

# Quality Account 2020-2021

Collaboration | Innovation | Action





## **FRONT COVER:**

*Auxiliary members presented Trauma Teddies to Nurse Sam Riley at Urgent Care Centre:  
L-R Ann Degan, June Wastell, Sam Riley, Rosie Moulday, Bren Brown and Barbara Reisch.*

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## Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer's Message



***Dr Dennis O'Brien***  
***Board Chair***



***Andrew Nitschke***  
***Interim Chief Executive Officer***

It gives us great pleasure to present the Quality Account for Benalla Health for the 2020-2021 financial year.

Each year we present this report, which is designed to highlight to the community achievements and improvements to our health service. Ordinarily, health services have been required by the Department of Health (DH) to produce this report but for the past two years it has not been mandated. However, we feel it is important to provide this information as a key communication strategy to those who use and work in our health service.

Once again, our year was heavily impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We were fortunate that in 2020-2021, Benalla was not significantly impacted by positive cases within our community, however the impact on our health service, particularly with entry screening and the requirement for staff to wear Personal Protective Equipment, made this a difficult year for all. We are incredibly proud of our staff, who have worked in this constantly changing and challenging environment to provide excellent service to those who use our health care facility.

The 2020-2021 year has seen significant changes in the senior management team with the resignation of our Chief Executive Officer Janine Holland, Executive Director of Clinical Services Dr Sue Wilson, and Executive Director of Medical Services Dr Campbell Miller. Despite these significant changes and new appointments to positions, we were able to demonstrate that there remained a high level of clinical care and service provided, with the achievement of full accreditation by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards in June 2021.

COVID-19 will continue to create challenges to the way healthcare is delivered but we are confident in our ability to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to provide a health service that meets the needs of our community.

We hope you enjoy reading this report and welcome your feedback on how we can improve the report next year.



# Year In Review

## Major achievements 2020-2021

Major achievements for this financial year have included:

- Developing a new Strategic Plan to guide the forward direction of Benalla Health from years 2020 to 2025.
- Implementing the Safer Care Victoria Safer Baby Collaborative.
- Reducing our carbon footprint with increased energy efficiency in lighting and solar panel installation.
- Successfully achieving ACHS accreditation in June 2021.
- Supporting our first Pharmacy Intern in collaboration with Northeast Health Wangaratta.

## Accreditation

On 23-24 June 2021, Benalla Health participated in its Organisation Wide Accreditation.

Two assessors from the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) spent two days on site, with the majority of their time spent observing our organisation.

Patient journeys through Urgent Care and Day Procedure were followed and time was spent in Maternity and Acute areas also. Accreditation was a huge success, with Benalla Health meeting all requirements with no recommendations.



# Strategic Plan 2020-2025

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**Benalla**  
HEALTH

## OUR VISION

Healthy, thriving and resilient communities in and around Benalla.

## OUR PURPOSE

To care for our community by providing safe, high quality healthcare for everyone.

## OUR PRIORITIES

Deliver responsive, high quality services

Strengthen our workforce and culture

Enhance community trust and engagement

Build lasting, effective partnerships

Consolidate our financial and environmental sustainability

## OUR OUTCOMES

... that drive wellness, support healthy ageing and are **responsive to the evolving needs of our community**.

...so we recruit and retain a **resilient, engaged and skilled team**, who have pathways for growth and development.

... so people know and use our services, we understand their needs, provide **person-centred care**, and support them to achieve their health goals.

... that enable us to share resources and services, and take a **holistic approach to our region's health**.

... to empower us to innovate and **determine our own path forward**.

## OUR BELIEFS

**We believe** that accessible healthcare is a fundamental human right.

**We believe** the community is stronger with us, and we are stronger with them.

**We believe** that everyone is welcome at Benalla Health.

**We believe** that each member of our team is integral to how we compassionately serve our community.

**We believe** in making a positive difference in people's lives - we really care.

**We believe** in and commit to collaboration, innovation and action.

## OUR VALUES



**Respect**



**Empathy**



**Excellence**



**Compassion**



**Accountability**

## Strategy on a Page

The new Strategic Plan for Benalla Health was developed in collaboration with staff, our community and other key stakeholders. It acknowledges the challenges faced by our health service but also the great opportunities we have to improve what we do.

The Strategic Plan 2020-2025 outlines the direction we will take to ensure that Benalla Health remains able to meet our community's needs into the future.

Pictured above is our Strategic Plan on a page. The full strategic plan can be found on the Benalla Health website at [www.benallahealth.org.au](http://www.benallahealth.org.au)



# Deliver responsive, high quality services

Benalla Health provides a range of clinical and non-clinical services that all combine to provide excellence in health care to our community. For the purposes of this report, we will focus on the clinical services offered, which include:

- Inpatient Services
- Maternity Services
- Perioperative Services
- Urgent Care Centre (UCC)
- Community Health

Benalla Health's Operational Plan identifies reducing avoidable harm as a key priority area. Strategies and actions are designed with the intent to reduce avoidable harm by 25 per cent in the 2020-2021 financial year. The four key components of reducing avoidable harm include harm associated with medication errors, harm associated with incidents of falls, harm associated with pressure injuries and harm associated with skin tears.

An adverse event is an incident that results, or could have resulted, in harm to a consumer. Very serious adverse events are called sentinel events.

Benalla Health's governance system ensures that all adverse events are reported through our clinical governance processes, which include sub-committees of the Board of Directors. Peer review meetings also occur across maternity, medical, the UCC and perioperative areas. Each area holds a meeting twice a year with specialist doctors from Northeast Health Wangaratta invited to attend. Recommendations and actions are monitored through the peer review process.

## Inpatient Services

### *Inpatient Services leader rounding with patients - patient satisfaction*

When inpatients were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with our service on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being very unsatisfied and 10 being very satisfied) more than 90 per cent of the 210 respondents answered 8, 9 or 10 out of 10.

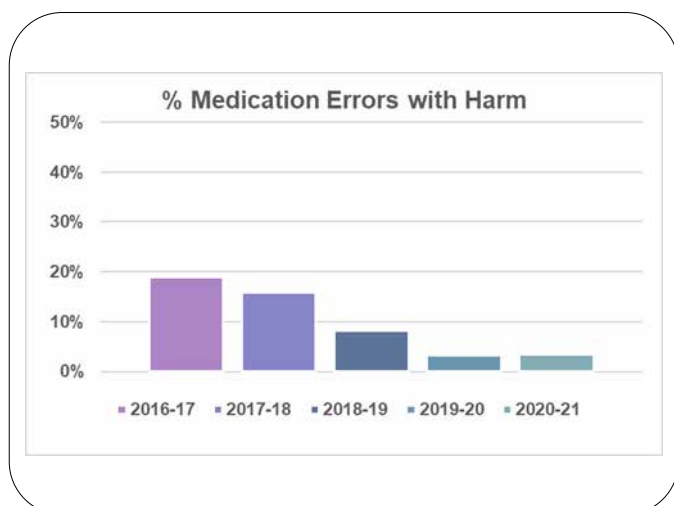
<b>51.0%</b> of inpatients, when asked, rated their level of satisfaction with our service so far as being <b>10 out of 10</b>
<b>34.3%</b> of inpatients, when asked, rated their level of satisfaction with our service so far as being <b>9 out of 10.</b>
<b>12.4%</b> of inpatients, when asked, rated their level of satisfaction with our service so far as being <b>8 out of 10</b>
<b>2.4%</b> of inpatients, when asked, rated their level of satisfaction with our service so far as being <b>7 out of 10.</b>

When inpatients were asked how they would rate on a scale of 1 to 5 their level of satisfaction with the amount of interaction they had with students, (with 1 being very dissatisfied, 2 dissatisfied, 3 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 satisfied and 5 being very satisfied), 100 per cent of the 69 respondents answered they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their amount of student interaction.

