



Our Year In Review

Annual Report

2020-2021



With you for life

**Bellarine Community
Health is committed to
investing in vital health
initiatives and allied
health services that
assist people to manage
their health needs**





Contents

Acknowledgement	4
Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer	6
About Us	9
Our Vision	9
Board of Directors	10
Our People	11
Organisational Chart	12
Capital Works and Facilities	17
Community	18
Primary Care Services	21
Allied Health	24

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to this land and we pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

Bellarine Community Health acknowledges the Wadawurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our sites are located and across which we provide services and programs for the diverse community. We are proud to be an inclusive workplace and welcome people from all cultures and backgrounds to our service.

THIS
GIRL
CAN

 VicHealth®



#ThisGirlCanVIC

Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

An Annual Report is the point in the reporting year of all organisations and is a time of celebration for what has been achieved, reflection on the year past and a time to signpost initiatives for the coming year.

The 2020/2021 year saw the organisation and our staff pivot in and out of lockdown whilst all the time maintaining service to clients and providing much needed support across our communities.

These past two COVID-19 years have been a true learning experience for the Board, the organisation, our staff and volunteers.

Living and working during the COVID-19 pandemic over the last 2 years has been extremely difficult for all members of the community. Our aim as a health service has been to continue to deliver quality services to those who need them. We believe we have been pretty successful in achieving our aim.

We have learnt new ways of working together, refined meeting processes and become stronger as a collaborative team. We have become fantastic problem solvers. Every action and decision is planned and interrogated to ensure that they best meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Our staff have been extremely resilient and have got used to the ramping up and down of services, using telehealth and other methods of communication to ensure that we have maintained our contact with the community and to deliver those services.

The contribution of our volunteers must not go unnoticed. We have over 100 people who assist us across a range of programs. This group has also managed the ups and downs of our service delivery over the COVID-19 period. The volunteers

are an amazing group of people who offer their own time to assist both BCH and our clients. Alongside the volunteers we have a very active Community Advisory Group who have undertaken significant tasks for the organisation and the broader community including undertaking work around the Eric Tolliday Unit project (ETU's), and facilitating community engagement processes to ensure that our new BCH strategic Plan is reflective of our communities.

Financial performance for the 2020-21 year was a significant improvement over the prior 2 years. The current year is likely to show further improvement. However, as we move out of the COVID-19 period, government funding policies are changing and will continue to change. We will have to adapt to these changes and ensure our financial stability while delivering quality service.

There have been a number of significant positives to come out of 2020-21:

- The advancement of the Portarlington redevelopment funded by the Commonwealth;
- Progress on the Ocean Grove Hub, also funded by the Commonwealth;
- The opening of the headspace service in Ocean Grove;
- Our Dental team has been nominated and won a number of awards relating to the Autism project; and
- Progressing a partnering arrangement for the Eric Tolliday Units.

Last year we made it clear that the 2020/2021 year would be one of focussing on business first, delivering on the hard work inherent within our turnaround strategy and most importantly continuing to deliver services to our communities.


We can confidently state that we have all been and continue to be committed to the task and wish to thank our Board of Directors and Executive team for their willingness to make the tough decisions and stay the course. There will always be more work to do as we meet the challenges that are inherent within community health but it is work that is both important and necessary if we are to support our community members to live healthy and well lives.



Fay Agterhuis
Board Chair



Garry Ellis
Chief Executive Officer

A photograph of two women smiling outdoors. The woman on the left has long blonde hair and is wearing a blue t-shirt with a lanyard and an ID badge. The woman on the right has short dark hair and is wearing a dark jacket and a scarf. The background shows a coastal area with trees and a body of water. A large teal circle is overlaid on the image, containing white text.

We have learnt new ways of working together, refined meeting processes and become stronger as a collaborative team. We have become fantastic problem solvers. Every action and decision is planned and interrogated to ensure that they best meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Bellarine Community Health will be the leader in primary health services in Victoria.

bch Bellarine Community Health

- Car Park >
- Reception >
- Medical >
- Dental >
- Community Health >

2 Nelson Road
Point Lonsdale

About Us

Bellarine Community Health Ltd. (BCH) is the major provider of primary health services to the Bellarine Peninsula. BCH operates from five sites – in Drysdale (two sites), Ocean Grove, Point Lonsdale and Portarlington and in community settings across the Bellarine. BCH is a registered Community Health Service under the Health Services Act 1988 (Vic).

Our Vision

Bellarine Community Health will be the leader in primary health services in Victoria.

Our Mission

Bellarine Community Health delivers a broad scope of health services & wellbeing programs for all people in our diverse communities

Our Values

These five values and behaviours underpin our actions in order to achieve our strategic goals

- Community first
- A positive and inclusive environment
- Excellence
- Leadership
- Integrity

Strategic Directions

01 Services & Programs

Create and extend services and programs which are designed, delivered and responsive to our changing and diverse communities.

02 Two: Community

Increase inclusive participation and community empowerment, and facilitate two-way awareness between BCH and our diverse communities

03 Staff & Volunteers

Ensure the best mix of staff & volunteers, with the right culture, right skills, and right numbers, as we grow our services & programs.

04 Quality & Safety

Ensure that all our services and programs are excellent.

