

# Community Newsletter



Grampians  
Health  
Dimboola  
Spring 2025



Grampians Health Dimboola nurses Jean Yu, Chinyere Ogueze and Asha Tharian pictured celebrating Aged Care Employee Day.





*Dr Peter Carter in the Horsham Emergency Department with Nurse Unit Manager Rebecca Bolzon.*

## Head of ED committed to expanding

The new Head of the Emergency Department at Horsham wants to increase the medical capability of the department.

Dr Peter Carter wants to improve the quality of the decision making as well as the diagnostic skill and the accuracy that is provided to ED patients.

"My priority is to expand the capability of the facility and eventually its physical footprint, so we can provide better care for emergencies presenting at Horsham," Peter said.

"Part of our plan is to develop our ED into a training department. It already has a training role for students but we want to expand it to be training emergency doctors as part of their accredited training.

"Until recently the department has been heavily reliant on locum doctors and junior doctors rotating from Melbourne.

"While they still provide an important and valued service, we have started to appoint more senior and permanent staff.

"We now have seven emergency specialists that are regularly working at Horsham ED. These are experienced doctors who have completed a minimum of six years of rigorous training in managing emergency conditions.

"We also have the assistance of an emergency Telehealth service to support decision making overnight.

Peter said he was impressed with the quality of medical equipment available in Horsham's ED.

**"The support from community groups toward the ED team, especially by donating funds for equipment used here, is very special and we are fortunate that these groups recognise the importance of the work that we do here."**

"We are constantly needing to upgrade equipment so we are using the latest technology available to deliver care that is responsive to community needs."

Peter has a strong connection to the local community, having been born and raised in Hopetoun. He worked as a GP in Stawell for 15 years before training as an Emergency Specialist in Melbourne where he spent a further 15 years at various hospital emergency departments.

Grampians Health's Chief Operating Officer Ben Kelly said Peter's appointment to the Horsham campus was an important one for the region.

"Peter's medical leadership is an important attribute that will help build the service in delivering safe, connected and person-centred care. His appointment is a perfect example of how we are growing capability to deliver services to the Horsham region."

# New national initiative to improve cancer care for rural and remote Australians



*Sue Bartlett, Oncology Nurse Practitioner, Catherine Hanns, Social Worker, and Carmel O'Kane, Cancer Nurse Practitioner and Manager of the Wimmera Cancer Centre.*

People living in rural and remote Australia experience poorer cancer outcomes compared to those in metropolitan areas, yet no dedicated optimal care pathway exists for this priority population.

The ECORRA OCP (Equitable Cancer Outcomes across Rural and Remote Australia – Optimal Care Pathways) project, led by Professor Anna Ugalde, is a collaboration between the Centre for Quality and Patient Safety Research within the Institute for Health Transformation at Deakin University and Cancer Council Australia, with support from Grampians Health and cancer clinicians across the country.

It directly addresses recommendations from the 2023 Australian Cancer Plan, which identifies people in rural and remote areas as one of 10 priority populations requiring dedicated support.

The goal is to develop a tailored Optimal Care Pathway (OCP) that addresses the specific needs and challenges faced by rural cancer patients. OCPs are nationally recognised guides to best practice cancer care across each stage of a patient's journey.

A dedicated rural-focused version will support more equitable care by tackling barriers such as limited access to specialists, long travel times, and financial stress.

Launched in September 2024, the 18-month project is currently in the working group stage, bringing together experienced cancer care professionals from across Australia to co-design the new rural OCP.

"Equitable cancer care in rural and remote areas is vital," said Carmel O'Kane, Cancer Nurse Practitioner and Manager of the Wimmera Cancer Centre, who is serving as Deputy Chair of the project's national working group.

Oncology Nurse Practitioner Sue Bartlett and Social Worker Catherine Hanns have also joined the national working group, bringing with them years of experience working with cancer patients across regional Victoria.

"Many of our patients face huge barriers including distance, cost, social isolation, and lack of transport and this impacts their ability to access timely, appropriate treatment," said Catherine.

