

Annual Report
2022/23

Bellarine Community Health

Our Year in Review



bch Bellarine
Community
Health
With you for life

Contents

Message from the Board Chair & CEO	4
Who We Are	6
The Faces of BCH	8
Focusing on our client experience	9
The Value of Community Health	11
Connecting our communities	12
Health & Wellbeing services for our community	14
Contact	24

Acknowledgement of Country

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

As an organisation we support the Uluru Statement from the Heart as it aligns with our values and priorities to support the health and wellbeing of all communities.

Statement of Diversity

We are working to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in our communities no matter their age, race, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity or cultural background. Our services are accessible to everyone regardless of social or economic status. We value and respect the diversity of our staff, volunteers, clients and communities.

Respect 2040

We are a proud member of Respect 2040 which is a movement to provide the resources and support for individual organisations and groups to take on and progress meaningful gender equality action, improving our community and our society while meeting the legal requirements of the state-wide Gender Equality Strategy.

Child Safety Commitment

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Children and young people have the right to give their views and opinions about decisions that affect them and protecting them is the responsibility of everyone at BCH.

Sustainability Statement

We join other health organisations around the world in recognising climate change as a health emergency. Climate change is the single greatest health challenge facing humanity and we are committed to mitigating its impact through strategies to reduce our carbon footprint.

Acknowledgment of funding

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



Message from the Board Chair & CEO



Fay Agterhuis
Board Chair



Garry Ellis
CEO

It is pleasing to report that the financial turnaround strategy implemented by the Board of Directors in 2020 has achieved significant success, with the operating result (excluding depreciation, donated land and capital income) for 2022-23 being a small deficit of \$80k.

This result has been achieved by a continuing focus on productivity and funded target achievement. While adapting to this concept has not been without its challenges, our staff have responded positively, with targets met consistently and client feedback reflecting the high quality of care delivered.

Along with financial results, the culture of the organisation has continued to improve. This has been demonstrated on numerous occasions where successful recruitment has been shown to be the result of people seeking to work at BCH as a matter of choice. It is undoubtedly clear that our staff work with our clients who are at the centre of all decision making.

Some of the major highlights for the year are:

- Successful outcomes achieved in the NDIS Mid-Cycle Review, and accreditation under the National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Health Care Standards - BCH was amongst the first agencies to undergo this review, with positive results and comments from the auditors

- The redeveloped Portarlington building was opened in April. This project allowed the restart of group programs at the site after a long absence. Clients are enjoying the large, light-filled space

The Portarlington Ladies Auxiliary has occupied a significantly larger space for the "Op-Shop" created as part of this project. It is reported that business is booming!

- We publicly announced the donation of a block of land by the Corless family, developers of the Kingston Estate in Ocean Grove, to BCH. This land will be the site of our new child, youth and family hub that will serve the Bellarine community as it continues to grow over coming years. Without the support of the Corless Family and funding from the Commonwealth Government, this project could not proceed.

- BCH continues to be an active member of the Alliance of Rural & Regional Health (ARRCH). This group has been successful in raising the profile of community health as a major contributor to the overall health sector in Victoria. Several proposals have been put to government for new and innovative statewide services and we are awaiting the outcome of these submissions.

We sincerely thank our Volunteers, Staff, Executive Team and Directors for their continued diligence, passion, and commitment to providing services to our community. Each individual or collective action makes a positive difference, and as a team, the outcomes are multiplied.

We also thank and recognise our funders, including the State and Commonwealth governments, donors and philanthropists, and other stakeholders and partners who make what we do possible.



Who We Are

BCH is the largest healthcare provider on the Bellarine with a physical presence in five locations. We provide a wide range of health and wellbeing services to communities across the Bellarine and beyond.

There are several ways the community can access our services including through State and Commonwealth Government funding streams and private fee-for-service.

Board Directors and members of the Executive Team have undertaken a Fundamentals of Governing for Reform in Aged Care course through the Commonwealth Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. The course builds the core skills, mindsets and capabilities of governing body members and executives.

Our Board Directors participate in the following sub-committees:

- Governance Committee (comprising 4 Board Directors and the Executive Assistant to the CEO and Board as secretariat)
- Quality, Safety & Risk Committee (comprising 5 Board Directors, CEO, Quality and Risk Manager, Executive Director Child, Youth & Families, and Executive Assistant to the CEO and Board as secretariat)
- Finance & Audit Committee (comprising 4 Board Directors, CEO, CFO, Senior Accountant, and Executive Assistant to the CEO and Board as secretariat).