<b>75.4%</b> of inpatients when asked, were <b>very satisfied</b> with the amount of interaction they had with students,
<b>24.6%</b> of inpatients, when asked, were <b>satisfied</b> with the amount of interaction they had with students.



## Medication safety



Of the 119 medication incidents reported for 2020-2021, the percentage of those that resulted in harm has continued to decrease over the past four years.

When patients are admitted to hospital, their current medications are reviewed and reconciled with what their clinician has prescribed. *"Medication reconciliation is the process of identifying an accurate list of a person's current medications and comparing it with the current list in use".*

This is a measure that is reported and benchmarked throughout our clinical governance systems and it aims to reduce medication errors such as omissions, dosing errors or drug interactions.

The percentage of medication reconciliations on admission continue to improve demonstrated by the good results seen in our Australian Council of Healthcare Standards (ACHS) clinical indicator reporting program, where we are benchmarked to other organisations across Australia. The percentage of patients whose current medications are documented and reconciled at admission are above those for all other organisations reporting this indicator over the past year and a half.

Medication Reconciliations on Admission	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2020	2 <sup>nd</sup> half 2020	1 <sup>st</sup> half 2021
Benalla Health	85.7%	67.3%	68.2%
All organisations	56.6%	61.1%	36.7%

## Maternity Services

Benalla Health offers a range of maternity services to care for women and their partners during pregnancy, childbirth and during the period of time following birth. We provide antenatal clinics, antenatal classes, a Community Midwife Program (CMP), inpatient antenatal, birth and postnatal care, special care nursery facilities, domiciliary (at home) care and lactation services.

### Maternity Surge

The end of 2020-2021 saw an increase of birthing women across Victoria, and Benalla Health was no exception. Typically our maternity unit assists with six to eight births per month, however May and June 2021 had more than 10 women booked.

To cope with this increase, strategies were developed, including having second midwives on call and developing an antenatal assessment room. This room is used for women to be monitored or assessed when they present with decreased foetal movements, or any other concerns related to the safety of themselves or their unborn baby. It has been set up with everything needed to assess and support women when they attend as unexpected outpatients.

Benalla Health had two episodes during this period where two women were labouring and birthing simultaneously and had three midwives on shift, one for each birthing woman and the third running the postnatal side of the unit and the antenatal clinic.

The assessment room has been well utilised and has remained in place for ongoing assessments. Two family postnatal rooms have been modified to birth suites and include re-instating the ability for the double beds to have stirrups on the end for post birth care.



### Foetal pillow



The foetal pillow was introduced at Benalla Health after recommendations arising from Regional Obstetric Morbidity and Mortality meetings. This is a single use piece of equipment which is used to prevent the unborn baby from descending down the birth canal.

It provides an even pressure to the scalp of a newborn prior to being birthed via emergency caesarean preventing haematomas and damage to the soft tissue of the skull.

Extra training was provided to our GP Obstetricians and Midwives. The foetal pillow has already been used successfully at Benalla Health.

### Water Pool



In July 2020, the Maternity Unit purchased an immersion in water pool. Benalla Health has progressed from offering women a shower to now being able to provide complete submersion. Safety mechanisms are in place to keep women safe and while we are unable to support birth in the pool, feedback from the women who utilised it as a form of pain relief has been fantastic.

*"I could float my pain away"*

*"I felt like I was in a bubble of safety"*

**Picture: Midwife Linda Adams training with the new equipment.**

### Carbon Monoxide testing

As part of the Safer Baby Collaborative with Safer Care Victoria, Benalla Health Maternity introduced carbon monoxide testing during pregnancy. Carbon monoxide testing is used as a tool to assist women to stop smoking. Benalla Health went one step further and chose to offer this tool to expectant partners as well. It is well known that second-hand smoke can increase the risk of stillbirth and SIDS so we felt this was a fantastic community service and step in the right direction for public health. Unfortunately not long after commencing this we had to stop due to COVID-19 risk of airborne particles. This will be re-commenced once the COVID-19 risk has reduced.



### ***Dietetics / Physiotherapy and Antenatal classes.***

As a part of Benalla Health's Integrated Health Promotion program, physiotherapy and dietetics have been included as a part of regular in-house antenatal classes. The classes traditionally have been run by midwives, however with the addition of a physiotherapy and dietetic expertise, we have been able to contribute to the Central Hume Primary Care Partnership regional goal to *"promote and evaluate antenatal and postnatal resources to service providers and the community by June 2021"*. By including a Dietitian and a Physiotherapist into antenatal classes, with an increased focus on healthy eating and active living during pregnancy and post birth, we can ensure that pregnant women in Benalla are maintaining good health throughout their pregnancy and post birth.

To June 2021, three sessions have included dietetic and physiotherapy input, with plans to be involved in the group regularly. A total of 18 expectant mothers and their support people attended classes. Feedback continues to be gathered from surveys pre and post classes, however early feedback has been very positive.

### ***Graduate Midwife – Jada Szeto***



Jada is the first Graduate Registered Nurse-Registered Midwife at Benalla Health since 2016.

After completing her studies at La Trobe University, Jada commenced her Graduate position here and is working across both Acute and Maternity Units to consolidate a broad range of skills.

In order to support her learning and development, Jada has been rostered on duty when another midwife is available onsite.

Initially, Jada began working on day shifts, however over her journey, her experience has expanded.

She is now able to conduct antenatal clinic sessions, antenatal classes and attend domiciliary visits where she visits new families in their homes independently.

Jada has become a valuable member of the Maternity and Acute teams, and Benalla Health is excited to see her career flourish.



## Perioperative Services

Theatre, the Central Sterile Services Department and the Day Procedure Unit had a busy year with 2305 cases through Theatre in 2020-2021. New equipment included two urology cameras and some Ophthalmology instruments which will allow us to provide up-to-date and safe ongoing surgical services. There was work done improving storage capabilities of ophthalmology boxes in the Fay Procedure Unit, with the recycling of old shelving replaced in Theatre from 2019-2020.

### Perioperative Services patient feedback

Post discharge telephone calls were made to some of the patients and care givers of people who had been discharged from perioperative services

<b>100%</b> of patients, when asked, <b>had no questions</b> about their medications after discharge
<b>98.5%</b> of patients, when asked, <b>understood their discharge instructions.</b>
<b>100%</b> of patients, when asked, were <b>satisfied</b> with the care they received whilst in Perioperative Services.
<b>83.5%</b> of patients when asked, had <b>no suggestions</b> as to how we could improve our service.

## Urgent Care Centre

### Patient feedback

For the year 2020-2021, there were 5132 total separations in the Urgent Care Centre, a reduction from the 5775 separations from the previous year. Post discharge telephone calls were made to some of the patients and care givers of people who had attended the Urgent Care Centre.

<b>93.7%</b> of patients, when asked, <b>had no unusual symptoms</b> or problems following their presentation
<b>98.4%</b> of patients, when asked, <b>understood their discharge instructions,</b>
<b>96.8%</b> of patients, when asked, were <b>satisfied</b> with the care they received whilst in Urgent Care Centre.
<b>88.9%</b> of patients, when asked, had <b>no suggestions</b> as to how we could improve our service.

### Oxylog Emergency Ventilator



In early 2021 the UCC purchased a new Dräger Oxylog 3000+ Emergency Ventilator which was gratefully funded by the Hospital Auxiliary.

This ventilator will allow us to provide airway and breathing support to patients who are unable to breathe for themselves while transfer to a higher acuity facility is arranged.

Dräger also spent time onsite at Benalla Health providing training and education to Urgent Care Staff and the After Hours Coordinators.