05 Strategic Finances

Ensure BCH is financially viable and sustainable for the future through exploring funding opportunities

Board of Directors



Fay Agterhuis
Chair



Tim Walsh
Deputy Chair



Kristina Dimasi
Board member



Jean Paul
Board member



Dr Virginia Dickson-Swift
Board member



Dr Robert James
Board member



Rod Slattery
Board member / Treasurer



Garry Ellis
Board member
(resigned 1 September 2020)



Lucy Simms
Board member
(elected 23 June 2021)



Mark Harris
Board member
(elected 23 June 2021)

Company Secretary

Garry Ellis has held the position of company secretary since 20 September 2020

Board Meetings

Full Board Meetings and Board Sub-Committee Meetings are held monthly, February through November.

Board Sub-Committees are:

- Governance Committee (comprising 3 Board Directors and the Chief of Staff as secretariat)
- Quality, Safety & Risk Committee (comprising 4 Board Directors, CEO, Quality & Compliance Manager, People & Culture Manager, and Chief of Staff as secretariat)
- Finance & Audit Committee (comprising 4 Board Directors, CEO, CFO, Senior Accountant, and Chief of Staff as secretariat)

Our People

Following the resignation of Chief Executive Officer Shane Dawson in September 2020, the Board of Directors appointed Garry Ellis to the position of Interim Chief Executive Officer on 14 September 2020.

Mr Ellis was formally appointed to the position of Chief Executive Officer for 2 years from 22 June 2021. He has significant experience, with 30 years working in the not-for-profit and health services sectors.

Our new employees undertake a comprehensive online induction program that provides professional learning and compliance for the NDIS and services sectors. Modules are tailored to ensure compliance with BCH's funding requirements.

All employees complete mandatory annual online training modules.

An example of modules undertaken in 2020-21 are:

- Infection Prevention
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competence
- Cyber Security
- Gender Equity
- Health & Safety

Skilled, motivated, and dedicated staff are critical to the success of our organisation. We strive to maintain a culture that recognises, encourages, and celebrates our employees' achievements.

Several employees reached significant years of service milestones in 2020-21. Our longest serving employee started her career with the health service in Portarlington in the late 1970s.

We held a COVID-Safe afternoon tea in April to celebrate these employees.

BCH is signatory to 5 Enterprise Agreements, all specific to Community Health.