The CEO holds the position of company secretary.

Board Meetings and Board Sub Committee Meetings are held monthly.



Board of Directors



Fay Agterhuis
Chair



Rod Slattery
Treasurer



Robert James
Board Director



Mark Harris
Board Director



Kristina Dimasi
Board Director



Tim Walsh
Deputy Chair



Jean Paul
Board Director



John Lesser
Board Director



Lucy Simms
Board Director

Our Executive Team

Our Executive team comprises the Chief Executive Officer and three Executives who oversee staff and services across the following areas:

- Finance & Information Management, Intake & Reception, Information Technology, Capital Works
- Ambulatory Care, Community Nursing & Palliative Care, Home Care Packages
- Child Health & Development, Youth Health & Wellbeing, Dental & Oral Health, Healthy & Connected Communities
- Communications, Quality & Risk, Procurement Contracts & Facilities Maintenance, People & Culture

The Faces of BCH

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

Staff numbers remain stable. Most employees are part time with increased flexibility of work hours and days a hallmark of the changes in work practices post pandemic.

We have been fortunate to be able to recruit to most vacant positions, attracting experienced and skilled people across every discipline and service offering, including those in senior management. We are committed to attracting and securing the best people to support the health and wellbeing needs of our communities.

In the 2022 People Matter Survey, 90 per cent of staff who participated said they can be themselves at work with 93 per cent of staff expressing their intention to stay.

We received Victorian Government recognition for creating an active and healthy workplace through the Workplace Achievement Program,

which is an evidence-based health and wellbeing program that helps create a healthier workplace environment.

Our volunteers connect regularly at morning teas and we have focussed on our communication through monthly newsletters, a closed social media group, and introducing the 'Little White Bus Tour' to give volunteers the opportunity to see all BCH sites and learn about programs and services.

We have migrated our volunteer management system to a new program which is providing a more robust and efficient system for managing compliance and rostering.

The Board is extremely proud of our staff and volunteers their commitment to excellence in health care for our community.



170 staff

7000+ volunteer hours

100 volunteers

Focusing on our client experience

Our client service team continues to be the cornerstone of client engagement, consistently receiving glowing feedback from our client base. This year we have elevated the client experience by expanding our SMS appointment reminder system to our allied health services which has been well received.

In line with our commitment to continuous improvement, we have fine-tuned various processes to offer a smoother, more intuitive client experience. Whether it is a seamless clinical process or an increasingly paperless system, our aim is to make every interaction with BCH easy and efficient.

Our information management team has also been hard at work, particularly in enhancing our government data reporting. These improvements not only

shed light on the impact of our services but also secure our critical government funding.

From connecting clients to BCH services to guiding them when required, the team's dedication to customer service always goes above and beyond.





The value of Community Health



Community health provides a range of services including health promotion, early intervention, chronic disease management, nursing, palliative care, mental health, oral health, allied health including community outreach.

The forum gave us an opportunity to gain insight from other organisations and identify partnerships that could help reach those individuals and communities that experience disadvantage.

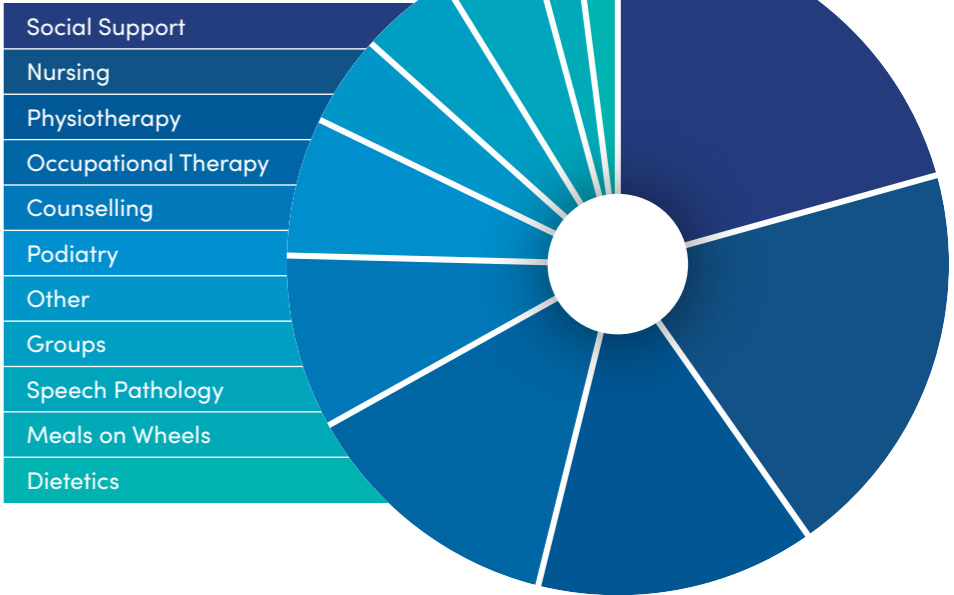
Throughout the fiscal year we provided 72,325 hours of support across our services to our communities on the Bellarine.

