

# COMMUNITY MATTERS

Spring 2020



East Grampians  
Health Service



## WELCOME FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This edition of Community Matters brings you some of the important developments that have taken place during this year and demonstrates the safe quality care you continue to receive when you require healthcare in the Ararat region.

During this difficult year our staff have been amazing. They are a professional group of people who have focused on the lives of clients, patients and residents as well as carers, family members and volunteers. Throughout the pandemic staff have continued to deliver safe quality care.

I can assure you that our staff will be working with you, our community, to ensure that services reflect the current health situation and that we will be proactive in our approach to the health needs of our community.



*Andrew Freeman*

**Andrew Freeman**  
Chief Executive  
East Grampians  
Health Service

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Following this year's Annual General Meeting our 2020 Annual Report will be available on our website [eghs.net.au](http://eghs.net.au)

# OUR COMMUNITY

## KEEPING YOU SAFE

Our dedicated staff have had the responsibility to ensure that our health services patients, residents and clients have been safe from contracting the COVID-19 virus.



Here in Ararat a team of highly trained professionals implemented strategies to ensure staff and consumers of health care were able to give and receive quality safe care. There have been enormous challenges for our Health Service and the aged care sector in particular. Together we have demonstrated what can be achieved as no staff or patients in Ararat contracted the virus.

**We established a COVID-19 testing clinic and as at the beginning of November over 2310 people have been tested.**

We increased our cleaning regime to include touch point cleaning. This has played a pivotal role in preventing the spread of the virus by cleaning frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles, light switches, hand rails and taps.

A number of changes were implemented to ensure that our Health Service complied with social distancing requirements and infection control, from conducting meetings via the internet, additional training and competencies for all staff, expanding roles for staff to incorporate COVID-19 related activities and administration staff helping to assist with visitors in aged care.



We are learning to manage the virus which means that there will certainly be future challenges that will extend into 2021 and beyond:

- Major redevelopment of our Perioperative Services and managing this within the pandemic
- Respiratory Health program - fit checking and fit testing of particulate masks for staff in high risk areas
- Mass vaccination program for when/if a vaccine becomes available
- Learning to live in a COVID-19 normal world
- Complacency as restrictions ease and the threat diminishes
- Mental health challenges within the community
- Ongoing scrutiny of infection control practices in aged care facilities
- Controlling clusters and outbreaks of COVID-19

As a result of a positive COVID-19 sample being found in waste water a Rapid Response Team was deployed to Ararat to conduct testing of residents.

No positive COVID-19 cases were detected and further testing of the waste water returned a negative result, which was a relief for the community.



## BUSINESS AS USUAL

The pandemic has tested all of us as we navigate a new “normal” for the future. Within our Health Service nowhere has this been more prevalent than in our Acute Services.

The skills and determination of all our clinical staff should never be underestimated. It has been a major undertaking to change day-to-day tasks to establish ways to undertake regular procedures under strict Infection Control guidelines and government directions, while continuing to deliver appropriate safe patient care. In partnership with staff from around our organisation this has been achieved by staff working together to ensure that our patients continued to receive quality, safe healthcare.

Babies, of course, take no notice of pandemics and our Midwives have continued to deliver babies, providing mothers with the support and assurance they need to know their babies will be delivered safely during the pandemic.

Appropriate COVID-19 safe plans were adopted to ensure that care was as free from risk as possible. The newly implemented regional centralised CTG (Cardiotocography) system has been very helpful in communicating scans to GPs, Obstetricians and Midwives.

This monitoring allows us to keep a close watch on foetal heartbeat during labour and the antenatal period. By the end of the year we will have three Lactation Consultants to provide both inpatient and outpatient consultations to breastfeeding mothers.

Our Oncology department has expanded services during the year as a Haematologist commenced fortnightly visits with the Oncologist continuing his visits on the alternate week. This has enabled the Health Service to extend the range of therapies to patients undergoing cancer treatments.

2020 was designated the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. We certainly believe everyone of our Nurses deserves our thanks and gratitude.

## YOU AREN'T ALONE

Lockdown during Stage 3 restrictions was extremely challenging for many Patricia Hinchey Centre clients who often live alone in the community.

Manager Jacinta Harman, her staff and volunteers worked hard to ensure that clients felt connected to the centre and their family and friends. While they weren't able to attend the centre, staff visited clients in their homes, and followed the appropriate precautions and screening.

During this time staff conducted social and mental welfare checks, assisted with essential shopping, joined in light exercises and provided a daily news service as to what was happening in the community! The smile and the chat lifted many a spirit.



## A FEELING OF BEING RIGHT AT HOME

For 45 residents, 70 Lowe Street is their home where, with excellent quality care, they live a meaningful life as independent as their health allows.