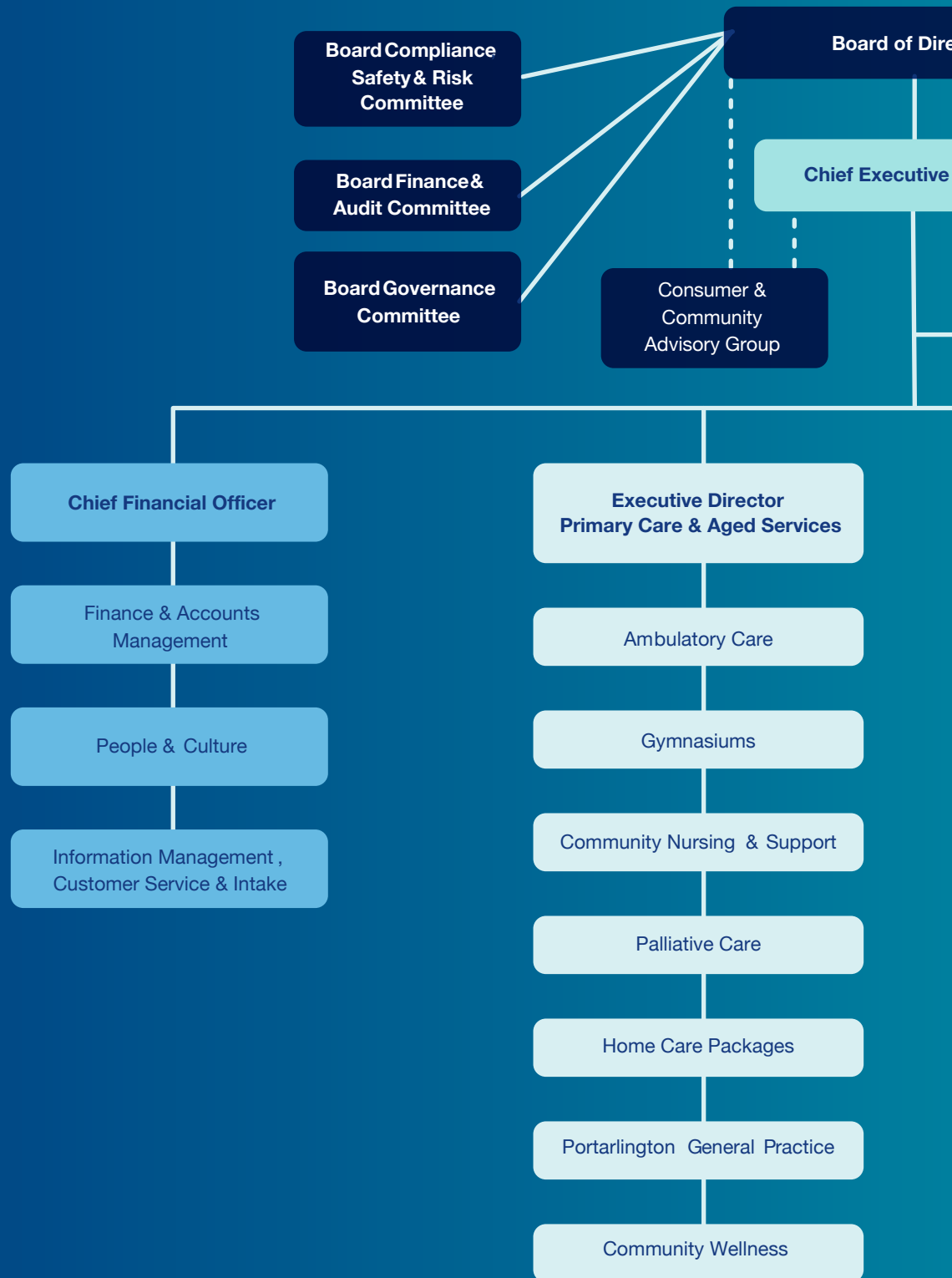
Paid employees
155

112
part-time

21
casual

22
full-time

Organisational Chart



ectors

Officer

Chief of Staff/ EA

**Executive Director
Child, Youth & Families**

Child Health & Development

Youth Health & Wellbeing

Mental Health

headspace Ocean Grove

Doctors in Schools

Oral Health

Healthy & Connected
Communities

Volunteer Engagement

Communications / Marketing

Compliance, Safety & Risk
OH&S

Information Technology

Capital Works

Procurement, Contracts &
Facilities Maintenance

“

I love having volunteers to help. They have excellent communication skills and are so attentive to the clients. I can focus on my professional role. It's an absolute luxury to have their help.

**Nurse at COVID-19
vaccination clinic**



Recruitment

BCH has experienced difficulty in recruiting skilled candidates in several clinical areas across the organisation. This is in part due to an increased demand nationally for skilled clinicians.

The increasing demand for skilled practitioners to support NDIS participants has impacted our ability to secure clinical and administrative staff in some areas. We have found difficulty in recruiting to both Occupational Therapist and Social Work vacancies and can expect these challenges to continue and increase as competition between employers grows. We are incorporating strategic online recruitment to expand our reach and entice clinicians to the region and our organisation.

Despite these challenges we had some exceptionally skilled people join BCH over the year.

Volunteers

BCH Volunteers have offered reliable and ongoing support in a challenging environment of change. Volunteers have adapted and learned new ways of working. There were many 'pivots' as programs paused, re-commenced and paused again to meet lockdown rules and ensure safety of all.

BCH now has a unique Volunteer Sign-in app, developed by a volunteer. The app has played a major role in building our understanding of the impact of volunteers across the organisation.

Volunteers are engaged:

- in larger programs of community service such as Social Support and Meals on Wheels. This includes programs predominantly run by volunteers, such as the Op Shop (Portarlinton Ladies Auxiliary) and the Food Assistance Program;
- in advocacy and support such as Community Advisory and Volunteer Support Groups;
- across sites supporting staff and clients with additional needs such as temperature checking. They have been integral to the success of the Portarlinton COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic.

- behind the scenes in a range of roles including gardening, nursing support, work health and safety committee, equipment and car maintenance, communication and administration.

BCH supported end-of-year small gatherings for volunteers after 2020 lockdowns.

In May 2021, the annual National Volunteers' Week event was held at the Portarlinton Golf Club, fortunately scheduled between lockdowns. Forty volunteers re-connected at this event, and gave very positive feedback about the high attendance of staff and opportunity to mingle.

The new BCH Guide to Volunteering developed by volunteers during 2020 lockdowns was launched at this event.

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services group comprises:

- The Executive Team
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Intake
- Information Technology
- Quality & Safety
- Communications & Marketing
- Capital Works

22 New
Volunteers



108 Active
Volunteers



9,554 Volunteer
Hours



The Corporate team has worked as normal throughout the financial year, with a significant amount of time working from home. Although the situation has been difficult at times, there was minimal impact on the team's productivity.



“

Thank you so much for the professionalism of the people I see at Bellarine Community Health. They have so much respect for their patients”

Client Feedback

Our COVID-19 Response

With a global public health emergency in place, Bellarine Community Health continued to deliver services where possible to clients.

During lockdowns services were delivered via Telehealth where suitable, with community nursing, urgent and emergency dental and other essential health services continuing face to face. The BCH COVIDSafe Plan and protocols were regularly reviewed and updated, and personal protective equipment was constantly reviewed in line with

Government guidelines to ensure safety for staff, clients and the community.

A COVID Marshal role was assigned to the Quality & Compliance Manager along with the reception staff at each site taking on the role of COVID Assistants. These roles follow the guidelines of the organisation’s COVIDSafe Plan.

Quality & Safety

During the year Bellarine Community Health was fully accredited against the new NDIS Practice Standards.

These standards create an important benchmark for providers to assess their performance and to demonstrate how they provide high quality and safe supports and services to NDIS participants.

Comprehensive work was done to redefine the Quality Governance Framework to incorporate clinical governance, quality, safety and risk. This Framework was approved by the Board Quality, Safety & Risk Committee.

