

# Bellarine Community Health

*Our Year In Review*

Annual Report  
2021/22

**bch** Bellarine  
Community  
Health  
*With you for life*





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

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.

BCH acknowledges financial support from the State and Commonwealth Governments along with private fee-for-service, community grants and donations.



# Message from the Board Chair and CEO

**The key point in the reporting year of all organisations is the presentation of the Annual Report. It is the opportunity to publicly reflect on achievements, to acknowledge the work of the organisation, the contributions of stakeholders and to celebrate milestones reached.**

It measures a point in time but should never be viewed as an end point.

There have been many opportunities for celebration over the year, a new strategic plan to action, programs up and running again and sites becoming busier by the day.

We celebrated 50 Years of Bellarine Community Health and continued with planning for and delivering on federally funded building projects.

Last year the Board of Directors and the BCH Executive team committed to continue to focus with needle-like precision on those aspects of business needed to deliver on the turnaround strategy with the aim of achieving the best possible outcomes for the community, with the support of our greatest asset, our staff.

We said it would be hard work, not without pain points, but can now report on the success of our collective efforts.

After consecutive years of operating deficits, we have reported an operating surplus of \$631,213 (before capital income and depreciation). There are many factors contributing to this outcome including data analysis, reporting systems and contractual negotiations. Critically the contribution of staff to our improved position cannot be underestimated. There has been significant change in the way we manage our operations and staff have been involved and contributed strongly to the improved outcome.

Building works to redevelop our Portarlington site are underway, planning and design for the Ocean Grove hub is continuing with the intent to begin building in 2023 and an outcome to secure the future of The Eric Tolliday units was reached. The collaboration with Sirovilla has been vital in getting these units upgraded and suitable for affordable accommodation for people on the Bellarine. We look forward to seeing residents back on site before year's end.

Our learnings across the pandemic years are immeasurable. As an organisation we have grown in knowledge and developed newer ways of working, always with the needs of the community front and centre.

In fact, these years have reinforced the value and importance of community health to all. We are a frontline service, a point of connection and for many remain the isolation breaker. We are the service that aims to keep the community well and to be there when needed.

This year BCH joined 10 other like-minded Community Health Services across rural and regional Victoria to form the Alliance of Rural and Regional Health Services (ARRCH). The major aim of this alliance is to advance the status of community health within the Victorian health sector and to increase the recognition of community health as significant contributors to the health and wellbeing of rural and regional communities.

We are indebted to, and publicly thank our BCH team; amazing staff, executive, volunteers, Community Advisory Group (CAG) members and directors who all work with a common purpose to ensure the delivery of quality services and support to all in our communities.

They are without doubt the people who make BCH an organisation we are not only proud to be associated with but recommend to others as the service of choice.

This 2021-2022 Annual Report attests to the fact that relentless focus on the business does pay dividends and can be actioned whilst continuing to deliver quality services to our communities.



**Fay Agterhuis**  
Board Chair



**Garry Ellis**  
CEO



Members of the Alliance of Rural and Regional Health Services (ARRCH).

# About Us

**Bellarine Community Health Ltd (BCH) is a not-for-profit with a rich history in providing innovative health and wellbeing services to the communities of the Bellarine.**

We operate from 5 locations, providing a range of primary health care services and health promotion activities for people of all ages.

We provide allied health services such as podiatry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, exercise physiology, and counselling along with mental health services, social support groups for adults and children, meals on wheels, continence services and exercise groups for adults and both public and private dental services.

Our Community Nursing and Palliative Care services are highly regarded across the Bellarine along with our comprehensive services for children and young people including speech pathology, dietetics and nutrition, mental health, OTs, and counselling.

We provide a range of multidisciplinary specialist services including cardiac rehabilitation, headspace services, school-based youth health called Doctors in Secondary Schools, and Home Care Packages.

BCH is committed to making positive contributions to primary health care and delivering quality services to the communities of the Bellarine.

