancy dress costumes to add more



Helpers who volunteered at the ball included Jacqueline Johnston (crouched), Belinda McGrath, Dennis Mills, Marie Arnold, Katie Ramsdale and Wendy Walters.



colour and flair to the event. There was also a photo booth for family photos and a supper was provided by team members who volunteered their time.

Organiser of the event Katie Ramsdale said the residents didn't stop smiling all night.

"The feedback from residents and family members who attended was just amazing," Katie said.

"They're wanting to know when we can do it again so we are looking to get the next one going as soon as possible," she said.

"They put a lot of hard work into the events and volunteer much of their time to do so and I'm very thankful that they do."



Queen Irene Perry and her chauffeur Katie Ramsdale.

Queen's Birthday High Tea

A recent high tea was another wonderful event that took everyone by surprise.

Residents were enjoying cakes and cuppas when in walked 'Queen Irene' with her corgi and chauffeur.

Queen Irene was Yarriambiack Lodge nurse unit manager Irene Perry and her chauffeur was Katie Ramsdale. Activities assistant Sonja Martinelli once again provided her amazing baking skills with help from other team members to ensure the residents dined in fine style.

Aged care manager Wendy Walters said the events were all about

making new memories for the residents.

"It's one of the most important considerations we have to be constantly looking at ways to make new memories and ensure their time in aged care is a whole new experience for the residents," Wendy said.

"Our team members get a lot of enjoyment out of organizing these events as well," she said.

"They put a lot of hard work into the events and volunteer much of their time to do so and I'm very thankful that they do."

Irish Australia Day in Hopetoun

Hopetoun campus team members have several occasions each year where they create new memories for their residents.

Christmas in July is always a big occasion along with more traditional holiday events – but one of those special days got tweaked for 2017. The team decided to give their annual Australia Day party an Irish theme.

Activities coordinator Norma Decker said they were unable to organise any celebrations for January 26 and had to settle for the day after.

“It wasn’t the actual day so we decided to go with the Irish theme,” Norma said.

“We decorated the place in Australia Day and green decorations,” she said.

“Team members wore green and we told lots of Irish jokes but we still kept the occasion about Australia.”

Birthdays for Hopetoun residents are always made that little more special thanks to some personal pampering. Former long serving team member and now volunteer Beryl Roberts comes in for each resident’s birthday and gives them a fresh hairstyle and make up for the day.

Norma said even the men get a little extra pampering for the occasion.

“They all look forward to their birthdays just that little bit more,” Norma said.



Marilyn Clancy, Jodie Malcolm and Norma Decker.



District Nurse
Kristy Toohey

Rural Northwest Health has once again demonstrated a growing commitment to the health of the Hopetoun community after increasing nursing services to the region.

District nursing has increased by one day per week and two more nurses have been added to the team. Registered nurse Allison Hondow and enrolled nurse Kristy Toohey are helping to cover extra district nursing shifts.

Hopetoun campus manager Natalie Ladner said the extra day had proved important.

"We've been able to increase our clientele and cover an important need," Natalie said.

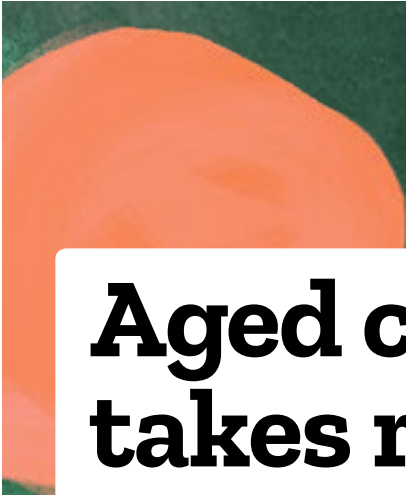
"The team is looking after more people and doing a great job," she said.

Rural Northwest Health also offers district nursing services in Warracknabeal seven days a week and at Beulah. District nurses play an important role in keeping hospital admissions and readmissions to a minimum and ensuring patients can return to their own homes as soon as possible.

The service is available to all ages and some fees may apply. You can self-refer or be referred by a family member or any health professional. Fees are set by the Department of Health and Human Services and are based on an individual's financial situation.

Boost for Hopetoun nursing service

"The team is looking after more people and doing a great job,"



Aged care facility takes responsibility for ensuring residents achieve best possible end-of-life care

During National Palliative Care Week (21-28 May) Palliative Care Australia is applauding residential aged care facilities that go the extra mile to provide exceptional end-of-life care. Below, we explain how two isolated rural homes in Victoria have worked consistently over years to better recognise dying, provide early symptom relief and reduce avoidable hospital admissions.

People who die at Yarriambiack Lodge don't just get wheeled out quietly through the back door. With family approval, they exit with simple ceremony through the front door of their aged care home in Warracknabeal, north-west Victoria, ensuring staff and other residents have the chance to say goodbye.

Shortly after the undertaker arrives at the 60-bed high-care home, run by Rural Northwest Health, an announcement is made over the public address system, indicating who will be leaving the building for the last time. And in a gesture of care and loving, a beautiful handmade patchwork quilt is draped over the concealed body on a trolley.

Those with a connection can then opt to stop work and join a guard of honour in the foyer to say farewell. Administration staff, kitchen staff, clinical staff and the CEO join residents, and sometimes friends and family, as music, thoughts and memories pay respectful tribute to the deceased.

Warracknabeal Campus manager of aged care, Wendy Walters, says while the concept initially had its detractors, it has become widely valued by both residents and staff, who often have close ties formed over generations. Warracknabeal is home to less than 3000 people, significantly shrinking the standard concept of 'six degrees of separation'.

The openness with which death is acknowledged at Yarriambiack Lodge is consistent with the way end-of-life is approached, both here and in nearby Hopetoun. At Hopetoun, an isolated town of 550 people, another 24-bed aged care facility is also operated by Rural Northwest Health.

Wendy says 95-100% of residents have up-to-date advance care plans, reflecting a willingness to take responsibility for residents'

end-of-life care and to actively plan for it. A breakthrough in achieving this came through a Decision Assist grant, which funded link nurses. Their role is to link general practitioners, specialist palliative care services and allied health professionals. They also review advance care plans, organise family meetings to discuss each resident's goals of care, and make early and appropriate referrals to specialist palliative care services when required.

Link nurse staffing has shifted over time and now sits at eight hours each week. Wendy sees huge value in having the responsibility vested in a dedicated staff member, who has expertise in discussing end of life with residents and families, rather than expecting all staff to be able to do it well.

"Before we got the grant people would say that we did palliative care well, but I didn't feel we did it consistently well," says Wendy.

"We all get busy and caught up in everything else, so I think we have to be careful to make sure there is a specific person who can do advance care planning and have discussions with families about palliative care."

The link nurse other staff have also learned about advance care planning and a palliative approach from visiting aged care resource nurse, Sharon Gibbens.

Sharon is employed by the Grampians Region Palliative Care Consortium to embed a palliative approach in each of the region's aged care facilities. This includes the Residential Aged Care End of Life Care Pathway, which is a national structured plan designed to guide end-of-life care. It's valuable learning that Wendy says would have been difficult for the isolated facilities to achieve without Sharon's visits, local workshops and phone support, as sending staff to city-based courses is prohibitively expensive.

Sharon has worked with all staff – not just registered and enrolled nurses – to help them better understand dying and identify when a resident's health might be deteriorating and entering a terminal phase. Wendy says some personal care attendants, cleaners and cooks spend more time with residents than clinical staff, leaving them well placed to notice and report changes. As a result, quality of life for residents has improved, as symptoms are managed and treated earlier, which in turn has reduced avoidable transfers to hospital.

"Importantly for the clinical staff is that we are now recognising deteriorating residents more of the time and we are getting





Katrina Fallon, Wendy Walters and Reeta Chisti in the Wattle Crescent garden.

palliative care approach 100% more consistently," says Wendy.

"It has helped us to say, 'Yes, they are dying', and so the nursing care plan stops and the end-of-life care plan comes into play."

Wendy says staff have been reassured to learn that if a resident's health improves, the nursing care plan can be resumed.

"It doesn't happen a lot, but it does happen. We have had a man who started on end-of-life care pathway and then came off. It is okay to start the process, and then take someone off it if they don't die."

Sharon says staff have responded well to her mantra: "Treat the treatable, reverse the reversible, unless the burden of treatment outweighs the benefit".

"They have grasped the concept that a palliative approach to care is about providing support when the goals of care have shifted from curative to comfort," Sharon says.

"They have grasped the concept that a palliative approach to care is about providing support when the goals of care have shifted from curative to comfort"

Generally, registered nurses work with local general practitioners and a nurse practitioner to provide palliative care. Sharon says

when a person has complex needs the link nurse facilitates timely and appropriate referrals to specialist palliative care.

"The link nurses have also really taken on doing palliative care case conferencing, which has improved communication around the dying process for both families and residents," she says.

"The majority of Rural North West Health residents now have advance care plans and

are seeing this as an ongoing review process rather than once-off documentation.

"It is very exciting to see them embrace this as not just a task to be done, but to see the difference it can make for their residents and the families."

BRIGHT returns



BRIGHT participants at Halls Gap.



The Hopetoun team tries pool aerobics

Rural Northwest Health is continuing its BRIGHT program for team members after the resounding success of its inaugural year.

Team members have used the program to improve their general health in a variety of ways including increasing their fitness, losing weight and giving up smoking. Under the guidance of Community Health manager Ngareta Melgren, BRIGHT coordinator Dana Kotkamp organised a variety of activities such as running events and water aerobics at Hopetoun and Warracknabeal.