## My Emergency Doctor

UCC, with the support of Murray Primary Health Network, has been utilising the My Emergency Doctor virtual consulting system since June 2020, to provide consultation with patients and Senior FACEM (Fellow of the Australian College of Emergency Medicine) Doctors. This is a telehealth service which can be used at no cost to our Urgent Care consumers. It allows doctors to have a virtual consultation with consumers and nursing staff and they can then email medication charts or radiology requests as required. Prescriptions can also be sent to the consumer's preferred pharmacy for dispensing following discharge.

Number of times My Emergency Doctor virtual consulting system utilised in 2020-2021
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463
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## Community (non-bed based services)

- Allied Health Services
- Health Independence
- Community Rehabilitation
- Planned day activities



### Meet Elise - Podiatrist

Elise Cook is a Podiatrist who has worked with Benalla Health since 2017, also having completed a Cadetship in 2014-2015.

Earlier this year, Elise was the recipient of a Benalla Health Scholarship to support her with university studies.

She is currently completing her Masters of Wound Care at Monash University and is an invaluable asset to the organisation due to her enthusiasm and wealth of knowledge.

Elise is very passionate about providing high quality wound care to Benalla Health consumers. Elise and Angela (High Risk Foot Clinic Nurse) work closely with local GP practices, the District Home Nursing Service and many specialists to provide shared care to consumers with wounds.

Elise works across many areas of Benalla Health, including Community Health, the Acute ward and Morrie Evans Wing.

Elise's ambition is to see wound care become a priority in healthcare, and is passionate about providing knowledge and up-skilling to staff at Benalla Health.



## **ARMED Project**

The Advanced Risk Modelling for Early Detection (ARMED) project was a trial involving technology worn by a person to help identify triggers relating to a fall. Data is collected around the clock by an electronic armband which is then analysed to identify factors that may have contributed to the fall.

The ARMED program trial at Benalla Health commenced on November 2020 with seven participants, five in the community and two residents from Morrie Evans Wing.

While there was only one participant who experienced two falls at home during the project, the trial was hampered by COVID-19 restrictions, the financial cost to the patient, and lack of technological and software support. This project may find more benefits following the COVID-19 peak if more funding can be obtained.

## **Social Work**

In an initiative to increase awareness and skills for staff members at Benalla Health, Noel Finch (Social Work) and Casey Cowie (Manager, Independence and Wellbeing) have completed Mental Health First Aid Instructor training to disseminate across our organisation.

Mental Health First Aid is a training program that teaches participants how to help a person developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. Like traditional first aid, mental health first aid does not teach people to treat or diagnose mental health or substance use conditions. Instead, the training teaches people how to offer initial support until appropriate professional help is received or until the crisis resolves. We are excited to upskill staff members alongside Merryn Howell (Manager, Healthy Lifestyles), who is already a qualified instructor.

## **Cardiac Rehabilitation group**

The Health Independence Program (HIP) provides a range of supportive rehabilitation and chronic disease management services to people who have been unwell in hospital, or in our Urgent Care Centre. One of the programs is Cardiac Rehabilitation. This is for people who have medical problems with their heart and blood circulation, are recovering from heart surgery, or chronic cardiac conditions.

There are an average of 10-15 active exercise group participants for each eight week cycle. A small number of cardiac graduates continue on with a specialised external program at local Benalla Gym, Primal Health Club. All clients are offered enrolment in the Heart Foundation 'My Heart, My Life' program which is delivered by email, phone and text for up to eight months following graduation from our program for ongoing support.

The Cardiac Rehabilitation program is a Quality project that has been completed under the Cardiac Ambassador 12-month program through the Heart Foundation. Paperwork and welcome packs have been developed in line with the national Cardiac Rehabilitation standards. Care Coordinators, Adele Caneva and Karen Adcock, have completed a course to extend their knowledge and improve the delivery of the program.

Looking to the future, the program is currently looking into developing a walking program with the support from the Heart Foundation, and developing a cardiac resource and education folder to be sent out in lieu of a weekly structured education program.



## Health Independence Program (HIP) – participant satisfaction feedback

A total of 47 Health Independence Program participants or their caregiver were contacted by telephone post discharge from the service and asked to provide feedback.

**91.3%** of participants, when asked, were **satisfied** with the care they received when involved in the program

**86.7%** of participants, when asked, had **no suggestions** as to how we could improve our service.

## Home Nursing Service

Our Home Nursing Service provides high-quality nursing care for people with short or long-term health issues or disabilities, who are able to remain in their homes. Nursing care can include medications, clinical assessment, and wound management, chronic disease management, health education and health promotion.

Our palliative care team cares for people with life-threatening illnesses and their families. It involves a multi-disciplinary approach with various health professionals such as doctors, nurses, social workers and volunteers working together to provide care for the ill person and their family. Palliative care offers support by helping people live a meaningful end of life. Over the 2020-2021 financial year, close to 120 clients utilised our palliative care services.

In August 2020, our Home Nursing Service moved from the building on Samaria Road which no longer suited its needs. It is now located on the first floor of the consulting suites building and, with help from the Engineering Team, the space has been transformed to a better work zone for our team.

## Residential Aged Care

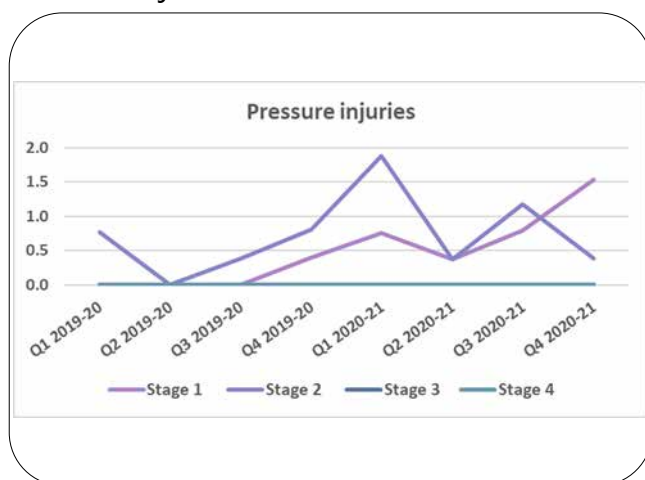
### Public Sector Residential Aged Care Sector (PSRACS) data

To ensure we are providing our residents with a safe home and high quality care, we are required to report to the Department of Health five measures that may cause harm to residents. These are compared to other services across the state each quarter and monitored.

There have been no fall-related fractures in 2020-2021 and we continue to have no use of restraints for 2020-2021.

### Pressure Injuries

Pressure injuries occur when an area of skin is damaged due to unrelieved pressure. Pressure injuries are assessed and staged from one (minor) to four.



Over the past two years, our rates of stage 1 and 2 have been increasing, whilst our rates of stage 3 and 4 remain at zero.

This demonstrates that we are finding pressure injuries earlier and treating them before they develop into the more serious and harmful stage 3 and stage 4 pressure injuries. (Graph - rate of pressure injuries per 1000 bed days)



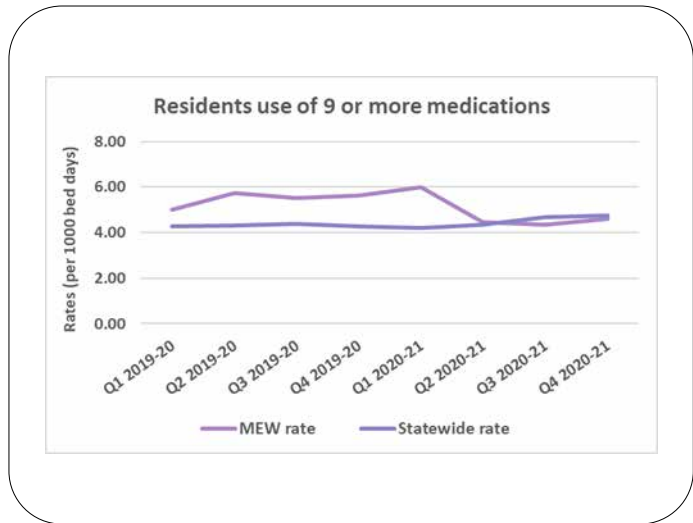
### Medication use

Morrie Evans Wing staff have introduced a number of medication audits which include medication chart reviews and psychotropic usage.