In October 2022 we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Queenscliff & District Community Health Centre, Victoria's first ever Community Health Centre, which evolved over the years to what is now known as Bellarine Community Health.

We have joined with all twenty-four registered independent community health services from across metropolitan, rural and regional Victoria to call for recognition of the critical role our services play in the broader health system and greater investment in prevention, early intervention and primary care in people's own communities.

In May 2023 we brought together organisations and community groups from across Geelong and the Bellarine, in a bid to identify and understand any unmet health and wellbeing needs of the community.

Hours by Service



Connecting our communities

Our Healthy and Connected Communities team (HCCT) is committed to ensuring best practice health promotion through the implementation of our Live Well Bellarine (LWB) Action Plan. At the heart of LWB is the vision 'Working together for a healthy and connected community.'

Our highly skilled team brings its passion and dedication to improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for our communities by implementing exciting initiatives focused on healthy eating, active living and tobacco and e-cigarette free living. The team's priority is to work in communities that experience the greatest challenges in achieving and maintaining good health.

Healthy Eating

This year the team established local partnership projects that actively connect children, young people and families to healthy sustainable food and food growing spaces in local communities, including the productive market garden at Bellarine Secondary College as part of the Farm My School pilot project, the re-establishment of the small kitchen garden at Portarlington Preschool as part of the Little Growers program, and the Youth Guerrilla Garden at our headspace site in Ocean Grove.