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

## Board Sub-Committees

- Governance Committee (comprising 4 Board Directors and Secretariat)
- Quality, Safety & Risk Committee (comprising 5 Board Directors, CEO, Quality & Compliance Manager, People & Culture Manager, and Secretariat)
- Finance & Audit Committee (comprising 4 Board Directors, CEO, CFO, Senior Accountant, and Secretariat)

## Board of Directors



**Fay Agterhuis**  
Chair



**Tim Walsh**  
Deputy Chair



**Virginia Dickson-Swift**  
Board member  
(resigned 24 Nov 2021)



**John Lesser**  
Board member  
(elected 16 Dec 2021)



**Robert James**  
Board member



**Rod Slattery**  
Treasurer



**Lucy Simms**  
Board member



**Kristina Dimasi**  
Board member



**Jean Paul**  
Board member



**Mark Harris**  
Board member



## Guiding Principles

*We strive...*

to become a sustainable organisation with a strategic mindset.

*We value...*

and support our staff, clients, and volunteers.

*We work...*

with our community to design services and programs to meet their needs.

*We act at all times...*

in the interests of the organisation and the community.

*We are guided by...*

best practice actions – always.

## Strategic Plan

**A highlight of the year was the development of a new Strategic Plan 2022-2025 for BCH. Extensive consultation was conducted with community, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders to develop a plan that will respond to the growing population and changes to the health and social needs across the Bellarine.**

Key principles to drive BCH were identified, with the Strategic Plan endorsed by the Board of Directors and publicly launched in May 2022.

These guiding principles are front of mind in all decision making and operational processes.

# Our People

The Board of Directors extended the contract period for CEO Garry Ellis until 30 June 2025.

In June 2022 BCH had 158 paid employees – 120 part-time, 14 casual and 24 full-time.

We are committed to delivering outstanding health care to the people of the Bellarine by working collaboratively with all BCH staff to ensure that every employee is valued and supported.

**Our success is reflected in the level of commitment our staff bring to their work, and the measure of satisfaction they are personally rewarded with each day.**

New employees are welcomed to BCH in a friendly and supportive way, provided with an online induction program prior to their commencement and a comprehensive onsite orientation regarding their role and responsibilities on commencing with the organisation.

Ongoing training and development is provided to staff to ensure that they feel engaged, supported and connected to their work. Staff are provided with a wide scope of education, training, and development, including:

- Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Quality and Standards
- Cultural competency
- Gender equity and equality
- Professional knowledge and competencies.

## Recruitment

The impact of Covid-19 on recruitment continues across BCH, as people look to tick off their bucket list, change industries, or pivot careers as the world begins to open again.

Recruitment of allied health clinicians is an ongoing challenge. A record low unemployment rate, and greater flexibility in workplaces has made recruitment very competitive.

Despite this challenge, BCH has welcomed some remarkably skilled and knowledgeable people to the team over the past year.

BCH employees have adapted to the changing workforce well, with many staff now balancing a work week split between home and office.

BCH continues to focus on building a positive and inclusive culture and ensuring that our staff are nurtured, engaged, and supported in their work.

“ Helping is rewarding and it’s great to be part of something that makes people smile



## Volunteering with BCH

Volunteers are vital to BCH and even more so in yet another challenging year of change.

All volunteers had to provide proof of Covid-19 vaccinations, and juggle personal and family challenges to honour their commitment to BCH and community.

They adapted with professionalism and flexibility to meet requests during a year of ‘on again, off again’ and last-minute calls for ‘help’ as staff managed Covid-19 related changes and challenges. This included extended periods with very few volunteer roles in operation.

**Volunteers work across all areas of the organisation and some highlights for the year include:**

- Supporting Covid-19 frontline activities including preparing PPE and documentation packs, packing RAT tests, supporting reception with temperature checking and vaccination clinics
- Preparation for the new Portarlington Ladies Auxiliary (PLAX) Op Shop in the renovated BCH Portarlington site

- Program support for Social Support groups
- Meals on Wheels delivery and client transport programs
- Gardening, administration, cleaning equipment and vehicle support
- Introduction of Years of Service certificates for all active volunteers with some recognised for 28, 32 and 45 years of service
- A volunteer support group was established, monthly social outings organised, and a volunteer social media page set up to help connect volunteers.