"This project provides an opportunity to advocate for rural patients and ensure their needs are built into a national healthcare framework," said Sue.

Once completed, the ECORRA OCP will provide a valuable national resource to guide clinicians, on how to improve access to services, and provide treatment closer to home delivering more equitable cancer care for rural and remote Australians.



Paul Margetts, centre, is pictured with Detective Sergeant Jake Ferguson and Inspector Tony Combridge APM after their Inside Story presentations.



## Record funds for Crime Night

A record crowd enjoyed presentations from two of Victoria's leading detectives during Blue Ribbon Foundation (BRF) Horsham's annual Inside Story event in August. BRF Horsham President Paul Margetts hosted the evening at Horsham's Harvest Church and announced the committee's newest fundraising project.

"We are kickstarting our newest campaign with the money we raise from tonight so we can purchase a Hamilton Ventilator for Grampians Health Horsham's Emergency Department," Paul said.

"There is now a need to upgrade the old Hamilton Ventilator in Horsham's ED. This device is used to provide respiratory support for a wide range of patients including neo-natal."

The record crowd ensured the event's biggest ever return with \$8000 being raised on the evening.

"We were fortunate to have two great speakers in Inspector Tony Combridge APM and Detective Sergeant Jake Ferguson who were highly entertaining despite the dark subject of the crimes involved," Paul said.

## Creative connections at Dimboola



The Meaningful Life team at our Dimboola Nursing Home celebrated Aged Care Employee Day on Thursday 7 August by asking the residents to leave messages of support on tea cup cutouts.

The cutouts were gifted to the staff and also included a tea bag along with the kind messages.

Residents also composed limericks and poems that demonstrated their love for those who care for them. The works were then printed on posters to be displayed around the nursing home.

Pictured with examples of the cups and posters are Meaningful Life team members Angela Facey and Jackie Exell with residents Billie and Jo.

# Sandy helps spread the support

Support for our First Nations people has been extended with the appointment of Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer, Sandy Stinten.

Working alongside colleague Danae McDonald, Sandy will help to provide support to patients, clients and team members in Horsham, Dimboola, Edenhope and Stawell.

The proud Gunai/Kurnai woman said she has settled into the role quickly, and has felt very welcomed by the community.

"It's a great role and I'm really enjoying it," Sandy said. "Danae and I are sharing the travelling so that we are both a constant presence at each of the campuses every week.

"Even the trips to Edenhope have been good because while there are not many First Nations people living there, a few team members at the campus are and they have appreciated the visits and the connection."

Sandy said she was impressed with the community space in Horsham and with the work Danae had been doing.

Danae said the appointment of Sandy was important in helping to extend their support.

"We've been working in well together and Sandy has settled in comfortably with her role," Danae said.

"Sandy's inclusion has meant that for the first time, we've been able to provide comprehensive support to First Nations people at every Grampians Health campus," Chief People Officer Claire Woods said.

"The work that our Aboriginal Liaison Health Officers do is crucial to our First Nations people's continuity of care."

Danae and Sandy visit Dimboola on Thursdays from 1:30PM – 4:00PM. They can be contacted at **0403 556 517** or **0475 420 398**.



## John puts the hammer down

Popular maintenance worker John Brooks is retiring.