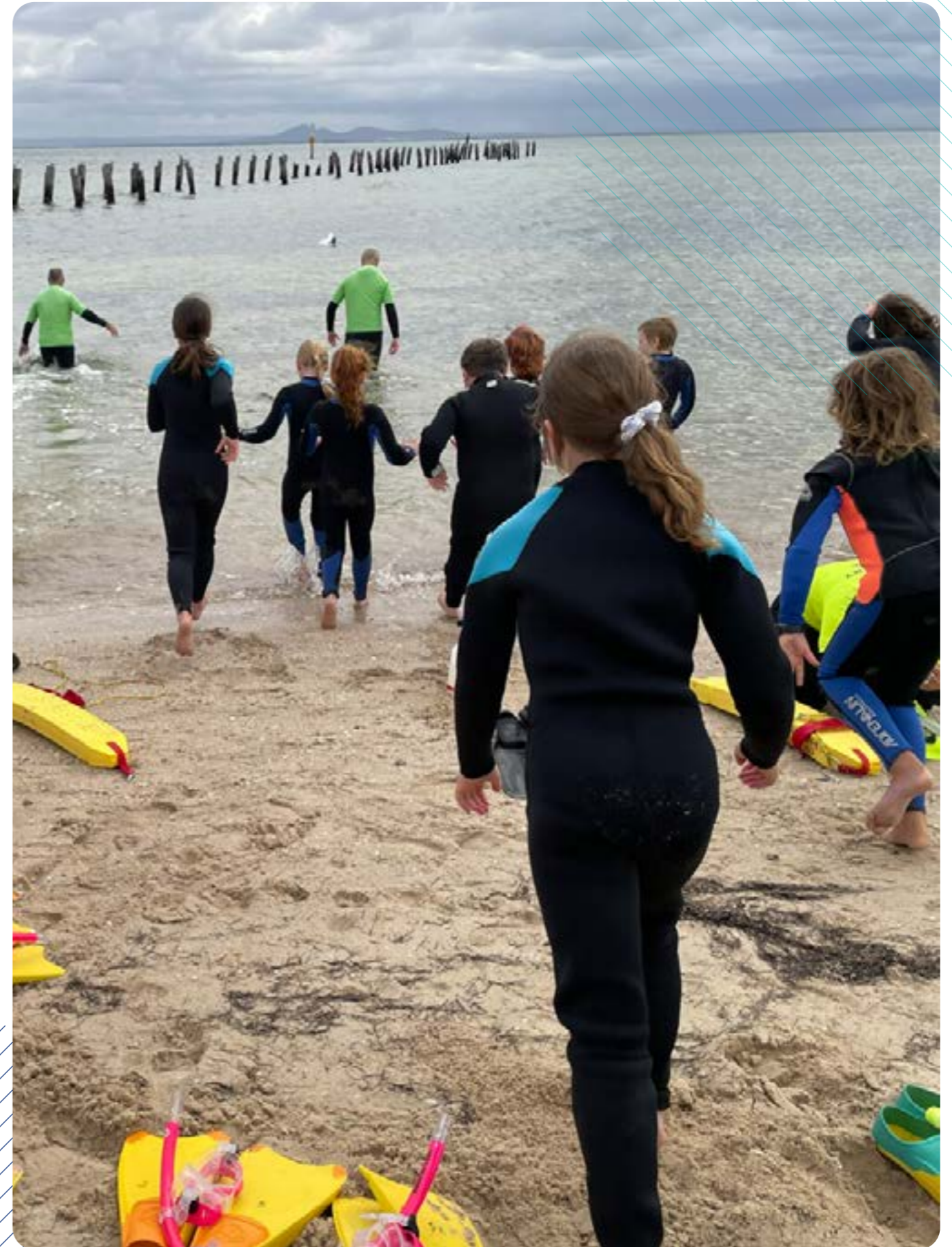
Active Our Way

The success of obtaining a VicHealth Jumpstart grant enabled us to work with three primary schools to co-design and pilot the Active Our Way (AOW) project, which aims to get more children, young people, and their families active in ways that suit them.

830 children took part in activities of their choice including snorkelling/water safety, skateboarding and Ride to School campaign. AOW champions are now embedded in schools to help shape future activities.

Tobacco and e-cigarette free living

A rapidly growing area of concern for our community is the use of vapes/e-cigarettes targeted towards our young people. In collaboration with the Cancer Council, Quit and local agencies we are implementing a range of initiatives to support our communities, including new signage across all BCH sites, advocacy campaigns to local Government and local politicians, and creating vaping and e-cigarette resources, toolkit and flyers for schools, staff and the broader community.



Health and Wellbeing services for our community



“ I have had a disability for over 40 years and feel I can attend this group with confidence that I am doing the appropriate exercises for my body. I have been able to achieve simple things such as being able to put on my pants without sitting on the bed. ”

Adult Allied Health

The winding back of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions saw our ambulatory care programs return throughout the year with clients delighted to be back with their groups on site.

Since the return of the Osteoarthritis group, using the internationally recognised GLA:D format of care, and the reopening of gym-based exercise programs at our Portarlington site which had been under renovation, we are seeing consistently higher numbers for group programs compared to pre-COVID-19 levels.

We are also seeing more demand for home based allied health services in line with increasing demand for Home Care Packages.

We continue to adapt our service delivery and look for new ways to support our clients within our funding models and use the telehealth format of service delivery in some disciplines, such as counselling, in response to the positive feedback from clients and uptake of the service.



Home and Community Support

A highlight of the year was the return of our Social Support groups to our Portarlington site after a lengthy absence due to site renovations delayed by the impacts of COVID-19.

Our groups are loving the large, bright new space and we have seen an increase in referrals for Social Support group activities at Portarlington.

A highly successful craft and plant fair in November gave clients a wonderful opportunity to create handmade crafts and interact with community members who enjoyed morning tea and buying gifts in the lead up to Christmas.

We are looking to further expand our transport options for clients following the successful rollout of regular supported shopping trips.