Capital Works and Facilities

Capital works were impacted by COVID-19 during 2020-21 as decision making bodies switched to working from home, and focus shifted to more immediate issues arising from the pandemic.

The Government decided that construction would lead the pandemic recovery, and consequently the market was flooded with building opportunities and a significant increase in costs and reduction in the availability of materials.

The BCH Portarlington redevelopment project was caught up in this which resulted in the tendered building prices vastly exceeding the available budget. Following significant redesign to bring the construction back into budget, BCH is currently preparing to sign a contract with the preferred builder and are hopeful of delivering the renovation in 2022.

BCH has obtained a site in the Kingston Estate in Ocean Grove for the purpose of building a health and wellbeing hub. The intention is to accommodate a range of integrated, multi-disciplinary services for children and their families. Planning for the design of this new hub has commenced.

In 2021, BCH opened a new headspace satellite site in Ocean Grove. BCH oversaw the renovation of the site at 78 Presidents Avenue, Ocean Grove that was designed by Four18 Architecture, with renovation works undertaken by Trak Constructions. The renovation upgraded and refreshed the aged building and altered the layout to meet the needs of the young people accessing the headspace service. BCH is pleased to have resumed delivery of some adult services from this site after a significant period of closure due to COVID-19.

The BCH facilities team rose to the challenge of COVID-19 by securing PPE, calculating room capacities, and introducing other COVID-19 safe measures such as sneeze screens, sanitation stations and creating separate waiting areas to allow staff to continue to offer onsite services to clients.

A further highlight of the past year was to re-contract BCH waste services, an exercise that has delivered considerable savings and allowed us to improve our separation and recycling of waste.

The challenge for the coming year is to achieve further cost savings from contracted services while striving to become more environmentally responsible and driving sustainable improvements. Areas of focus include cleaning services, a reduction in the use of single use plastics, increased use of compostable and recyclable materials and improved energy efficiency.



Community

Healthy & Connected Communities

The health and wellbeing of our community is at the core of our service. The BCH Healthy and Connected Communities team is committed to building the capacity, skills and knowledge of our community to enable them to make healthy and informed choices to maintain their own and their family's wellbeing.

We are grateful for the Integrated Health Promotion (IHP) funding that we receive from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to undertake our work in the key priority areas of Healthier Eating, Active Living and Prevention of Violence Against Women. We do this work in partnership with a range of local and regional organisations through the G21 alliance, enabling us to build worker capacity and knowledge, reduce duplication of effort and obtain greater reach and impact across the region.

The COVID-19 pandemic has required us to be flexible and innovative to respond to our community's needs. We continued to work with childcare settings, kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools through the development of online tools such as the Eat Well at Home kit, Choose Water Every Day activities and healthy lunchboxes and canteens ideas and resources.

We were fortunate to be able to work with 6 community clubs and groups to implement the This Girl Can event. Women and girls had the opportunity to have a try at golf, surfing, basketball, cycling, netball and open water swimming. Thank you to all the groups that made this program a huge success, with over 150 attendees.

BCH continues to work to be a leader in Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW) by running programs and campaigns, changing internal procedures and guidelines and helping people to understand the issue. BCH partnered with the Borough of Queenscliff and 11 retailers to raise the awareness of PVAW as part of the International 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign. The retailers supported the campaign by wearing orange 'Respect' caps, placing stickers on coffee cups and displaying posters with key messaging in their venues.

Community Participation

The BCH Community Advisory Group (CAG) has welcomed new members to the group providing a greater gender mix, broader geographical representation and new skills and experience.

The CAG has had a busy year due to their involvement in a range of community engagement projects.

BCH would like to thank the CAG and the other members of the community that participated in the Eric Tolliday Units Community Engagement Reference Group (CERG), the BCH Strategic Plan Community Engagement Working Group and the Climate Action Working group for their ongoing support and contributions over the last year.

We were fortunate to be able to work with 6 community clubs and groups to implement the This Girl Can event. Women and girls had the opportunity to have a try at golf, surfing, basketball, cycling, netball and open water swimming.

RESPECT IS...

**treating
everyone
as an equal**

#respectis #callitout #16dayscampaign

Respect
Victoria

RESPECT
WOMEN

CALL
IT OUT

bch
Balance
Community
Health
With you for life



Borough of Queenscliffe
Queenscliffe & Invercargill

“

How can my family thank you all enough for the wonderful palliative care given to my husband... always on hand to guide us, unwavering support, no matter the time the nurse did everything beautifully and with respect. How lucky are we, to have this service at our darkest time.

Client Feedback

Primary Care Services

Community Nursing

Community Nursing continued to provide quality services throughout the pandemic.

An increased demand for services has been strongly attributed to client aversion to hospitalisation in the COVID-19 environment. During this time, our nursing workforce demonstrated resilience by stepping up to meet the challenges presented.

One of the major challenges working in this environment has been the need for staff to maintain strict infection control protocols to keep our clients and workforce safe and well.

BCH appreciates the Victorian Department of Health's support in ensuring the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), required to support our efforts in this regard.

BCH has also moved this year to increase its permanent part-time nursing workforce by offering casual employees the opportunity to convert to permanent part-time contracts.

