



(L-R): Life Governor recipients Pam Byron and Nicole Nicholson; and Debra Barry, who this year reached 45 years of service

Honouring long serving staff and supporters

Grampians Health has celebrated the dedication and commitment of our staff and community members at a special ceremony held to honour those who have completed significant periods of service.

Around 26 staff members from Stawell who have completed 10 and more years of service were honoured at the event held on 28 November.

This included Debra Barry, who has completed a remarkable 45 years of service at our hospital. Throughout her time

at Grampians Health Stawell, as part of the Operating Suite, Debra's unwavering commitment to excellence in patient care has made her an invaluable asset to both her team and the community.

Allied Health team member Nicole Nicholson, who completed 40 years of service, was also honoured at the event. CEO Dale Fraser presented the service awards, expressing admiration and gratitude on behalf of the organisation.

"These individuals have dedicated their lives to the

care and health of others, which is already a noteworthy path," he said.

Life Governor awards were also presented at the ceremony, which is an honour bestowed on staff members, remarkable volunteers, donors, and consumer representatives who have demonstrated outstanding commitment, dedication, and support to our organisation.

Pam Byron, Stawell Hospital Auxiliary member, and Ms Nicholson were appointed 2024 Life Governors.



Attendees at the 2024 Grampians Health AGM

Enhancing care options through collaboration

Grampians Health has benefited from increased collaboration across our sites over the past year, playing a key role in making care more accessible to regional Victorians and increasing care options across the Grampians region.

Our commitment to further enhance care was reinforced at the 2024 annual general meeting held on 27 November at Edenhope.

“One of our key priorities when we came together as Grampians Health was to deliver care closer to home and over the past year, I am proud to see the steps we’ve taken to increase our services and provide care that is responsive to local needs,” said Dale Fraser, Chief Executive Officer.

“The collaboration between our campuses has been instrumental in increasing the range and quality of services we offer. This teamwork ensures that our regional communities have access to the care they need without having to travel long distances.”

Achievements in the last year include increased operational governance and oversight across Ballarat and Horsham Intensive Care Units, an expansion of care at home programs to include paediatric care at home, improved allied health services across its sites, and enhanced oncology services across campuses to deliver care closer to home.

We have also made strides in reducing wait times for elective surgery through a two-year elective surgery reform project

through the Grampians Region Health Services Partnership. In addition to reducing wait times, the project has expanded capacity and maximised throughput of surgical services within the Grampians region.

“These achievements were made possible because of our unified efforts as Grampians Health. Our commitment to working together has not only improved service delivery but also strengthened our ability to respond to the unique needs of our regional population,” Dale said.

During the AGM we also took the opportunity to thank outgoing Board Chair, Bill Brown for his service following his resignation. The Hon. Rob Knowles AO has been appointed as Interim Chair.

Construction commences on Stawell's second theatre

Construction on Stawell's \$5.15 million second theatre has commenced.

Q Construction, a company renowned for delivering first class projects in regional areas, has been appointed to redevelop the second theatre, with Grampians Health's Capital Projects team managing the project.

The new theatre will significantly boost surgical capacity in the region, positioning Grampians Health Stawell as a leading provider in specialised healthcare services including ophthalmology, endoscopy, gynaecology and general surgery.

Key features of the second theatre include a renovated endoscopy reprocessing room, sterile stock storage area, dedicated staff write-up space, an expanded recovery area, an eye block anaesthesia area, enhanced staff amenities and cutting-edge medical equipment.

CEO Dale Fraser said Grampians Health was committed to delivering future focused infrastructure to support our healthcare services in the region.

"It's exciting to see the delivery of the second theatre taking place, which will help to deliver care closer to home and meet the needs of the community in the future," Dale said.

"The new theatre will help to reduce wait times for surgeries and help eliminate the need for



Stawell Site Director Sue Campigli, Senior Program Manager Tony Van Eekelen, Operating Theatre Manager Sally Hamilton, Director Capital Projects Stuart Squire and Maintenance Manager Phil Hutton on the site of the second theatre.

many patients to travel outside of Stawell for care.