The program culminated with a weekend retreat in the Grampians mountain range in October, 2016. Team members who had signed up for the program earlier in the year spent the weekend exercising and telling inspirational stories about their own health and wellbeing.

They gained inside knowledge from an informative life coach and enjoyed a walk up either the Pinnacle or Boronia Peak. Bad weather forced last minute changes to the itinerary but there were still plenty of great activities.

Dana said the BRIGHT team split into different groups to embark on their challenging walks in Halls Gap.

"Every person chose to push themselves, both mentally and physically," Dana said.

"We had so many people achieve success by completing the physical challenge they had set themselves," she said.

"Every person who attended the retreat should be extremely proud of themselves as many of them didn't think they could make it to the top."

Dana said team members who were asked to speak and share their stories did an amazing job as the rest of the team felt very motivated and inspired by what they heard.

Team members also cooked healthy meals that went down a treat. Activities from BRIGHT programs were constantly reported on in Rural Northwest Health's monthly newsletter The Buzz. This kept every team member informed of its progress and provided them with health recipe ideas to try at home.



Beulah team members and community members get involved in the program.



Gamification: that's the name of the fish

When Rural Northwest Health CEO Catherine Morley approached health educator Kaye Knight with a proposal for her to instruct team members using the FISH principles, an ocean of ideas flooded her busy brain.

Kaye's background is nursing but she brandishes a particularly impressive curriculum vitae that includes a Bachelor of Applied Science in Nursing, Masters in Education and a PhD in Nursing. She has dedicated her career to nurse education after beginning in clinical support.

Team members at every health service constantly attend training sessions to keep abreast of changes in clinical methods and health application. Instruction is often specific to a medical field but the broader education is Kaye's domain.

Kaye is also a naturally lateral thinker, so when Catherine dropped a line looking for education ideas around FISH principles, Kaye's mind started swimming and she hooked on immediately.

Kaye subscribed to the principles completely and implemented gamification into her teaching. Kaye said gamification was about using games to create a learning experience for adults.

"Gameful thinking in adult education is a way to engage and motivate learners," Kaye said.

"I use games with my teaching but not everything is a game," she said.

"It's interactive and active learning."

Kaye said she started her new education method by throwing out the Powerpoint presentation.

"What I did was take the four FISH principles and apply them as the philosophy for education," she said.

"So having fun is now an underpinning philosophy for all our education.

"I have to be person centred in my education so I need to apply the principles, which in turn shows team members how they can apply the same principles in their day to day caring."

Kaye said the novelty of gamification meant that team members were not away they were learning cumulatively.

"Because they have experienced this form of education for a while now, I can ask team members to do things that would not work at any other health service," she said.

"For example last year I got every group to go out and make a rap about what they had learned and film it for presentation.

"Every single group did it and the raps were brilliant. Now that is a sign of really mature learners.

"Had I asked them to do that eight years ago, they would have suggested I needed a holiday."

Gamification is now embedded throughout Rural Northwest Health as the preferred learning method. It is the modus for all essential training and departmental compliance education.

"As the years have gone on, the activities have become more reflective of previous learning," Kaye said.

"With every different element and approach someone's understanding develops."





Mindful of better training

Using the same FISH principles in learning, Kaye has developed another unique training program to help team members become more aware of how they approach their work and how to be more person centred and respectful of others.

Mindfulness at Work was created to support healthcare workers to 'Be There, Play, Choose Their Attitude and Make Their Day'.

While Kaye likes to make training fun, the first day is very challenging and the fun comes later.

The MaW program is based on the research of Harvard psychology scholar Professor Ellen Langer. Kaye said participants begin by exploring the concept of 'mindlessness' and the impacts that could have on safety and quality of care.

"If you're mindless, you are going through the motions and not thinking about why you're doing what you're doing," she said.

"You're not open to change and you are not being person centred."



Participants learn to challenge their own thinking and perspectives. They then consider the idea that mindfulness is about being in the moment, noticing what is happening around us, being more aware of our own behaviours and being open to multiple perspectives.

"This helps to improve our problem solving, decision making and the way in which we interact with others," Kaye said.

"It's been a real eye opener for many and they are quickly developing a new level of respect and awareness."

Kaye said she developed the program specifically for Rural Northwest Health.

"I introduced the program in 2015 and the results have proved its effectiveness," she said.

"The reason it works well here is because Rural Northwest Health team members are open to change and innovation.

"After all, it's the organisation's culture."

***"If you're mindless,
you are going
through the
motions and not
thinking about why
you're doing what
you're doing,"***



Groove Train

Rural Northwest Health is renowned for its unique approach to compliance education.

Since the introduction of the training format, team members have learned the latest organisational procedures and Department of Health requirements while taking a Compliance Cruise, going on a Staff Safari and enjoying a Staff Siesta. In 2017, team members from all three campuses were asked to board the Groove Train while being instructed by a band of hippies.

They learned about the advantages of the Kronos time and attendance system, team member expectations, the latest flu strains, team wellness activities and much more.

The format has been accredited with the success of Rural Northwest Health's high rate of flu vaccinations (84.1%) and it's impressive results from the People Matters survey.



Kerry Seater, Wendy Walters and Ngareta Melgren get groovy for training.



Hip CEO Catherine Morley tries the go-go girls cage.



Peter Miller, Wendy James, Wendy Walters and Ngareta Melgren offer nutritious snacks.

The significance of respect

Every April or May, Rural Northwest Health team members complete the People Matter Survey. The Department of Health and Human Services require all health services to complete the survey as evidence indicates that culture is intrinsically linked to providing high quality and safe care.

The Health and Wellbeing Board committee review the results and work with the team to ensure that the results are shared and acted upon.

In August 2016 a group of team members from across the three campuses and all areas of Rural Northwest Health met for a decision making day to decide how and what we would work to improve.

CEO Catherine Morley said Rural Northwest Health introduced decision-making days in 2016 based on the work of US behavioural science author Daniel Pink.

"We know that when the right people with the right knowledge are involved in improving or developing actions, or to solve areas that we wish to improve, then the right decisions are made," Ms Morley said.

"So we reviewed the survey results and compared them with the corresponding results from the previous year," she said.

"The review provided us with examples of areas where we were doing well and improving as well as examples of areas where we could improve."

The decision-making forum group decided to share these numbers throughout the year in our team newsletter The Buzz to keep all team members aware of the results.



Support services manager Jo Martin instructs a group during team training.

"The review provided us with examples of areas where we were doing well and improving as well as examples of areas where we could improve."

The decision-making attendees decided that the one key area they wanted to target for improving was that all team members felt respected. Actions they agreed upon included running sessions about respect and teamwork at our education forums in October, 2016.

At the education forums, team members were broken into teams and one group had to prepare the lunch meal. Team members attended lunch and were given a temporary disability to cope with while they ate their meal. Some were vision impaired, some had a loss of hearing and others were in wheelchairs.

Another activity undertaken was to understand how to communicate effectively and work together to achieve a difficult task. Team members were blind folded and had to work together to erect a tent.

Learnings from the sessions were excellent as team members discussed the noise, or the difficulty in finding their food and having to trust what the person was telling them to do.

A working group has continued to work on agreed strategies to improve respect. We have progressed on developing a computer-generated animation for the team member orientation process so that every team member hears the same information. The process involves developing a video that highlights the expected behaviour of all team members so that diversity is valued and embraced.

The group is also working with the diversity group to achieve the Rural Northwest Health diversity action plan.



Registered nurse
Keisha Roche likes the
new shift times.



The 8-8-10 gets 10 out of 10

"Team member feedback has indicated a high level of satisfaction with the new shift times"

Team members on shift work at Rural Northwest Health are enjoying a better work/life balance since the introduction of new night shift times.

Previously night shift workers completed an eight-hour shift the same as day and evening team members. Under the new 8-8-10 format, night shift team members start an hour earlier and finish an hour later, giving them more one-on-one time with residents and patients before and after their normal sleep patterns, thus working a 10 hour shift.

The 8-8-10 model was first trialed at the Hopetoun campus and its success ensured it was soon introduced at Warracknabeal. Campus manager for acute, Wendy James said the format was well received from all care team members.

"Team member feedback has indicated a high level of satisfaction with the new shift times," Mrs James said.

"They believe the times are better for work/life balance and have improved clinical care as well as client safety, communication and documentation," she said.

"The new times mean that senior nurses can provide more education to night shift carers who would often miss out on regular updates and relied more on correspondence."

Team members working night duty were happy with working 10 hours only needed to work four days to complete their 40-hour working week.

Comments from feedback sessions included:

"You get to meet the clients and spend more awake time with them to understand their needs and abilities"

"You get more time to complete work"

As part of the new model, three new roles were introduced for team members to complete during the new extended period of team member overlap in the middle of the day. The roles for safety checker, consumer engagement and daily auditor were evaluated by team members and 73 per cent felt the roles were the best way to utilise the double time.

A most worthy winner

Let's face it. If you have chosen to seek work in the health profession, you are naturally going to be a reasonably compassionate person.

Caring for people and serving such an industry requires a good deal of compassion as well as a sense of duty above and beyond the call. If this is not in your DNA then you may have chosen your profession poorly.

Health workers are people we all respect and admire. So imagine how good you must be at your role and how passionate you are for whom you care, if you are winning an award in that industry.

Our newest Betty Richardson Award winner still can't believe she was chosen. Memory support nurse Katie Ramsdale believes there are so many other wonderful people working for Rural Northwest Health who are worthy of such an honour – and she is right. As our CEO Catherine Morley has vindicated many times, you can't become the best small health service in Victoria without a wonderful hard-working team.