Palliative Care

The BCH Palliative Care team continued to provide face-to-face services during the pandemic. This service saw an increase in both client numbers and complexity of care needs. The main reasons for this situation included earlier discharges from hospitals based on client choice. The pandemic lockdowns heightened fears for this particular cohort of clients, of dying alone. This, and reduced access to medical care, resulted in the shift of workload to community based providers.

Despite these challenges the staff maintained a 24hr shared care service providing care for 174 clients.

Achieving 65% of client's dying in their place of choice is a major outcome. While 70% of people wish to die at home only 14% of Australians achieve this outcome, according to the Grattan Institute Report 2014. The BCH palliative care team is highly commended for achieving this outcome.

GP Clinic

BCH's Portarlington General Practice Clinic continues to expand its capacity to respond to the primary health services needs of the community. The current general practitioner team includes Dr Alison Sinadinos, Dr Carina Pyteltek, and Dr Lucy Ham who has most recently joined our team. Lucy brings over 30 years of general practice experience to this team. With this expanded workforce we are now open Monday to Friday.

Activity	19/20	20/21	% change
Referrals	147	174	15.5
Deaths	93	120	22.5
Dying in the home	53	78	32.
Dying in hospital	40	42	4.7



Nicki Goodwin, second from the left, with BCH Dental colleagues at the Ocean Grove Rotary Dinner

Dental

The BCH Dental Clinic caters to both public & private patients.

Our public community dental clinic is funded through Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) by both the Victorian State Government and the Commonwealth Government via the National Partnership Agreement. We operate two dental chairs five days per week providing dental care for eligible community members. The clinic supports the Inclusive Dental Service – for people with Autism and mild intellectual disability and the Outreach Dental Service, which visits local primary schools enabling screening of children’s teeth with follow up treatment available in the clinic if required.

The private dental clinic operates 3 days per week offering affordable private dental care to everyone in the community. Dr. Jane Wong is our private dentist who has a very gentle caring approach to all her patients. Appointments are available usually within a few days with priority given to emergencies. This service has continued to grow with recommendations from patients using the service.

During the pandemic all BCH dental services followed the guidelines of DHSV and the Australian Dental Association Victoria Branch. The clinic reduced services to meet level 1, 2 and 3 dental restrictions which significantly impacted the services that have been able to be provided, with at times only emergency care offered. These restrictions have greatly impacted waiting times for many patients.

We undertook modifications to the working environment to ensure the safety of both the staff and the patients. Patients who have identified they are in a high-risk group for COVID-19 have had the option to suspend their dental treatment. Additional PPE and patient COVID-19 screenings were introduced to ensure the safety of patients and staff entering the clinic.

The Dental Team worked tirelessly throughout the restrictions with this ever-changing environment.

Dental Outreach Program

From February to June 2021 the BCH Dental team visited 8 Schools and preschools, screening 835 students.

Our outreach programme to Primary schools and preschools was put on hold in the latter part of 2020 due to COVID-19 however we reached out to the schools and parents to encourage them to make an appointment at the Dental Clinic if their child was due for a Dental check-up or if they had any dental concerns. The importance of maintaining tooth brushing, a good diet during restrictions and dental check ups to develop good habits for a lifetime of healthy teeth was emphasised.

Activity	Private Clinic		Public Clinic	
	20/21	19/20	20/21	19/20
Individuals Treated	507	267	2,666	3,167
Courses of Care	590	286	3,477	3,537
Appointments	811	352	5,211	4,545
Treatments	10,523	4,408	60,794	56,475

Inclusive Dental Service

We received funding from State Trustees to undertake a project to expand our Autism Dental Service to include people with Intellectual Disability.

The new service was renamed **Inclusive Dental Service** - for people with autism and mild intellectual disability.

A project lead was appointed and together with the Dental Team the Inclusive Dental Program has been incorporated into the clinic to help improve the experience for patients with Autism or Intellectual Disability when accessing our dental service.

In May the project lead, Nicki Goodwin, was the winner of the Ocean Grove Rotary Community Service Awards - Team Member category for her outstanding work in this space

Disability Awards BCH Dental Team!

BCH Dental was one of the four finalists at the 2021 Victorian Disability Awards under the category of 'Excellence in promoting health, housing and wellbeing.' and received a 'Highly Commended' for the Inclusive Dental Program.

Great Collaboration by the Dental & Healthy and Connected Communities Teams

The Dental and Healthy and Connected Communities teams joined forces to encourage healthier eating and drinking to dental clients and their families through a fun new display at the Point Lonsdale site.

The passage through to the dental clinic is now Healthy Food and Choose Water Every Day themed. Colourful pictures of vegetables, healthy teeth and images of water characters line the walls and have already received a positive response from patients.

The visual displays will assist the dental team to engage children and families when giving dietary advice and promoting healthy eating for good dental health.

BCH Dental was one of the four finalists at the 2021 Victorian Disability Awards under the category of 'Excellence in promoting health, housing and wellbeing.'

Allied Health

Adult & Aged

BCH Primary Health Service staff continued to provide services within a very fluid and demanding setting given the many lockdown periods. Their flexible and versatile responses resulted in continued contact with clients and maintenance of connection with BCH. Agile movement to alternate service platforms (such as Telehealth) in response to COVID-19 restrictions was very successful for Dietetics and Counselling services.