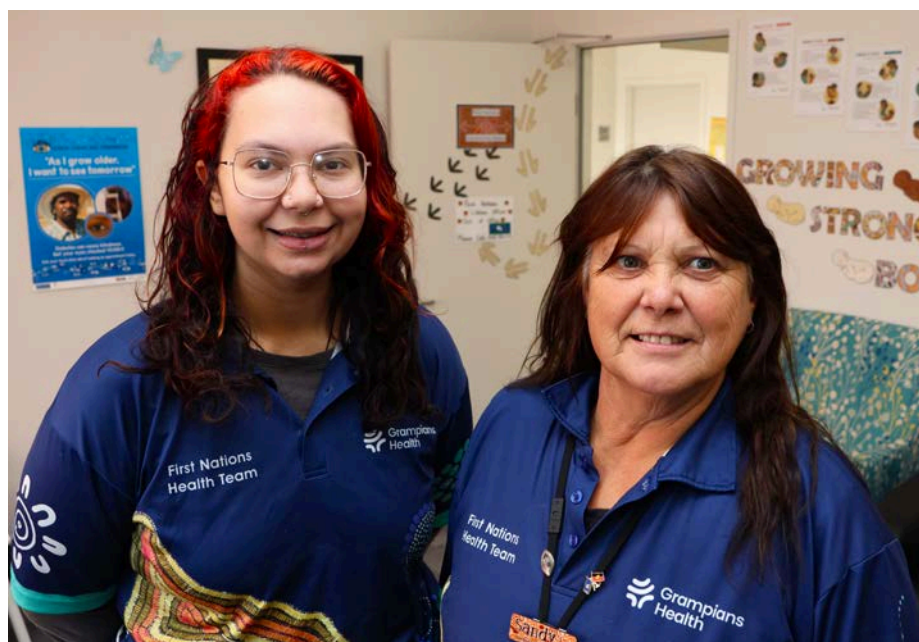
After spending the majority of his life as a business owner, John started work at the Dimboola campus in 2011, having previously worked for a short period at Wimmera Base Hospital.

Known to all as 'Brooksy', he has enjoyed his role, especially the company of his work colleagues and the residents.

"I haven't made any real plans for retirement yet but eventually my wife and I will do a bit of travelling and I'll be able to catch up on a few chores around home that need doing," John said.

"John's always been very helpful with anything we've needed and he takes care of things with no fuss," Dimboola Care Community Manager Amy said.

"He's always very good to the residents and considerate of their needs when doing his work."



Danae McDonald and Sandy Stinten in the Community Space at Wimmera Base Hospital.



# Independent renal hub status advances kidney care

Our organisation has transitioned to become an independent renal hub, marking a significant milestone in the delivery of care for those with chronic kidney disease across the region.

Previously operating as satellite services of the Royal Melbourne Hospital, renal units in Ballarat, and Horsham will now be managed directly by Grampians Health, allowing for expanded services and improved patient outcomes.

This transition is driven by a commitment to providing high-quality, effective, and consistent care closer to home for patients living with kidney diseases and ailments.

The new hub status enables us to significantly enhance the medical and nursing capabilities in renal medicine, introduce

surgical services for renal patients, and increase the number of specialist nursing roles to support those with advanced kidney ailments.

"Becoming an independent renal hub means we can deliver more responsive, locally managed care that reflects the needs of our patients and supports our dedicated staff," said Chief Executive Officer Dale Fraser.

It's about putting people first and making sure they receive the best possible care, close to home."

As part of its role as a renal hub, we will be responsible for home dialysis services for patients across the region. A dedicated regional coordinator is being introduced to streamline treatment pathways and support patients living with chronic kidney disease in regional communities.

**"This is a major step forward in how we care for people in our region,"**  
– CEO Dale Fraser.

"Becoming an independent hub service means we can now be responsible for managing all the components of our renal services—staffing, equipment, and clinical decisions—and focus on delivering high quality renal and dialysis care across the region," said Dr David Langsford, General Manager – Medical and Clinical Programs.

"Being an independent hub allows for more agile responses to patient needs, better integration with other local health services, and a stronger focus on continuity of care across Stawell, Edenhope, Horsham and Ballarat."



Fresenius Medical Care Australia clinical sales specialist Rachael Clarke and Dialysis Nurse in Charge Je Vic Solante with one of the new machines.

# Staff dominate RFDS scholarship awards

Two of our staff members have recently won highly coveted scholarships from the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

Horsham Enrolled Nurse Tammy McDonald and Ballarat Program Assistant Chloe James both won the scholarships to support their nursing studies. Adding to their achievement is the fact that only four scholarships were awarded to nurse trainees in Victoria for 2025.

