



Accessible bus opens up world of adventure

Meaningful Life Coordinator Amanda Post (left) and Campus Manager Tricia McInnes (second from right) show off the accessibility features of Edenhope's new bus to residents Frances, Norma, Marie and Ron.

The arrival of a new accessible bus, equipped with a wheelchair lift, is opening up a world of adventure for Edenhope residents.

The brand new Toyota Coaster bus was delivered early July, replacing a well-worn Yutong model.

Its long-awaited arrival will enable a full calendar of excursions for Day Centre clients and Lakeside Living residents. It will also be used by Edenhope's Murray to Moyne team during their annual cycling event, which raises funds for Edenhope.

For regular users, the shiny new vehicle offers enhanced comfort and technology.

For others, like Lakeside Living resident Marie Colgate, the accessible bus will be life-changing.

"I haven't been out for a trip in a long time, because I couldn't get down the steps of the old bus," Marie said.

"It will be so lovely, to get out and see the sights and enjoy a meal; otherwise, I do feel locked in."

Ron Williams, who will now be able to travel in his wheelchair, has a list of requests for staff members.

"I'll be advocating to go to the flower farm in Miga Lake and maybe have a picnic lunch," he said.

"Now, with the wheelchair lift, I can get on there and have a look around too."

Campus Manager Tricia McInnes said the new bus had been in high demand, since it hit the road.

"This new bus is not just about transporting people around; it's a vehicle for social connection, adventure and well-being.

"It's 100% dedicated to the Edenhope community, ensuring residents stay active, engaged and supported."

Transport Manager Tristan Cooney said his team was proud to assist with delivery of the new vehicle and was excited to see it in use.

How one walk transformed Kirily's life

When Community Health Nurse Cath McDonald started planning a half-marathon event for Edenhope, she was targeting people like Kirily Ryan.

Last year, Kirily said there was "no way" she could walk 21 kilometres. As for running, she hadn't done that in three decades.

Kirily can now be seen running Edenhope's 5.5km Lake Wallace perimeter track three times per week, before sunrise. On alternate days, she walks. It was Cath's challenge that sparked a whole new fitness era.

"She told me to get off my butt and start training for the half-marathon," Kirily said. "I just looked at her and said, 'no way'; I'd never walked that far in my life."

But a seed had been planted. Kirily shared the challenge with her neighbour, Jan, and the pair slowly built up the kilometres.

"We worked our way up, from one lap of the lake, to two, then four," Kirily said. "We have compatible personalities and talked so much that the laps were done before we knew it."

The friends navigated Edenhope's inaugural half-marathon earlier this year, with ease.

"It was a very proud moment, because we actually walked further than the 21km," Kirily said.

The challenge was behind her, but Kirily's life was fundamentally changed.

"I had discovered early morning exercise and I had so much more energy, I was more productive and even my sleep was better," she said. "I wasn't going to stop."

"I was watching a bloke run past every day and thought, 'I reckon I could do that,'" she said. "I'm nearly 50 so it was kind of about proving to myself that I could do it at my age too."

A few weeks in, Kirily was running the full 5.5km loop.

"What I'd say to other people is, just give it a go; nothing's impossible. If I can do it, anyone can do it."

Kirily's love of exercise was what Cath hoped to foster when she came up with the challenge, which required training and commitment.

"People don't realise how capable their bodies are and sometimes we need a concrete challenge to create those life-changing habits," Cath said.

Follow Grampians Health Edenhope on Facebook for details about the 2026 half-marathon event.



When Kirily Ryan (left) and her neighbour Jan completed Edenhope's inaugural half-marathon in March, the pair entered a new fitness era.

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.

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

Like to join our mailing list?

If you'd like to join our community mailing list please send you name, email and postal address through to communications@gh.org.au.

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



*Harrow Bush Nursing Centre Manager Ann Vaughan and Grampians Health Edenhope Campus Manager Tricia McInnes expressed gratitude for the generous donation to local health services.
Photo courtesy Diana Saville.*

A vintage car enthusiast's lasting legacy

A generous bequest from a vintage car enthusiast will enhance health services in Edenhope and Harrow.

All proceeds from an auction of 600 items, including dozens of impressive vintage cars, will be split between Grampians Health Edenhope and Harrow Bush Nursing Centre.

Hundreds of people travelled to Harrow to view the items before an online auction that attracted interest from interstate and overseas.

Competitive bidding ensued, with two vehicles selling for more than \$20,000.

"This collection was such a generous gift to our

local health services, and the lasting legacy is improved health outcomes for our local communities," Chief People Officer Claire Woods said.

"We are extremely grateful for the donation, which will go toward Edenhope projects and equipment that are identified as the greatest need.