One of the positive outcomes from operating in the COVID-19 pandemic environment was the identification of efficiencies in specific service settings that would not have been apparent if not for the need to modify services. A highlight for staff involved was the enthusiastic client re-engagement in group exercise activities as they were reintroduced. Cardiac Rehabilitation referrals continued increase year-on-year throughout the pandemic.

Social Support

Staff continued contact with clients during periods of lockdowns (phone calls, newsletters, 1:1 visits). The provision of high quality and personalised Meals on Wheels continued over the year with over 300 meal services delivered per month.

A grant was received from Give Where You Live grant for digital engagement of socially isolated clients. This was extended due to client contact restrictions.

Older Australian's Initiative

In December 2020 BCH was successful in a tender, obtaining Commonwealth funding to deliver the Older Australians Initiative – Geelong Otway.

The Older Australians Initiative is a program designed to help older community members (those over 65 years of age or over 55 years of age for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) recover from the effects of increased social isolation experienced during the pandemic. The support enabled the provision of a Mental Health Nursing service and care coordination across the Geelong Otway region to assist in social reconnection for isolated older people who may be at risk of, or have a mental illness.

The program's target audience was single person households and carers, with a range of physical and mental conditions. The mental health nurse has seen approximately 40 people for up to 6 sessions per person across wide geographical, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. This 12-month program has provided much needed care and support for vulnerable community members and the support has been greatly appreciated by those participating in the program.

Mood Support Group

In early 2020 BCH began facilitating a 'Mood Support Group'. The group has approximately 8-10 regulars who meet each Thursday. The aim of the group is to provide a safe place for peer support for people experiencing mental health concerns. BCH has partnered with Bellarine Training and Community Hub to deliver this program from their site."



Finally I feel like I have some direction and support. Thank you, you do a great job

Client Feedback

Case study:

Carolyn

"I moved from Phillip Island to Geelong in March 2021. I moved here because my cousin/ support person lives in Ceres. Apart from her I was isolated and once COVID lockdown hit I was lonely and left with my troubled thoughts. Initially I had the support of a Barwon Aged Care psychiatry nurse, which was great, but she recognised I needed psychological support and referred me to Sue Eddy. What a revelation she has been.

Sue has opened my heart up and helped me to relinquish my critical mind that has dominated my thinking for way too long. Through the Older Australian's Initiative program I have come to get a greater sense of self, and opening of my feelings and to be at ease in my singledom. This has been a transformative program and I feel that it has changed me for the better and more able to cope with COVID limitations."

Carolyn has now completed her 6 sessions and has been linked in to other community social supports to assist her to maintain wellness.

Carolyn and BCH employee, Sue Eddy

Quotes from Group Participants:

“

I have been coming for 5 years. It has meant an enormous amount to have a safe space to be completely myself; to be understood and not judged. The support is magnificent

“

From one week to the next, I hardly talk to anyone else but the dog, so its really lovely to connect with other

“

I really look forward to coming each week

“

The group helps me to feel safe, connected, understood and I receive compassion that I've never felt before

A large, stylized white quotation mark icon centered within a light blue circular background.

**It's a tonic for the soul,
which has allowed me to
blossom and grow**

A large, stylized white quotation mark icon centered within a teal circular background.

**I can't speak highly enough of
my experience; I have come
from the depths of despair, and
coming here is the best thing
I've done in my life; we learn
from each other, and build
friendships and empathy**

A large, stylized white quotation mark icon centered within a dark blue circular background.

**I am back to feeling
part of society**

Home Care Packages

The Australian Government has committed to providing a once in a generational \$17.7 billion reform package that includes additional 40,000 x 2 Home Care Packages (HCP) over 2021 & 2022. This will allow BCH to grow the number of HCP clients.

Currently BCH has over 100 HCP clients (clients over 65 years old) with Case Managers supporting clients to live independently in their home with services to support this goal.

Our consumer directed care approach gives clients choice, flexibility, and control over the types of services they receive.

Staff continued to provide this critical support during the pandemic.

The introduction of a Senior Case Manager and increased administration staff will support this growing area.

Child Health and Development

The Child Health and Development team (CHAD) provide a multidisciplinary therapy service for children aged 0-12 years living and/or going to pre-school or primary school on the Bellarine Peninsula.

Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy are provided by clinicians with specialised experience and qualifications in paediatrics. Using an early intervention approach to working with families, services are provided to children in their environment, including pre-school, school, at home or at our children's clinic based in Drysdale. The allied health professionals in the CHAD

team work with families to incorporate therapy into daily routines whilst supporting carers to build their skills knowledge and confidence to guide their child to achieve their goals. The full spectrum of services is provided for children with mild to moderate delay through a brief intervention model to children with diagnosed disabilities via the NDIS program.

We are privileged to work with children in an early intervention setting and support them to develop the skills they need to participate and be confident in daily activities and achieve the best possible outcomes throughout their life. The important work delivered by the CHAD team can change the trajectory of a child's life by enabling them to actively participate in the community and education settings. A significant proportion of our children have come from social and financial disadvantaged backgrounds.