Katie just happens to epitomise everything about our team and was chosen by the judging panel to be marginally ahead of others with the same depth of compassion, dedication and drive. Cancer resource nurse Kathy Poulton and Angie Cox from the administration team were the other finalists for the award and both have given many hours of their own time to improve the lives and wellbeing of those in our community.

Katie said she was honoured to receive the award.

"I worked with Betty Richardson when I first moved to Warracknabeal and I always looked up to her," Katie said.

"She took me under her wing and she taught me how to work hard but enjoy what I'm doing by having a bit of fun at the same time," she said.

"The other part that was really special to me was to receive the award standing next to the inaugural winner Jodie Lardner.

"Jodie is so amazing with the residents and always pleasant to everyone and I really admire what she does."

Katie also paid tribute to the organisation of the evening.

"It's a very special night and there is genuine respect shown by all with the whole presentation of the event," she said.

"I love that the service award team members are also recognised for their dedication and given their moment for us to show our appreciation."

Registered nurse Coral Schmidt, environmental services coordinator June Wright and enrolled nurses Karen Germano, Rosalie Stein and Greg Bourke all celebrated 35 years with the organisation at the 2017 awards.

Other major milestones went to enrolled nurse Belinda Muller and environmental services cook Sharron Taylor, 30 years; and district nurse team leader Janet Coghill and environmental services cook Janine Edwards, both 25 years. Other milestones included 20 years; Jodie Malcolm and Norma Decker, leisure and lifestyle, 15 years; Kylie O'Connor, environmental services and enrolled nurses Adrienne Morcom, Katie Ramsdale, Gary Bellis, 10 years; enrolled nurse Carmel Lowry, human resources officer Dal Wilding and environmental services worker Ruth Roberts.



Wendy Walters, Gary Bellis and Irene Perry congratulate Katie.



Service award recipients, back; from left, Gary Bellis, Jodie Malcolm, Adrienne Morcom, Janet Coghill, Katie Ramsdale, Carmel Stein, Sharron Taylor, Kylie O'Connor, front; Belinda Muller, June Wright and Janine Edwards.



Angie Cox is congratulated by her family.



Betty Richardson congratulates Katie Ramsdale.

Building on a new plan

Two significant areas are highlighted in Rural Northwest Health's strategic plan for 2016-2020.

Rural Northwest Health chair Leo Casey released the new plan on behalf of the board and executive at the AGM in November, 2016. It focuses on 1. building business capability and 2. responding bravely and innovatively to opportunities that improve local health outcomes.

With the strategies being implemented, community members can expect that:

- Services will be targeted to the areas of highest need
- They will be better informed about the services on offer and about key changes taking place in health

- They will be empowered and supported to take responsibility for their own health
- They will have better care experiences when connecting to services outside Yarriambiack Shire
- There will be a more integrated range of local aged care services to help people live well at home longer
- Rural Northwest Health team members are committed, competent, capable and provide high quality safe services where the community member is involved in decisions about their own health and wellbeing.

Several recent programs at Rural Northwest Health have been introduced under the guidance of the strategic plan, some of which are documented in this publication.

The biggest of those programs is the introduction of wellbeing coordinators on July 3, 2017, to help navigate community members through the health system. Copies of the 2016-2020 Rural Northwest Health Strategic Plan are available at all three campuses. There is also an electronic version on the website www.rnh.net.au



Members of the Wellbeing Coordination team include administrator Angie Cox and wellbeing coordinator Kathy Poulton



Angie Cox, left, and Hanna Butuyuyu, right, with Friends in the Kitchen participants, from left, Penny Waters, Rebecca Green and Tara Viney. Angie is holding Tara's daughter Temperance.

Learning basic cooking

Warracknabeal families are enjoying nutritious home cooked meals through a new initiative and the generosity of volunteers.

The new program called Friends in the Kitchen developed from an Elli Martha Fund committee meeting. During the meeting a member suggested that she had always wanted to show people how to cook basic meals and wondered if this might be something else the Elli Martha Fund could support.

The committee member pointed out that helping families in times of need was wonderful but perhaps there was scope to help in other ways as well.

"I remembered as a child that I wasn't shown how to cook so I just tried to learn as much as I could by watching others," she said.

"I know what it was like for me because I was very hit-and-miss with my cooking."

Elli Martha fund committee members Hanna Butuyuyu and Angie Cox are volunteering their time to provide the cooking lessons at Rural Northwest Health's community room kitchen.

Hanna said instant meals had become more common in the modern family diet.

"Instant and frozen meals were in most food pantry these days and takeaway food is also a regular meal," Hanna said.

"These instant options are the main reason that cooking skills are being lost on today's parents," she said.

"Raising little people takes a lot of time but sadly many mums don't know how to make a basic roast or cake, suggesting the cooking skills simply haven't been passed on from the previous generation."

Angie Cox who is also a Rural Northwest Health team member, said that while Friends in the Kitchen was not developed as a YCHANGE program, its principles applied when it came to cooking ideas.

"Hanna loves cooking healthy food for her family so it just comes naturally to her," Angie said.

"She makes everything as sugar free and carbohydrate free as possible where I'm a bit looser in that area."

Angie said the program started late last year as a monthly lesson with community members who had been invited to take part.

"It's been a popular event and we've had to start meeting fortnightly to meet the demand," she said.

"We always have fun doing it and those involved are enjoying it and making new friends in the process."

Angie said the idea was to cook healthy family meals and treats the most cost-effective way possible, using the most basic tools.

"It's a relatively easy program for anyone. We show them how to cook the meal by demonstrating and then actually cooking together," she said.

"After that we get to enjoy the food for lunch on the day then we send the participants home with the recipe and the ingredients so they can cook it for themselves."

Hanna said it was great that Rural Northwest Health provided the community room kitchen for the lessons on cooking and other home skills such as growing your own food.

"We have already noticed how much these mums have grown in confidence by learning basic cooking skills," she said.

"They often send us photos of what they are cooking at home which is so rewarding for us to see."

Hanna said others were welcome to get involved and join in the fun and learn new skills along the way.

"Friends in the Kitchen also provides childcare at the facility while the parent is in the kitchen," she said.

"We are lucky that the area in the community room is big enough to accommodate this so the children can play happily and mum or dad are never out of sight."

"We have volunteers who have dedicated themselves to caring for the children during the classes and they are doing a wonderful job."

If you would like to know more about Friends in the Kitchen please do not hesitate to contact Rural Northwest Health or email ellimmartha@rnw.net.au

Diversity in working group

Rural Northwest Health understands the importance of treating everyone equal, whether they are team members, organisational partners or clients.

After the development of our own diversity plan last year, team members under the guidance of executive Jo Martin have developed a working group to action the ideas.

The diversity plan was developed from the incorporation of the HACC diversity plan, agency diversity plan and disability plan. Jo said the new group would focus initially on equality among team members and then develop the program into the community.

"Our work is around ensuring we are respectful and mindful of the needs of our diverse team members," Jo said.

"It's also about how our services interact with the diverse needs of our community," she said.

"We have been particularly good historically with understanding the needs of a rural community but we have since acknowledged that we need to focus more on other diverse groups with particular needs and sensitivities."

The group formed after team members attended a Grampians Community Health seminar reporting on the extreme levels of violence against women.

While this would be a major focus, the group decided that there were other people that also needed support. They chose to concentrate on five diverse communities; gender inequality, older persons, all abilities, culturally diverse and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.

Jo said the diversity group aimed to create a bigger awareness among team members.

"We want to increase our understanding and empathy for the five different groups in particular," she said.

"We've developed a statement of priorities and we have promoted our group at team member training programs so everyone knows what is expected."

Early achievements for the group have included:

- Bearing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at each campus to acknowledge our traditional owners
- The appointment of a family violence coordinator for team members to contact
- with complete confidentiality if they are experiencing any level of effect.
- Educating team members to have an awareness of potential violations among community members and to follow with the appropriate response.
- Progressing the e-rainbow equality standards in relation to LGTBI populations.

Jo said Rural Northwest Health would continue to develop strategies and programs to support its diverse community.



Diversity group members Jo Martin and Belinda Billman with CEO Catherine Morley after a Welcome to Country ceremony was performed by Auntie Hazel McDonald, second from right. Also in the picture is Wimmera PCP Koolin Balit project officer Felicity Johns, far right, and Auntie Hazel's friend Yvonne Taylor.



Healthy fun for toddlers

A team of enthusiastic allied health professionals has developed a fun learning platform for the region's young families through a unique new program.

The five Rural Northwest Health clinicians have been giving children aged up to five years a fun environment with lots of play activities, exposing them to concepts around health development and language. Additionally the program gives parents the opportunity to further understand and develop skills in supporting their child's development.

The Play To Learn program has been presented at Warracknabeal and Hopetoun with great success. It was initially trialed in the community room of Rural Northwest Health's Warracknabeal campus and then taken on tour to include Base 8 participants.

Play to Learn presenters have included Rural Northwest Health's

speech pathologist, dietitian, exercise physiologist, occupational therapist and physiotherapists. The program involves games and activities around five language concepts – texture, colour, numbers, sizes and shapes.

Each clinician's activities incorporate their specialty, such as healthy food, motor skills and physical activity.

Rural Northwest Health speech pathologist Kelsey Hamilton said the team wanted to help families understand about their children's health development but make it a fun experience.

"With children it's all about playing and having fun but there is an opportunity to promote good health and language development," she said.

The program is free and is a Linking Learning – Family Rewards event.