We have also had a renewed focus of our Resident Medication Management Plans. This has led to our polypharmacy (nine or more medications) and our use of psychotropic usage being reduced improving outcomes for residents.

We continue to have a strong focus on Safe Medication Management. (graph - rate of use of nine or medications per 1000 bed days)

Benalla Health has been lucky enough to commission the work of Deanne Gorman, who is a board certified Geriatric Pharmacist. Deanne has been providing clinical pharmacy services to our Morrie Evans Wing to improve medication analysis and safety.



### MEW satisfaction feedback

**97.4%** of residents, when asked, reported that **staff treated them with respect always or most of the time.**

#### Inpatient services leader rounding with patients

*"Care has been spot on. Best care I have had ever in a hospital. Staff treat you like a person, not a number"*

*"Service is excellent. Don't think anything could be better".*



## Satisfaction data

The experience of people who use our service, along with clinical outcomes, are two of the best measures of our performance at Benalla Health. While it is important that people can access the health services they need, they need to receive services that improve their health and meet their satisfaction.

### Compliments

In 2020-2021, Benalla Health received 59 compliments. Here is a sample.

*"Social workers like you are worth their weight in gold. Thank you for supporting me during my time here"*

**To maternity staff:**

*"The maternity ward here is amazing. They have treated me so well ... Lovely food, lovely cleaners, even nurses from other wards came to say hi to me"*

**To Home Nursing Services:**

*"You were all a wonderful support to (consumer) and to us all. We feel blessed to have you in our lives at this sad time. Words can never express what we feel for you in our hearts"*

**From a student:**

*"Thank you for making my placement experience so enjoyable. I felt so welcomed from the very first day! Thank you for all your lessons and advice, I feel fortunate to have an amazing placement experience"*

**To the High Risk Foot Clinic:**

*"Many, many thanks to you both for doing so much for me over the last few months – am sure I would never have made it without you both".*

**To Community Health:**

*"A big thank you for all the care and support you have given ... and thanks for making rehab fun!"*

**To the Perioperative Unit:**

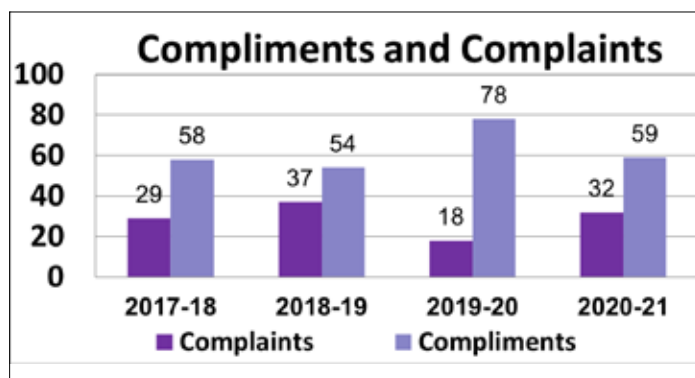
*"I have been a patient in a few hospitals over my lifetime and absolutely NONE have impressed me the way your team has"*

**To Urgent Care Centre staff:**

*"Many thanks to the nursing staff for their great care and professional courtesy for myself and my family"*



## Complaints



*There has been 32 complaints received for 2020-2021 of which 78 per cent have been finalised and responded to within 30 days.*

At Benalla Health we are dedicated to providing quality care and service and welcome both compliments and complaints, which help us improve our service to you. Feedback of any kind can be made in the following ways:

**In person:** Please call into reception and arrangements will be made for you to speak with one of the Executive Staff.

**By phone:** If you prefer, please phone us on (03) 5761 4209 and ask to speak with one of the Executive Staff.

**By email:** Email the Executive Office at [executive@benallahealth.org.au](mailto:executive@benallahealth.org.au)

**By mail:** The Executive Office - Benalla Health, PO Box 406, Benalla, Victoria, 3671.

### What to do if you are not satisfied with our service:

If you are not satisfied with our service, please contact us. We take complaints seriously and aim to resolve them quickly and fairly.

If you remain dissatisfied with our response, you may contact the Health Complaints Commissioner (HCC). The HCC responds to complaints about health services and the handling of health information in Victoria. Their service is free, confidential and impartial. To lodge a complaint with the HCC, fill out a complaint form online at [www.hcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hcc.vic.gov.au) or phone 1300 582 113 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday to discuss your complaint.

### Aged care-related complaints

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is the primary contact for providers and consumers in relation to quality and safety in the aged care sector, including complaints.

Phone: 1800 951 822

**Website:** [www.agedcarequality.gov.au](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au)



## The Victorian Patient Health Experience Survey

The Victorian Healthcare Experience Survey (VHES) is a State Government-sponsored survey of people who have been discharged from a Victorian public hospital and asked to rate their experiences while they were an inpatient.

For the past year, the survey has been adapted to better understand the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on patient experiences of care during the pandemic and is now called the Patient Experience During The COVID-19 Pandemic Survey.

In response to the VHES question: ***"Overall, how would you rate the care you received while in hospital?"*** the percentage of patients who responded positively (either as 'very good' or "good each quarter showed that Benalla Health has consistently rated significantly higher than the state by patients who use our service.

VHES Survey	Benalla Health	Victoria State-wide
September 2020	100%	91%
December 2020	98%	90%
March 2021	100%	89%
June 2021	95%	89%

### Perioperative Services leader rounding with patients

*"Absolutely brilliant and very impressed  
with team work, staff looking out for each  
other. All staff great".*

*"Service top notch. Student explained  
everything well".*

*"Everything went well. All staff  
helpful and wonderful"*



# Infection Control and COVID-19

## Respiratory Protection Program and Fit Testing

The Respiratory Protection Program commenced at Benalla Health in March 2021 due to the increased requirements for Personal Protection Equipment needed for COVID-19. By utilising infection prevention measures such as immunisation, social distancing, hand hygiene and personal protective equipment, including respiratory protective equipment N95/P2 masks, Benalla Health is working hard to eliminate the risk of contracting COVID-19 within the work place.

Benalla Health has achieved 64 per cent of overall staff being fit test with 100 per cent of staff from UCC which is our most front-facing high risk team fully fit tested.



On March 18 2021, Aimee from Goulburn Valley Health assisted our staff with fit testing as Benalla Health's program commenced. Testing can take up to one hour to complete as staff are tested for at least six masks with the aim of each staff member having three masks appropriate.

Fit testing is required by Australian New Zealand Standard AS/NZS1715 before a user wears a respirator on the job, and will be required to be assessed at least annually. In addition, fit tests should be performed when facial changes occur that could affect fit, such as significant weight fluctuation or dental work.

Benalla Health employed UCC nurse Hannah Capstick to work with our Infection Prevention Control Coordinator Tanya Allan one day a week in a role dedicated to fit testing.



***Pictured: Infection Prevention and Control Coordinator Tanya Allan with some of Benalla Health's Housekeeping staff for training on Donning and Doffing Personal Protection Equipment safely.***



## **Fever Clinic**

Benalla Health has been committed to providing the community with COVID-19 testing facilities throughout the pandemic. For the 2020-2021 period, this testing occurred outside the Urgent Care Centre and has been run by UCC staff and designated Fever Clinic staff.

