

Auricle

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Fun facts

Maternity Assessment Unit
2021/2022 financial year



2759 BIRTHS

~**13,400** VISITS TO THE
MATERNITY ASSESSMENT UNIT

~**8000** PHONE CALLS FROM
WOMEN SEEKING ADVICE ON
PREGNANCY AND/OR LABOUR

Records

17 BABIES BORN IN ONE DAY
(DAILY AVERAGE OF 8)

70 MATERNITY ASSESSMENT
UNIT VISITS IN ONE DAY
(DAILY AVERAGE OF 50)

Cover: Cancer patient Alby Rhodes and nurse Paige Williams at the Andrew Love Cancer Centre chemotherapy ward.



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Message from the Chief Executive

This year has seen staff continuing to rise to the challenge, as Barwon Health has responded to times of high demand and workforce shortages.

I'd like to acknowledge the work of each staff member throughout this period, as everyone plays a role in achieving better health outcomes for our community and improving our services. I'm incredibly grateful for all your hard work and commitment, and I know our community values your efforts too, particularly during more difficult times.

In July, we celebrated 30 years of Barwon Health's Andrew Love Cancer Centre. This was a great opportunity to look back at how our community's generosity has been an instrumental part of our Cancer Service's constant growth over three decades. Without the After Cancer Care Group and Barwon Health Foundation, the services and comfort we offer to patients would be very different, as they experience the range of cancer treatments that can be delivered here in Geelong. Thank you to everyone who contributes to making the Andrew Love Cancer Centre a world-class facility.

After consultation with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, we've renamed Building B as the Youang Surgery Centre, which reflects both its views of the region's iconic You Yangs

and the site's focus on surgical services. A surgical recovery ward was recently opened in the Youang Surgery Centre, as part of a move to reduce waiting times for both our elective surgery and Emergency Department care, and it's exciting to see the facility making an impact on the way we deliver services.

We've had several visits from Premier Daniel Andrews in recent months, most notably to tour the children's ward and speak about the new \$500 million commitment for Barwon Women's and Children's. This announcement as part of the May State Budget took us to the next step of the project, with funding for the full scope of the development. Early works are now underway as we prepare Myers House for demolition, with staff relocating to new spaces. The project will be delivered in stages over the coming years and will ultimately provide more capacity including more space for birthing, postnatal care and special care nursery, more paediatric beds, more theatres and expanded specialist clinic consulting areas.

Construction works are also underway for our Early Parenting Centre and the Barwon Health Surf Coast community hospital, while the new 16-bed Mental Health and Wellbeing Centre at the McKellar Centre has completed construction and will begin providing a more welcoming environment to support consumer's acute treatment and recovery from mental illness.

Statistics from our past financial year help demonstrate the scale of the fantastic work happening at Barwon Health, including 75,174 Emergency Department presentations, 2772 babies born, 230,397 outpatient appointments, 104,069 telehealth appointments, 19,554 surgeries, 215,073 COVID-19 tests, and 106,877 COVID-19 vaccinations. Once again, I have to thank everybody across the organisation for being the faces behind these numbers. Your teamwork, resilience and work ethic has been outstanding and I appreciate your ongoing commitment to caring for our community.

Frances Diver | Chief Executive

KEY STATISTICS FROM 2021/22



75,174
EMERGENCY
DEPARTMENT
PRESENTATIONS



79,716
INPATIENT
ADMISSIONS



19,554
OPERATIONS



2,772
BABIES BORN



230,397
OUTPATIENT
APPOINTMENTS



8,377
STAFF
(HEAD COUNT)*



104,069
TELEHEALTH
CONSULTATIONS



379,002
COVID-19 VACCINATION
DOSES (DOSE 1 & 2)



215,073
COVID-19 TESTS



The Lived Experience Network provided valued input to the project team designing the Mental Health Hub under construction in Moorabool Street (artist's render pictured).

LIVED EXPERIENCE TO TRANSFORM MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

A network of volunteers is working together to help adapt and improve Barwon Health's mental health services.

The Lived Experience Network was officially launched in October 2021, and now has 80 members, including people who have received mental health care, treatment for alcohol or other drugs and family members or people who have cared for or supported someone who has used the services.

Some of the group's activities have included:

- Providing input to the project team on the design of the new Central Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub under construction in Moorabool Street
- Giving perspective on the Barwon Health Be Smokefree campaign
- Involvement in the design of the Youth Prevention and Recovery Care (PARC) service

Lived experience consultant Carolyn Flett said after completing the task of building the network, her team was excited to see it making a difference.

"We are incredibly proud of the work we have put in, spending countless hours on the phones, sending many emails and meeting with team leaders and unit managers to explain what it is we do and why we need their support," she said.

"We love what we do and the connections we are making with people. We are so blessed to have been given the responsibility of managing the network.

"With so much going on in the mental health, drug and other alcohol sector at the moment, it is really exciting to be a part of and we cannot wait to see what the next opportunities are for our network members."

Carolyn said feedback had shown members appreciated that their voices were being heard.

"We've heard that they feel respected, they find the process uplifting and inspiring," she said.

"It's been an exciting to observe the group coming together and bonding through their stories."

For more information on joining the network, email mhdaslen@barwonhealth.org.au or call 0435 184 820.

NEW RAPID ACCESS HUB TO REDUCE ELECTIVE SURGERY WAITING TIMES

Barwon Health has welcomed State Government funding for a new specialist procedural hub to help reduce waiting times for elective surgery.

The \$5 million project was funded as part of the Labor Government's COVID Catch-Up Plan, designed to exceed pre-pandemic elective surgery levels by 25 per cent.

Barwon Health director of surgery Simon Williams said the specialist procedural hub at University Hospital Geelong will offer plastics, ear, nose and throat (ENT), and oral maxillofacial procedures.

"This new hub will enable our surgical services to provide an efficient, patient-centred model of care that will utilise a combination of procedural facilities and clinical rooms for suitable patients.

"Targeting a launch next year, the specialist procedural hub will reduce patient waits for elective procedures, and also allow us to transfer patients more quickly from the Emergency Department when they require urgent specialist procedures before being discharged.

"Both planned and unplanned procedures will take place at the hub, which will free up our operating suite for more major surgeries.

"We look forward to opening the hub, which will run alongside other initiatives in place to reduce the elective surgery times."



NURSE ANNIE CLOCKS OFF AFTER 48 YEARS

Barwon Health nurse Annie Sproules has hung up her scrubs after almost five decades at University Hospital Geelong.

The RAPU (Rapid Assessment and Planning Unit) nurse joined the hospital as a student nurse on 3 June 1974 and for 32 years worked the night shift around various sections of the hospital, including medical, surgical and respiratory wards.

"I was aiming for 50 years, but the rigors of the work mean it's time for me to go after 48 years," she said.

"I've been here longer than any of the hospital buildings, bar Kardinia House."

Nursing and caring for people runs through Annie's family. Her grandmother was the first bush nurse in the Otways, her mother and sister are nurses, while eight nieces and nephews are now working in healthcare as paramedics or nurses.

Staff who worked with Annie will miss her leadership, experience and sense of humour on the job, and Barwon Health wishes her the best in retirement.

Pictured: RAPU nurse Annie Sproules was farewelled by colleagues after 48 years with Barwon Health.

HEALTHY PLANET, HEALTHY PEOPLE

Barwon Health has joined a global effort to improve public health by reducing environmental impacts.

Barwon Health recently signed up to the Global Green and Hospitals (GGHH) movement, an international group of healthcare providers that recognises that environmental damage is a significant cause of ill-health around the world through pollution, climate change and unsustainable resource use.



Members of the GGHH network attempt to address the healthcare system's contributions to negative environmental impacts, often caused through intensive energy use, water use and waste generation.

Barwon Health's regional environmental sustainability manager Kylie McIntyre said GGHH provided the organisation with helpful tools and information to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve waste management.

"Joining Global Green and Healthy Hospitals connects us to colleagues and experts from around the globe," she said.

"We are joining more than 1500 other members in 76 countries, representing more than 60,000 hospitals and health centres, all aiming to reduce the environmental impact of their services.

"Our areas of focus initially are energy and leadership and our Environmental Management Plan will put in place a number of strategies to achieve improvements in these and other areas of environmental performance."

Barwon Health consultant paediatrician and medical lead for sustainability Dr Mike Forrester said Barwon Health would be part of the global effort to deliver high-quality, carbon zero healthcare by 2040.

"This year, Barwon Health will be the first Victorian hospital to enter a renewable purchase payment agreement that will offset 70 per cent off of energy with renewables."

"The remaining 70 per cent of our footprint is from procurement chains, waste, food, and pharmaceuticals.

"The input and creativity of everyone in the organisation will help us reach the challenge of transitioning to net zero and providing healthcare in a way that does not harm future generations."

Barwon Health has partnered with Deakin University to develop a decarbonisation plan, which can be viewed on the Barwon Health website.



Andrew Love Cancer Centre turns 30

Barwon Health celebrated the 30-year milestone of the Andrew Love Cancer Centre in July. Thanks to community fundraising from groups including the Cancer After Care Group Geelong and the Barwon Health Foundation, the facility now offers a range of world-class services including chemotherapy, radiotherapy, clinical trials, wellness lounge support, and pharmacy.