SENDER goes interstate

A smartphone app that evolved from Rural Northwest Health community feedback is now part of a national project for carers, volunteers and aged care staff supporting people living with dementia.

With Department of Health funding, researchers from La Trobe's Wodonga-based John Richards Initiative are developing a Virtual Dementia Friendly Rural Community project they are calling the VERILY project. The project will run in rural communities in Victoria, NSW and SA and will include Wimmera towns Warracknabeal and Edenhope.

The VERILY project will build on existing research projects with three key initiatives. One of those initiatives is the SENDER app which was also developed by the same researchers, in partnership with Rural Northwest Health and Heathcote Health.

The SENDER app helps carers of people living with dementia to navigate health and aged care services as well as increase support and connectivity between carers and service providers.

John Richards Initiative director Associate Professor Irene Blackberry said the primary aim of the project was to support those

who cared for people with dementia and their rural communities.

"There are an estimated 200,000 informal carers of people with dementia in Australia, including many who live in rural communities where they have less access to support services," Associate Professor Blackberry said.

"By creating dementia friendly rural communities we can better support carers, local volunteers and staff and potentially reduce the need for more expensive and disruptive residential care or multiple acute care admission."

Rural Northwest Health CEO Catherine Morley said her organisation could take pride in knowing the significant role it played in the development of such an important project.

"This is a wonderful example of how our research partnerships with Australian universities are making a genuine contribution to the health industry," Ms Morley said.

"But at the same time, the outcomes will be profound for our own community."

Rural Northwest Health is a partner in several important health projects with La Trobe University, Swinburne University and Deakin University.

Beulah looks in the pantry

Establishing a community pantry was one of several ideas to come out of a Community Action Research Group meeting in Beulah.

Attendees believed a community pantry or community food bank could provide fresh food and healthy options. Community members would also have access to nutritional recipes from Rural Northwest Health's dietitian.

CARG leader John Aitken opened the October meeting by outlining health statistics in the community before asking attendees to complete a questionnaire about their health services and source of knowledge. Mr Aitken said ideas flowed from the mini survey.

"The community garden suggestion was certainly a popular one and there were several ideas that fed off it," Mr Aitken said.

"Discussion also centred on the use of the community garden at the Beulah campus to supply fresh fruit and vegetables that could be included in the pantry," he said.

"It was also suggested that cookery classes, teaching healthier ways to cook, could be held in the Beulah Business and Information Centre."

Mr Aitken said not all the conversation was around food.

"It was a very productive meeting and I think everyone gained a lot from it," he said.

"There was an idea to canvas the development of additional friendship groups for socially isolated people.

"A suggestion of introducing a 'jigsaw club' at the BIC where older people could meet and students would be encouraged to attend after school.

"This would promote intergenerational health and well-being."

Mr Aitken said transport issues for medical appointments were also discussed in depth.

"The conversation centred around developing regular transport options to Warracknabeal and Horsham for medical appointments, shopping and catching up with support agencies and local government services," he said.

"That issue is currently being assessed with the Hopetoun community bus service.

Many improvements to our regional health system and the implementation of new programs have resulted from initial discussions at Community Action Research Group meetings.

CARG formed in early 2013 to improve community health and to have a vision for the type of health services the community would need in the next decade. Rural Northwest Health CEO Catherine Morley and La Trobe University's Professor Jane Farmer engineered the program based on a similar project Professor Farmer had started in Scotland.

They appointed retiring Warracknabeal pharmacist John Aitken to head the project and study for a PhD in that role. A series of monthly meetings began in March, 2013, and community members attended from Hopetoun, Beulah, Brim and Warracknabeal as well as interested health professionals from the region and beyond.

Mr Aitken has now completed his PhD and said he had gained a great deal from the project.

"I don't want our group to be taking credit for every new program but certainly our meetings were well supported and have helped instigate many sustainable outcomes," Mr Aitken said.

"Definitely the community gardens that are progressing well in each town resulted from our meetings," he said.

"Other programs such as Seasons of Wellness and our Retirement and Beyond expos were also a direct result of CARG.

Mr Aitken said while CARG as a university study had wound down, he would continue to meet with the community twice a year.

"We are holding two focused community consultations per year," he said.

"I feel that I owe Rural Northwest Health for the support they have shown me and I have community health manager Ngareta Melgren working with me on these meetings."

New community members are always welcome to get involved in CARG meetings and have their say about the best direction for our health services. Further information on CARG is available from Ngareta Melgren on 5396 1200.



New coordinators appointed

Rural Northwest Health has appointed six wellbeing coordinators and an administrator to forge its new model of care to help people live well and keep well.

The health navigation team is available to every community member of any age in Rural Northwest Health's footprint. The team started work on Monday July 3 after months of planning and development of the program.

Rural Northwest Health Community Health manager Ngareta Melgren said all six wellbeing coordinators were qualified clinicians with specialised training specific to their roles.

The team includes Janet Coghill, Sharon Taylor and Anne Clarke based at Warracknabeal, Sue Sanford at Beulah and Kathy Poulton and Kate Watson working the Hopetoun region. Long serving team member Angie Cox provides administrative and reception support to the wellbeing coordinators.

Ms Melgren said the wellbeing coordinators were the first point of contact for any community member who felt they needed support.

"The wellbeing coordinator will also follow up regularly with that person to make sure they continue to get the right care."

"If a community member is feeling unwell either physically or mentally or they want to improve their wellbeing in some way, all they have to do is make a free call on 1800 667 301," Ms Melgren said.

"Once they have made contact, the wellbeing coordinator will guide them to the right care for that particular individual," she said.

Wellbeing coordinators Janet Coghill, Sue Sanford, Sharon Taylor, Kate Watson, Anne Clark and Kathleen Poulton.





Sue Sanford discusses a health plan.

"The wellbeing coordinator will also follow up regularly with that person to make sure they continue to get the right care."

Ms Melgren said health providers and other services would support the program by identifying health risks in individuals and connecting them to the navigation team.

"We want concerned friends and family to encourage loved ones to contact the navigation team but we also want people to ask for help.

"So all people have to do now to improve their health and wellbeing is to make that call to 1800 667 301.

"If people want to see a wellbeing coordinator in person they will visit your home or farm and there is no cost for the service."

Rural Northwest Health CEO Catherine Morley said the new system had been heavily researched and tested.

"I'm confident we have this right and it is of great benefit to the community," Ms Morley said.

"Under direction from the Department of Health, we have based the service on the Wagner Model of Care and refined it to best suit our region," she said.

"We went through an extensive community consultation process and all six wellbeing coordinators have worked heavily on the development of the program and provided plenty of ideas to make it work right."

To contact a wellbeing coordinator phone 1800 667 301 or email livewell@rnh.net.au

"I'm confident we have this right and it is of great benefit to the community"



How we have listened

Rural Northwest Health works exceptionally hard to understand what is important for community members and utilise this information to design and improve services.

The Board of Management and executive team meet with clients, community members, residents and their families in both formal and informal settings, which are enjoyed by all. Lunches and morning teas are held in the boardroom, coffee enjoyed at Yarriyak Café and relatives find time to attend every engagement session.

Outcomes from all sessions are reported to the Board of Management with agreed actions, accountabilities and timelines. These are monitored to ensure that as an organisation we are listening and responding appropriately to the diverse needs of our community members.

Examples of how we responded to feedback specific to our Acute unit in Warracknabeal include:

1. The Acute unit has access to a lovely outdoor area. Two issues were raised by clients regarding the area and both have been addressed.

- Clients had difficulty accessing the yard independently as the outside door had to be unlocked by a team member. The door is now automatically opened in the mornings and locked in the early evening. The result is that clients can now access the outdoor area independently.
- Clients asked for more shade to be provided in the front yard so the area could be used more often. Support beams have been installed in preparation for the attachment of shade sails, which will happen prior to the commencement of warmer weather. The outcome is that clients will be able to utilise the outdoor area in sunny weather.

2. Information folder for clients

- Clients told us they were not always made aware of this folder being available. The folder was reviewed by clients and as a result the labelling was improved on the front cover and the folder spine to make it more identifiable. The majority of its information was also placed onto a client information channel on the TV to provide another source of accessing the information. This video loops continuously on a spare channel so every acute client can access it from their room with ease.

Feedback has also generated the following actions at Rural Northwest Health.

A number of infrastructure and equipment concerns including:

- Pillows and wheelchairs, which have been purchased.
- Noisy pipes and lack of hot water and lights not staying on which have all been addressed
- Gardens getting weeded and watered and some new plants purchased and planted



Enrolled Nurse
Jade Taylor in the
new outdoor area at
Yarriambiack Lodge.

A number of food and tea and coffee concerns and compliments including:

- Having access to tea and coffee when the kitchen is closed and small tea and coffee stations have been set up in all areas
- Tea time moving to a later time in the acute unit
- Adjusting the heat of the hot water served with the meals in acute
- Access to fresh fruit in Hopetoun which is now available

Timely and knowledge of access to services, actions include

- The development of a new marketing campaign to support all community members to understand what services are available and how to access them
- A review of the model of care in community and the development of a wellbeing coordinator role to support community members to navigate the system
- Increased district nursing hours in Hopetoun
- Availability of an aged care officer to attend community groups to explain admission to aged care residents

Changes to service delivery include

- Working with the radiology unit to support community members to access timely appointments for services
- The introduction of the oncology telehealth rehabilitation program
- Investigating the option of removing shared beds in residential care
- The development of the wellbeing coordinators

The Board and Management thank the community members for their time and assistance and support for Rural Northwest Health to continually improve as well as achieve our strategic goals.