"Our Capital Projects Director Stuart Squire, Senior Project Manager Tony Van Eekelen and Stawell Operating Theatre Manager Sally Hamilton have all worked closely with healthcare professionals to ensure this new theatre meets the highest standards of quality and safety."

Stawell Site Director Sue Campigli said Grampians Health was extremely pleased to soon be home to a second theatre, enhancing healthcare delivery and patient outcomes.

"I would like to thank my wonderful, hard-working team in helping to make this second theatre a reality for our community. This second theatre is a real win-win for our community," Sue said.

Ms Campigli said the second theatre was expected to be completed in March 2025.

To allow for the construction of the second theatre at Stawell, the first theatre has temporarily closed.

Grampians Health has consulted with local healthcare professionals in the region regarding alternatives during this time and will utilise its theatres at other campuses including Horsham and Ballarat.

Grampians Health understands this may temporarily inconvenience local patients in the short-term. However, we look forward to providing a fully-equipped second operating theatre in Stawell early 2025 which will provide significant patient benefits into the future.

*Grampians Health haematologist
Dr Adam Facey with patient Amanda
Hancock at the clinic in Stawell.*



Haematology clinic opens in Stawell

A new haematology clinic has opened in Stawell, expanding access to specialist care for local communities.

The clinic, which complements a fortnightly service in Horsham, will help patients diagnosed with a blood disorder to access treatment locally and reduces the need for travel to Ballarat or Melbourne.

"The clinic in Stawell, which is a fortnightly service, was established after we identified a local need. Many of our patients in Horsham were traveling from Stawell, so we assessed the demand and started the clinic this year to make care more accessible," said Ben Kelly, Chief Operating Officer.

A haematology clinic is instrumental in diagnosing and treating those with blood disorders and cancers such as leukaemia, myeloma and lymphoma.

The haematology clinic in Stawell will help in providing cancer-related treatments and will address non-cancer blood issues efficiently.

"With the new clinic, patients with bleeding and clotting conditions but do not have cancer, will now receive quicker attention and care. Prior to having this clinic, they would have experienced a longer waiting time but now they will be seen more quickly," said Dr Adam Facey, haematologist at Grampians Health.

"For those diagnosed with cancer, with a haematologist visiting every fortnight, there is now the potential to offer more complex chemotherapy treatments locally."

Ben Kelly said that the opening of the haematology clinic in Stawell was part of Grampians Health's ongoing commitment to making healthcare more accessible to regional communities.

"We are dedicated to ensuring that patients receive the care they need closer to home, which is crucial for their overall well-being," he said.



Avoid mozzie bites this summer!

Warm and wet weather creates ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes. Avoid mozzie bites by following these simple steps:

- Cover up with long, loose-fitting clothing
- Use mosquito repellents containing Picaridin or DEET on all exposed skin
- Mosquito-proof your home and campsite with flyscreens on doors and windows
- Make sure there is no stagnant water around your campsite
- Use 'knockdown' fly spray, mosquito coils or plug-in repellent where you gather to sit or eat outdoors
- Don't forget the kids – always check the insect repellent label. On babies, you could spray or rub repellent on their clothes instead of their skin. Avoid applying repellent to the hands of babies or young children



Site Director and Director of Nursing Sue Campigli with trustees Meg Blake, Kevin Erwin, Graeme Ellen and Theatre Nurse Unit Manager Sally Hamilton with the newly purchased Manual Defibrillator.

Foundation's generous donation to improve patient care

Stawell Hospital Foundation's generous donation of \$30,000 has enabled the purchase of life-saving equipment for the Stawell hospital.

The donation has funded a BladderScan i10 for the Urgent Care Centre and Acute ward, and a Philips Intrepid Heartsmart Manual Defibrillator for the theatre wing, both of which will significantly enhance patient care and outcomes.

An easy-to-use and lightweight device, the Philips Intrepid Heartsmart Manual Defibrillator will make it easier for staff to respond quickly to cardiac emergencies.