Overall, 107 volunteers were active during the financial year, contributing 5857 hours in roles across the organisation. We welcomed 23 new volunteers to the team during 2021-2022.

“ I love working with a fabulous team of staff and volunteers who are always so energetic and passionate about making sure our clients enjoy every minute of every day they attend the program



# Healthy & Connected Communities



## Our Healthy and Connected Communities Team (HCCT) has developed their new 2021-2025 Health Promotion Plan - 'Live Well Bellarine'.

Health promotion work is an important part of BCH's activities, complementing the delivery of primary health care services, community support programs and wellbeing activities.

The team works across the entire Bellarine Peninsula, with a particular focus on those in our community who experience the greatest challenges in achieving and maintaining good health.

The priorities in the current four-year plan include increasing healthy eating and active living and decreasing tobacco related harm. Our target population is children 0-18 and their families.



## Community Partnerships

Community partnerships and collaboration are vital to our Health Promotion work to ensure we have a coordinated and holistic approach to improving the health and wellbeing of our community.

We would like to thank our key partners including Local Government, Barwon Health, G21, Farm My School and all community groups and organisations that support our health promotion initiatives and programs.

## Community Advisory Group (CAG)

CAG is an ongoing advisory group that provides advice to the BCH Board on the planning, delivery and evaluation of community health and care from a client or community perspective.

CAG has provided significant input into community engagement for the BCH 2022-2025 Strategic Plan and provided a paper to the BCH Board on mental health.

CAG welcomes new members and encourages diversity in membership.

## Youth Guerrilla Garden

**In 2021, a group of dynamic young Bellarine eco-warriors joined BCH to create a Youth Community Garden, built by young people, for young people, located on a neglected piece of land behind headspace Ocean Grove.**

The Youth Guerrilla Garden (YGG) is an initiative of BCH's Healthy and Connected Community Team's Bellarine Youth Agents of Change Environmental Leadership initiative, which takes a whole of community approach to healthy eating and community preparedness in the face of climate change.

The youth garden was built during a working bee where all youth participants learnt to build water efficient wicking garden beds and 'no dig' vegetable garden.

The YGG is the first dedicated youth community garden on the Bellarine Peninsula. The garden was established with seed funding from VicHealth. This youth development project connects with young people around growing food, environmental sustainability and climate change and gives young people the opportunity to be change makers in their own community.

The YGG crew learn new skills in sustainable food growing, reducing their food carbon footprint, and community leadership and encourages them to build and share their knowledge with each other, their peers, and their community.

# Primary Health Care

Primary health care is essential care and often the first contact a person has with the health system. It refers to a broad range of health services provided by medical professionals including Nurses, Doctors, Dentists and Allied Health Clinicians.

BCH supports the community through the provision of health and wellbeing services to help clients maintain good health, with regular health checks, health advice when they have concerns, and support for ongoing care.

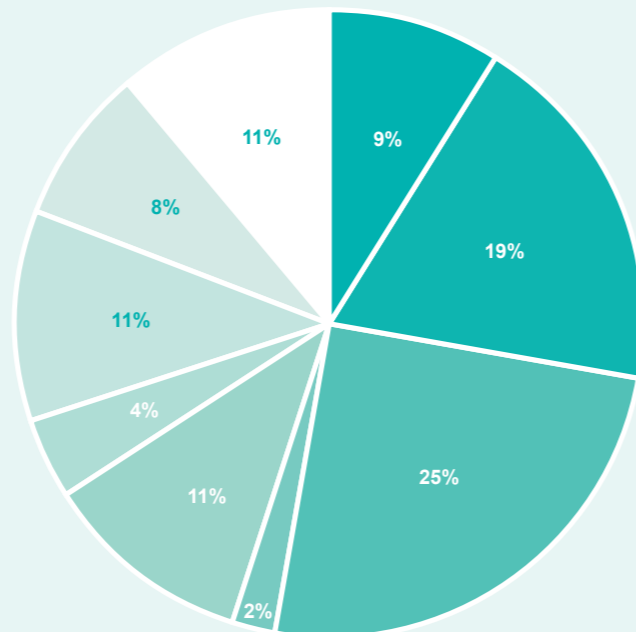
Our adult services include podiatry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, exercise physiology, and counselling, social support groups and exercise groups, meals on wheels, and continence and dental services.