Rural Northwest Health prides itself on its level of community engagement at both ends of the health spectrum.

A series of ground-breaking forums introduced four years ago got the community ball rolling by asking the general public what health facilities and services would be needed in the next decade. The Community Action Research Group was supported by La Trobe University and proved the catalyst for many programs and changes at Rural Northwest Health.

More recently Rural Northwest Health has taken the community engagement model to the other end by meeting with its consumers and partners to ask how we can support them better.

The meetings started with patients who had been cared for in the acute unit. They were invited to a luncheon at the Warracknabeal campus and asked to give their views on how they were treated.

The feedback provided small but important ideas on how things could be improved, such as cutting back on the level of noise during the night when everyone is sleeping. The meetings proved so successful that they are now a regular event.

They also triggered community lunch meetings with residents and their family members in aged care both at Warracknabeal and Hopetoun. Warracknabeal campus manager for aged care Wendy Walters said Rural Northwest Health had always sought community feedback.

"We have several vehicles for gaining community feedback but the lunches have been by far the most successful way," Ms Walters said.

"They are a great way for the manager to connect with the residents and their families and it provides a two-way conversation which is much better than someone just filling out a form," she said.

"I'm able to update the residents on any new developments going on at Rural Northwest Health and particularly in aged care and then they can tell me their thoughts.

"The residents get an official invitation to the lunch and we always have a guest from another department come along who can talk about their role and also gain insight into possible improvements."

Ms Walters said she originally tried resident and relative forums for feedback but found they lacked intimacy.

"People are less inclined to open up in a big room but the small groups and the whole lunch environment makes it a relaxing and intimate experience," she said.

"So people are more comfortable talking about any issues they might have and as a result, we are able to make important improvements to our service."

Digesting feedback





Interviewing a privilege for Jen

Warracknabeal's Jen Ferguson was surprised but chuffed when approached by Rural Northwest Health to be involved in team member interviews.

Aged Care manager at the Warracknabeal campus Wendy Walters wanted to include the family member of an aged care resident on the interview panel when selecting new team members. Wendy shortlisted a few people including Jen because she had shown a genuine interest in Yarriambiack Lodge's daily activity.

Wendy said Jen's father Laurie has been a resident for five years and mother Kath was also a resident until her passing earlier this year.

"Jen had offered valuable input at our feedback lunches with Yarriambiack Lodge residents and family members," Wendy said.

"She presented as an obvious choice to help with the interview process when selecting new team members."

Jen had her own experience in the health industry, having worked in doctor's surgeries in Adelaide and then as an assessment officer for Meals on Wheels. After retiring and returning to Warracknabeal, Jen volunteered at Woodbine for several years.

Jen said she felt it was quite a privilege to be involved in such an important role.

"It was nice to be asked and I felt really good about it actually," Jen said.

"It has turned out to be a really good experience and I have really enjoyed it."

Jen she didn't just sit in on the interviews as an observer.

"I was involved and asked questions then gave my thoughts to the other panel members," she said.

"I wasn't altogether interested in what the interviewee had on paper but how they came across as a carer for my father and other residents.

"I didn't make the final decision about who would be chosen though because there is a process to follow."

Jen said she felt really comfortable with the role.

"You really feel like you're genuinely making a contribution and not just for my family but for others as well," she said.

"We actually got great feedback from interviewees, saying it was a great idea to have a family member on the panel.

"If I was asked, I would still consider staying involved in the role even if I didn't have any family in Yarriambiack Lodge."

Change of pace for day visitors

Clients of Rural Northwest Health's Day Program haven't stop talking about how much they enjoyed their Discover Your Hidden Talents week.

Day Program clients from Beulah and Warracknabeal attended four small-group sessions over two days where they; reminisced with items from bygone eras, got their hands dirty potting plant cuttings, laughed along to clowns telling jokes and performed fun scientific experiments.

Clients were asked to assess the sessions at the end and every single form noted how much fun they had and that everyone enjoyed the unique program.

Day program coordinator Tony Wagenknecht said Discover Your Hidden Talents was brainstormed from feedback with the clients.

"When we asked clients what they would like to see in Day Program, some of them said they would like the opportunity to try things with smaller groups occasionally," Mr Wagenknecht said.

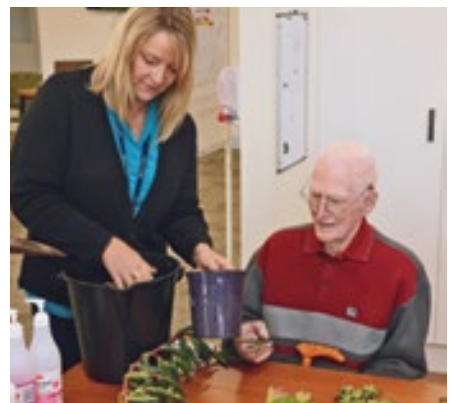
"Once we decided a format of how we would put it together, it was just a matter of working out what activities we could try," he said.

"This resulted through suggestions from both clients and team members and proved to be a big hit with everybody.

"We all got plenty of enjoyment out of it."

Mr Wagenknecht was in charge of scientific experiments where he demonstrated exploding Coke bottles and electrical charges in lemons. Katrina Rosser and Sue Forsyth showed how to plant pots from various cuttings, Karen Miller had a mini museum of historical clothing and household items while Jenny McGrath dressed as a clown and told jokes.

On the back of its success, the team plan to run the interactive small group program at least twice a year.



Joyce Bellinger was being more like 'Joyce Belligerent' when she was asked to give this interview.

The Hopetoun Ladies Auxiliary member is typical of the 'volunteer' persona - loves to get in and get her hands dirty and do whatever she can ... but doesn't want any recognition for it. She argued with me that 'there are people who do more than me' but my sources tell me that's not likely.

Joyce devotes many hours each week to her community. She is president of the garden club which meets every second Wednesday, cleans the church each week, delivers meals on wheels and depending which Friday of

the month it may be, she is either at a church meeting, CWA or the ladies auxiliary.

That's only what we know about - but it's the amount of volunteer work she does for the residents at Rural Northwest Health's Hopetoun campus that prompted this article. If she is not selling raffle tickets to raise funds for the campus, Joyce is working in the campus's Ye Olde Coffee Shoppe or spending time chatting with the residents and helping them in any way she can.

In fact, on the day of the interview she was a little rushed because she had organised with fellow garden club colleagues to go and plant trees in the new campus garden.

"I just love helping and seeing the looks of the delight on the faces of the residents,"

Hopetoun propped up by Joyce





Volunteer Coral Cox gets a coffee from Joyce Bellinger.

Mrs Bellinger said she loved spending time at the campus.

"I just love helping and seeing the looks of the delight on the faces of the residents," Mrs Bellinger said.

"It might be something as simple as picking up a hanky for them or telling them they just got a bingo number but their faces just light up and it's just so beautiful," she said.

"There's one resident who always drinks tea but every time I'm on duty at the campus coffee shop, she gets me to make her a cappuccino.

"So three times a week and she has a coffee and when I bring it to her the look on her face is just beautiful.

"She clears a little place for me to put the coffee and it's just a special moment each time."

Mrs Bellinger said she loved helping out where possible.

"I was always going to be doing this because my mother loved volunteering too, although she went about it a lot quieter than I do," she said.

Mrs Bellinger said if she had to cut back her various volunteer roles to just one, she would automatically choose remaining on the Hopetoun Campus Ladies Auxiliary.

"It's just a wonderful little group and we really enjoy raising money for the campus," Joyce said.

"We have about a dozen members and we sit around the table find out what might help the residents and then we just do it.

"It's not hard work. We raise a lot of the money with raffles and we do a bit of catering."

Joyce said she had another good reason for strongly supporting the aged care residents at Hopetoun.

"One day it might be me in there and I'd like to think someone would take the time to chat and make me a coffee."

• Yarriambiack Lodge volunteer coordinator Katie Ramsdale said Rural Northwest Health was always keen to recruit more volunteers of all ages and backgrounds.

"Volunteers like Joyce are an absolute blessing for us," Ms Ramsdale said.

"We give plenty of support to our volunteers to make sure they are comfortable with the role and have all the tools and knowledge they need," she said.

"We will help orientate them to work out what their interests are and where they would most like to volunteer.

"But it's entirely up to them as to how much and how often they can contribute."

To find out more about volunteering at Rural Northwest Health, phone Katie on 5396 1200.

Grampians launch for new cancer survivorship program

Wimmera residents affected by cancer are taking advantage of a comprehensive survivorship education, exercise and wellness program.

The 'Wellness and Life after Cancer Exercise and Supportive Care' program provides people who have finished their active cancer treatment with two-hour education and exercise sessions. Rural Northwest Health health professionals deliver the sessions at the Warracknabeal campus.

The program is also being piloted at Stawell. The education session is delivered using telehealth video conferencing to link participants together.

The Cancer Council Victoria program assists participants to:

- Increase their fitness and strength
- Improve their ability to perform daily tasks
- Learn to cope with life now
- Identify local support services available

Cancer Council Victoria head of Strategy and Support Meg Chiswell said the program provides invaluable support and information for locals diagnosed with cancer.

"On average, there are 209 people who are diagnosed with cancer in the Grampians each year," Ms Chiswell said.

"We hear regularly that cancer patients can have trouble adjusting to their 'new normal' after active treatment ceases," she said.

"This program provides people with the tools they need to get back into exercise and to deal with changes in their lives at home and at work.

"Research shows that exercise rehabilitation programs help cancer survivors manage pain, reduce fatigue and improve quality of life; while group-based education programs develop resilience and empower patients to improve their health and wellbeing."