In April 2021, the Department of Health provided Benalla Health with six iPads and Test Tracker software to streamline the process for the community being tested for COVID-19. The Test Tracker system enables community members to register their personal details, including Medicare number, online prior to be tested. A unique number is then sent to the consumer which is presented on arrival to Fever Clinic. This is more efficient for staff because less paper work is required and reduces the risk of incorrect details being collected.

As a result of the hard work, Benalla Health performed almost 5500 COVID-19 tests for the community during the 2020-2021 financial year.

## **Asymptomatic COVID-19 testing**

To slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep aged-care residents and staff safe, health services in partnership with Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services (PSRACS), have been directed to undertake regular asymptomatic testing for all staff working in PSRACS. The asymptomatic testing program is designed to rapidly identify otherwise undetected cases of COVID-19 and minimise spread of the virus to staff and residents.

A sincere thank you to the MEW team, which has taken on board the testing, and for the ongoing commitment and support of Benalla Health and the community we serve.

## **COVID-19 Vaccination**

Benalla Health's COVID-19 vaccination program has been well received in partnership with Goulburn Valley Health (GVH). GVH staff have been onsite numerous times to kick off our COVID-19 vaccination program to our Morrie Evans Wing residents, along with staff. Among those to get their vaccine were MEW resident Bernard Exton and Allied Health Assistant Kellie Keele (below).

It was then turn of our acting CEO Andrew Nitschke (below right ) to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in April 2021. As healthcare workers, vaccination is vital part of protecting each other and the community.





### **Tristel 3T digital traceability system roll-out**

Tristel 3T digital traceability system roll-out occurred for all UCC and Midwifery staff in April 2021. This equipment ensures the portable ultrasound probe was being monitored in a secure, fast, accurate and paperless process with the capabilities of reporting and tracing possible infections. The Tristel 3T are monitored in a smart and efficient way by an app that records a disinfection event with patient's events.

Training was provided to all staff in UCC and Midwifery over a course of a couple months ensuring all had completed the online videos and questionnaire. Hands-on training with a Tristel T3 app and Tristel Protect sleeves provided all clinical staff with the added security and knowledge that each and every time that a ultrasound probe was in use it had passed a full high level disinfection clean.

Tristel protect sleeves, introduced at the same time of the 3T app ensuring probes, were ready at any time and easily identified as clean through a labelling system.



**Inpatient services leader rounding  
with patients**

*"They treat me like a king. No  
complaints rate 10 plus".*



# Building lasting effective relationships

## Pharmacy Intern

Benalla Health and Northeast Health Wangaratta (NHW) Pharmacy Departments have been working closely together to deliver a comprehensive and innovative rural hospital pharmacy internship throughout 2021. The program has been led by Susan Trevillian, NHW's Deputy Director of Pharmacy, and Benalla Health's Intern Preceptor, along with Angela Lawrence, Benalla Health's Chief Pharmacist.

Senita Jaji relocated from Queensland to undertake this unique pharmacy internship, and began her training in December 2020. Her twin sister also relocated and is undertaking her internship at Goulburn Valley Health. Senita has spent about two-thirds of her working year at Benalla Health, and the other third at Northeast Health Wangaratta, where she has experienced aspects of pharmacy practice not encountered routinely at Benalla Health, such as Intensive Care, Paediatrics, Mental Health, Oncology, and supplying medicines from the Dispensary. She has had the opportunity to work directly with 15 different pharmacists across both health services, tapping into a wide variety of experience with both early career and seasoned professionals.

Senita has become an integral part of Benalla Health's pharmacy team, and can usually be found in the Acute Ward, helping the patients, nurses, doctors and allied health team to resolve medication-related problems, and helping patients to understand their medicines, and to know what they need to do to take their medicines safely at home.

Our current focus is on helping Senita meet all her requirements for registration, and to continue to develop her skills as a rural hospital pharmacist while she completes her intern year. It's been a privilege to guide Senita on the journey from pharmacy student to pharmacist, and we hope there will be an opportunity for Senita to help guide our next Benalla Health Pharmacy Intern as they embark on their internship from December 2021.



*Pictured: Senita Jaji (Benalla Health's first Pharmacy Intern), Susan Trevillian (NHW Deputy Director of Pharmacy, and Benalla Health Intern Preceptor).*

*ABOVE RIGHT: Angela Lawrence (Benalla Health Chief Pharmacist), and Tarsh Armstrong (Benalla Health Pharmacy Technician).*



## Gap Year Program

Benalla Health partners with a number of local community organisations and schools and is committed to providing opportunities for our local young people. The Gap Year program enables a young person to develop employability skills and aims to retain and grow the workforce in our local community. In the past, we have had previous participants return to rural Victoria, and Benalla Health following their undergraduate studies and begin their professional careers.

### *Poppy Aggenbach – From Gap Year to Occupational Therapist*

"I undertook my gap year with Benalla Health in 2016 in the Education and Research Unit. I originally applied for the role as I wasn't sure what I wanted to do before I headed off to university and wanted to gain some more experiences. I had a fantastic year and learnt a lot about the health system, as well as many professional skills. During my year I was introduced to the profession occupational therapy, which very much interested me. After looking into occupational therapy, I decided to apply to study it as I was drawn to a career involving helping others and having a variety of work. I spent the next four years at Bendigo's La Trobe University doing a double degree to Bachelor of Applied Science/ Master of Occupational Therapy Practice.

This year I was lucky enough to be offered a position again with Benalla Health, this time in the role of an occupational therapist. I have spent this year consolidating the many skills I learnt at university, working across inpatient and community settings. I feel very lucky to work with so many great staff across many different disciplines and departments, as well as consumers in the community."

### *Meet Meg – Gap Year Administration support*



"This year I am working in the Performance Improvement Team as part of the Gap Year Program. After completing Year 12 last year, I knew I wanted to take a year off studying and spend some time working before commencing my university studies in 2022.

This gap year role has provided the perfect opportunity for me to gain some experience and develop important employability skills, such as communication, working in a professional team, meeting goals and deadlines, developing independence, problem solving, and improving my ability to manage priorities.

As part of my role, I am involved with a variety of aspects of the Performance Improvement Team, including organising paperwork for incoming

nursing students on placement, organising bookings for education sessions, reporting on Staff Mandatory Training levels, booking student accommodation, managing Regional Health Services eLearning Network (ReHSeN), and many other admin tasks.

This role has been a great introduction to working in healthcare, which fits in perfectly with my future career aspirations. I have been accepted into the Bachelor of Biomedicine at the University of Melbourne, and hope to go on to study Medicine after that so I can become a doctor. I am so excited about the future, and having this year working at Benalla Health has really reinforced my interest in healthcare and desire to work in this field in the future.

I have also been lucky enough to have the unique experience of working in a healthcare setting during a global pandemic, which is something I will never forget. It has been a really eye-opening and invaluable experience, and has made me really appreciate the role of all healthcare workers across Victoria in this time. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working in the Performance Improvement Team, and have learnt so much. I hope I will be fortunate enough to be back at Benalla Health at some stage in my future career."

More recently, Meg has been given the opportunity to work with our Fever Clinic team, assisting staff with administration roles relating to COVID-19 testing.



## Clinical Placements

Throughout the year, Benalla Health hosts numerous students in all wards and disciplines. Students are completing placement for various diplomas and degrees and spend varying lengths of time at the health service and are well supported by our Clinical Support staff and Educators.

In 2020-2021, Benalla Health had a total of 2561 student placement days (compared with 2292 in 2019-2020).