"Having a manual defibrillator helps us to further fine tune our response in cardiac

emergencies and improves patient care and outcomes," said Sally Hamilton, Nurse Unit Manager Theatre.

"Being able to administer defibrillation within minutes of a severe cardiac attack has proven to have positive outcomes for patients and we're grateful to the Foundation for this wonderful donation."

Stawell Foundation Chair Graeme Ellen said the Foundation was keen to ensure the local hospital has access to the latest equipment to provide quality care to the community.

"We understand how important these advanced devices are in providing life-saving care to our

community and we're delighted to support our hospital in funding them. I thank each and every community member for their generosity. Your support helps us to fund items that are vital in providing medical care."

"Stawell Hospital Foundation's donations have played a vital role in helping us upgrade our essential equipment over the years and in turn improving health outcomes for the local community," said Chief People Officer, Claire Woods.

"We are forever grateful to the Foundation and all our fundraising groups for their commitment to our organisation."

Falling into friendship

Two Stawell residents have formed an inseparable friendship after sharing a room at Grampians Health Stawell.

In August 2023, Gwen had a fall at home in her loungeroom.

"It was at night and I was plugging my phone into my chair to charge it when I stood up and got my leg caught and I went straight over," Gwen said.

"I rang my son and his wife, and they came around. I was in too much pain for them to touch me so they rang an ambulance and I was taken directly to Wimmera Base Hospital in Horsham.

"The next morning I was transferred to Ballarat where I had a partial hip preplacement.

"After a while I was transferred back to Stawell for my recovery."

In the same month of Gwen's accident, Olive fell while helping with bingo at the Day Centre.

"Someone yelled 'bingo' and I turned around to get a prize. The next thing I'm on the ground and I don't remember what happened," Olive said.

"It turned out I had cracked five ribs and my patella."

Olive was transferred from our Stawell campus to the Ballarat Base Hospital, before returning to Stawell's Simpson Ward.

"They wheeled me into this room. I remember being peeved off because Gwen was already in the room and she had the bed by the window.

"I was thinking oh my goodness I'm going to be stuck with this old bird, we don't know each

other and I'm going to be talking to a curtain ... but it didn't happen that way at all."

Gwen and Olive proved to be both well practiced in the art of conversation and struck up an immediate friendship that amused the nursing staff greatly.

Since returning home from their hospital stay, the friendship has continued as strong as ever.

"Gwen is 10 years older than me but we pretty much do everything together. We don't get tired of one another," Olive said.

"We have plenty of laughs and we keep finding ways to entertain each other."

Olive Karam and Gwen Dunn have formed an inseparable friendship.



Digital Health Skills program to upskill workforce

Grampians Health is rolling out a new pilot program to further enhance digital skills of our clinical, administrative, and digital health information technology staff, ensuring they are well-equipped to navigate the evolving landscape of healthcare technology.

The Digital Health Skills project, which will be delivered in partnership with RMIT and Cisco, is part of the Victorian government's \$4.4 million Skills Solutions Partnerships program that aims to address critical skills shortages with new training courses to help industries upskill and grow their

workforce. Grampians Health's pilot program will seek to advance digital competency of healthcare staff.

In today's rapidly evolving healthcare environment, increasing our digital competency is essential. Healthcare staff need to be proficient with digital tools to provide the highest quality of care, protect patient data, and adapt to new technologies," said Kate Nolan, Chief Information Officer at Grampians Health.

"Grampians Health's Digital Health Skills pilot program ensures our team is ready to meet these challenges head-on, ultimately benefiting our staff, patients and the broader community."



[L-R]: Professor Vishaal Kishore, RMIT-Cisco Health Transformation Lab; Ben Dawson, Cisco Australia & New Zealand; Nithya Solomon, Health Transformation Lab, RMIT; Mohneesh Mahajan and Mel Vasen, Grampians Health; and Marcus Lim, RMIT University.



ARE YOU OUR NEXT
VOLUNTEER?



Grampians Health Stawell are looking for people to volunteer and assist in our hospital and aged care community.