To register, or to find out more, contact Rural Northwest Health on 5396 1315.

Cancer Council Victoria acknowledges the support of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and the Grampians Integrated Cancer Service.

Rural Northwest Health dietitian Ilana Jorgensen provided nutritional information to the group.



For further information, please contact: Thea Cargill on (03) 9514 6585 or thea.cargill@cancervic.org.au

Cancer Council Victoria is a non-profit organisation that has been leading the fight against all cancers for 81 years in the areas of research, patient support, cancer prevention and advocacy. For details visit www.cancervic.org.au, or to speak to our experienced cancer nurses call Cancer Council 13 11 20. This is a confidential service for anyone after cancer information or support.



Cancer resource nurse Tracey Daffy with RNH exercise physiologist Britenie Power.



Doreen Taylor of Warracknabeal.





Jill Thompson shows Marge around the exhibition.



Gary McLean with his mother

Resident artists on display

An art exhibition at a popular Warracknabeal venue was a great example of the town's two biggest organisations working together.

Disability service Woodbine has held the art exhibition each year at Warracknabeal Town Hall but in recent years a couple of art works from Rural Northwest Health aged care residents have featured in the display. In 2016, Rural Northwest Health introduced its own art program for aged care residents.

Local artist Jill Thompson was appointed as an art and craft therapist to take charge of the program and teach the residents to improve their artistic flair.

Jill works with the residents every week and realised she had quite a collection of works by the time the art exhibition was due.

She approached Woodbine exhibition organisers and they were more than happy to include the residents' work.

Memory support nurse Katie Ramsdale said the exhibition was moved to the Creekside Hotel which proved a wonderful idea.

"We really appreciated Woodbine including us in their exhibition," Katie said.

"The residents and their family members had an evening meal out and then got to absorb the art on display," she said.

"It was a very special time and they talked about it for weeks afterwards."

All the paintings at the exhibition were sold on the night.

"I know our CEO bought a few of them," Katie said.



Art tour at campus

***“When people look
for work in health
professional roles, they
look at the entire region
and its opportunities”***

Since the completion of stage two redevelopment at Rural Northwest Health’s Warracknabeal campus, CEO Catherine Morley has decorated corridors and rooms with a variety of artwork.

Akin to a self-appointed gallery director, Ms Morley has selected artworks she has discovered on her jaunts around Australia and other nations. She has also decided on the most appropriate layout for the collection.

So now the walls of the campus are a colourful gallery of paintings, images and etchings providing a decorative touch to every stroll through the building. There is also an entire aged care unit displaying a series of historical pictures of the region, depicting different eras.

The extensive collection inspired memory support nurse Katie Ramsdale to start an art tour for aged care residents.

Once a week, different residents are wheeled along the corridors stopping at each display along the way. Katie said the residents really enjoy the tours.

“Many residents have commented to team members that it’s just like going to the art gallery,” Katie said.

“Every picture or painting is a topic of conversation for them and it doesn’t matter how many times they do the tour, there is something new and fresh from them each time,” she said.

“Some of the residents have their very own art work on display.”

Volunteer Carol Clyne and activities worker Marilyn Clancy take residents on the art tour.



The world wants to know what we do

Recognition as an award winning health service is earned - not won in a draw.

Rural Northwest Health is proud of its endless list of initiatives that its team members and management have developed under the organisation's vision of moving together through change to provide innovative rural health care. Our executives are consistently finding themselves on the international stage, speaking at forums and conferences around Australia and across the globe, promoting better practice ideas to health industry colleagues.

Speaking engagements at American health seminars have become an annual occurrence but executives have also presented Rural Northwest Health initiatives in China, England and Japan.

Many of the speaking engagements have centred on Rural Northwest Health's innovative ABLE model of care and our memory support success with residents living with dementia. But last year at the fourth annual Worldwide Nursing Conference, held in Singapore, the topic was from left field.

Warracknabeal campus manager for acute Wendy James took the conference on safari with her talk on "Compliance education where fun is mandatory". Wendy's oratory centred on how Rural Northwest Health used imagination and fun to improve staff mandatory education compliance and workplace culture.

Wendy was inundated after the talk with nurses wanting to know more about how Rural Northwest Health presented its mandatory education sessions in a humourously entertaining format.

"It was fascinating to get such a reaction but it also proved beyond doubt that our small rural health service in the sticks is achieving wonderful things," Wendy said.

"My presentation included slides of team members dressed up in animal costumes and people dancing around the education room which was decked out as an African jungle," she said.

"But the essence of the talk was that the information was absorbed better by presenting it in a fun format and having a laugh along the way.

"No-one goes to sleep in our presentations. There is too much happening all the time and learning is easier and enjoyable."

After returning from Singapore Wendy gave the same presentation at the Wimmera Southern Mall Health Alliance best practice seminar in the small West Wimmera community of Goroke.

"They were just as fascinated there actually," she said.





The Groove Train team from left, Peter Miller, Ngareta Melgren, Kerry Seater, Wendy Walters and Kaye Knight.





Rural Northwest Health diabetes educator Leanne Huebner with client Jeremy Eckermann.

Telehealth turns life around for Jeremy

A Warracknabeal diabetic has a new lease on life after recent consultations with a Melbourne specialist.

Jeremy Eckermann has been living with type-1 diabetes since he was 12 and has never felt more in control of his condition. The revelation came for the father of two after a telehealth conference with an endocrinologist from Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute.

Jeremy takes his blood sugar levels three times a day and injects himself with insulin around five times a day. He had struggled to maintain regular blood sugar levels and earlier this year he was having too many 'lows'.

Jeremy said he had always maintained regular contact with Rural Northwest Health diabetes educator Leanne Huebner who had been advising him to be more consistent with his insulin dosage.

"Leanne sits and talks with me about how I'm controlling my diabetes," Jeremy said.

"I'll show her my books because I keep a record of every blood sugar reading and every insulin shot," he said.

"Leanne wanted me to be more regular with my levels and not to over-react to blood sugar highs or lows but it wasn't until the specialist pushed home the point that I realised.

"She was able to put it all into perspective for me and made me pull my head in."

Jeremy said since his telehealth consultations, his three-monthly pathology blood sugar reading had dropped from 7.5 per cent to 6.3 per cent.

"During this time I also got some great advice from Rural Northwest Health's dietitian," he said.

She walked me through the supermarket and showed me what I can have and what I can't have.

"Between that and the telehealth consultations, it's made all the difference. I've hardly had any sugar lows and I just feel so much healthier."

Jeremy said if telehealth was not available he would have found it almost impossible to visit the endocrinologist.

"I'm a single parent with two young daughters and I don't have a driver's licence because my long distance eyesight has deteriorated too much," he said.

"With telehealth, all I have to do is go up to the Warracknabeal campus and Leanne and I sit in a consultation room with a computer screen and talk to the specialist online.

"Leanne is able to ask and answer questions as well and we all know where things are at for me."

Leanne said the Diabetes Telehealth Service with Baker IDI was a new program provided by Royal Flying Doctor Service.

"It's a very efficient and well controlled system," Leanne said.

"I have a log-in number so as soon as I have the GP referral, all I have to do is get on the computer and book the endocrinologist," she said.

"They will then inform me by email and send a message to the client, as well as a reminder message the day before the appointment.

"It's made a big difference to Jeremy because the extra support from the endocrinologist has improved his diabetes control and benefitted his health."

Jeremy had important advice for young people diagnosed with type-1 diabetes.

"You are so much better off if you get on top of it early," he said.

"Look after yourself and keep control of your levels from the start because if you don't do the right thing, it can ruin your body."

Taking recruitment to the world

Rural Northwest Health is one of four Wimmera health agencies taking advantage of a new video promoting the uniqueness of the region in a bid to attract health workers from all corners of the globe.

The health agencies of the Wimmera Southern-Mallee Health Alliance (WSMHA) launched the video release at the Regional Best Practice and Innovation Forum at Goroke Community Health Centre.

The video clip takes a brief look at the range of people from different backgrounds that have made the move to the region to work and encourages people to consider the Wimmera and Southern-Mallee as a great step for career and lifestyle.

Rural Northwest Health is promoting the clip on its website and with other job advertising platforms and social media networks in the hope to highlight the positives of living and working in the region.

WSMHA team members profiled in the clip include:

- Kathleen Ballinger (Edenhope and District Memorial Health Service)

- Ngareta Melgren (Rural Northwest Health)
- Charlie Sittichochaitawee (West Wimmera Health Service)
- Feby Baulose (West Wimmera Health Service)
- Yakep Angue (Wimmera Health Care Group)

WSMHA chair and RNH board member Leo Casey said the video was impressive and would help attract a varied range of health professionals.

"When people look for work in health professional roles, they look at the entire region and its opportunities" Mr Casey said.

"When people look for work in health professional roles, they look at the entire region and its opportunities"

"The clip will help show the opportunities for both career progression and great work-life balance in the Wimmera and Southern-Mallee" he said.

"We believe the passion we have and our people have for this region comes across in the clip and it will help promote the Wimmera and Southern-Mallee as a great destination for a range of people across the health sector.

"It is up to us as a region to convince everyone else what we know is great about everything on our doorstep, this is one way we can do this."

The video clip, produced by Horsham videographer Lynton Brown, can be viewed on YouTube using the link <https://youtu.be/WXKElh6QehI>

Ngareta Melgren





Community praised

Organisers of Rural Northwest Health's 2017 Walk for Yarri have praised the community for its support.

Rural Northwest Health memory support nurse Katie Ramsdale said the event was a great success once more.