## Vocational Education Training in Schools (VETiS)

Each year the Performance Improvement Team supports a number of school-based traineeships across the organisation. In 2020, we hosted four School Based Trainees in varying departments completing certificates in Individual Support, Business Management and Community Services. The trainees attend on-site each Wednesday where they complete the practical component of their course. On a monthly basis, their GoTAFE instructor comes on-site to deliver the theory component. This year's trainees were Lachlan Sands, Amali Edmondstone, Phoebe Howard and Tahlia Pallpratt. A graduation ceremony was held on their last day, where the trainees received a certificate and a small gift in recognition of their achievement. Students were congratulated on their demonstrated resilience, particularly with COVID-19. Restrictions disrupted their placement, but they never complained and took it all in their stride. Special thanks to all the staff who have assisted with the program by mentoring the students while on placement.



## Careers Day and Work Experience

On 25 March 2021 Benalla Health took part in the Tomorrow Today Foundation Careers day, held for the local Year 10 and 11 students from Benalla P-12 and FCJ College. Approximately 28 students arrived at the Benalla Health campus by bus in the morning, to undertake a site visit.

Benalla Health staff facilitated sessions to give the students an overview of the wide variety of career options available in the healthcare field – with some fun and games thrown in for good measure. In the afternoon, there was a lakeside function where all of the local Year 10 and 11 students could visit exhibitor stands of numerous local employers and education providers. Benalla Health staff members Tara Bradley (Registered Nurse), Noel Finch (Social Worker) and Poppy Aggenbach (Occupational Therapist) attended on behalf of the organisation to answer questions.

Unfortunately due to COVID-19 restrictions, Benalla Health did not host any work experience students this year.



## Education and Staff Training



***Pictured: Dr Grace Reynolds, Jade Szeto, Marcia Ratcliff and Dr John Lambert.***

Every year the maternity unit has to meet specific education requirements.

As part of these requirements, any clinician at Benalla Health who is an accoucheur (person receiving the baby at birth) is required to have neonatal resuscitation competence, foetal surveillance (FSEP) level 3 and maternity emergency training.

During these training sessions our GP Obstetricians and GP Aesthetists come together with the midwives and senior nurses from around the hospital to practice their skills.

We are fortunate to have a fantastic group of responsive GP Obstetricians attend to improve their practice and increase the team approach.

Dr Grace Reynolds is also credentialed in running the Practical Obstetric Multi-Professional Training (PROMPT) program, which means we have been lucky enough to run extra programs when needed to keep our skills current.

## Remote Placements

Carman Cheung and Ashlee Brient joined the dietetics team as part of their first year student Community Nutrition (Public Health) placement. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the students completed their entire placement from their homes in Canberra.

The aim of their project was to evaluate the impact of our wicking garden bed projects on the partners and the quality of these partnerships. This included both the Benalla Grow Your Own (BGYO) and the Alpine Harvest wicking garden bed projects. The students interviewed our project partners, including St Vincent De Paul, the Men's Shed and Beechworth Corrections, and completed evaluations via a three-way phone call. Their results showed that all partners from Benalla and Alpine affirmed that the projects have been a good partnership, with communication being identified as the most important component. They also found that the partners had improvements in their gardening skills and knowledge.

They were able to observe dietitian consultations in a community health setting and were able to participate via the desktop camera.

*Ashlee: "This experience went above and beyond any expectations I had of this placement. Kathryn and the team at Benalla Health provided us with as many opportunities for learning and experience as possible, considering the unique circumstances we are currently living in. Despite a couple of technological issues throughout the 6 weeks, we were able to communicate with Kathryn as though we were sitting in the room with her, providing us with valuable experience with technology on top of what we learnt throughout our placement."*

*Carman: "Even though we couldn't meet in person, I could feel all the enthusiasm from Benalla Health staff. I had a really good experience in my community placement. Thank you for giving out the best in this tough situation. I hope I can come and visit all of you after the pandemic. Stay strong and healthy!"*



# Strengthening our workforce and culture

## Live Hire and HROnboard

The People and Culture department implemented two new Human Resource Management systems during 2021. In line with our organisation's Strategic Plan of increasing the use of data, analytics, and digital solutions, the People and Culture team delivered Live Hire and HROnboard.

In an effort to improve both the candidate and hiring manager experience during recruitment and selection, Live Hire is a fully integrated system. It manages vacancy requests, approvals, advertising, candidate selection and candidate offers. This platform has replaced paper-based forms and manual recruitment practices by providing hiring managers the ability to review, shortlist and appoint in collaboration with fellow interview panellists. This also has positive environmental benefits.

In addition to Live Hire, HROnboard, a fully integrated onboarding platform, has delivered a streamlined process for newly appointed employees of Benalla Health. HROnboard manages the phases throughout, including offer creation, internal offer approval, offer acceptance, completion of employee documentation and payroll integration.

In support of Benalla Health's commitment to implementing digital solutions, these newly integrated systems have provided efficiency and process improvements throughout the recruitment and onboarding of Benalla Health's workforce.

## People Matters Survey

The People Matter Survey is a public sector employee opinion survey run by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. The survey gives public sector staff the opportunity to express their views on how well their organisations reflect their values and provides an anonymous avenue for all staff to provide feedback to their employer on how safe and engaging their workplace has been in the last 12 months. The survey is voluntary and in 2019, 64 per cent of Benalla Health staff responded.

People Matter Survey - Key Performance Indicator	2019-2020 Target	2019-2020 Actual	2020-2021 Target	2020-2021 Actual
Organisational culture				
Percentage of staff who say they are able to work effectively with others in their workgroup	Question not asked		80%	93%
Percentage of staff who say they are able to work effectively with others outside their immediate workgroup	80%	89%	80%	88%
Percentage of staff who say they feel encouraged by colleagues to report patient safety concerns	Question not asked		80%	88%
Percentage of staff who say their workgroup strives to deliver services in a timely manner	80%	88%	80%	88%
Percentage of staff who say they can make a worthwhile contribution at work			80%	87%
Percentage of staff who say their workgroup strives to provide high quality advice and services	80%	95%	80%	86%



## Harmony Day

Harmony Day celebrates Australia's cultural diversity, with the theme of inclusiveness, respect and a sense of unity regardless of cultural or linguistic background. Benalla Health held a morning tea to celebrate this day with the theme of "Everyone Belongs".

Benalla Health has a diverse workforce, something to be celebrated and embraced. The organisation works hard to ensure we are welcoming and inclusive of our clients, patients, residents and staff.



*Pictured above Jacina Mathieson and Adele Myconos get into the spirit.*

*Left: The Community Health reception was decorated orange to celebrate Harmony Week.*



# Enhanced Community Engagement

## Benalla and District Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

The women of the Benalla and District Memorial Hospital Auxiliary continue to do a wonderful job of raising money and providing special gifts to our patients and community. This has been despite clear challenges relating to COVID-19 restrictions and has meant they needed to be creative in how they work. Some of the work they have done this past year include:

- Lakeside Market – plant and car boot sales. Sale of jams, sauces, relishes
- Online advertising of sales
- Donation of crochet rugs to MEW
- Fundraising of almost \$40,000 to provide new equipment for UCC and Perioperative Services.
- Open Gardens
- UCC trauma teddies to give to paediatric patients
- Gift packs for new Mums on Midwifery. This included knitted jumpers for newborns



*Pictured presenting the mum gift packs (also shown above) are L-R Rosie Moulday, Marcia Ratcliffe, Ann Degan, Gabrielle Robinson and Bren Brown.*





## Volunteers

The contribution of volunteers at Benalla Health is vital to the organisation's ability to provide such a valued service to the community. While COVID-19 brought about changes to the way volunteers could assist the health service, their contribution throughout the year was outstanding. There is barely a part of the health service where they don't assist, whether it be providing friendship and support to our Morrie Evans Wing residents, to bringing newspapers to patients, providing music or just assisting in being able to provide a high-quality service that our community values.