The RFDS Give Them Wings scholarships provide one-off financial assistance and offer students the opportunity to spend a week with the Flying Doctor or take a work experience trip by air.

The scholarship program encourages students to seek employment in regional or rural towns upon graduation, putting their vital skills to work in communities that need it the most.

An Enrolled Nurse at our Horsham campus, Tammy has already gained success in her role having been recently awarded Federation University TAFE's Trainee of the Year and followed that up with the ANMF Student of the Year.

Tammy is now studying her Bachelor of Nursing and has already received distinctions during her studies.

"I'm really enjoying nursing and when I finish my Graduate Year, I want to further my studies to either work in Theatre as a peri-operative nurse or to qualify as a midwife," Tammy said.

Chloe James currently works as a program assistant with the Allied Health team at our Ballarat campus and is studying her Bachelor of Nursing.

Chloe said her true passions are in health research and rural and remote nursing.

"I never expected to see so much impressive work done in smaller hospitals but the research happening at Grampians Health is incredible. That is definitely the driving factor and I'd like to be a part of that work.

"Rural and remote nursing is my goal. I've visited a lot of remote settings in recent years and I find the common theme among those communities is they don't have doctors or clinicians.

"Nurses that work in those communities get to be a 'jack of all trades'. They go out to emergencies and they help people the way a paramedic would," Chloe said.

Tammy and Chloe were among 160 applicants to apply for the scholarships in the 14<sup>th</sup> year of the Give Them Wings program.

Of the 10 scholarships awarded, four were for Bachelor of Nursing studies, five are studying medicine and one is studying a Bachelor of Paramedicine.



Dr Senator Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP and RFDS Victoria CEO Dr Michael Ben-Meir present the awards to Tammy (pictured left) and Chloe (pictured right).





*GH At Home Nurses Jodi King, Janet Johnson and Zoe Frew with the portable bladder scanner and ECG.*

## Community buys new equipment and reassurance

Community donations have bought equipment that will ensure that more of our acute patients can be cared for at home.

For the first time, the GH At Home medical team have access to their own portable ECG unit and a portable bladder scanner so they can monitor their patients in their own home.

GH At Home is an alternative to an in-hospital stay, providing acute admitted care in the comfort of the patient's home.

Patients are still regarded as hospital patients and remain under the care of their hospital doctor.

"In the past, we had to borrow this equipment from

the acute ward which wasn't ideal because they might need to use the items at the same time," Horsham GH At Home Coordinator Janet Johnson said.

"Now that we have these items, we hope to take the pressure off in-patient services and outpatient continence services as well.

Chief Operating Officer Ben Kelly said the purchase of the vital new equipment was a great example of the importance of community donations.

"It just proves that every contribution, no matter what size, can help us deliver care that is responsive to local community needs." Mr Kelly said.

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

[grampianshealth.org.au/careers](https://grampianshealth.org.au/careers)



SCAN HERE



# ARE YOU OUR NEXT VOLUNTEER?



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

**Volunteer Drivers**

**Palliative Care Volunteers**

**Community Friendship Program – Dimboola Nursing Home**

If you, or someone you know, is interested  
in volunteering with Grampians Health Dimboola, please  
contact Kellie McMaster  
at [Kellie.McMaster@gh.org.au](mailto:Kellie.McMaster@gh.org.au) or 5381 9347.

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



SCAN HERE



# Old IV pumps given new life at Fed Uni

In a win for both education and the environment, 20 IV pumps and poles that could no longer be used at our Horsham campus have been gifted to nursing students at Federation University.

The donation is part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability – ensuring equipment is recycled and repurposed where possible, rather than sent to landfill.

Chief Redevelopment and Infrastructure Officer Veronica Furnier said she was pleased that this multidisciplinary approach would maximise the lifecycle of resources and minimise waste.

“Grampians Health is extremely pleased to donate the equipment which will now allow every nursing student in the classroom to have access to their own IV pump for hands-on training in the simulated clinical environment.”

Environmental Sustainability Officer Sam Harris said the donation was a great example of sustainable thinking in action and a positive outcome for students and the environment.