"We are also grateful to Harrow Bush Nursing Centre staff, particularly manager Ann Vaughan, for working hard to meet the donor's wishes and carry out a successful auction."

We extend a heartfelt thank you to the family members, staff and volunteers involved.

ARE YOU OUR NEXT VOLUNTEER?

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

Volunteer Drivers

Palliative Care

Community Friendship Program with Lakeside Living

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

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



SCAN HERE





Joey joy for Lakeside Living residents

Hearts were hopping in Lakeside Living's care community when a joey paid a visit to residents.

Naracoorte wildlife carer Kate Roach brought the six-month-old bundle in, drawing a crowd of people vying for a cuddle.

The joey was a pink 200-gram baby when she first took him in, growing to more than 500 grams under Kate's care.

Kate, who has dedicated more than 50 years to voluntary wildlife rescue, shared tips for

responding to injured wildlife and their young.

Meaningful Life Coordinator Amanda Post said the visit brought multipronged benefits to residents.

"Animal therapy is renowned for its sensory benefits, particularly for people living with dementia," she said. "There is also the added benefit of meeting someone new and enjoying that social interaction.

"Also, who wouldn't want to steal a cuddle and kiss from a baby joey?!"

Young lovers' Australia dream comes true

Yvonne and Michael Gomez spoke about moving to Australia when they first met, 17 years ago.

The young students were at nursing college, in the Philippines, when their individual dreams started morphing together.

In the ensuing years the couple got married and moved to Dubai, where they had three children. Life in Dubai was hectic, with Michael working in the Emergency Department, and Yvonne in the Intensive Care Unit.

The cost of living made it difficult to save money so the pair used their annual leave, separately, to complete a one-month bridging course in New Zealand.

An interview with Grampians Health Edenhope followed, and the couple's dream finally came true.

"When we look back on that time, it's been a really long journey," Michael said.

The pair are both working at Lakeside Living and Yvonne's mother has also moved to Edenhope, to help with childcare.

The small rural town has met all of Yvonne's expectations.

"We feel so welcome here, not only in the workplace but also in the community," she said.

Both nurses feel more comfortable working in a slower, more personable environment.

"Ever since I was small, I wanted to become a nurse because my passion is taking care of people," Yvonne said.

"We can spend more time with residents here and take care of them properly. At one stage all of us will need care in hospital or aged care; I treat the residents the same way I would want to be treated."

Michael and Yvonne Gomez have settled into a slower environment.



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 Edenhope on Thursdays from 9:00AM - 12:00PM. They can be contacted on **0403 556 517** or **0475 420 398**.



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

Community Health Exercise Programs

Join Community Health Nurse, Cath McDonald, at one of our weekly community exercise classes.

The Community Exercise Programs cater to all ages and fitness levels.

Classes are a \$3 donation per session.

For more information, visit www.edmh.org.au/exercise-classes or contact Cath on 5585 9845.

Tuesday

- 9:30am: Group Exercise at Apsley RSL
- 11:15am: Group Exercise at Elsie Bennett Community Centre
- 4:00pm: Hatha Yoga at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

Wednesday

- 8:30am: Men Only at Elise Bennett Community Centre
- 10:30am: Lifestyle Program at Elsie Bennett Community Centre
- 4:30pm: Pilates at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

Thursday

- 8:45am: Group Exercise at Elise Bennett Community Centre
- 5:00pm: Yin Yoga at Elsie Bennett Community Centre

Friday

- 8:30am: Men Only at Elise Bennett Community Centre

Lakeside Living residents granted \$47,000 worth of wishes

It was like Christmas in July for residents at Lakeside Living care community, where a series of packages was delivered.

A wish list of items, valued at more than \$47,000, was purchased through a Commonwealth Government Lifestyle and Dining Grant designed for improved dining and activities.

Among the deliveries were a table tennis table, large garden umbrellas, a coffee machine and cart, physiotherapy

machines and a large dementia clock.

Smaller items, including an air-fryer, sandwich press, juicer and glassware, will promote independence and make residents feel more at home.

Nurse Unit Manager Lady Anne Vidal said playing Santa was an exciting, but difficult, role.

"We did have some restrictions, with the companies on our supply list, but we tried to grant as many requests as possible," she said.

"It was a great opportunity to hear from residents what it is they want, to make life a bit brighter or easier."

Resident Ian Smyth was excited to relive his youth with a table tennis bat in hand.

"As a kid, our house was the place to be because we were the only ones with a table," he said.

"All the kids would turn up to play table tennis and I thought I was pretty good too.

"I thought it would be a piece of cake, picking up the bat again, but I'll need a lot of practice."



Help us improve healthcare and bring services closer to home

Can you help us make our community stronger, healthier, and a better place for us all to live?

Donations help us implement innovative projects and improve existing programs to meet the needs of our community.