1978

The Cancer After Care Geelong Group was formed, and soon began raising funds to bring radiotherapy services to the Geelong community.

1992

Premier Joan Kirner opened the Andrew Love Cancer Centre (ALCC) on 5 July 1992, as Victoria's first regional cancer centre. Radiation therapy services began with two treatment machines and seven radiation therapists, servicing the Barwon South West region, including Ballarat and Warrnambool. For 10 years, a bus would arrive full of Ballarat patients, departing once they had their treatment.

1997

In 1997, the centre began hosting clinical trials, with roughly 3000 patients recruited to about 300 research trials in 25 years.

2003

The first autologous stem cell transplant performed in Geelong, with 40 to 50 transplants now undertaken annually in Geelong.



DID YOU KNOW?

Andrew Love was the first minister of the Presbyterian Church in Geelong in 1840.

- In 24 years, he was estimated to perform more than 4000 marriages.
- Andrew Love left Glasgow, Scotland, to move to Melbourne on a ship that was destroyed by fire on its next Australian voyage.
- He was a trustee and donor to the Geelong Infirmary and Benevolent Asylum, which later became The Geelong Hospital, and is now known as University Hospital Geelong.

CANCER AFTER CARE GROUP GEELONG – 44 YEARS OF CARING

As Barwon Health celebrates the Andrew Love Cancer Centre’s 30th anniversary, members of the Cancer After Care Group Geelong are reflecting on the years of fundraising that made the milestone possible.

The group was formed in 1978 through a classified in the Geelong Advertiser, aiming to provide a meeting place for cancer patients and their families to support each other and discuss their experiences.

The group soon turned its focus to providing transport for patients traveling to Melbourne for treatment, before fundraising to bring additional cancer services to Geelong.

Cancer After Care Group Geelong spokesperson Libby Bate said she was proud to be part of the group that helped make the Andrew Love Cancer Centre a reality.

“It’s very rewarding to support Barwon Health and we’re so lucky to have first-class facilities in Geelong at a public hospital, where they’re available for everyone,” she said.

“Once the facility was there, we’ve been very active in making sure it has access to the equipment that government funds can’t always provide.

“We like to make sure they’re very well-equipped through our fundraising efforts.

“I don’t think there’s a single family out there that hasn’t been touched by cancer, and we live in a wonderful, generous community that wants the best.”

The group’s secretary, the late-Betty Lawrie, was particularly instrumental in fundraising, known for writing tirelessly to politicians and media throughout the 14-year lobbying process that led to the Andrew Love Cancer Centre’s construction.

Over the years the group has also continued supporting the Andrew Love Cancer Centre, providing the funds for a second Linear Accelerator, a research assistant and the funds for RapidArc Therapy along with a large number of other pieces of equipment.



The Varian trueBEAM Linear Accelerator was installed in 2018, cutting radiation therapy treatment times in half.

2010

Barwon Health was the first radiotherapy department in Victoria to implement volumetric modulated arc therapy (VMAT), which allows for a much quicker treatment delivery.

2015

In 2015, stereotactic radiotherapy was first performed at Barwon Health’s Andrew Love Cancer Centre, which uses special equipment to position the patient and precisely deliver radiation to smaller tumours at a much higher dose. This results in less visits for patients, compared to some common regime.

2019

Project Love was completed, which saw the construction of a new Chemotherapy Day Ward and the Allerton Family Oncology Pharmacy within the Andrew Love Cancer Centre. More than 6000 patients have chemotherapy each year, with all chemotherapy drugs made by the on-site pharmacy.

2022

Approximately 30,000 outpatients take place in the Andrew Love Cancer Centre each year. Radiation therapy services have expanded to three treatment machines, 21 radiation therapists and treating more than 1000 patients a year.

Opposite: Chemotherapy patient Alby Rhodes and cancer nurse Paige Williams at the Andrew Love Cancer Centre chemotherapy day ward.



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

HOW WE REACHED 30 YEARS OF CANCER TREATMENT AND WHAT'S NEXT?

In July, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the opening of Barwon Health's Andrew Love Cancer Centre, a milestone event in the overall development of cancer treatment in Geelong. This occasion provided us with an opportunity to reflect on the achievements made in this time and what the future will bring, as cancer therapeutics moves into an exciting era of innovative precision medicine.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PHILIP CAMPBELL | BARWON HEALTH DIRECTOR OF CANCER SERVICES

As the Director of Cancer Services, I am enormously proud of all of our staff, both past and present, who have provided and continue to provide, world-class care to our patients that is recognised internationally.

Prior to July 1992, the patient experience following a cancer diagnosis in Geelong, was very different to what it is today. For some patients, it often meant travelling to Melbourne for critical radiotherapy treatment, at a time when many people find it difficult to travel far from home. This all changed with the opening of Barwon Health's Andrew Love Cancer Centre, an event long-awaited by our community, as well as the multiple support groups who

lobbied tirelessly to bring radiation therapy to Geelong. In particular, it is important to highlight the role of the Cancer After Care Group Geelong, which has been raising funds for cancer treatment since it was founded in 1978. The group has contributed an astonishing \$4 million towards cancer services over these years, working hard to make the vision of the Andrew Love Cancer Centre a reality. The Cancer After Care Group represented patients, family members, carers and Barwon Health staff, all of whom understood the toll it took on patients and carers commuting to Melbourne. At the time, patients often faced the difficult decision of travelling when physically frail,

in order to access radiotherapy, or forgoing radiation therapy altogether, potentially compromising the overall success of their treatment. Equitable access to radiation therapy became a reality with the opening of the Andrew Love Cancer Centre and we are eternally grateful to all those people who made this possible.

Over the years, Cancer Services at Barwon Health has been delivering world-class care to patients in Geelong and more broadly across south-west regional Victoria. Cancer Registry data demonstrates a steady improvement in outcomes during this time for our patients, with more patients receiving timely access to potentially lifesaving therapy.

Our Cancer Services Trials Unit (CSTU) has been in operation for the past 25 years, recruiting approximately 3000 patients to clinical trials, investigating many new therapies

Whilst it is very pleasing to see this improving trend in overall survival, there is more work to be done however. The data continues to reveal a disparity between cancer outcomes in regional and remote communities, when compared to metropolitan centres. The establishment of large, regional comprehensive cancer centres such as our own Andrew Love Cancer Centre, helps to address this outcome gap, through the local provision of more complex care and access to new treatments in the form of clinical trials. The local availability of medical oncology, haematology, and radiation oncology services, provides greater equity of access to care without the need to travel to Melbourne. Our Cancer Services Trials Unit (CSTU) has been in operation for the past 25 years, recruiting approximately 3000 patients to clinical trials investigating many new therapies that have ultimately become the current standard of care for our patients, and fully reimbursed through Medicare. Cancer Services at Barwon Health will continue to grow and develop our clinical trials portfolio, providing our community with access to state of the art cancer treatment, building on Barwon Health's Strategic Plan for Research and the integration of research into our service delivery.

Cancer treatment is evolving incredibly rapidly and is almost unrecognisable from 30 years ago. Whilst surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy still have an important role to play, personalised therapy is increasingly becoming a reality for our patients, with cancer therapy determined by the underlying genetic and biological drivers of the disease

rather than tissue of origin itself. Researchers are developing more effective treatments using small molecule inhibitors of tumours that are associated with less side effects than conventional chemotherapy. Targeting tumours through the use of immunotherapy has also become the standard of care for many different types of cancer. Perhaps even more exciting is the emerging use of 'T-cell' therapy, where the patient's own immune cells are extracted, genetically modified to recognise and kill their cancer cells, and returned to the patient provide lasting immunity against their cancer. Refinements in radiation therapy enable our radiation oncologists to treat tumours more accurately, limiting damage to surrounding normal tissue. A decade from now, when we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Andrew Love Cancer Centre, it's very likely that few of our patients will be receiving conventional chemotherapy. Instead, most of our cancer patients will more than likely be receiving immunotherapy or targeted therapy, which are more effective and less toxic to the patient.

Many people who remember the Andrew Love Cancer Centre when it opened 30 years ago, would hardly recognise it now, thanks to the significant contribution our community has made to improve the facility.

We are now able to treat more patients, run many more clinical trials, and offer greater expertise and complex care, involving highly trained specialist staff right across University Hospital Geelong. In that regard, it is important to acknowledge the many teams and departments across Barwon Health that play a key role in the provision of care to our cancer patients. Our Wellness Lounge epitomises our commitment to patient-centred care, running a number of programs for our patients, all designed to optimise their experience of our service throughout their journey. Many of these programs would not have been made, possible without the generous donations from the Barwon Health Foundation, enabling us to offer complementary therapies alongside our traditional medical treatments. Cancer Services is looking forward to continuing this positive relationship with our donors for many years to come. There is so much to be excited about as our cancer service moves forward to meet the needs of our community, and the Andrew Love Cancer Centre continues to be the focus for future innovations in cancer treatment, in its fourth decade of existence.

Associate Professor Philip Campbell.