BCH offers a therapeutic mood support group under the guidance of a highly skilled and credentialled mental health nurse. The group gives

adults who have a diagnosed mood disorder the opportunity to receive therapeutic interventions in a safe, welcoming group environment, providing opportunities for social skill development, emotional regulation and focused therapeutic interventions.

BCH provides a range of services for NDIS participants including continence, counselling, dietetics, exercise physiology (adult), mental health, nursing, occupational therapy, speech therapy (children), social skill development, physiotherapy (youth and adult) and podiatry. Services are delivered at BCH sites, in home, and in education and community settings.

This year BCH successfully met the NDIS Practice Standards mid-term review. As a registered NDIS 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 for NDIS participants.

A focus for the past year has been on recruitment and improvements within our Home Care Package team to deliver the best possible services to our clients.

The Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care is currently delivering a significant program of aged care reforms to ensure older people are treated with the respect they deserve. These reforms are a result of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Staff numbers are increasing, and a new Senior Case Manager is now supporting the team. We have also developed additional communication methods and have begun the work to establish a new Consumer Advisory body in line with the reforms.





“ The process of dying as you may know is confronting, humbling and emotional for everyone – 24-hour care is required as illness and disease progress and life and independence deteriorate. The same team from BCH cared for both my parents, providing wonderful care, delivered with respect and compassion. They also provided information, education and emotional support as my parents’ journey progressed – informing decisions and responding to changing care needs. ”

Nursing and Palliative Care

Community Nursing is a critical service to our clients with our highly skilled team providing an array of services to residents living on the Bellarine including wound care, medication support and management, personal care and chronic disease management.

We work closely with the regions public and private hospitals to assist with the delivery of their post hospital recovery and post-acute care services to deliver the best outcomes for our clients.

Our close working relationship with Barwon Health includes shared education of nursing staff in University Hospital Geelong’s ‘Hospital in the Home’ program.

We pride ourselves on being a popular workplace destination with a recruitment campaign during the year attracting more than 50 applications for nursing positions.

The BCH specialist palliative care team, made up of a nurse practitioner, specialist palliative care nurses and a social worker, works alongside our community nurses, allied health team and external medical teams to ensure clients receive the best quality care and support in their own homes.

This specialist team is highly skilled and successful at enabling clients to die in their preferred place (a palliative care quality indicator). In the past year they supported over 80 per cent of clients with their choices, with 64 per cent of them dying at home. This statistic is significantly higher than the Australian average of 14 per cent.

A highlight for the year has been engaging with our community around the difficult conversation about death. Hosting screenings of a documentary on death called ‘Live the life you please’ was a wonderful way to encourage the community to understand what palliative care involves and how people can take control of their own end of life care.

Child, Youth and Family

Our Child Health and Development team provide expert paediatric services to children and young people under the age of 12 years old.

Demand for services including occupational and speech therapy continues to be high with a waitlist for all services. During the year we introduced a new waitlist system to support families and we continue to embed our senior speech pathologist role and child and family engagement practitioner to support the team.

We introduced an exciting new play therapy service and several group programs to support children’s developmental stages.

In a very busy year the team supported the Department of Health’s HACC Assessment project conducting assessments for the younger cohort of HACC clients.

The team supported training related to specialised child assessments, progressed working more closely with the youth team on assessments for young people, supported the implementation of The Orange Door Bellarine Access Point at Drysdale, as well as recommenced a number of regular external stakeholder engagement opportunities (Bellarine Early Years Network, provision of education and PD to local Maternal Child Health Nurses network, Barwon Health, Department of Education and the library).

In addition to clinical complexity, we are witnessing an increase in the number of families who are struggling with the interface, complexity, and effectiveness of the health, disability (NDIS), education and social sectors. Our staff are exceptional in providing high quality therapeutic services as well as guiding and supporting families with appropriate support in times of crisis.



“ Your services for our child will not only shape her life but also improve the quality of it too. ”

Youth Health and Wellbeing

Our youth services team is made up of nurses, general practitioners, dietitians, occupational therapist, physiotherapists, podiatrists, and a diverse range of mental health clinicians working together to provide fully integrated, adolescent friendly services. Our teams' approach has supported countless young people to receive integrated multi-disciplinary care including therapy, diagnosis, support, and education.

The Drysdale based youth service is in its 15th year of operations. The site was given a refresh with support of HACC PYP Minor Capital funding which enabled interior painting, new furniture and workstations, creating a welcoming and comfortable space for those attending.