*Clinical Nurse Educator EN Traineeships (West) Susan Roberts, Federation University Assistant Discipline Lead Diploma of Nursing Gab McCulloch, Federation University TAFE Teacher Nursing Jane Dunn and Engineering Services Leading Hand Adam Simmons.*



## Aged Care Reforms – Putting Older Australians First

The Australian Government is introducing important reforms to ensure aged care services better support the rights, choices, and wellbeing of older Australians.

Whether remaining at home or moving into residential aged care, the reforms aim to provide high-quality, person-centred care when and where it's needed.

As a provider of aged care services, Grampians Health is committed to delivering care that supports dignity, independence, and safety.

To learn more, visit [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or call 1800 200 422.



**myagedcare**

important  
update



Blue Ribbon Foundation Horsham President Paul Margetts is pictured being shown the donated items by ED Registered Nurse Taylor and Acting Nurse Unit Manager Kaylene Schultz.

## Faster assessments for trauma patients

Assessing trauma patients at Wimmera Hospital's Emergency Department has been made easier and quicker thanks to the latest donations from the Horsham branch of the Blue Ribbon Foundation (BRF).

The BRF team have used the funds raised from their most recent events to purchase a portable curvilinear ultrasound probe and a tonometer.

Acting ED Nurse Unit Manager Kaylene Schultz said the portable ultrasound probe allowed for a more immediate assessment of vital organs.

"In the past we've relied on Radiology/CT for internal examinations but this unit allows a thorough bedside assessment," Kaylene said.

"Transporting a patient to radiology can be very difficult, particularly for trauma patients and the process also slows down the doctor's assessment for treatment considerably.



"Now that we have a portable unit, it will make an incredible difference and we are very grateful to the Blue Ribbon committee for their support."

Kaylene said the convex shape of the probe allowed for deeper imaging of organs while the tonometer is used to test the pressure inside a patient's eyes.

"It can also assess for glaucoma."

BRF Horsham President Paul Margetts said his committee were pleased to be able to provide such vitally important equipment.

## September is Sexual Health Month

There's a lot more to sexual health than just sex – it's also about having open conversations about your health.

This month we're encouraging the community to shed any embarrassment or shame and to talk about their sexual health. This includes asking for a sexual health check (including STI testing) at least once a year.

We're also advocating for the 4Cs of safer sex – **Communication, Consent, Contraception** and **Condoms**:

- Communication – Talk openly with your partner(s) about sexual health and pleasure.
- Consent – Take steps to check that everyone involved is freely agreeing to each sexual activity.
- Contraception – Take steps to avoid getting pregnant, or getting someone else pregnant, unless you both want to.
- Condoms – Use protection to reduce the risk of STIs and unintended pregnancy.

Make the right decisions for you by talking to someone you trust. Sex should be enjoyable. Safer sex means sexual contact when you and your partner(s) are ready. Any form of sex needs to be consensual, and you should feel respected and protected.

## Do you have any suggestions for us?

If you have a suggestion or an issue you want to raise, please contact us at [feedback@gh.org.au](mailto:feedback@gh.org.au)

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

## Like to join our mailing list?

To join our mailing list please send your name, email and postal address to [communications@gh.org.au](mailto:communications@gh.org.au).

Please also contact us if changes are required to your contact details.



# Contact Us

## Acute Care

**5363 7100**

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

## Medical Centre

**5363 7111**

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

Appointments required except in the case of emergencies.

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

## Telehealth

**5363 7100**

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

## Dimboola Nursing Home (Care Community)

**5363 7100**

Supporting residents to maintain their connections within the wider community.

## Day Centre

**5363 7159**

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

## Allied Health (Horsham)

**5381 9333**

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

## Feedback

**5320 4014**

Suggestions, concerns, thanks and complaints.

Call, email, or visit our website to complete a feedback form.  
[grampianshealth.org.au](http://grampianshealth.org.au)  
[feedback@gh.org.au](mailto:feedback@gh.org.au)