Vision becomes a reality for kids' rehab centre

The \$3.6 million state-of-the-art paediatric rehabilitation facility at the McKellar Centre was officially opened in April.

Bendigo Bank House, home to McKellar Kids' Rehab, was funded entirely by the Barwon Health Foundation Kids Appeal through community donations.

In 2016, the team from McKellar Kids' Rehab approached local community fundraising group Our Women Our Children Volunteers with a project designed to support local kids recovering from injury or learning to live with a disability. This initial idea of a therapy garden developed into a much bigger project, with thanks to naming rights partner, Bendigo Bank joining with Our Women Our Children Volunteers, and more than 2000 donors who collectively have made the dream for a new home for the McKellar Kids' Rehab service a reality.

The McKellar Kids' rehab team, now located in the new Bendigo Bank House, provides specialist rehabilitation services for young people aged 0-25 who have sustained a traumatic brain injury, spinal injury, stroke or who require treatment after cancer or for other conditions such as cerebral palsy.

McKellar Kids' Rehab clinician Dr Therese Clark said the opening of Bendigo Bank House was a culmination of five years of community support, both in fundraising for the build and working with young patients and their families to design the space.

"To make sure that this new centre was just right for kids, our team spent time asking young people what they wanted," Therese said.

"Children and young people are not 'little adults' so it was important to really understand what they thought this centre needed.



Sandra McLaglen, her grandson Braxton, and McKellar Kids' Rehab co-ordinator Therese Clark at the official opening of Bendigo Bank House.

"What we've ended up with is a light-filled, welcoming space that is child-friendly and sparks their creativity and imagination and we are so proud of the end result."

One family that has been there from the beginning is Braxton and his grandmother Sandra McLaglen, who are excited to see Bendigo Bank House come to life.

"Braxton has been a client for five-and-a-half years and both Braxton and I have been involved in the fundraising and consumer consultation since the beginning," Sandra said.

"It is really exciting walking into the building to see the space come to life, after passionately supporting the Kids Appeal and the co-design process for many years.

"We're continually thankful for the support of Braxton's therapy team and we're glad he can continue his journey in this new facility."

Barwon Health Foundation board chair Dan Simmonds thanked the community and major donors for their support in making this dream a reality.

"Once again, the generosity of Greater Geelong has shone through. The Barwon Health Foundation is grateful to every single person who made a donation, purchased an auction item, attended an event, or put a coin in a tin in support of the Kids Appeal since it began in 2017 – this wouldn't have been possible without collective community support," Dan said.

"We are also very appreciative of all the Kids Appeal major partners who shared our belief that Geelong children deserve the very best; Bendigo Bank, Our Women Our Children Volunteers, Cotton On Foundation and The Gwyneth Raymond Trust."

Youang Surgery Centre to cut patient waiting times

New refurbishments at University Hospital Geelong's Youang Surgery Centre have added 40 beds, which will improve waiting times for Barwon Health's emergency and surgical services.

As part of a plan to increase elective surgery, overnight patients have returned to the site for the first time since the Geelong Private Hospital closed in 2018.

Formerly known as Building B, the site has been renamed as the Youang Surgery Centre, in consultation with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation. The new name was chosen to encapsulate the facility's views of the iconic You Yangs across Corio Bay.

A surgical short stay ward has opened for admissions up to 48 hours, while Barwon Health's Rapid Assessment and Planning Unit (RAPU) relocated to the Youang Surgery Centre.

Including the Youang Surgery Centre refurbishments that were completed last year, there are now four operating theatres,

24 short stay surgical beds, 16 RAPU beds, 13 specialist consulting rooms, and 140 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff.

Barwon Health chief executive Frances Diver said the changes would allow for additional surgeries, with extra staff also assisting the effort to reduce the elective waiting times that increased during COVID-related restrictions.

"By moving RAPU and opening the short stay surgical ward, we're able to make way for extra surgical and medical beds, which has a flow-on effect to create more capacity throughout the hospital," she said.

"We are addressing the demand for elective surgery by activating the Youang Surgery Centre for approximately 5500 theatre procedures and 10,000 outpatient appointments each year.

"This is the first time overnight patients have been admitted to the Youang Surgery Centre since the site was occupied by the former Geelong Private Hospital, and it's taken a lot of innovative planning to refurbish the rooms for this purpose.

"The Youang Surgery Centre's foundation as a medical facility and its location within the University Hospital Geelong precinct have made it a key part of our plans to increase and improve our services."



Youang Surgery Centre NUM Elaine Hocking.

NEW MEDICAL IMAGING SERVICE FOR THE COLAC COMMUNITY

Barwon Health has expanded its medical imaging services in a partnership with Colac Area Health.



BMI operations manager Yasmin Verbunt.

Starting in April, Barwon Medical Imaging has provided services from Colac Area Health in Connor Street, to support hospital inpatients including the Colac Urgent Care Centre and community-based clinicians.

The new service benefits the Colac community with enhanced access to expert imaging and reporting, with no-out-of-pocket costs for all Medicare reimbursable imaging.

Before the move, an average of 18 Colac patients were travelling to Geelong for bulk-billed medical imaging, such as X-ray, ultrasound and CT.

With expert radiologists and Barwon Health's medical imaging staff working locally, the same high-quality and accessible service offered in Geelong will now be available in Colac. This will provide an integrated service with a smooth transition for any patients that may need a referral to University Hospital Geelong.

BMI operations manager Yasmin Verbunt said staff were excited to be partnering with Colac Area Health in the provision of high quality and accessible services for the community.

"There will be a smooth transition for patients between Colac and Geelong, offering a seamless transfer of information and continuity of care between Colac Area Health and Barwon Health," she said.

"Barwon Health is committed to consistently delivering quality and expert care across our imaging sites, providing equitable access and improving health outcomes for all.

"Our vision is to provide an accessible, integrated and comprehensive imaging service for the Colac Otway region."



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

THE BIRTH OF A NEW ERA FOR WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S HEALTH

As you look around Geelong and its surrounding suburbs, it's clear that our community is growing fast. A close look at Barwon Health's maternity services shows a very tangible side of this population growth, with approximately 2800 births in the recent financial year compared to 2400 just six years ago.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DAVE FULLER | CLINICAL DIRECTOR, WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S DIRECTORATE

This increasing demand for maternity services means we are quickly outgrowing the current facilities at University Hospital Geelong. The new Barwon Women's and Children's project now has more than \$500 million of committed funding and Barwon Health is deep into the process of preparing the University Hospital Geelong precinct for this major healthcare infrastructure project.

Our goal is to deliver high-quality care closer to home for as many people as possible, and Barwon Women's and Children's will

greatly assist in this process by giving us new opportunities to provide care in Geelong. With a future focus, we will build and develop a service that will serve families across the Barwon South West region for decades to come.

This development also offers an important avenue to think long-term about the future of healthcare for women and children in regional Victoria. Specialist clinics and tailored services here in Geelong will allow families to access the care they need closer to home, without worrying about traveling to Melbourne.

With early works beginning later this year, the new facilities will transform the University Hospital Geelong precinct. Locating the facilities on the existing University Hospital Geelong site means a seamless transition between other acute services in the hospital, including the Emergency Department, Intensive Care Unit and operating theatres. Incorporating environmental sustainability into our design and building are a priority for the project. We're excited to be able to involve consumers



Associate Professor Dave Fuller.

A first-class facility like Barwon Women's and Children's will help realise our commitment to train and recruit medical, nursing, midwifery and allied health staff within the region.

in the design, including Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, and more broadly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. This will help ensure that our service model meets the diverse needs of our community.

Barwon Women's and Children's will work in tandem with developments in other areas of our health service, including Barwon Health North, a new community hospital in Torquay (Barwon Health Surf Coast), the new Early Parenting Centre at the McKellar Centre, and a new children's emergency department at University Hospital Geelong. This will offer a broader, more integrated range of services in our community, which means we can tailor our care to the specific needs of each family.

We have already started expanding services with new developments, such as our maternal fetal medicine service and paediatric specialist clinics. The new

Barwon Women's and Children's facilities will allow us to further expand these and other services, such as couplet care in the Neonatal Care Unit, where mothers and babies can receive care in the same room.

A first-class facility like Barwon Women's and Children's will help realise our commitment to train and recruit medical, nursing, midwifery and allied health staff within the region, growing the workforce of the future and attracting skilled staff to move to Geelong.

There are exciting times ahead for Barwon Health and for this project. There is a real enthusiasm among our staff, and we know the community shares that same interest in watching our services evolve to provide the best possible care for our women and children.

PROGRESS MADE ON EARLY PARENTING CENTRE AT MCKELLAR

New parents in Geelong will soon have greater access to early parenting support with construction underway at the site of Barwon Health's Early Parenting Centre.

The centre will provide parents and carers with the advice and care they need in the early years, including support with sleep and settling, feeding and extra care for babies and toddlers with additional needs.

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews attended a sod-turning event in September, as work began on the multi-million dollar facility.

Barwon Health chief executive said the build was one of several exciting projects expanding services on offer at the McKellar Centre.

"This much-needed centre will provide support for hundreds of families in Geelong and the Barwon South West region, reducing the need to travel to Melbourne," she said.