This year challenged the CHAD team to adjust our model of service delivery from being primarily in the community, toward becoming creative with Telehealth, learning how to use technology remotely to have meaningful interactions with children and families. In particular, our vulnerable families with children with disabilities who have found it hard to engage with Telehealth have experienced extreme social disconnect and there has been little respite available, so the CHAD team has provided additional capacity building supports with carers and supported families to connect with family support services.

This year has seen us trial a key worker model of care with NDIS participants and commence an assessment clinic to support children with multiple delays to access other early intervention pathways through the NDIS when appropriate.

Social groups for children with difficulties in social communication and interaction were established this year between lockdowns, including Lego Friends, Girls activity group and late talkers groups.

BCH has recruited a talented team of speech therapists this year, with specialist skills in literacy, keyworker (transdisciplinary) service provision and together with the existing staff we have been able to create new models of care of assessment and best practice in early intervention.

NDIS

BCH provides a range of capacity building and core supports to NDIS participants including Counselling, Dietetics, Exercise Physiology, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Paediatric Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy, Podiatry, Psychology and Therapy Assistance.

BCH has worked in challenging and frequently changing circumstances to ensure continuity of service for NDIS participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. Face to face services at BCH centres and in community settings were maintained whenever possible but at times it was also necessary to offer services in new and different ways such as therapy sessions provided via Telehealth. At times service adjustments needed to be made at short notice demonstrating the adaptability of our team.

In late 2020 BCH was assessed against the new NDIS Practice Standards and achieved Accreditation as a registered provider. The NDIS Practice Standards create an important benchmark for BCH to assess our performance, and to demonstrate how we provide high quality and safe supports and services to NDIS participants.

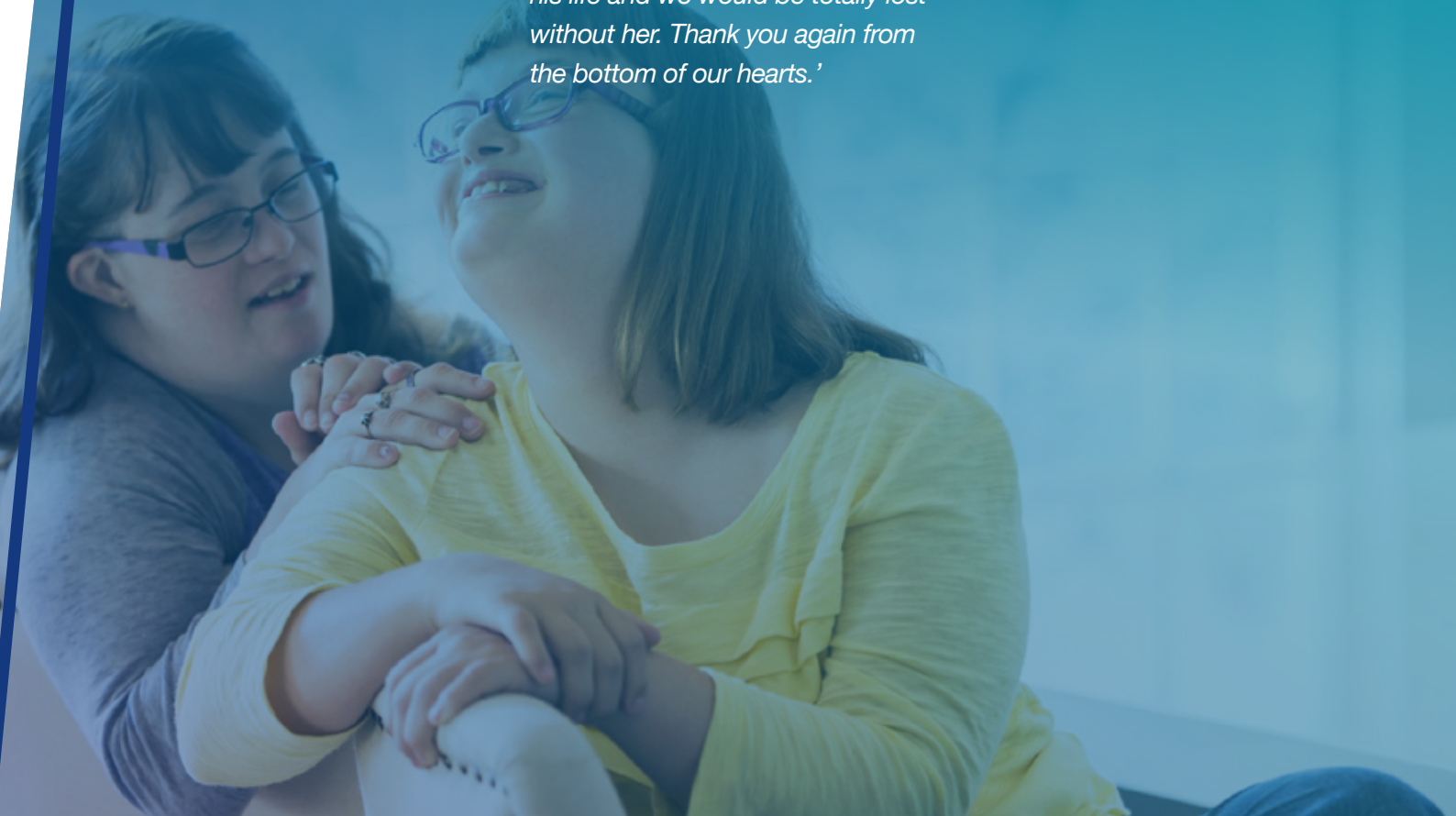
This year the NDIS worker screening clearance has been implemented across BCH.