With your support, we can enhance patient comfort and care, support our healthcare workers, and continue to lead

the way in rural healthcare and collaborate with our community on exciting new developments.

To donate, **scan the QR code** or contact Danielle Grindlay, Engagement Coordinator, on **0409 215 696**.

Donations of \$2 and over are tax-deductible.



Fred embarks on new career at 73

A familiar face has joined the Social Support Day Centre program, with Fred Carberry officially coming out of retirement.

Participants are unlikely to notice the team's expansion, because 73-year-old Fred has been volunteering for Edenhope over many years.

Now employed as a Homecare Worker, Fred will be doing "more of the same" – importantly, Fred's appointment means more participants can join excursions and activities.

Renowned for hosting public events, performing poetry, telling jokes and his musical talent, Fred has strong connections in the wider Edenhope community.

He has also built relationships with day centre clients,

through volunteering as the 'mystery bus tour' driver.

Fred puts a lot of thought into routes, tour guide commentary and song selection, but said the most valuable gains came from clients themselves.

"Once you get 15 or 20 people on a bus, they can't help but interact with each other," he said. "I'll often turn the music down when I can hear the nattering start.

"More than half of clients live alone, so it's about encouraging that social aspect."

When he's not officially on the clock, Fred can be found volunteering for Lakeside Living care facility, running motorsport events or making plans for West Wimmera pistol club.



"I'm a burned-out entertainer who likes to have an audience," he said. "I like talking to people, entertaining people and engaging them in whatever they like."

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.

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 14th 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).

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.

Old face, new role: Matt returns to Apsley after 17 years

It was almost two decades ago that Matt Palliaer bid his rural hometown farewell and embraced city life in Melbourne.

It was a "massive life change" for the then 19-year-old Apsley local, but the return home, last year, was just as unsettling.

"It's taken me a while to adjust back to the country," he said.

"I'm so glad to be back in the community though, this is a fresh start to my life.

"It when I started in the job that I started enjoying it again."

Matt is now working as a Hotel Services Assistant, moving between the acute ward and Lakeside Living.

"I really like this role because in the long-term I can build a career; there are places to go within Grampians Health," he said

"It's not just a job, it's a career path."

For now, Matt is "willing to learn anything" but has found most joy working in the kitchen.

"It's fast-paced in the kitchen and I've learned so much," he said.



Lilly explores a career in caring, through food

It was during a visit to Lakeside Living Care Community, with her class, that Lilly Schapell started thinking about her future.

The 16-year-old Edenhope College student was inspired to pursue a career in caring for aged care residents.

She is now completing work placement in the Edenhope kitchen, which may lead to a school-based apprenticeship in Community Health.

"I'm not all that interested in nursing at the moment, but I really like to cook," Lilly said.

"That's why I thought of this, because it's a way of caring but also doing what I like."

Lilly was introduced to the Care Community through a school project that involved interviewing residents and writing their stories.

"We came down a few times, to meet the residents and ask them questions," she said. "It made me think that I wanted to help in the nursing home."

Although she was in tears on day one, Lilly promised it was solely a reaction to the pile of onions she was cutting.

"Apparently everyone cries when they cut them, so it was fine," she said. "Everyone is really nice, I'm enjoying it."



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.

Contact us

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

Urgent Care

5585 9800

Fully bulk billed medical service 24 Hours, 7 days a week.

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

Acute Care

5585 9800

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

Residential Care

5585 9800

At Lakeside Living we provide, long term and respite care in a beautiful brand new facility overlooking Lake Wallace.

We also have one bedroom independent living units available for rent across the road from the Hospital.

Rural Outreach Program

1300 688 732

A free service. Our team of Outreach Workers can help when times get tough.

Elsie Bennett Community Centre

Social Support 5585 9825
Community exercises 5585 9845
Community Health Nurse 5585 9845

Telehealth

5585 9830

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

Community Services

5585 9800

- Catering
- Laundry services
- Meals On Wheels -through the West Wimmera Shire

Health & Wellbeing Hub

5585 9830

Located in the main street of Edenhope. Services include:

- District Nursing
- Community Care Nurse
- In Home Care
- Post Acute Care
- Physiotherapy
- Diabetes Educator
- Cancer Resource Nurse
- Occupational Therapy
- Social Work
- Rural Outreach Program
- Mental Health Social Support
- Speech Pathology
- Podiatry
- Telehealth

Edenhope Medical Clinic

5585 9888

There is a medical clinic located onsite which is operated by Rural Doctors. Please phone them for an appointment or visit their website.

www.ruraldoctors.com.au



If you have a suggestion or an issue you want to raise, please contact us at feedback@gh.org.au

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

For the full range of services and more detail on accessing the services please visit www.edmh.org.au



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