"We know the first four years can be particularly challenging for families; this centre will provide a holistic approach to common concerns in the early years."

The centre is expected to be completed in 2024.

The centre will be operated in partnership with Tweedle Child & Family Health Service.



Barwon Health Board chair Brian Cook, Premier Daniel Andrews, Member for Lara John Eren and Member for Geelong Christine Couzens at the EPC sod-turning in September.

Major funding for Barwon Women's and Children's

Barwon Health's women's and children's services, including maternity, will be transformed through a State Government funding commitment of more than \$500 million announced for the Barwon Women's and Children's project.



Premier Dan Andrews talks with children's ward nurse unit manager Sandra van Roon during his announcement visit.

The new Barwon Women's and Children's will provide world-class maternity and paediatric facilities and deliver additional capacity to ensure families in Geelong and surrounding communities can continue to access the very best care, close to home.

The new facilities will be built within the University Hospital Geelong precinct and will provide a new children's inpatient unit, new neonatal and patient care unit, specialist (outpatient) clinics and more operating theatres.

The project will create additional capacity to meet demand with the following improvements:

- Additional maternity inpatient beds;
- Additional paediatric multi-day/same day inpatient beds;
- Additional special care nursery cots;
- Additional birth suites;
- Additional operating theatres; and
- Expanded paediatric and maternity outpatient facilities.

This announcement included \$100 million State Government election commitment in 2018, and a \$50 million Commonwealth Government contribution.

Premier Daniel Andrews visited University Hospital Geelong in June and said the project, which will provide maternity and paediatric services, was full steam ahead.

"Having better health and hospital services for women in the local area will provide great comfort and security for Geelong families," Mr Andrews said.

"This is a massive project, one of the biggest health projects in regional Australia.

Chief executive Frances Diver said it was an exciting time for our staff and the broader Geelong community as we begin the largest infrastructure project in Barwon Health's history.

"Barwon Women's and Children's will support the delivery of integrated healthcare that is family friendly, culturally safe, best practice, safe, high-quality, and accessible.

"This facility will enable Barwon Health to meet growing demands and the changing needs and expectations of the G21 and Barwon South West communities.

"The Women's and Children's project will support the modernisation of University Hospital Geelong facilities to meet the needs of the community into the future, and marks a huge leap forward in the future of healthcare in our region."

"This is a massive project, one of the biggest health projects in regional Australia." – Premier Dan Andrews

This project complements the other infrastructure initiatives underway to increase access to surgery and provide more comprehensive services, including mental health, the early parenting centre and Barwon Health Surfcoast (Torquay Community Hospital).

HARP patient Jai returns to learn

A former patient of Barwon Health's Hospital Admission Risk Program (HARP) has returned for a six-week placement with the team that inspired his career in healthcare.



HARP intern Jai Roberts.

Jai Roberts was treated in 2015 with chronic heart failure and found himself in line for a heart transplant, under the close eye of the HARP team that helped manage his condition.

Thanks to Barwon Health staff, including cardiologist Professor John Amerena, Jai said he was able to turn his life around and improve his health enough to avoid the transplant.

Inspired by his treatment and care, Jai is now at the end of his studies at the Gordon Institute of TAFE, undertaking a diploma in community studies – case management.

"I realised how much I wanted to be able to help others," he said.

"I have recently been doing one day a week in the Heart Failure Clinic with Prof Amerena and have also agreed to volunteer one day a week with Odyssey House.

"I initially started the course with an interest in counselling and really just wanted to get involved with helping others in whatever way I could.

"However, my end goal was always to get involved with a program like HARP, so to be given this opportunity doing my placement here is extremely exciting and I am incredibly grateful."

Jai said while his study had sparked interest in disability, AOD, mental health and Indigenous health, his passion is to work with chronic illness and the elderly.

"I always had in my head to focus on heart failure because of my lived experience, but after learning so much more about different sectors in my studies, I am now open to whatever lies ahead.

"After completing my studies, I am hoping to work in a program such as HARP, be it volunteering or employed.

"I'm really looking forward to the next chapter in my life and being able to help others.

"I want to thank everyone involved for giving me this opportunity and gain such valuable experience."

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP TO CLOSE MENTAL HEALTH GAPS

A new mental health consortium will bring local agencies together to bridge gaps that have impacted access to timely support in the Geelong community.

A partnership between Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative, Wellways, ermha365 and Barwon Health will deliver the new Greater Geelong and Borough of Queenscliffe local mental health and wellbeing service.

The Geelong Mental Health and Wellbeing Local will improve access and tailored delivery of mental health care for adults 26 and over in the Geelong region. Launching by the end of 2022, it will offer integrated wellbeing, mental health, alcohol and drugs services, providing a range of wellbeing supports, education, peer support, self-help opportunities and clinical treatment and therapies.

When fully implemented, the service will deliver approximately 40,000 additional hours of wellbeing and clinical and services to our local community each year. Additional funding over the next three years will total \$29 million.

Barwon Health clinical director of Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol Services, Professor Steven Moylan said the partnership model was underpinned by positivity, hope and inclusion.

"This is a great example of building something new from the ground up that will cater to a new way of doing things. People will be able to find the support they need, when they need it.

"People will be able to access services in the way that they prefer - our digital platforms and contact centre will be setup to warmly assist people to access information and support, before they are connected to a person with lived experience who can help guide them through every step of their care journey.



The Geelong Mental Health and Wellbeing Local brings together four support services under one roof.

"Our organisations have long-standing reputations for collaborating with other healthcare providers and regional organisations to support consumer recovery outcomes. We will leverage these relationships to support earlier intervention and respond to the diverse needs of our community.

"We will continuously evaluate, learn and improve this service, and will share our learnings with others as this key component of system reforms is rolled out across Victoria."



The gift of life

Jason Nelson is calling for people in the community to donate blood to support patients who need blood transfusions, pictured with a photo wall of his loved ones in his hospital room.

Newtown plumber and haematology patient Jason Nelson is urging the community to give the gift of life by donating blood.

Staff working in Baxter 6 Oncology Haematology and the Andrew Love Cancer Centre manage blood and blood products on a daily basis for their patients, as part of cancer treatment and treatment of blood disorders.

Blood transfusions are critical for patients like Jason who are undergoing cancer treatment for blood cancers, such as acute myeloid leukaemia (AML).

On 13 May, Jason was diagnosed with AML, a rare and aggressive cancer that requires blood transfusions along with chemotherapy treatments, due to effects on blood and bone marrow.

After three rounds of chemotherapy in two months, Jason said he had received 14 blood transfusions, as well as four bags of platelets, to keep him going.

"Blood donations have been really critical for me because the chemo destroys my blood count, so they need to top up my red blood cells and platelets," he said.

"We know the state is struggling with blood supplies and it's a gift of life, something that you can give and save someone's life.

"From day one, my brother-in-law has been passionate about blood donation and set up a Lifeblood group in my name that has got a lot of attraction. We had over 60 first-time donors join our group 'Team Long Live Jase Nelson', and we reached no.1 in the country for all blood groups.

"I've got a lot of people signed up to give from all over the country, after reading my story, which is wonderful.

"I think people find it confronting how quickly it's happened to me, as a fit and healthy plumber who's only 52-years-old, with a wife and kids. The last time sick with more than two days off work was 2007."

Jason described his treatment at Barwon Health's haematology ward as "extraordinary".

"I've never met 80 people so dedicated and switched on to what they're doing, it's just amazing. Everybody is on exactly same wave length – from cleaning staff to doctors, they're there to help."

In Australia, more than 30,000 blood and plasma donations are required weekly and treatment for cancer and blood diseases accounts for around 34 per cent of the need.

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood provides life-giving blood, plasma, transplantation and biological products for world-leading health outcomes.

Barwon Health is a proud supporter of the annual Australian Red Cross Lifeblood Health Service Blood Drive and this year Barwon Health was the most generous health service in Victoria, with 177 donations, saving around 531 lives.

To donate blood, visit lifeblood.com.au.

NEW HOME FOR VACCINATION TEAM

Staff at the Community Vaccination Hub in Norlane have found a new home for vaccination in Geelong.

The team packed up and relocated to Belmont in May, as vaccination dose numbers continued to decline with most of the community vaccinated.

Located in the former civic function centre at the rear of the Belmont Community Health Centre, the Barwon Health Vaccination Centre in Belmont has expanded its vaccination program to include COVID-19.

Co-director of the Barwon South West Public Health Unit Deb Kay said the move was an indication on how far the community had come in the fight against COVID-19.

"Our community has responded very well to COVID-19 vaccinations, meaning there is only a very small group of people in the region currently unvaccinated," she said.

"Our immunisation team has been offering childhood immunisations and flu vaccinations here for a number of years so it is a natural progression for our COVID-19 vaccination team to make the move to bring vaccinations together in one location.

"We are excited to move to a smaller venue, as it means vaccination rates in our region are exceptional and our community has come together to protect each other and get vaccinated.

"I'm so proud of our staff that have been part of a historic vaccination rollout. We have all worked together to support each other throughout the past 12 months."



Administration worker Trish Mant, nurse immunisers Kerri Bayne and Sarah Crook, and Barwon Health Immunisation Service clinical coordinator Fran Zygmunt at the new vaccination hub in Belmont.