"We've been able to raise \$10,000 which is an incredible effort," Katie said.

"Our walkers and supporters raised \$5000 and the generosity of one family matched the money raised dollar for dollar to bring the total to \$10,000," she said.

"We are so grateful for such amazing generosity and to the family of a resident who have shown their appreciation in the biggest way."

Katie said there was a core of regular walkers in the event who always dedicate themselves to the cause and gained great support.

"The whole day went really well and we had a treasure hunt that was popular with the kids."

Geoff Ward and Kylie O'Connor put in the biggest strides for the event, each walking 21 kilometres while three-year-old Gabe Sibley did an amazing job to walk seven kilometres.

Money raised from the walk was used to buy a big 85-inch screen for the Dal Monte Cinema in Yarriambiack Lodge and a speaker system for the resident dining areas.



Hopetoun community bus returns

Rural Northwest Health has reintroduced a community bus service from Hopetoun to Horsham.

The new service gives community members a social outing and a different landscape. It was introduced after community consultation through Rural Northwest Health's Hopetoun Beulah Reference Group.

Group committee member Barbara Hallam said the feedback through a Community Action Research Group meeting was disappointment that the original community bus service had stopped.

"The original service was introduced to help isolated people with no regular means of transportation get to medical appointments in bigger centres like Warracknabeal and Horsham," Mrs Hallam said.

"The service stopped because it wasn't being utilised enough to warrant the costs involved," she said.

"But the new service is running monthly monthly and we have four volunteer bus drivers who will generously donate their time to help keep the cost to a minimum."

Mrs Hallam said the service could be used socially or for any purpose and where possible, passengers would be delivered directly to their destination, within reason.

"The bus leaves Hopetoun Senior Citizens Club at 9am so there is plenty of time to enjoy a day away," she said.

"There is a \$10 fee for the day which is to help cover fuel costs."

Hopetoun residents wishing to book a seat on the Community Bus will need to contact Gateway BEET.



Volunteer driver Margaret Burdett checks her passengers for a trip on the community bus.

Doug and Evelyn McColl with the artwork they donated.



Night art donation

A collection of classic photographs depicting iconic Warracknabeal sites was donated to Rural Northwest Health early this year.

The framed art was commissioned by Warracknabeal philanthropists Doug and Evelyn McColl and is on display in the new Community Health wing at the Warracknabeal campus.

Mrs McColl said she and her husband saw a display by Bendigo photographer Richard Tatti during last year's Easter Festival and immediately fell in love with his work. Mr Tatti specialises in night-time landscape photography, using torchlight to emphasise subjects.

The display features three photographs – one of the Brim silos, another of Warracknabeal's water tower and the third is Warracknabeal Railway Station. All three can be seen in the red waiting area of the newly built wing.

"I just think the photographs have a unique style to them," Mrs McColl said.

"As soon as we saw them we wanted to get some for the health service," she said.

"They capture the historic icons beautifully and they look really lovely where they have been placed."

Rural Northwest Health CEO Catherine Morley said her organisation was very grateful for the photographic donation.

"Doug and Evelyn have always been wonderful contributors to Rural Northwest Health and to the general health and wellbeing of our community," Ms Morley said.

"They are a big part of our extended family and we appreciate all they do."

Paella recognition



Rural Northwest Health has recognised the high level of care provided to its aged care residents with a special paella luncheon at its Warracknabeal Campus.

The luncheon was part of Aged Care Week celebrations but Aged Care manager Wendy Walters said she wanted to use the occasion to recognise a broader care network.

"Most are aware of the wonderful job our clinical team does caring for our residents but there are other team members who are directly involved with the care and comfort of the residents," Ms Walters said.

"The environmental services team work very closely with our residents and often go beyond their role to provide comfort and support," she said.

"The allied health team are also regular visitors to Yarriambiack Lodge and to our Hopetoun campus providing their particular specialised care.

"So the event was to thank them all for their wonderful efforts."

Ms Walters said there were many great examples of team members providing extra care to residents.

"Our carers, nurses and environmental services team are all known for their extra care," she said.

"They often go shopping for the residents when they know they can't do it themselves or they will take in clothes for them to wear."



Kevin and Sally Gebert check the progress of the paella with Kylie Zanker.



Garden 'first' takes shape

Work has begun on a multi-purpose therapeutic garden in Warracknabeal that will be available to the public every day.

Horsham company Chapple Landscaping is building the Warracknabeal Wellness Garden at the entrance to Rural Northwest Health's newly redeveloped campus. The garden will not only be the first of its kind in western Victoria but most likely the first in Australia.

The garden will feature four main areas; a community plaza, a movement park, a children's play area and a sensory garden. The themes of the garden are designed from the region's key elements including farm, tree, creek, community and health.



Melbourne landscape architects Kate and Kendall Monk created the concept for the garden and Chapple Landscaping's Tory Chapple is adding a few of his own ideas to the plan.

Rural Northwest Health CEO Catherine Morley said the focus on the garden was first and foremost on wellbeing.

"It's also going to be a wonderfully unique place to visit and it is designed to enhance the wellbeing of everyone who visits," Ms Morley said.

"It would certainly provide a distinctive resting area for anyone touring along the Silo Art Trail," she said.

"When it's ready, we would love everyone to stop by and do some exercise, decrease their stress, engage with others to reduce isolation ... and just breathe."

Ms Morley said the garden was being developed in four stages when funding allowed.

"We've started the project with our own funding and a \$500 donation from Warracknabeal Rotary Club," she said.

"We still need to raise more money before we finish the garden and we are currently looking for sponsors.

"There are plenty of opportunities for naming rights and other donations toward this important project."

Handy new hygiene system

Team members and visitors to Rural Northwest Health can have better protection for their skin after the installation of a new hand hygiene system.

A new range of soap, sanitiser and hand cream dispensers have been installed at all three campuses to increase the level of hygiene while providing the added skin care protection. Rural Northwest Health infection control nurse Maree Bell said the installation of the foam dispensers would help her role.



Registered nurse
Renu Maliackal tries
the new dispensers.

"We had a liquid crème hygiene system in place but after extensive surveying and testing with our team members, we decided to switch to the foam system," Mrs Bell said.

"Our feedback so far has suggested that the foam soap was gentler on sensitive skin but still an effective cleanser," she said.

"We have also added several new hand hygiene stations so that people can access the products from every corner of each campus."

Mrs Bell said soap and water was still the best way to kill the germs that cause influenza.

"We should always be conscious of keeping our hands clean but during times when people are affected by diarrhea and vomiting or the flu, we must all clean our hands with soap and water," she said.

"We can't just rely on a sanitiser during these times because it's not as effective."

Mrs Bell said everyone that visited a place of care had a responsibility to clean their hands thoroughly both on arrival and departure.

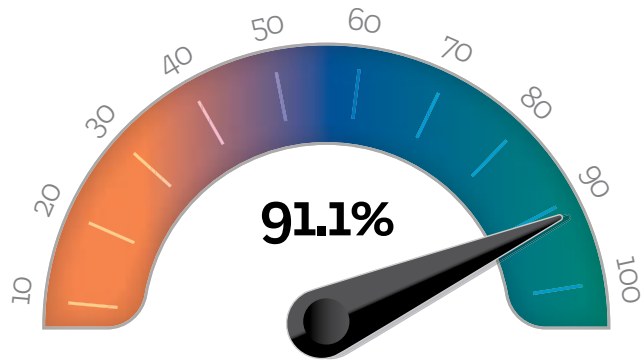
"The easiest way to pass on germs is with our hands."

The foam-based formula is also more environmentally friendly because there is less wastage.

Hand Hygiene

The barometer indicates the percentage of team members who were compliant with hand hygiene procedures when audited earlier this year. The Department of Health requires all health services to be compliant with hand hygiene protocols and expects compliance rates to be at least 70 percent.

Rural Northwest Health's percentage is well above the state average.



Flu Vaccinations

Rural Northwest Health team members reached compliancy with flu vaccinations in 2016. More than 70 per cent of team members were vaccinated which was above the Department of Health recommendation for public health services.



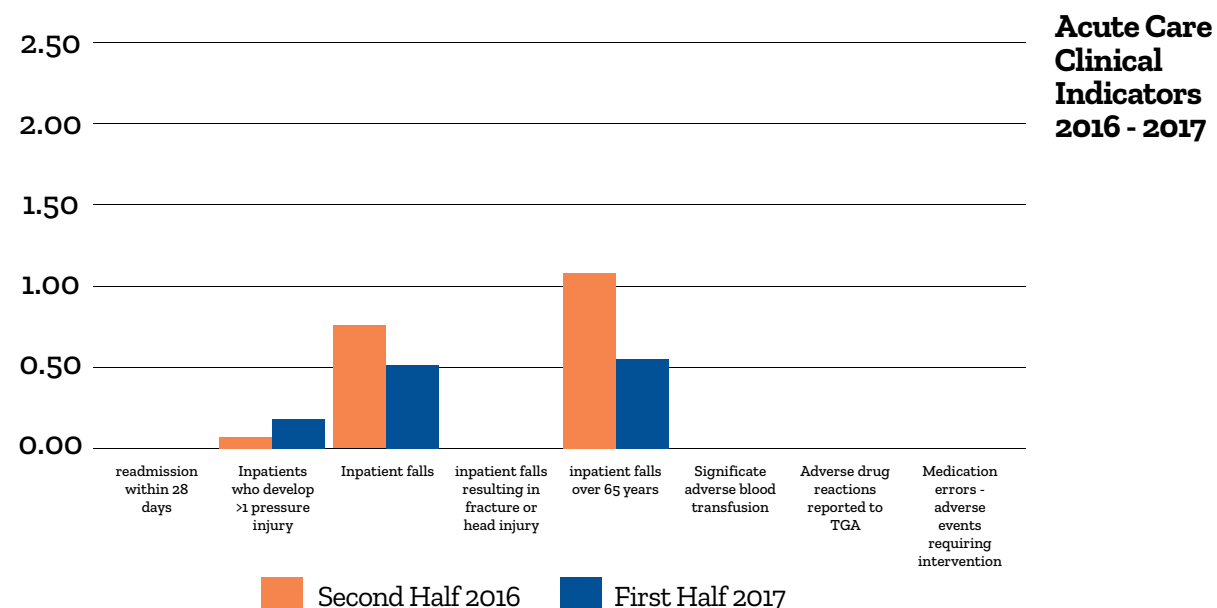
Acute

Below are the hospital wide clinical indicators for Acute Care at Rural Northwest Health, combined into one graph. All clinical indicators are recorded and provided nationally for scrutiny and assessment.