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

Scan the QR Code to find out more or visit grampianshealth.org.au/volunteer



URGENT CARE

What you need to know...



If your condition is serious, or you are experiencing chest pain, you need to call 000 (Triple Zero) for an ambulance.

Grampians Health Stawell has an Urgent Care Centre, staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

Assessment in Urgent Care

Members of the public who present at our Urgent Care Centre will receive a comprehensive assessment by our experienced nursing team. If required, the nurse will work with our on-site doctor or nurse practitioner, available from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm every day, to provide your care.

Outside of these hours, the nursing team are supported by the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED), unless the patient's condition is critical and requires further escalation to the doctor or nurse practitioner on call.

Triage

Community members presenting at our Urgent Care Centre will be assessed based on the severity of their condition, with the most critical cases being prioritised.

Patients with less urgent needs may experience a wait or offered the option to use telehealth services via the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED). The consultation is in real time, with very clear images, and allows patients to ask questions as if they were in the same room as the doctor. This technology supports rural patients by reducing the need for travel and enables faster commencement of treatment.

Fees

Urgent Care Centres are not like Emergency Departments in large hospitals. Fees may apply for some services, including transport or transfer with Ambulance Victoria.

Ambulance Membership

We strongly encourage all community members to hold an Ambulance Victoria Membership (www.ambulance.vic.gov.au/membership/). Having this membership is the only way to ensure your transfer costs are covered. Many private health insurance policies do not include full ambulance cover, please check your level of cover.

If you have a serious medical condition that requires transfer by ambulance to a larger hospital, you will need your Ambulance Victoria Membership. Without this coverage, you will be invoiced for the ambulance fees by Ambulance Victoria.

Non-Urgent Medical Attention

If medical attention is required for a non-urgent condition, patients are encouraged to contact their GP during business hours. Expert health advice can also be sought 24 hours a day from a registered nurse via the Victorian Nurse-on-Call service by phoning 1300 60 60 24.

Nurse-on-Call: 1300 60 60 24

Other Care Options

When you need immediate care, but it isn't life-threatening

Virtual Emergency Department

(Online service - smart phone or computer with camera required)
No appointment necessary | Free service
24 hours, 7 days
Interpreter services available
vved.org.au

Health Direct (Nurse on call)

(Telephone service)
No appointment necessary | Free service
24 hours, 7 days
1300 60 60 24

National Home Doctor (Health Direct)

(Telephone service) After hours GP clinic
Bulk-billed for eligible Medicare card holders | Booking lines open:
6pm weekdays, 12 noon Saturday, all day Sunday and public holidays
13SICK (137 425)

Doctors on Demand

(Online service - smart phone or computer with camera required)
An out-of-pocket fee applies to most appointments.
Book online 24 hours, 7 days
doctorsondemand.com.au

Helplines

- Pregnancy Birth and Baby Hotline 1800 882 436
- Victorian Poisons Information Centre 131 126
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue 1300 224 636
- Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1800 806 292
- Safe Steps Family Violence Centre 1800 015 188
- Rainbow Door (LGBTIQ+) 1800 729 367
- Kids Helpline 1800 551 800
- 13YARN 13 92 76

GPs and Medical Centres

Find your closest medical service at healthdirect.gov.au

Stawell Medical Centre

Co-payment/Appointment required
8am - 5pm, Monday to Friday
Ph: 5358 1410
26 Wimmera Street, Stawell

Patrick Street Family Practice

Co-payment/Appointment required
8am - 6pm, Monday to Friday
Ph: 5358 7555
8-22 Patrick Street, Stawell

Emergency Departments

**For life-threatening emergencies, chest pain or uncertainty
Call Triple Zero (000)**

Your nearest Emergency Department is:

Wimmera Base Hospital

No fee
24 hours, 7 days
Ph: 5381 9111
Access from Baillie Street



Emergency: call Triple Zero (000)
Urgent but not life threatening: see options at top of page
Not urgent: see your regular GP

my.gh.org.au/emergency