32 years of support for Sinko



Michael Sinko at Settlement Road.

The wife of long-time Social Support Program (SSP) client Michael Sinkinson has paid tribute to the service after 32 years of life-changing care.

Liz Sinkinson wrote a letter to SSP staff as Michael recently moved into permanent care, ending 32 years of therapy sessions and social support at the 120 Settlement Road site in Belmont.

After a major stroke in 1989, Michael first attended the Belmont SSP in 1990 while his children attended secondary school and Liz went to work. At that time, the site was an outpatient/respite facility combined in one building, staffed by a nursing sister-in-charge with on-site physiotherapists, occupation and speech therapists, craft and activities staff along with kitchen staff.

Liz said Michael had received immeasurable benefits from attending over the years, both physically and socially.

"It was such a happy place," she said. "Michael's day was filled with these allied staff sessions interspersed with lots of social interaction, activities and outings.

"He loved his days there. I think he felt a little important, maybe because he was much younger than most clients and attended daily. He soon got back a lot of his confidence and outgoing, cheeky ways.

"He progressed so well, became physically much stronger and eventually was able to walk completely unassisted other than with his walking stick. He became self-sufficient with his personal care, including his showering, and he would even do the dishes, hang out the washing, help bring the groceries in from the car, and he loved going to see his mighty Cats at home and away.

"All of this was made possible by the intense therapy sessions he received at the day centre. He learnt how to communicate quite well with family and close friends and he happily did his best in many group discussions and social occasions at Belmont."

Liz said the benefits extended beyond Michael's own improvements, as the treatment allowed their whole family to experience a normal life with regular routines.

"From the moment he was collected until he was returned home, he was in the care of professional and caring staff who provided him with so much encouragement and support so that he eventually reached his maximum capabilities," she said.

"We have so far managed for 32 years and when I think back to the way he was in December 1989, he has shown incredible endurance, perseverance and acceptance of his fate in life and has made the most of the assistance offered to him. So much of his recovery is due to the wonderful Belmont staff and facilities.

"I am extremely grateful for all that the day centre and respite staff have done for him and our family over so many years. The best testament to your programs is that in the 32 years he attended, he never once said he didn't want to go."



CLINICAL TRIALS

ADRIAN COSTA CLINICAL TRIALS CENTRE

Barwon Health's Clinical Trial Unit (CTU) was established more than 20 years ago and now runs between 10 and 20 research trials every year at the Adrian Costa Clinical Trials Centre.

Located at the Geelong Private Medical Centre on Little Ryrie Street, the Adrian Costa Clinical Trials Centre is a key part of Barwon Health's strategy to embed research excellence into every aspect of clinical care, and with 18 active trials across the team of four registered nurses and a medical scientist, the CTU covers a broad range of therapeutic areas, including a high focus on infectious diseases, vaccines, endocrinology / diabetes, obesity and paediatrics.

Barwon Health research director Professor Peter Vuillermin said a thriving clinical trials program improves the overall standard of medical care by expediting the uptake of evidence into practice and increased adherence with evidence-informed care.

"The generous financial support of the Costa Family enabled Barwon Health to establish the ACCTC," he said.

"The ACCTC is the overarching system and infrastructure that supports clinical trials



The Clinical Trials Unit.

activity at Barwon Health, with which each of our clinical trials teams is affiliated."

CTU manager Bree Sarah said the team's broad range of skills allowed them to manage a diverse range of research and therapeutic areas, engaging with an average of 150 participants each year.

"Our trial unit has been instrumental in our contribution to the Novavax COVID vaccine approval, with 69 participants recruited in one week to meet the global targets and timelines required to have these vaccines approved for the community," she said.

"This year, Novavax again reached out to the CTU to be involved in the development of their new vaccine, which contains the

COVID omicron variant. This trial is currently underway and more Novavax trials are in the pipeline for 2023.

"We've also played a pivotal role in Pfizer COVID and flu vaccine trials, as well as several respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine trials."

She said nurses Kate Ellis and Jo Chambers had successfully completed their immunisation certificates, which has been a key factor in allowing the CTU to assist in the increasing number of vaccine trials since the COVID pandemic.

"Amongst the other trials, we are looking at vaccines to prevent cytomegalovirus (CMV), staph skin infections and urinary tract infections (UTIs).

"Last November, the unit was involved in a three-day Good Clinical Practice (GCP) Audit performed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), which saw us receive the highest level of compliance achievable.

"That was an outstanding achievement for the CTU team and Barwon Health, and we're very pleased with the way the community gets involved in the trials we recruit for."

For more information on the trials that the unit is currently recruiting for, please refer www.barwonhealth.org.au/research/clinical-trials and click Currently Recruiting Clinical Trials.

High-Risk Accommodation Response wraps after 22 months supporting the vulnerable

Barwon Health's High-Risk Accommodation Response (HRAR) has ended after 22 months of intensive assistance supporting vulnerable people through the pandemic.

As the community has adjusted to living with COVID-19, the HRAR program ceased operations on 30 June, with its work transitioning into the Barwon South West Public Health Unit (BSWPHU).

The team was established in 2020 to support people living in a range of high-risk settings and dwelling types, including low-and medium-rise public housing with shared facilities, supported residential services (SRS), rooming houses, community housing, disability residential settings, caravan parks with longer term residents, and homeless outbreak accommodation.

The HRAR team provided a local area approach, engagement with people residing in high-risk settings and their local communities through a range of community engagement strategies and assisted with COVID-19 prevention and preparedness. The team also provided linkage to health and social supports, and outbreak response activities to protect the health and wellbeing of people in high-risk settings from COVID-19 infection and its impacts.

SINCE SEPTEMBER 2020, THE HRAR TEAM HAS:



Provided support to the community bus vaccination program partnership with Volunteering Geelong with **91** public housing, community housing and Supported Residential Service residents transported to the Ford Vaccination Hub for dose 1, 2 and booster dose.



Worked with and supported **589** dwellings across City of Greater Geelong, Colac Otway Shire, Surf Coast Shire and Borough of Queenscliff.



Engaged with more than **2300** residents and managers of dwellings.



Provided **983** boxes of masks, **1301** sanitiser pump packs, **153** boxes of wipes were provided to caravan parks, community housing, rooming houses, public housing and supported residential services.



13 Barwon Health staff worked on the program over the **22** months.



Door-knocked **1294** residences with delivery of summer and winter care packs.



Delivered **7053** RATs between January – June 2022.



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

FIND WHAT **YOU** HAVE TO OFFER

In 2006, I watched a documentary about an African civil war. It was very confronting, and as it ended, there was a statement on the screen: “You can’t do everything, but everyone can do something.” This planted the seed of inspiration to begin my adventures volunteering in both Uganda and Fiji, where many communities lack the access to education and healthcare that we consider normal in Australia.

LIBBY ELLIS | BARWON HEALTH EMERGENCY NURSE PRACTITIONER

I am a registered nurse, emergency nurse practitioner and midwife with 37 years’ experience at University Hospital Geelong. Even working with remote communities in the Northern Territory outback could not prepare me for what I experienced overseas. In 2007, 2009 and 2011, I volunteered my services to Operation Uganda - a not-for-profit organisation based in Queensland. My idea of Africa was all about the wildlife and the excitement of being on safari to see elephants, giraffe and lions in the flesh. After a 10-day safari, my African experience changed

dramatically when I began my volunteer work in Kampala, the capital of Uganda with a population of 8.5 million. It was here I saw the most incredible people dealing with the outcomes of civil war, poverty and inadequate healthcare. I very quickly realised how blessed we are as Australians to have access to world-class healthcare, as well as the education required to look after ourselves.

In 2013, I had an opportunity to fly to Suva and volunteer my nursing skills on the Coral Coast in the villages around Sigatoka, assisted by a not-

for-profit charity called Hope For A Village Fiji. As a common tourist spot for Australians, it can be confronting to experience “the other side” of Fiji, with a healthcare system that has limited telephones and lacks internet access, as well as other technology that we take for granted for simple clinical tasks at Barwon Health. Up until the pandemic, I returned to Fiji each year, travelling by foot, boat and 4WD into remote villages that had no healthcare services.

With no doctors or nurses in the villages, most of my work involved doing very basic



"In both Uganda and Fiji, health literacy is limited and I thoroughly enjoy educating people enough to see them become empowered to take ownership of their healthcare."

Emergency nurse Libby Ellis last visited Fiji in 2019, pictured providing care for the community of Sigatoka.

health checks in the community halls, including simple blood pressure and blood glucose level checks. Many adults were initially terrified of these simple processes because it was an entirely new experience, despite cardiovascular disease and diabetes being two of the biggest health mortality and morbidity outcomes in Fiji. Many people are extremely reluctant to attend the hospital as "that is where people die". Despite their initial hesitance, my Fijian "family" now welcome me as "Dr Libby" and happily allow me to complete basic health checks and offer education to senior students.