Comprehensive services for children and young people include speech pathology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, dietetics and nutrition, mental health support, dental and youth nursing.

Our community nursing and palliative care team provide highly valued support and expertise allowing people to receive care in their homes.

BCH provides a range of multidisciplinary specialist services including cardiac rehabilitation, headspace Ocean Grove, a school-based youth health program called Doctors in Secondary Schools in 4 locations, and home care packages.

## Hours by Service



Counselling 9%	Dietetics 2%	OT 11%
Groups 19%	Physio 11%	Podiatry 8%
Nursing 25%	Meals 4%	Speech Pathology 11%

Graph does not include BCH GP or Dental Statistics

I can honestly state that everything BCH has provided on our behalf has been a strong example of the ability of Community Health to offer the much-needed support to local community residents in their time of need



## Dental

**Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions during the year had a significant impact on the Dental service and the Dental team, navigating staff shortages and the challenges of rescheduling patient appointments.**

Wait times for dental services grew significantly. At the start of the financial year, the wait time for general dental services was 34.9 months.

A short-term funding injection from the Federal Government through Dental Health Services Victoria allowed the team to reduce that wait time down to 8.1 months by June 2022.

This was achieved through a combination of additional in-house appointments and a voucher system allowing patients to access general dental services at private dental clinics. More than 1,700 patients were offered care during that time.

The team also created a new program of oral health education sessions which is providing additional support for dental patients and has been well received. The Oral Health Educator provides patients with the knowledge, skills, and resources to broaden their understanding of what it takes to improve their oral health.

We have resumed our Dental Outreach Program following Covid restrictions, visiting most of the local childcare, Preschools and Primary schools on the Bellarine Peninsula to conduct dental health checks. There was an increase in referrals into the clinic for treatment following these outreach visits.

The Dental team continue to offer a personalised and inclusive dental service for clients with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or intellectual disability. This service pathway considers the unique needs of individual patients and where possible makes adjustments to the way care is provided to create an environment that enables patients to feel more comfortable and able to receive dental care.

A private dental service is provided 3 days per week and has provided enhanced access to dental care for the broader community.

Activity	PUBLIC CLINIC	
	21/22	20/21
Individuals Treated	3,680	2,666
Courses of Care	4,135	3,477
Appointments	5,163	5,211
Inclusive Dental Appointments	105	



“  
 We could never have managed without your visits. Fred used to call you Nurse on Wheels. Your kindness and care will never be forgotten

## Community Nursing & Palliative Care

**The BCH community nursing service provides wound management, chronic disease management, medication support and administration, personal hygiene support, hospital in the home services, post-acute care services and other nursing services as required. Our service provides these nursing interventions with funding provided by the state and federal government for eligible Australians.**

**Our service area covers the Bellarine Peninsula and residents who are not eligible for government funded services are able to access the services by paying privately. In this last year we delivered 13,423 hours of nursing services to our communities, which is an increase from the 11,482 hours of service delivery in the previous financial year, allowing more of our residents the choice to receive nursing services in the comfort of their own home.**

In addition to community nursing services, BCH offers specialist palliative care services to assist people with a life-limiting illness to live in the place of their choice, with a focus on achieving the best possible quality of life. Whilst the majority of people wish to die at home, others prefer to die elsewhere. This is a very personal choice and our team of palliative care specialists support the person's wishes when developing a plan of care to assist the person to manage their illness at home and plan for their death, be it at home, in hospital or in care. During the last year, our team was able to support 65 people to die at home in-line with their wishes.