The team has continued to strengthen their clinical skills with several staff attending professional development opportunities that have improved their understanding and approach to therapeutic modalities for young people with autism spectrum disorder.

BCH is proud to provide students and early career mental health clinicians opportunities for placement and internship including supporting tertiary

masters level student placements across occupational therapy, social work, clinical psychology, and psychology internships. This investment will support the sectors growing need for youth specific trained clinicians.

Doctors in Secondary Schools

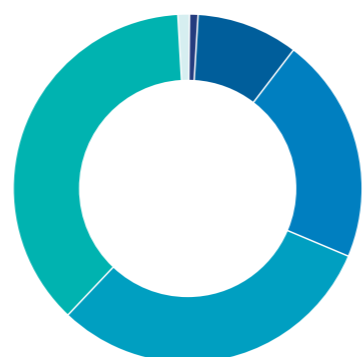
Our integration of the different youth programs has brought about outstanding client outcomes. Students can present at our Doctors in Secondary School (DiSS) programs and receive free primary health medical support from our doctors and nurses and then be referred to our onsite allied health and mental health care teams. This year a total of 157 consultations occurred which represents 1810 hours.

The DiSS program operates from four secondary schools across Geelong and Lavers Hill. It gives us the ability to reach vulnerable young people who are unable to access general practice medicine and nursing support in the community. Consultations are youth focused, confidential and family inclusive. The program also provides valuable classroom education on health-related topics.

headspace Ocean Grove

Our headspace Ocean Grove service has seen an increase of over 500 occasions of service during the year with more than 180 of those clients having never accessed headspace services before. The headspace service provides access to mental health, physical health and alcohol and other drugs support. In addition, access to dietetics and co-located services such as The SAFV Centre means the service can offer young people who have been victims of sexual or family violence, or young people who are experiencing disordered eating or eating disorders, specialised help closer to home.

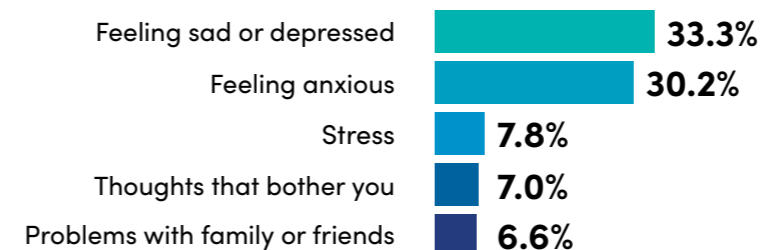
Types of services provided



- Physical health 0.2%
- Family 9.2%
- Intake/Access 19.4%
- Mental Health - Low Intensity Intervention 36.3%
- Mental Health 31.3%

“ Being a multi-disciplinary integrated team means that young people can receive quality holistic health care. ”

Top 5 Reasons for coming to headspace



headspace services provided to young people

2,358

A Case Study

It was identified that a young person who attends secondary school may benefit from attending a group program and were referred to a program being run with the support of students on placement with the youth team at BCH.

On completion of the group program's sessions, it was then identified that the young person would benefit from further support. A GP appointment was made with a doctor at one of our Doctors in Secondary School clinics.

The young person attended the GP appointment and presented with sensory issues, anxiety, poor sleep and was gender questioning. With the support of the GP, a referral was made to BCH youth services for mental health support.

The mental health clinician's initial assessment resulted in some provisional diagnoses including generalised anxiety, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), intellectual disability and dyslexia.

Further testing was recommended and conducted with results from assessments indicating severe language disorder and ASD. The young person's emotional wellbeing was identified as declining resulting in a referral to tertiary mental health services. After tertiary support they returned to BCH youth services for local support.

The young person is now travelling well, they have come out to their family that they are gender diverse, they have changed their name and have a supportive family that is providing love and care.

They applied for a NDIS package successfully and now receive NDIS funded support through BCH. They currently attend TAFE and are working towards gaining skills to enable their employment.





Dental Health

BCH has introduced Smile Squad to the Bellarine this year, with the community dental team visiting local primary schools in the big orange Smile Squad bus. Smile Squad is a Victorian Government program that provides free dental care to students enrolled in government schools. Providing Smile Squad has further enhanced our existing outreach service in various settings supporting preventative oral health dental screens for local children.