Acute had no adverse blood transfusions, no adverse blood reactions, no medication errors and no patients readmitted within 28 days of release during the past financial year.

Inpatient falls in Acute are lower than the previous year with an average of just over one fall per 1000 bed days. Almost all falls involved inpatients over 65 years of age.

The number of inpatients developing a pressure injury while staying in Acute has continued to remain extremely low with an average of 0.3 per 1000 bed days.



Aged Care

Below are the Public Sector Residential Aged Care clinical indicators for Warracknabeal and Hopetoun campuses. These clinical indicators are recorded and provided to the Department of Health for assessment.

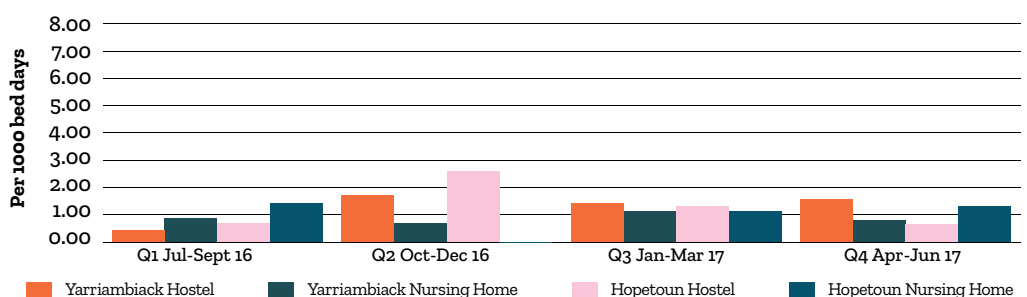
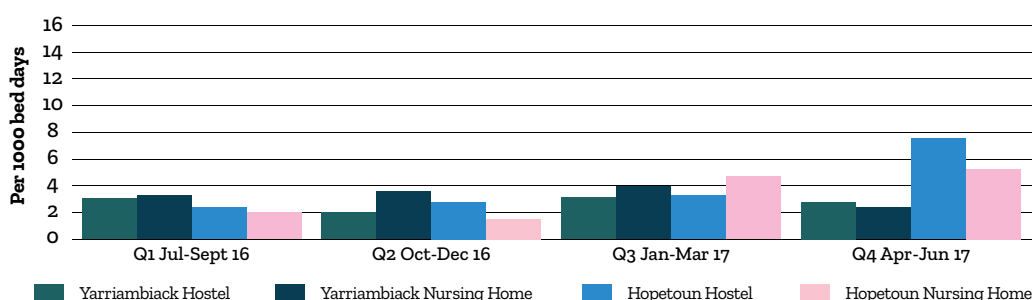
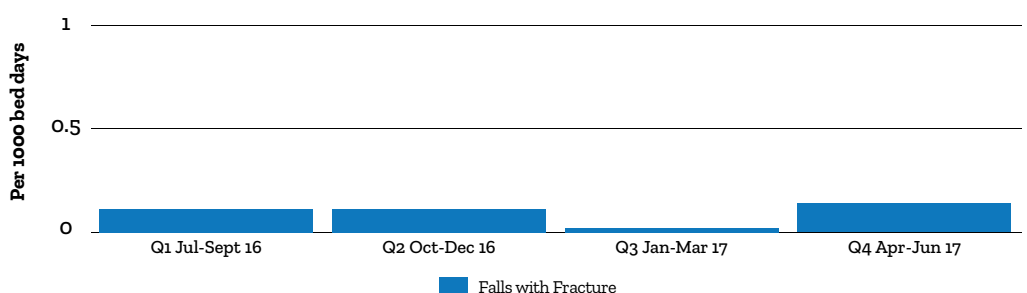
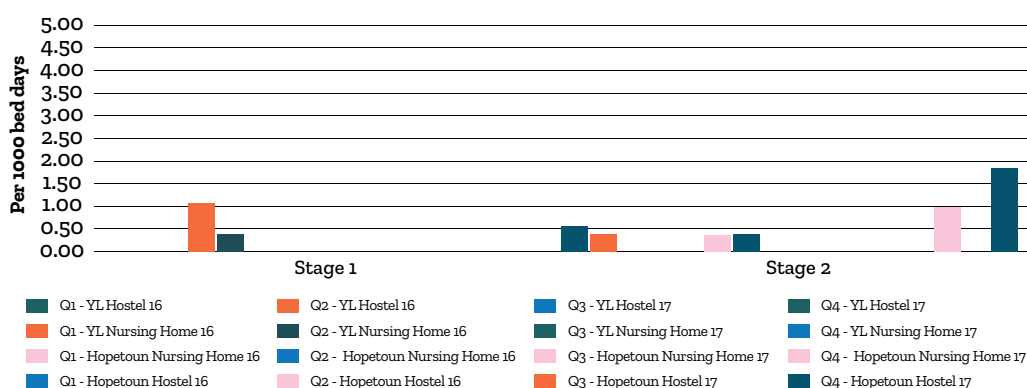
Our aged care teams at Hopetoun and Warracknabeal have a great record for the management of residents' pressure injuries. This is why our pressure injuries numbers are only at stage one or two and haven't reached stages three, four, five or six.

Falls and fractures are extremely low at both campuses. Rural Northwest Health provides important instruction to team members with regular sessions on fall prevention. There are also processes in place that include involving family members of residents in planning fall prevention.

Rural Northwest Health do not restrain residents at any time and therefore there is no point publishing a graph for indicator 3.

Both campuses continue to remain comfortably below the state average with the amount of residents per 1000 bed days who are administered nine or more medications.

Our unplanned weight loss figures also remain extremely low and have also dropped from the previous year. Our dietitian and speech pathologist continue to work closely with our residents to help control their diet and nutrition.



At Your Service

Rural Northwest Health provides a range of services and programs that the community is able to access through in-patient, residential, home or community based services including:

After Hours Service

GPs, Nurse Practitioner and Nursing team members provide an After Hours - On Call service 24 hours a day 7 days a week at Warracknabeal and Hopetoun

Acute Care

Rural Northwest Health has 12 acute beds at the Warracknabeal campus and 4 acute beds at Hopetoun. Both campuses provide urgent care services.

*Acute Medical Palliative Care Pharmacy
Pathology Services Urgent Care*

Aged Care

Rural Northwest Health has 60 aged care places at the Warracknabeal Campus and 23 aged care places at Hopetoun.

*Respite Care Cognitive Rehabilitative Therapist
Memory Support Unit Lifestyle Program
High and Low Care accommodation*

Medical Imaging

X-ray and 4D Ultrasound are provided at Warracknabeal by Rural Northwest Health contractors.

Community Health

Community and Allied Health services are provided across the three campuses at Warracknabeal, Beulah and Hopetoun.

*Ante Natal and Domiciliary midwifery services
Asthma education and health plan development
Community Health nurse
Diabetes education and health plan development
District nursing services
Health education and promotion
Hospital to home
Day Programs (Warracknabeal and Beulah)
Post Acute Care
Memory Support Nurse
Cancer Resource Nurse*

Allied Health

*Occupational Therapy Physiotherapy Podiatry
Counselling Speech Pathology Dietetics
Exercise Physiology Social Work Massage Therapy*

Support Services

Carer Support Services Volunteer program

Specialities

Ear Nose Throat Cardiology

Warracknabeal Campus

Dimboola Road
PO Box 386
Warracknabeal VIC 3393

Tel: (03) 5396 1200
Fax: (03) 5396 1210
Email: reception@rnh.net.au

Beulah Campus

Cnr Henty Hwy & Bell Street
PO Box 2
Beulah VIC 3395

Tel: (03) 5396 8200
Fax: (03) 5396 8201
Email: reception@rnh.net.au

Hopetoun Campus

12 Mitchell Place
Hopetoun VIC 3396

Tel: (03) 5083 2000
Fax: (03) 5083 2050
Email: reception@rnh.net.au

Important Telephone Numbers

Emergency Call	000
Nurse on Call	1300 606 024
Community Health	5396 1238
District Nursing	5396 1278
Occupational Therapy	5396 1262
Freedom of Information	5396 1200
Radiology	5396 1200
Psychiatric Services (Horsham Office)	1300 661 323
Yarriambiack Medical Clinic	5396 1380
Hopetoun Medical Clinic	5083 2080
Beulah Medical Clinic	5396 8200
Tristar Medical Centre	5394 1880

Please visit our website:

www.rnh.net.au

Please check out our Facebook Page

 / **[ruralnorthwesthealth](https://www.facebook.com/ruralnorthwesthealth)**