The BCH Palliative Care Team delivers specialist palliative care via an interdisciplinary team consisting of a Nurse Practitioner, community specialist palliative care Nurses, Occupational Therapists, external medical support and a recently employed family support worker.

Our shared model of care works in collaboration with the BCH Community Nursing service to ensure patients and their families receive the best quality of care in the privacy and comfort of their own home with the reassurance of 24 hour, 7 day a week community palliative care support.

In May 2022, the team developed and delivered a memorial service to honour the 135 patients who had died during 2021. The ceremony was attended by families, friends and carers who welcomed the opportunity to remember their loved ones in an environment where they were supported, and their grief acknowledged by BCH. The memorial service will now be offered to families and friends on an annual basis.





## GP Clinic

**The BCH GP Clinic provided a critical service during the year delivering weekly vaccination clinics to support the State Government's vaccination rollout and Covid-19 education campaign. Child specific Covid-19 vaccination clinics were offered and well attended.**

As Covid-19 vaccination ambassadors, BCH built community confidence in the vaccination program and was able to support many vulnerable community members.

“

The GP Covid clinic at Portarlinton was efficient, safe, timely & friendly, very professional, made me feel comfortable, thorough & reassuring

## Adult Allied Health

Our clinicians continue to adapt and refine their service delivery in line with Covid-19 restrictions and have successfully embedded a combination of face to face and telehealth services, particularly for services such as counselling and dietetics.

A highlight was the permanent return of group exercise programs including resistance training and low-level balance/mobility exercise groups along with an osteoarthritis group. Our physiotherapists work closely with the exercise physiologists and allied health assistants to transition clients from one-to-one services to an independent/group exercise setting.

Occupational therapy (OT) is a home-based service offering home visits and assessment services across the Bellarine. The team has been fully staffed for the first time in two years and there has been a progressive decrease in the wait time for services. A Federal Government initiative funding simple home modifications has been well subscribed. The OT team also provides significant support for the BCH Palliative Care program.

Referrals for the Cardiac Rehabilitation program remain high, and consideration is being given to expanding this program to other BCH sites in 2023.



“

My son has recently completed his therapy lessons with your clinician. I cannot speak more highly of them as a Speech Pathologist. They helped my son achieve all his goals and gave him the confidence he needed. The attention to detail was excellent. They went above and beyond to help us and gave me a lot of guidance to help my son to continue to move forward now without them. We cannot thank you enough

## Child Health and Development

**The Child Health and Development team provides multidisciplinary allied health services for children and young people, aged 0-12 years, living, or attending school or pre-school on the Bellarine Peninsula.**

Paediatric occupational therapy and speech pathology are provided in a clinic setting, via telehealth, at home or in an educational environment. This can be supporting a child to learn to tie shoelaces, prepare for their school routines, develop their language, or build capacity in parents.

Group environments can be perfect for addressing multiple developmental areas and BCH ran several group programs such as little talkers (for late talking toddlers), circle of security (attachment theory parenting), or lego @ friends (social skills and fine motor skills using lego @).

A new Child and Family Engagement Practitioner role has strengthened our engagement with families/guardians. A thorough screening of a child's needs and coordination of their care including linking to other service providers allows our clinicians time to deliver therapeutic supports in a timely manner. Families say they really value this additional support.

The Child Health team continues to respond to the changing demands and landscape of Covid-19. For some of our older children telehealth continues to be the preferred mode of service delivery. Masks and other precautions are also challenging for the team when working on non-verbal communication skills or oral motor control.

The addition of a senior paediatric speech pathologist is providing strong clinical and professional leadership, support in staff capacity building, staff growth and further developing speech pathology services. This role is important in the expansion of services to adolescent aged clients, the proposal for trans and gender diverse voice services, and in strengthening clinical supervision and governance.