Access to healthcare for the people of Fiji and Uganda is challenging and the level of care is not world-class, yet the locals are so grateful for any care they receive. There is no social welfare, which means treatments are not free for all and many specialties are completely unavailable. Even travelling to another city to receive care is often hindered or impossible due to lack of finances and

transport options. Without assistance to fund medications and travel, people are fortified in preference to feeding their family. In both Uganda and Fiji, health literacy is limited and I thoroughly enjoy educating people enough to see them become empowered to take ownership of their healthcare.

Often they ask "Why do you come here to help us?", but I get far more benefit out of it than what I give. In May, we celebrated International Nurses Day and this year's theme has highlighted the importance of investing in nursing and respecting rights to secure global health. This is clearly a passion of mine and I encourage everyone to consider ways they can help overseas where it's needed. It's easy to view it as someone else's responsibility, but you really don't have to be a doctor or a nurse to help improve the health of people in these communities. Anyone can make a difference and you'd be surprised the skills you can learn that will contribute to improving health outcomes

when you join an experienced volunteer organisation. We've all got something to offer and it doesn't have to be a specialised skill – even playing with children while their parents receive their check-up, or sitting with someone and talking to them about how they're feeling is a huge help. You can't do everything, but you can do something, and it starts with taking the bold step to believe you can make a difference.



Language Services celebrates first birthday at Barwon

It has been 12 months since the Language Services department welcomed new in-house interpreters at Barwon Health, completing more than 4000 requests in a year.

The team, whose work was previously outsourced, has continued growing and this year added two new interpreters to the already busy team.

Requests for Karen interpreting remains the most common by far, with Delta Naw Nyo joining the team as a second Karen interpreter to help manage the demand.

"I am very proud to be part of Barwon Health Language Services' team and it is an honour for me to work as an interpreter here," Delta said.

"I get to help patients accurately convey their symptoms to their doctors and understand their diagnosis and or treatment.

"Language is a very vital part of communication, so I am grateful and look forward to continuing to help bridge the language barriers between our patients and health professionals."

Huimin Chen also joined the team in June, interpreting for Mandarin-speaking patients.

"Working as an in-house interpreter at Barwon Health has always been fantastic experience to me," Huimin said.

"As interpreters in our Language Services team, when it comes to caring for patients with limited English proficiency, we understand it is important for us to render complete, accurate and impartial interpretation to ensure our high quality of healthcare services will not be compromised.

"I feel so lucky working with so many supportive and lovely colleagues in our language services team and other teams."

Providing interpreters to patients improves health outcomes, reduces medical errors and provides clear health information needed for the patient.



Interpreters Huimin Chen and Delta Naw Nyo have joined Barwon Health.

The Language Service team can provide assistance and training to staff on how to book and use interpreters across all Barwon Health sites, Monday to Friday.

If you would like more information on interpreters at Barwon Health, please contact the Language Services office on 4215 2344 or email interpreters@barwonhealth.org.au.

LOCAL VACCINATION SOFTWARE RECOGNISED WITH AWARD

An innovative digital platform developed to manage the Barwon South West's COVID-19 vaccination appointments has been recognised with Australia's Best Health Project at the IT News Benchmark Awards.



Barwon Health information and analytics director Matt Morris received the IT News Benchmark Award in June.

Vaccine management system CoVaxApp won the national recognition after being rapidly developed and launched in February 2021 to support Barwon Health's COVID-19 vaccination rollout for the Geelong region and south-west Victoria.

The platform, a partnership with developer Circle T, supported on-site vaccination processes, reporting of patient outcomes and online bookings between February and July 2021, when it was phased out to integrate with the system used by the rest of Victoria's health services.

Barwon Health information and analytics director Matt Morris said without the quick development of CoVaxApp, the vaccination program would have faced the limitations of a paper-based system.

"We're very proud of this project's success and we're pleased to see it recognised with a national IT award," he said.

"The launch of our vaccine rollout wouldn't have been as effective as it was, and we wouldn't have reached such high vaccination rates so quickly, without this platform," he said.

"More than 140,000 doses were delivered through the CoVaxApp system, and it supported between 5000 and 10,000 bookings a day."

Infectious Diseases director Associate Professor Daniel O'Brien said the platform was a huge help to health services in Barwon South West's rural communities.

"At peak times, we were able to vaccinate up to 3000 people each day, across 50 sites and vaccination centres, which allowed our regional healthcare immunisation teams to work as efficiently as possible," he said.

Mr Morris said due to the project's success, Barwon Health had incorporated a number of its capabilities into other IT processes, including platforms and governance models.

New Community Electronic Medical Record to empower consumers and clinicians

Consumers and clinicians will have fast and easy access to medical records when a new electronic system is rolled out at Barwon Health next year.



Timothy Brown, Janette Byrnes and Robert Pereira from the HARP team, which helped develop the electronic medical record.

The Community Electronic Medical Record (EMR) will digitise health records for community and mental health consumers, providing real-time access to clinical information, resources and appointment times.

Barwon Health chief information officer Andrew Macfarlane said the digital system would utilise an innovative cloud-based product, Salesforce Health Cloud, implemented in partnership with software integrator Mav3rik.

“Clinicians will be able to gain access to the full picture of their consumer’s healthcare experience, and consumers will also be able to access their own Barwon Health information,” he said.

“Access to this real-time Barwon Health consumer information will enable clinicians to better respond to each care episode to a level not previously possible in a paper-based health record environment.

“We’re committed to consumer privacy, so the digital platform will be built with security and privacy controls incorporated into the design from the beginning.”

This project is one of the first platform-based solutions for community-based health services across the Victorian public health system and is part of the state digital health strategy to improve health outcomes.

Hospital Admission Risk Program (HARP) community clinician Jackie James said consumers using the new system would benefit from greater control and choice over their healthcare journey.

“One of the key benefits of the new community solution is the opportunity for consumers to have access to their own consumer portal,” she said.

“The portal will offer an avenue for consumers to access up-to-date information about their healthcare, get valuable health education and resources and communicate with their healthcare providers.

“For staff on the road visiting consumers, utilising the product via a tablet or laptop will reduce paper-work and provide fast access to information.”

The pioneering cloud-based approach will allow the software to be easily adapted to the changing needs of the healthcare system and provide a more consumer-friendly portal.

Professor Steve Moylan, Barwon Health clinical director Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol Services, said the technology would allow staff to gain greater insights into the mental health and community health needs of our region.

“These insights will contribute to research and planning work that will ensure we are able to respond to community need now and into the future,” he said.

The Community EMR project commenced in June and will be implemented across many of Barwon Health’s community services and Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol Services (excluding the in-patient Swanston Centre) in 2023.

Making moves for gender equality

Barwon Health has published a new Gender Equality Action Plan to reinforce and progress gender equality within the organisation and through its services in the community.

In 2021, Australia ranked 50th out of 156 countries for gender equality, with relatively low scores for workforce participation, wage equality and the number of women in Federal Parliament and ministerial positions.

Barwon Health's Gender Equality Plan was designed in response to new legislative requirement resulting from the Gender Equality Audit and will help ensure staff and consumers have fair access to opportunities and resources.

Gender equality project officer Alexandra Cowie said the document was a sign of the organisation's commitment to providing an equitable and inclusive workplace.

"We believe gender equality, diversity and inclusion improves the care we provide for all

patients, staff and our community," she said.

"We look forward to the implementation of Barwon Health's first Gender Equality Action Plan to ensure Barwon Health is an employer where everyone is able to access the same opportunities, resources and rewards, regardless of gender.

"Barwon Health recognises that gender equality is a human right and a foundation to social justice and we're committed to creating a gender inclusive culture, which empowers our people and harnesses our diversity to deliver better services to our patients, consumers and the community.

"By improving gender equality in our organisation and our community we will help to bring about significant social and health benefits, contributing to reduced family violence and reducing the historical discrimination and disadvantage that women have experienced based on their sex and gender."

Barwon Health's Gender Equality Action Plan can be found on the Barwon Health website under About Us, Publications.

DID YOU KNOW?

Violence against women is more damaging to the health of Victorian women aged 15 to 44 than any other risk factors for chronic disease.

Women are overwhelmingly concentrated in part-time employment, resulting in fewer opportunities to progress to senior leadership roles.

The combination of career breaks, part-time employment and a persistent gender pay gap throughout women's working lives **significantly hampers women's ability to achieve greater financial security.**

Caring responsibilities continue to fall disproportionately on women, who spend twice as much time in unpaid care as men.

TRAINEES FACE THE PRESSURE WITH PHYSICIAN ADULT MEDICINE EXAMS

Third-year Basic Physician Trainees (BPT3s) have recently embarked on months of preparation for the RACP Adult Medicine Divisional Clinical Exam, a prerequisite to Advanced Training.

The high-pressure process sees candidates face a written exam on basic science and clinical knowledge, while the following clinical exams comprise 'long' cases (interviewing/examining patients, then presenting to examiners) and 'short' cases (examining patients in the presence of examiners).

Dr Cameron Jeremiah, Director Physician Education (DPE), said Barwon Health had fared well recently, with success across the board in the previous group.

"It's never an easy task to sit these exams, and the degree of difficulty has been even higher with the disruption of COVID over the past years," he said.