NDIS Participant Story/feedback

'I would like to express my gratitude to your Speech Therapist - she has been fantastic with my teenager - without her my son would not be able to read. We have been seeing her for almost 2 years now and he is so much more confident with his speech, recognising words and is a much happier boy. He was so far behind other children his age when we first met his therapist, but a huge thanks to her this is now changing dramatically for the better. This therapist is such a valued part of his life and we would be totally lost without her. Thank you again from the bottom of our hearts.'

"We have felt really supported by BCH through our journey of commencing therapy for our son right through to assistance with becoming an NDIS participant. We are looking forward to continuing his speech therapy sessions and his occupational therapy appointments so that he can thrive in life.

Many thanks BCH! Our boy would not be where he is today without the incredible support we have received."



Youth Health and Wellbeing

Doctors in Secondary School

Bellarine Community Health is the provider of the Doctors in Secondary School program across four schools in the Greater Geelong and Otway region. The program provides a doctor and a nurse one day per week within a purpose-built facility on the school grounds.



During the year we have delivered 160 sessions, mostly providing mental health, physical health & sexual health services.

The service needed to quickly pivot to Telehealth during school closures and state-wide lockdown due to COVID-19. The staff navigated some very difficult situations during this time yet were able to continue to provide quality and responsive medical services.

headspace

In November the establishment process for the headspace Ocean Grove satellite commenced. This process was supported by headspace National, Western Victoria Primary Health Network and Barwon Child Youth and Family, the lead agency of headspace Geelong. The establishment was a lengthy process to ensure the new service could meet all the requirements of a headspace satellite. The implementation included engagement with young people to seek their input into the location, design and furnishing of the site. Youth participation is a core principle of headspace.

headspace provides mental health services to 12-25 year olds and provides information, support and services across the key areas which may affect a young person's health and wellbeing.

The establishment of this new service will enhance access to services for young people, their family and friends. Young people will be able to access services to support mental health, physical health (including sexual health) and alcohol and other drugs.

The headspace satellite is operated by Bellarine Community Health and is a satellite of the headspace Geelong centre.

In June recruitment commenced for the new headspace team in readiness for the satellite to open in August 2021, which, given the challenges for young people over the past years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, will be a great asset to the community.





The Youth Team showing their support for respect and zero tolerance to violence

Student Placements

In partnership with Deakin University and headspace Geelong, Bellarine Community Health provided the opportunity for four Occupational Therapist 4th year student placements with the Youth Services team. Two blocks of placement occurred with two students for eight weeks.

The students provided individual and group sessions via face-to-face, Telehealth and within school settings. Two art projects were also able to be offered in between COVID-19 school closures and lockdowns.

The collaboration will see a further two Occupational Therapy students producing a project piece – multi media presentations for the waiting room at the newly established headspace Ocean Grove site to enhance and educate clients, friends and family around health related topics.

As part of this project, the centre will also be hosting four Clinical Psychology students, providing a very much welcomed addition of mental health support to the team.

Throughout the year multiple enquires for student placement continued to come through with a shortage of available organisations that were able to support them through COVID-19.

BCH was very fortunate to be able to continue to support our next generation of workforce and valued their contribution to the team.

Youth Services

BCH's Drysdale Youth services continue to grow and provide youth health services, now in its 13th year.

Referral numbers have continued to be high with the majority of clients seeking mental health support. Over 5000 sessions were conducted over the 2020-2021 report period delivering multi-disciplinary care in the areas of Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Podiatry, Nursing, General Practice and Mental Health.

The youth team provides services under several different funding streams including state and commonwealth funding, NDIS, TAC, Workcover and Medicare Benefit Scheme.

During the year the rolling out of the Eating Disorder Mental Health Care plans through Medicare has provided an opportunity to provide better coordinated and extended care to consumers. This has given us an additional funding stream for dietetic service, enhancing our capacity to see more clients.

One of the greatest achievements of the year was a swift and almost seamless transition to working from home. The team was able to flex at very short notice and managed to continue to provide services with no requirement for any team member needing to reduce hours. The youth team was the first team back onsite (with the exception of the community nursing and dental teams) after the initial lockdown and then remained open during subsequent lockdowns to provide essential face to face services.

The youth team collaborated with the Department of Education and provided extensive support to students during school holidays whilst teachers and school wellbeing staff took a well-deserved rest. Deakin University once again partnered with us and provided an opportunity for a provisional psychologist in their final year to sit with the team and conduct check-ins, risk and safety assessment and internal and external referrals to services for students across the Geelong area.

The youth team was happy to support the many campaigns that were run through the year but especially happy to support any messaging around respect and zero tolerance to violence.

*With you
for life*

BCH acknowledges the financial support of:



Grants were received for a number of projects and activities from:



BCH also thanks the individuals and families from whom we have received donations this year.



With you for life