### Volunteer Week

Benalla Health has paid tribute to its volunteers during its annual thank you morning tea on May 18, 2021. Staff across the organisation also recognised the contribution of the volunteers with a social media campaign.

Acting CEO Andrew Nitschke said the morning tea was a chance for the health service to say thank you for the outstanding work which volunteers did.

"Although COVID-19 restricted much of the work our volunteers have been able to do in the health service, we know they are eager to return to their roles again and to work with us on providing valuable services to our community," he said.

"Volunteers are so vital to every health service, performing a number of roles and working across many departments and our staff and community has greatly missed the presence of our volunteers at Benalla Health."

During the event, certificates were presented to the volunteers.

Mr Nitschke said Benalla Health currently has 21 active volunteers, the youngest of which is 16 and the eldest being 81.

"Our longest serving volunteer has been with us for 14 years," he said.

"Prior to the impact of COVID-19, volunteers at Benalla Health contributed 684.55 hours of service over the first two months of 2020."







**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: John O'Loughlin; Gerri Murphy and Peter Cox; Peter Hurley; Sally Gingall; the presentation certificates; Karen Adcock, Adele Caneva, Casey Cowie.**



## Free face masks through Community Health

The Victorian Government has been working hard to protect Victorians and has distributed face masks to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

Benalla Rural City Council and Benalla Health are working together to distribute these masks to members of our community, especially to those more at risk, such as older people and people with chronic illnesses and those having difficulty getting masks. The masks were available from multiple locations across the community.

## National Palliative Care Week



***Pictured: April Betheras, Patricia Saker, Pauline Montgomery and Jo O'Brien.***

Benalla Health staff and patients celebrated the important role palliative care provides in the community.

National Palliative Care Week was held from 23 to 29 May, with the theme "Palliative Care – it's more than you think".

Benalla Health Acting Chief Executive Officer Andrew Nitschke said that Benalla Health Palliative Care team was made up of three staff, working with 48 patients and 80 clients.

"Palliative care is a vital service to our Benalla community, but is so much more than end of life care," he said.

"It allows people living with a life-limiting illness to live as well as they can, and our dedicated staff are well-trained in helping our patients manage pain and symptoms to ensure their quality of life is maintained."

Benalla Health Loss and Grief Coordinator April Betheras said her work supports people and their families, particularly around grief and bereavement.

"The services provided as part of palliative care are a valuable exchange of knowledge, experience and support and recognises the important and special understanding of people caring for those close to them," she said. "I have learnt so much from people we care for and like to think that I am able to take what I learn from patients and families and share this special knowledge with others."

Genevieve Bancelhon, who lost her husband Michael in 2020, said palliative care was vital. "Because of the service, we were able to bring Mike home at his request and had the opportunity to surround him with those who loved him and who had shared his life with him," she said. "I believe it is a choice that everyone should be given to share these precious moments and grieve together while the person is aware and able to respond. Of course, it is hard and heartbreaking something no one wants to go through. However, at the other end when all is finished, I honestly believe that it helped tremendously with the grieving time."

Volunteer and client Jean Hamilton said that she would always be grateful to the team for their support.

"Palliative care is a most wonderful service to help people and families through one of the most difficult times in their lives," she said.

"I have personally experienced their help when my husband passed and as a volunteer I have seen other families benefit from the loving care given by the palliative care team."



## Benalla Youth Live4Life Partnership

Benalla Health remains committed to the mental health and wellbeing of our community, in particular our youth, and continues to strive to increase community resilience and reduce rates of youth suicide.

Benalla Health is one of 12 organisations in Benalla that have worked together since 2017 as part of the Benalla Youth Live4Life Partnership.

Other partner organisations include Benalla Rural City, Benalla P-12 College, Benalla Flexible Learning Centre, Central Hume Primary Care Partnership, FCJ College, NESAY, NE Tracks, NECAMHS, Tomorrow Today Foundation, Benalla Place Based Suicide Prevention Trial Site and Stolz Furnishings.

Youth Live4Life builds community resilience by providing Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training to parents, teachers and other community members who work with young people.


The program also trains secondary students in Teen Mental Health First Aid (TMHFA). The Live4Life model focuses on a whole of community approach to mental health education and suicide prevention in order to build resilient young people and communities.

A recent two-year independent evaluation of Live4Life in Benalla and Glenelg Shires, funded by the Victorian Government, showed the significant impact the model is having. Results include:

- Communities are more networked and resilient.
- More than nine in 10 young people are having conversations about mental health with someone else.
- 65% of young people found Live4Life useful that year; 75% expect it to be useful in future.
- One in four senior students have sought support for their mental health.
- People are kinder to one another.
- Three in 10 senior students have sought support on behalf of a friend.
- Adults are far more confident to support a young person with a mental health need (82% feel confident after the training, up from 32%).

Merryn Howell, Manager Healthy Lifestyles and Accredited Mental Health Social Worker, has facilitated nine Youth Mental Health First Aid Courses in Benalla since 2017, resulting in almost 150 adults becoming trained Mental Health First Aiders.

In addition, Live4Life Benalla has trained more than 800 secondary school students in Teen Mental Health First Aid.



**Inpatient services leader rounding  
with patients**  
*"I've been in a lot of hospitals and its  
top of the lot here.  
The food, the staff,  
everything is the best".*



# Consolidate financial and environmental sustainability

## Solar Panels

Benalla Health completed its third instalment of solar panels, installing another 97.68kw on the hospital roof during November 2020. This project is part of multiple strategies Benalla Health works towards to reduce our Carbon Emissions and protect the environment.



## Load Shedding

With the recently installed large capacity CAT generator, Benalla Health is in the fortunate position to be able to participate in the Emergency Grid Support Program. Facilitated by our engineering team, Benalla Health will run our generator on critical demand days for up to four hours at a time. These actions bring benefits by reducing blackouts and decreasing Victoria's peak loads on days of extreme heat. This initiative lowers power costs and utilises a more renewable power source. Furthermore, large scale use of backup generators reduces the need to build a more expensive power plant.

Benalla Health is committed to protecting the environment and acknowledges the impact the organisation has on carbon emissions. Consideration is regularly given to conserving energy and water, reducing greenhouse emissions and improving waste management. Orientation and ongoing education is provided to staff in relation to waste management, segregation and recycling. Despite an increase in clinical and general waste a result of COVID-19, Benalla Health's energy and water consumption has decreased.

Environmental Impacts and Energy Usage	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Energy Use			
Electricity (MWH)	1615	1520	1489
Gas (Mj)	10.97	11.89	11.48
Carbon Emissions (Thousand Tones of CO <sub>2</sub> e)			
Electricity	1.73	1.55	1.46
Gas	0.57	1.61	4.59
Total Emissions	2.29	2.16	2.05
Water Use (Millions Litres)			
Potable Water	13.14	9.57	9.28



## Equipment

### *Microtech DPS Donation*



Morrie Evans Residents received a generous donation from Microtech DPS in a Ricoh Interactive Whiteboard with a 135cm touchscreen. This valuable piece of equipment had previously been on loan from Microtech DPS to help residents keep in touch with the local community during COVID-19 restrictions.

This allowed for the Intergeneration Kindergarten program to continue during COVID-19 restrictions, keeping our residents safe. All residents look forward to the interesting and at times very funny moments shared with the young students. Residents use Skype in the Activities Room to connect with friends and family. The screen is large and the audio clear. Residents find it a lot of fun to be able to see each other whilst talking. The unit is also used to facilitate specialist medical appointments and enables residents to keep in contact with other outside groups offering access to a greater range of activities including live bands.

Having made such good use of the loan whiteboard, Joel Steers, General Manager of Microtech DPS visited MEW to donate the whiteboard. Special thanks to our ICT Manager, Peter Hurley, who was instrumental in the successful implementation of the interactive whiteboard.