"It's a lot of pressure to prepare for these exams, which take place over 10 hours, and a huge amount of work goes into both organising exam preparation for our trainees and hosting the exams; made all the more challenging in the middle of a pandemic.

"We have 24 BPT3s sitting the clinical exam at hospitals state-wide, which is five more than our previous largest cohort of 19 in 2021.

"Hopefully we can emulate our 100 per cent pass rate from the previous exams, as this compares very favourably with the average national pass rate of 75 per cent."

All sessions require significant administrative and registrar support, plus volunteer patients and examiners. This year Dr Caitlin Paul, Dr Tia Smith, Dr Tasneem Haque and Ms Donna Walker have played an amazing role in coordinating our local exam activities. Other participants include exam assistants (BPT1s/2s, interns, medical students) and nurses.



Louise Blake practising a Long Case with Prof. David Russell.



New skills to fill gaps

Barwon Health North administration staff Stephanie King and Hannah Tribe upskilled with five microcredentials through the Future Health Skills program.

A TAFE pilot program addressing skill gaps in the healthcare industry has resulted in 360 Barwon Health staff members upskilling with new microcredentials.

Barwon Health partnered with the Future Health Skills (FHS) project developed at the Gordon TAFE in partnership with the Victorian Government, St John of God Health, The Epworth and the Geelong Region Local Learning and Employment Network.

The initiative was piloted over an 18-month period by 1800 participants across 83 healthcare areas, designed to build the skills and capacity of current and future healthcare workforce for areas such as non-clinical and nursing roles.

Learning and Development officer Wendy Jones said a suite of microcredentials was designed to upskill existing workers and increase the job-readiness of VET and nursing graduates.

She said the pilot program had given Barwon Health employees a great opportunity to upskill and showcase best practice eLearning.

"These fit-for-purpose microcredentials allow health care workers and students to build their skills and receive digital badges, acknowledging their competency in various area across the sector," she said.

"FHS has been built by collaboration with the healthcare sector, and through this process we have been able to recognise the skill gap areas and understand the training needs and complexities of the healthcare system.

"The content and learning outcomes have been designed by subject matter experts from within the healthcare sector itself, so it provides extremely relevant content that aims to close the skills gap, improve operational efficiency and patient centered-care standards and overall effectiveness of workforce training in health service organisations.

"The program received wonderful feedback and great engagement for those who completed the microcredentials."

Staff members Louise Davies, Stephanie King, Liz Loft and Hannah Tribe were recognised for completing more than five microcredentials during the pilot program.



Partnering for critical workforce

ICU Discovery Program registered nurses Suzanne Wang, Tess Houghton and Tina Abbott, with ICU nurse unit manager Donna Robertson.

The ICU Discovery Program has helped Barwon Health nurses learn the critical care nursing skills required to give the Intensive Care Unit a much-needed boost during times of high demand.

The Clinical Education and Training team has worked with ICU Nursing Leadership over many years to support the gradual expansion of postgraduate training positions in the ICU, as the unit has replenished its workforce and grown in size and complexity. However, the pandemic response placed “next level” demands on the clinical workforce and the education workforce, with the need to implement rapid, flexible and safe solutions to meet service and workforce needs.

Clinical Education and Training nursing manager Lynda Knuckey said the ICU had been a huge focus due to the need for nurses who could care for the growing numbers of critically unwell patients.

“Programs were designed and implemented, clinical support at point of care was strengthened, and workforce were redeployed or came forward to be trained and be part of the solution to a global problem being experienced at our local level,” she said.

“Safe, quality nursing care in the ICU relies on access to a highly skilled, postgraduate-qualified critical care nursing workforce and strong clinical leadership at point of care, and our 2023 program will partner with the ICU team to support the largest ever cohort of nurses in training programs within the ICU.

“This will safeguard our service capability whilst providing fantastic career pathway opportunities and professional development for Barwon Health nurses.

Lynda said there was unprecedented energy, creativity and collaboration in the ICU team, thanks to the training program that has supported new entrants to the nursing workforce, enabling mid-career transitions, providing upskilling and reskilling, and maintaining a program of essential COVID and non-COVID education and training for clinical staff.

“It’s never been more important to design adaptive workforce strategies and training interventions to strengthen workforce supply and develop skills and knowledge that assure quality care.

“We are working with managers and leadership staff to meet the challenges head on, diverting our resources to address the most urgent need.

“For the ICU, this involves the continuation of the COVID-induced ICU Discovery Program, for registered nurses seeking to move into critical care nursing from another area of practice, and the expansion of the postgraduate training program in 2023 from 8 nurses per year to 16.

“Alongside the comprehensive program of in-service and continuing education in the unit, this stepped pathway into critical care nursing specialisation is a key attraction and retention strategy for the ICU.”

Improved access and care for those living with osteoarthritis

In just one year, Barwon Health has increased physiotherapy appointments by almost 5000, in an effort to provide better outcomes to people living with osteoarthritis (OA).

Arthritis is common and costly, and access to timely non-surgical care can be a barrier for many people. Since 2021, Barwon Health's Outpatient Physiotherapy and Community Health teams have worked hard to improve access and care for people living with OA.

Since July 2021, Barwon Health has delivered an additional 2692 physiotherapy appointments at University Hospital Geelong, and 2089 at community health sites, thanks to additional funding to increase the capacity of Advanced Practice Physiotherapy screening clinics and treatment services.

Physiotherapist and outpatient coordinator Peter Schoch said the program had focused on OA due to the difference physiotherapy is known to make in the lives of patients.

"There is high-quality evidence that appropriate education, exercise, lifestyle changes and physiotherapy treatment, are effective at improving the quality of life and function, and, reducing the disability of many people with OA," Peter said.

"Our increased physiotherapy appointments have contributed to a significant reduction in the number of patients waiting and the time they wait to be seen, within Orthopaedic, Neurosurgery and Community Health services.

"It is a real credit to the staff and managers at each site that this additional work has



Community health physiotherapist Kara Hanson works with patient Faye to help her improve balance due to osteoarthritis.

“Our increased physiotherapy appointments have contributed to a significant reduction in the number of patients waiting,” – Peter Schoch

occurred despite challenges such as the redeployment of many physiotherapists during the various waves of COVID-19.”

Community Health senior physiotherapist Jessica McDonald said the expanded service was funded until June 2023, with staff working hard to maximise patient throughput and outcomes, whilst collecting the necessary data to evaluate the impact of the extra services.

“We will work with the relevant managers and other stakeholders to try and secure long term funding, so we can maintain the gains we’ve made and continue to deliver high quality and timely care for the people in our region.”

Barwon Health Foundation celebrates 20 years

The Barwon Health Foundation is proud to be celebrating 20 years of improving comfort and care for patients at Barwon Health.

Since it was established in 1992, the Foundation has raised well over \$50 million for capital projects alone, as well as supporting small projects to improve patient experiences.

Key projects include the \$7.3 million redevelopment of the Cotton On Children's Ward, the \$3.8 million expansion of the Special Care Nursery and the \$4.1 million renovation of the Andrew Love Cancer Centre Chemotherapy Day Ward and Oncology Pharmacy.

In recent years, the Foundation has proudly led major appeals such as the \$3.6 million Bendigo Bank House – home to McKellar Kids Rehab, a \$1 million Coronavirus Emergency Response Fund and the \$2.5 million Adrian Costa Clinical Trials Centre.

Barwon Health Foundation executive director Zoe Waters said the Geelong community has a long history of philanthropy to improve health services.



Barwon Health Foundation executive director Zoe Waters and board chair Dan Simmonds.

"With every year that passes, the generosity of the Geelong region continues to blow us away," she said.

"Our team is inspired every day by the work of Barwon Health's cancer centre namesake, Reverend Andrew Love, who lobbied government and raised funds to build the original Geelong hospital in 1849.

"We can only hope some of our own achievements and partnerships will have a similar multi-generational impact."

Barwon Health Foundation board chair Dan Simmonds said the 20-year milestone was an opportunity to reflect on achievements.

"The population of Greater Geelong has grown exponentially over the past two decades and the Foundation has been there to help respond to the changing needs of the health service, its staff, and the community," he said.

"Our campaigns, causes and modes of fundraising have been many and varied.

"Over the journey, we have founded a number of events that have gone on to become highly anticipated annual fixtures on the calendar including Gala celebrations, Geelong's Longest Lunch, Catwalk4Cancer and Run4Geelong.

"While this milestone birthday provides a welcome opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved so far, the Barwon Health Foundation team is excited for what might be possible in another 20 years."

GIVING MONTH PASSES FUNDRAISING GOAL

The generosity of Geelong inspired the expansion of Barwon Health Foundation's annual Giving Weekend into an entire Giving Month during June.

The appeal goal was to raise \$300,000 in 30 days to support Project North, a \$2.5 million campaign to establish a purpose-built public dental facility at Barwon Health North.

With support from individuals, businesses and community groups we raised \$366,750.

There were many heart-warming moments from across the month including the stories of a number of grateful patients who donated either funds or time to the cause.

Our team of volunteers manned barbeques at local Bunnings stores and pop-up stalls in Market Square and we were fortunate to have the support of North Shore and Lara Football Clubs who fundraised at their AFL Barwon match.