Child health service provision uses an early intervention approach by providing services that are child centred, family focused, flexible, culturally sensitive, respectful, and supportive. This approach builds on the strengths of the child and families/community.

The needs of children and young people are seen in the context of their age, developmental stage, gender, and culture, and supports already in place. This approach empowers the child or young person to participate meaningfully in their home and community life and is seen to have a positive lifetime impact during a period of critical development.



# Youth Services



“

We're really proud to have been able to support young people for the past year in a safe and accessible environment

## NDIS

**The Child Health team received some short-term funding to deliver specialist assessments for children and young people to enable them to test their NDIS eligibility or enhance NDIS planning.**

An assessment clinic established in collaboration with the Youth Services team to focus on neuro-diverse assessments is a great opportunity to consider what sustainable service model we may offer into the future.

Another area of high demand within the Bellarine Peninsula is access to NDIS funded allied health services. Children and young people can receive funding through NDIS then have difficulty in accessing services because of a limited number of providers or service capacity. The Child Health team is working to help address this demand through service growth however staff recruitment has made this challenging.

## Youth Health and Wellbeing

Our Drysdale Youth Services navigated Covid-19 restrictions in the second half of 2021 without significant interruption to services for young people.

Referrals for mental health support continued to rise, and the recruitment of a senior mental health professional along with a mental health occupational therapist and community nurse strengthened service capacity.

With a senior mental health clinician on staff, BCH was able to offer psychology internships for the first time. A partnership with Deakin University saw 3 students continue their vocational pathway to gain the experience to become general Psychologists.

Mental health outreach sessions continued at three secondary schools throughout the school year, providing one to one psychological support for students.

At Geelong High, a mental health education program was rolled out to year eight students covering topics such as the importance of being socially active, food and mood, mindfulness and the benefits of sleep and exercise on mental health.

## Doctors in Secondary Schools

The Doctors in Secondary Schools program is a key component of BCH's support for young people across the greater Geelong region. This program gives students access to a doctor and nurse within the school environment and the opportunity for education sessions on health, alcohol and drugs and sexual health to the broader school communities.

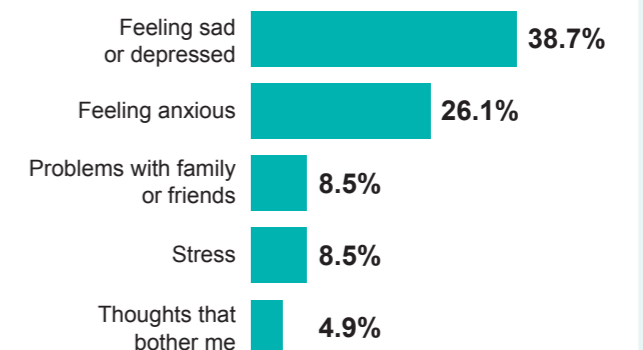
During school shutdowns and periods of learning from home, BCH continued to deliver services to vulnerable students who were attending school and telehealth to those studying at home.

## headspace

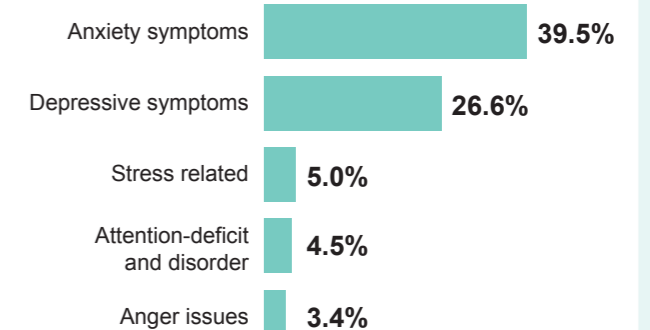
The BCH operated headspace Ocean Grove satellite was established in August 2021, with a steady stream of referrals and 2,800 appointments made for young people, their families and their friends during the year. Even more significant, 256 young people came to a headspace centre for support for the very first time highlighting the value of this local service.