## Annual appeal

Funding of just over \$39,000 was raised through the 2021 Benalla Health Annual Appeal. Money raised is being put towards a new community bus for the organisation. This will enable more members of the community to be able to participate in our Lifestyle Program and will also be used for our Aged Care residents for day outings.

Board Chair Dr Dennis O'Brien said the Benalla Health Annual Appeal had always been met with a great outpouring of support from all sectors of the community.

"Our residents and clients are lucky enough to enjoy day trips around our great region and purchasing a new bus will allow them to do this in greater comfort," he said.

"Our current bus is in need of replacement and we look forward to being able to replace this important community asset.

"We have always been extremely thankful to our Benalla community for the support people show us and we hope they can dig deep again this year and assist by providing a donation to the appeal."

Past appeals have also provided significant contributions for Benalla Health. This includes the purchase of equipment such as patient monitoring systems, defibrillators, the upgrade and refurbishment of the Urgent Care Centre, Perioperative Theatres, Morrie Evans Wing and an instrument washer for theatre.



## Electronic Maintenance and Requisitions System

From November 2020, Engineering migrated to an Electronic Maintenance and Requisitions System called MEX. The new system replaces the manual paper based systems in order to allow compliance with the new Asset Management Accountability Framework (AMAF).

This is a computer-aided maintenance management system that has been implemented to enable times and costs to be more accurately recorded and to have improved and more transparent planning processes.

One of the benefits is the reliable tracking system from current requests, jobs, work orders and the historical data. Internal consumers can see the status of their requests and the response of the Engineering Department.

For Preventive Maintenance Services, MEX has the ability to schedule periodic inspections and/or carrying out regular maintenance raising work orders showing the tasks to complete as per Australian standards with the option of attaching reports.

## Cybersecurity

Benalla Health has continued to strengthen our cybersecurity protection defences and as a result, recorded no significant cyber events during the 2020-2021 financial year. Insecure and unsupported software vulnerable to cyber-attacks have been removed.

Benalla Health has also worked closely with Department of Health (DH) and Hume Regional Health Alliance (HRHA) to implement recommendations from cybersecurity events.

Cybersecurity remains a high risk for Benalla Health, however the organisation remains committed to continue to plan and implement stronger firewalls and endpoint security to limit and/or prevent attacks.



### **Health Independence Program patient discharge phone calls feedback on our service:**

*"Found everyone and the program very helpful. Thought  
having a small group of 3-4 was very personalised".*

*"Was excellent (Ortho rehab). Lots of help and ideas.  
Small group & at time 1:1 which was felt to be more  
beneficial than large group. Were able to get on top of  
any issues quickly."*



## Celebrating our staff

### International Day of the Midwife May 5



International Day of the Midwife on May 5 was an important day of celebration. It's an occasion to honour all midwives and what they do for mothers, babies and families around the world, including in our Benalla community. On this day we show appreciation for midwives and help them feel valued, respected and important. This year's theme was *Follow the Data: Invest in Midwives*. Thank you to Benalla Health midwives for the important role you play in our community.



***Pictured: Christine Austin, Lisa Pryor, Cindy Lowe, Brittany Flanagan, Andrea Hogan, John Hutton, Gabrielle Robinson and Linda Adams.***

### International Nurses Day May 12

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every year on May 12, which is the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. The theme for 2021 as advised by the International Council of Nurses was *Nurses: a Voice to Lead—A vision for future healthcare*. Nurses across the organisation wrote their reasons for choosing their profession on speech bubbles which became a major social media campaign for the organisation.



***Pictured from left are Jasmine Ignacio and Sally McKindlay; Gabrielle Robinson; Anne Fitzgerald.***





## Staff Awards



- Excellence in Quality Service were Merryn Howell, Simone Sammon and Tanya Allan.
- Excellence in Innovation and Sustainability was shared by Cara Hammond, Stephanie Johnson and Casey Cowie
- Excellence in Leadership were Melissa Jackson, Jenny Hooper and Kate Marshall
- Excellence in Consumer Care and Engagement was awarded to Adele Myconos, Melanie Stretton and Mary Steel

## Service Awards

- 10 Years – Michelle Dack, Shirley Gordon, Lyndell Naughton, Matthew Pulham, Angela Syer, Belinda Thomas
- 15 Years – Anne Fitzgerald, Judi Greaves, Suzanne Hughes, Catherine Ings, Angela Lawrence, Jo-Anne O'Brien, Raylene Peachy, Kim Vallender
- 20 Years – Caroline Burns, Reg Johnston
- 25 Years – Robyn Hughan
- 30 Years – Ric Grubissa, Cris Pianta



## Farewell

### *Ric Grubissa Retirement*



On 17 February 2021, Acting CEO Andrew Nitschke announced that Ric Grubissa would be retiring 41 years of outstanding service to Benalla Health.

Ric's contribution to Benalla Health has been exemplary, with the needs and requirements of the organisation first and foremost in all that he was involved with.

There have been many projects that Ric and his team have been heavily involved with over the years that have produced outstanding results, with them all being cost effective.

Some of the recent projects have included the fire ring main saving Benalla Health over \$100,000 in the process from the initial costings; Morrie Evans extensions and renovations over many years, but most recently the excellent extension to enable single room occupancy for all residents; the refurbishment of the Community Rehabilitation Centre and the refurbishment of upstairs of the Consulting Suites building for District Home Nursing Service.

Some of the other major projects have included the building of the Benalla Community Care Ray Sweeney Centre, Michael Long Education Centre and the new kitchen building and redevelopment of the old kitchen space.

In 2013 Ric was the recipient of the staff excellence award for Innovation and Sustainability for the installation of the state of the art Solar System consisting of 396 individual solar panels.

### *Janine Holland resignation*



Benalla Health's Chief Executive Officer Janine Holland resigned following 11 years of outstanding service.

In announcing Ms Holland's resignation, Board Chair Dr Dennis O'Brien said Ms Holland had been an inspirational leader.

"Among her many achievements, the development of the recently launched Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and her work on securing successful funding for renovations at Morrie Evans Wing are stand-outs," Dr O'Brien said.

"The 2017 Premier of Victoria Medium Health Service of the Year award was another of her many contributions and testament to her work.

"Janine was a compassionate and respected leader, who led the organisation admirably during the many challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak, and who won the admiration of staff and Board for her

dedication to Benalla Health.

"She began working at the health service in December 2009 as the Director of Clinical Services before being appointed to CEO five years ago."

"We wish her all the very best in her future endeavours and know the community will be saddened to hear she is leaving the organisation."

"During her time here at Benalla Health, she has formed some wonderful and strong relationships in her work with the community, which have had a positive impact on the organisation and our future going forward," he said.



## Your opinion is important to us

Each year Benalla Health seeks feedback on the previous year's Quality of Care (Quality Account) Report from members of our community.

Your feedback is important as it gives us the opportunity to improve on the Report's presentation and content. We encourage you to take every opportunity to give your comments and feedback, both positive and negative, as this will give us the opportunity to include your ideas and comments in next year's Report.

### How to provide feedback in person or phone:

**Main Reception:** 45-63 Coster Street, Benalla Victoria 3672

**Phone:** 03 5761 2222

**Fax:** 03 5761 4246

### In the post (no stamp required)

*C/- Operational Director of Performance Improvement*

*Benalla Health*

*Reply Paid 406*

*Benalla Vic 3671*



### Health Independence Program patient discharge phone calls feedback on our service:

*"Staff were excellent and very knowledgeable and helpful".*

*" I enjoyed the program and was happy I could make up a session  
I missed after a fall".*

*" The program is organised and well fun with  
plenty of attention for us all"*





**Benalla Health**

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