Giving Month concluded with the traditional Giving Weekend tin shake locals have come to know and love.

We also had wonderful contributions from our shopping partners, Natural Supply Co, Café Go, Fresh Food Merchant and Community Care Chemist, all of which donated a percentage of their takings from across the weekend.

For more on Project North, visit barwonhealthfoundation.org.au



Giving Month volunteers.

ROTARY DONOR HIGHLIGHT

The Rotary Club of Geelong West has pledged to raise \$100,000 in support of Barwon Health Foundation's Project North appeal.

The funding commitment will mark the largest donation by the Club since the local branch was founded in 1955.

President Jim Marendaz said the volunteer-based organisation, which exists to give back to the local community, shared the Foundation's vision to close the current health gap that exists in the Greater Geelong region.

"Rotary is a network of passionate problem solvers who unite to create lasting change in our community," Mr Marendaz said.

"We, like the Barwon Health Foundation, have identified that more can be done to provide better access to health care for those living in the northern suburbs of Geelong and we look forward to partnering with them on this important goal."

Barwon Health Foundation executive director Zoe Waters said service clubs such as the Rotary Club of Geelong West provide an invaluable support to our community.

"The commitment of \$100,000 to support Project North will help to build healthier futures," she said.

"The Barwon Health Foundation has a long and proud association with Rotary and we know that there is a huge amount of volunteer time and passion that goes into raising such a significant amount.

"We thank the Rotary Club of Geelong West sincerely for their leadership and support in creating positive change for our region."



Rotary Club of Geelong West secretary Kasia Quail is part of the effort to raise \$100,000 in support of Barwon Health Foundation's Project North appeal. Photo: Geelong Advertiser

Dry July

The Geelong community is raising a glass to its most successful Dry July ever, generating more than \$200,000 for Barwon Health's cancer services.

Barwon Health Foundation Dry July ambassador Billy Brownless led his 'Frothy Fund' team to back-to-back victories, finishing as the top fundraising team in Australia for a second consecutive year with \$100,000 raised.

Brownless, whose mother died of cancer, said he was proud to partner with Barwon Health Foundation for the worthy cause.

"I loved seeing the growing fundraising tally every day," he said.

"The community's generosity has blown me away all over again – my 'Frothy Fund' team bet last year's record by more than \$19,000 which is just an amazing result for Barwon Health's Andrew Love Cancer Centre and all the patients it supports so thank you to everyone who contributed."

Community ambassador Rory Costelloe, a board member of the



Barwon Health Foundation, also defended his position as one of the country's leading individual fundraisers clocking up an impressive \$48,200.

The region's stronghold on the national campaign didn't stop there, however, with a group of Geelong United Basketball presidents securing third place on the team fundraising ladder by generating \$32,900 and Buxton Geelong's Ben Riddle finishing in the top 10 solo fundraisers with an impressive \$19,200 raised.

A total of 238 people – including community and business leaders, past patients and those fundraising in honour of loved ones lost to the disease – gave up alcohol for the month of July to fundraise for Barwon Health's Andrew Love Cancer Centre.

Pictured: Geelong Cats legend and Barwon Health Foundation Dry July ambassador Billy Brownless led his 'Frothy Fund' team as the top fundraisers in Australia for a second consecutive year.



SAVE THE DATE

Ena Pelly Catwalk4Cancer – Saturday 15 October

An immersive fashion experience at Geelong Arts Centre, celebrating 30th years of Barwon Health's Andrew Love Cancer Centre.

Run 4 Geelong – Sunday 13 November

Geelong's favourite family fun-run is returning to the waterfront for 2022.

Gala Christmas Concert and Festive Markets – Saturday 10 December

Celebrate Christmas with the Barwon Health Foundation, raising funds for local kids.

Staff acknowledgements

New CMO appointment

Dr Ajai Verma has been appointed as Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Barwon Health, with Dr Simon Woods stepping back from the role in late July to work part-time in the directorate.

Ajai previously worked as Deputy CMO at Barwon Health, he is an Affiliate Associate Professor with the Deakin University School of Medicine, and a fellow of the Royal Australian College General Practitioners.

As CMO, Ajai will provide professional leadership for medical workforce, oversight of the Public Health and Health Service Partnership Directorate, Research and Pharmacy, as well as leading the Quality, Safety and Improvement team.

Maternity staff farewell

In July, 80 maternity staff gathered to celebrate past and present staff members who retired during the pandemic.

The event at the Telegraph Hotel was a belated farewell for Pat Huby, Mary Hibble, Debbie Keown, Claudia Russelhuber, Rhonda Ballantyne, Kerry Peart, Aurora Delacruz, Chris Mengler and Anne Tyrell.



L-R: Nine midwives and nurses were celebrated with a belated retirement party in July; Inaugural Frank Costa Leadership Award winner Frances Diver.

Career years of the retirees totalled an astonishing 425 years and too many births to keep count.

We thank them all for their service to Barwon Health and to the women, babies and families of the Geelong region.

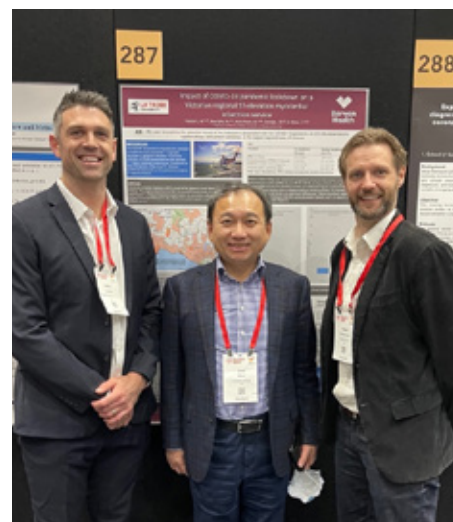
Leadership award celebrates organisation's success

Barwon Health chief executive Frances Diver was recognised as the inaugural recipient of the Frank Costa Leadership Award in June.

Announced earlier this year, Frances was officially presented with the award at the Committee for Geelong Leaders for Geelong graduation dinner.

Frances said the award celebrates the success Barwon Health has had in working with the community to respond to the many challenges faced together in 2021.

"We are committed to making Geelong the healthiest and safest community it can be, which starts with access to the high-quality healthcare that we provide."



Cath lab nurse Nathan Herbert, and interventional cardiologists A/Prof Chin Hiew and A/Prof Adam Hutchison.

Recognition for cath lab research

Cath lab nurse Nathan Herbert has been awarded for a research poster exploring the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on regional STEMI (St-elevation myocardial infarction) services.

Nathan presented the poster at the 70th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (CSANZ) from 11-14 August.

Nathan received the 2022 Nursing New Investigator Poster Prize, which he said had encouraged him to continue his interest in the research field.

The poster outlined findings from his recently submitted minor thesis, examining whether patient and system delays were experienced at University Hospital Geelong due to the lockdown periods associated with the pandemic.



Length of Service

Congratulations to the following staff who celebrated Length of Service milestones between June and August 2022!



Ros Barwell
 Marcia Beard
 Tim Beilby
 Susan Bodger
 Daniel Borenstein
 Brett Chandler
 Lisa Charlton
 Irene Connolly
 Leeanda Cook
 Carly Delmenico
 Zvezdana Djordjevic
 Paul Dodemaide
 Anna D'Orsa
 Kellie Eales
 Russell Fox

Dieter Gercke
 Shannon Graham
 Helen Hibbins
 Tanya Hodgkinson
 Katrina Humphryis
 David Jeffery
 Nicole Kingwell
 Carolyn Kuik
 Ann Lyle
 Ainsley Macpherson
 Rachel McCoy
 Leo Mithen
 Jean Moller
 Michelle Morron-Ryan
 Michelle Murphy

Rebecca Poje
 Sharon Reeves
 Michael Sheridan
 Philippa Shilson
 Mario Sinozic
 Angie Smith
 Fiona Smith
 Jo Stafford
 Marlene Stapper
 Gemma Strickland
 Claire Taprell
 Chris Woollard
 Cheng-hon Yap



Helen Bosevski
 Philip Campbell
 Cheryl Campbell-Stewart
 Heather Chiller
 Carolyn Dreher
 Rachel Driscoll
 Leanne Finlayson

Maureen Harmer
 Janette Kerr
 Jodie Long
 Jane MacDonald
 Janet McDonald
 Heather McSparron
 Belinda Picak

Debbie Porter
 Nicole Pupavac
 Laura Rutherford
 Nerida Sadler
 Andrea Storan
 Paul Talman
 Jane Wilding

Please note, names and employment commencement dates are taken from official Barwon Health records. Please contact People and Culture to check or update your details - workforcerelations@barwonhealth.org.au.



Russell Boustead
 Andrea Collins
 Colin Gordon
 Rhonda Hunter

Kerry Lane
 David Lun
 Susan Tump



Project North

Our initial aim for Project North is to raise \$2.5 million to relocate the dental service at Corio Community Health Centre to a new, purpose-built facility at Barwon Health North that can care for up to an additional 5,000 patients per year.

Building a **healthy** future

If you can, **donate now** by scanning the QR code, visiting projectnorth.org.au or calling 4215 8900.



Barwon Health
Foundation



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