The establishment of this facility on the Bellarine Peninsula is a wonderful outcome for young people and a true community collaboration with support from parent centre headspace Geelong, in collaboration with Barwon Child Youth & Family, Stride Mental Health Limited, the commissioning body, Western Victoria Primary Health Network (WVPHN) and headspace National.

### Top 5 Reasons for coming to headspace



### Top 5 Presenting issues



# Health & Wellbeing Support for Adults



## Older Australian's Initiative

This Commonwealth funded program targeting older, vulnerable community members with limited social supports and complex physical and mental health challenges was offered 3 days per week for 12 months and came to an end in February 2021.

**A BCH mental health nurse provided more than 380 hours of much needed care and support to many across the broader Geelong region.**

The rolling Covid-19 lockdowns made service delivery difficult with appointments cancelled and rescheduled as restrictions changed. Many community education sessions at community venues, support groups or retirement villages were greatly impacted however despite these challenges the program had a significant impact for those participating with support and care offered as restrictions allowed and connection to ongoing supports an outcome for many participants.

Rising Covid-19 case numbers led to an increase in anxiety for many in the target group. The mental health nurse spent additional time with program participants on vaccine education and supporting them in other ways to move from being vaccine hesitant, to becoming vaccinated.

## Mood Support Group

In partnership with Bellarine Training and Community Hub, BCH delivers the 'Mood Support Group', a mental health therapeutic intervention group.

Group numbers have doubled since this support group began, with more than two hundred hours of support provided during the 2021-2022 financial year.

Regular participants are aged between 35 to 80 and are provided with group therapy delivered by a credentialed mental health nurse. The group has a strong bond which has developed over the years as they've supported each other through many mental health challenges. This group provides connection, education, and purpose.



## Connecting our elderly community

Isolation continues to be a major issue as we navigate the Covid-19 years and this year the Social Support team was able to roll out a Digital Access Program for socially isolated people.

The program, funded by a 'Give Where You Live Foundation' grant, helped individuals learn how to navigate internet-based activities and digital devices.

Participants gained knowledge and confidence and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. One participant received a facetime call from her daughter in Singapore after her mother sent her an email for the very first time.

The Social Support team has now added tablet-based activities to its group sessions and with support from the BCH IT team delivers digital cyber safety talks for seniors.

Other initiatives from the Social Support team have included special themed lunches around celebrations such as the Queen's Jubilee, and a wonderful inter-generational morning tea and games session with students from the local primary school.

## Home Care Packages

Home care packages provide a range of aged care services delivered in the community to support senior Australians with complex care needs to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

BCH is proud to partner with older people on the Bellarine Peninsula and beyond to support living and ageing well in our community.

The home care packages team deliver coordinated packages of care and services to meet older people's assessed needs and goals, providing choice and flexibility in how care is delivered.

Providing support in the home has never been more important and BCH provides flexible services to support people on the Peninsula and beyond to remain living at home.

In the last year, BCH has grown the number of older people we support through Home Care Packages by more than 12%, offering services through a choice of providers including BCH's own podiatrists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, nurses and dietitians.

As people discover the benefits of a beautiful coastal lifestyle, our team continues to grow and our skilled case managers support people to make meaningful decisions about living well at home.

BCH's home care package program provides care and services through trusted local partners, and look forward to offering even more opportunities for support at home.

# Capital Works - Building Better Health Facilities

## Portarlington

**BCH capital works projects continue to be impacted by Covid-19 and the more than 20% increase in construction costs that have occurred because of the pandemic.**

Building tenders for the redevelopment of the Portarlington site, funded by a Commonwealth Government capital grant, came in significantly higher than expected, forcing the scope of the work to be stripped back, resulting in delays in town planning and building permit approvals and additional permit requirements.