Ongoing staff shortages are challenging for the dental team, but they have successfully managed to minimise impacts to patients and actively reduce public dental wait times.

Additional funding from Dental Health Services Victoria has assisted in the reduction of wait times for general dental from 23 months in June 2022 to 9.2 months in June 2023. There was also a significant reduction in wait times for denture care.

Our oral health education sessions continue to be highly valued for their ability to enhance dental patients' capacity to understand the importance of good oral health and strengthen their ability to support this through building their knowledge and skills.

Some dental team members have enhanced their skill base with a Certificate IV training in Oral Health Education and/or Sterilisation which is further supporting quality outcomes for our patients.



12 schools and kindergartens visited

900 children received free dental care

The National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards external audit completed in June confirmed the dental service and sterilisation unit met the new national standards.

The dental service for patients with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or intellectual disability continues to offer inclusive dental care through its personalised approach which considers how to reduce barriers and create an environment that enables patients to be more comfortable to receive dental care.

A private dental service also enhances access to quality private dental care for the broader community.

Reduction of wait times...
23 months in 2022
9.2 months in 2023
5067 dental appointments

“Absolutely wonderful service – skilful, thoughtful, professional and good value for private service too.”





Building for our future

The redevelopment of our Portarlington site was completed and officially opened in April 2023. In line with our commitment to mitigate the impacts of climate change, we are implementing initiatives that are helping reduce our carbon footprint. The building includes thermal strength windows and a high performing roofing material called Arc Panel that delivers superior longevity, insulation and rigidity.

The completion of the site renovations means our clients are enjoying a large, open group activity room while staff have access to new consulting and meeting rooms. The Portarlington Ladies Auxiliary is now operating from a large new space for their Op Shop including kitchen and bathroom facilities and change rooms.

The Hon Ged Kearney, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care officially opened the building at an event attended by local politicians, business leaders and community representatives.

We are now working towards establishing a Portarlington hub at the site to provide community members with access to information and services to assist them to remain living well at home with access to a range of support services.

Our environmental sustainability activities have seen the installation of the first electric vehicle charger on the northern Bellarine Peninsula, along

with the decommissioning of a high energy using cool room with the cool room panels repurposed to house equipment for the dental clinic.

Environmental sustainability is also featuring in plans for our new health and wellbeing hub in Ocean Grove which will deliver child and youth services from a site in a growing family area. The new hub will be built on land generously donated by development company Kingston Estate Ocean Grove and will be used to deliver services to children, young people and families on the Bellarine.

Collaborating with community partners

This year we have established two significant partnerships that have resulted in wonderful outcomes for the community.

Sirovilla, under a lease with BCH, began welcoming new residents in the Sirovilla Eric Tolliday Units in November 2022, following a renovation by Trak Constructions. The residents are enjoying the fresh new units, organised activities and sense of community that Sirovilla is able to provide.

There is a significant wait list for the units, reflective of the need for housing across the region. We thank Sirovilla for being able to provide the current residents with safe and secure, affordable housing.

Epichealth, under a lease with BCH, provides General Practice services from our site in Portarlington. BCH continues to run allied health and social support services from the site.

The development of strong community partnerships is essential to the way we work. We would like to thank all our partners, community groups and organisations for their commitment, contribution and support of our work and communities.



Some of the many partners we work with are

Farm My School Ltd

Bellarine Secondary College

Leisure Networks

Geelong Regional Library

Leopold, St Leonards & Portarlington Primary Schools

Bendigo Community Bank – Bellarine

The Orange Door

The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre

Sirovilla

Stride Mental Health

City of Greater Geelong

Borough of Queenscliffe

Geelong Community Foundation

Hearing Australia

Compassionate Hearts on the Bellarine

Bellarine Training & Community Hub

Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West

Epichealth

Barwon Health

Hope Bereavement Care

Contact

Phone: 1800 007 224

General Enquiries: info@bch.org.au

BCH Website: www.bch.org.au

Referrals: intake@bch.org.au
bch.org.au/referrals

Youth Referrals: youth@bch.org.au

Youth Phone: 5258 0400

headspace Ocean Grove:
headspaceoceangrove@bch.org.au



bch Bellarine
Community
Health

With you for life