A builder was appointed in November 2021 with demolition of the northern section of the building occurring in March 2022.

BCH secured a State Government grant for the purchase and installation of equipment to enhance safety and security at the Portarlington site.

## Ocean Grove

Protracted negotiations have been underway to secure land for the construction of the Ocean Grove Health and Wellbeing Hub. The funded project will go ahead, but the significant delays in securing the land and rising construction costs will result in a smaller facility, utilising available Commonwealth Government funding.

In 2021, BCH received a grant from the Anthony Costa Foundation for the construction and fit out of a sensory/assessment space for children and young people in the new hub.

## headspace Ocean Grove

Renovations to the City of Greater Geelong owned building, leased by BCH, allowed for the establishment of a headspace satellite site which opened in August 2021.

The renovations to this building have allowed BCH to deliver services to young people.

The facility was officially opened by the Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt in March 2022.



“This partnership aligns with the aims and objectives of Bellarine Community Health to support the health and wellbeing of vulnerable communities on the Bellarine”

## Eric Tolliday Units

BCH is delighted to partner with Retirement Village operator Sirovilla to renovate and reopen the Eric Tolliday independent living units at the Point Lonsdale site.

The 16 units are being renovated in stages and are being allocated to meet the community need for affordable housing and provide secure housing for low-income seniors in the region.

Sirovilla is taking on the redevelopment and will manage operations of the units under a lease arrangement with BCH.

## Environmental Sustainability

BCH recognises that climate change is a health emergency and the single greatest health challenge facing our communities.

The Australian Medical Association Federal Council has declared that “climate change is real and will have the earliest and most severe health consequences on vulnerable populations around the world, including in Australia and the Pacific region.”

In 2021- 2022, BCH took action to improve practices impacting our environment, including attending several Borough of Queenscliffe Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) Leaders Action Group meetings, engaging a consultant to audit energy usage at all sites and forming an Environmental Sustainability Advisory Group.

BCH has now developed an Environmental Sustainability Action Plan which is endorsed by the Board and has been shared with BCH staff and promoted across BCH sites.

This plan sets an aspirational target to achieve a year-on-year reduction in carbon emissions based on activities undertaken.

### The objectives of the plan include:

- BCH will endeavour to mitigate the impacts of climate change through strategies to reduce our carbon footprint
- BCH will be a community leader and trusted voice, educating our community on the impacts of climate change on health and well being
- BCH commits to increasing community (internal and external) capacity to mitigate the impacts of climate change and strategies to respond and adapt to these impacts.
- BCH will showcase and celebrate our environmental sustainability leadership.



# Communicating with Our Community



## Customer Service

The BCH Customer Service team is key to our client engagement, and they receive regular positive feedback from clients.

We continue to work on improving processes to enhance our clients' experiences including transition to a more paperless process, and ways to streamline our clinical processes including access to my health record for better client care. BCH has streamlined procedures for quicker and more consistent invoicing and introduced automated supplier verification to streamline setting up suppliers and reduce the risk of fraud.

Our information management team has focused on improvements to government data reporting requirements to better report what we do and secure our government funding.

## BCH website

How our clients access information is extremely important so a focus during the year was updating the BCH website to a new cost-effective platform that has a more modern look and is vastly more user friendly.

The project team, with input from our Community Advisory Group and volunteers, focused on reviewing copy and developing and improving the function and navigation of pages to create a much improved experience for users accessing our website.

## Social Media

BCH social media is becoming an increasingly important platform to engage with clients, gain feedback and promote services. All BCH platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, continue to grow user engagement.

Social media has also been a key in our role as a Community Ambassador in the Covid-19 Vaccination rollout. Information sharing, access to videos from health experts and notification of vaccination clinics has helped reach many in our community.

## Contact Us

**Phone:** 1800 007 224

**Referrals:** [intake@bch.org.au](mailto:intake@bch.org.au)

**Youth Referrals:** [youth@bch.org.au](mailto:youth@bch.org.au)

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