As with all homes after a few years, it's time for a bit of rejuvenation of the building. And who better to help choose the paint colour, the furnishings and the lighting but the residents themselves. The residents have been an integral component of the redevelopment which has seen the relocation of the dining room next to the kitchen, to streamline the dining experience for residents and staff. The new cabinetry, flooring, lighting and painting has made the dining room a most inviting space in which to enjoy the home cooked breakfasts, lunch and dinners.

We have also received funding to renovate residents' bedrooms. Each resident will now have a single room with private ensuite, providing the level of privacy and dignity that each resident so rightly deserves.

Our residents are a creative group of people who enjoy painting pictures, making and painting garden mushrooms, planting out succulents, diamond bead work, gardening, cooking, making bird houses, papier maché and constructing pinatas. The residents have donated their creations for the enjoyment of other residents, staff and visitors. The Leisure and Lifestyle staff enjoy working with the residents to create a very special environment where residents are able to discover hidden talents that bring joy to others.

Of course, as with so many, life has not been without its challenges during this time of the pandemic. But our residents have quickly become acquainted with Skype, keeping in touch with family and friends through the internet and regular phone calls. The monthly newsletter Lowedown, has kept family members up to date with important health information and news of events at 70 Lowe Street.



## KEEPING HEALTH CARE LOCAL

Willaura Healthcare provides a strong community connection to the people requiring acute and residential aged care who want to stay in their community, where they have family and friends, and know the staff understand country life.

And what a resilient community that busily supports the Willaura campus! Jane Millear was recently recognised for her excellent work as coordinator of the Willaura Healthcare Outdoor Market that has **raised over \$90,000** since its inception in 2005. This fundraising is used to enhance the Willaura Healthcare environment. What an achievement for everyone involved in this fantastic community event, which this year just snuck in before COVID-19 lockdown.

Willaura Healthcare is an important and valued part of the local community. The future is looking very positive with the recent installation of solar panels that will greatly reduce the cost of power.



## QUOTES FROM PATIENTS/RESIDENTS

"We are very appreciative and grateful for the amazing service"

"we live in a great community"

"this is an amazing service"

"I'm excited about coming back to the centre"

"Jacinta, staff, family and friends have helped show we are not alone"

"this place is like a 2nd home to me – it's great to be back"

President of the Friends of PHC Graeme Bailey summed it up when he said that he cried when Jacinta rang him to say that clients were able to return to the centre. That's how important the centre is to their lives.



## KEEPING TOGETHER WHILE APART

Before the Pandemic struck one of our Garden View Court residents, Meryl\* was concerned that she might not be able to attend her mother's funeral, as her mother had lived in in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

Staff at Garden View Court were able to spend time with Meryl to reassure her that she would be able to go to her mother's funeral and that two staff members would accompany her. Meryl was able to spend time farewelling her mother at the funeral and reminiscing with family at the wake. It was a long day but one that Meryl was so pleased that she could undertake with the support of staff, and she was full of thanks and still talks about how grateful she is that she could go to this important family event.

Perhaps the biggest challenge during the past year has been keeping our residents and clients connected with family, friends and the broader community.

Significant events, from weddings, anniversaries and yes, even funerals, have meant that it has been really difficult, in fact just about impossible, for families to come together to share these times.

It has been so rewarding to see the way in which our Lifestyle and Leisure staff, along with the local community, have come up with innovative ways to keep residents and clients in touch with those people who matter to them.

This has included visits by staff to check on clients in their homes, families visiting residents (while looking through windows), regular video and phone calls as well as letters and paintings from school children.

\*name changed for privacy

## RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE

### MEDICATION ERRORS - EGHS WIDE

Medication errors are an important area for quality monitoring. There are many classification of errors ranging from documentation issues, missed doses and wrong dose or wrong person. For all the errors recorded there has been no significant adverse outcomes for our patients or residents. Our staff are highly motivated to get medication administration right all the time, however, sometimes errors can occur. The EGHS Medication Advisory Committee reviews in detail the medication error trends and puts in place actions to change the possibility of error occurring. During 2019/20 we experienced on average four errors a week across all clinical areas, including 81 aged care beds.



### FALLS - EGHS WIDE

Unfortunately falls at EGHS are a risk associated with the care that is provided. Dignity of risk ensures that all aged care residents are afforded the right to choose how they live their lives and sometimes for our more mobile active residents this means that a fall may be possible. All residents and patients of EGHS undergo a falls risk assessment on admission, this provides the opportunity for staff to discuss the options for strategies to minimise the risk of falling. This may include a referral to an occupational or physio therapist as well as the use of mechanical aids. Care plans document the support that staff initiate when looking after these vulnerable members of our community.



### PRESSURE INJURIES - EGHS WIDE

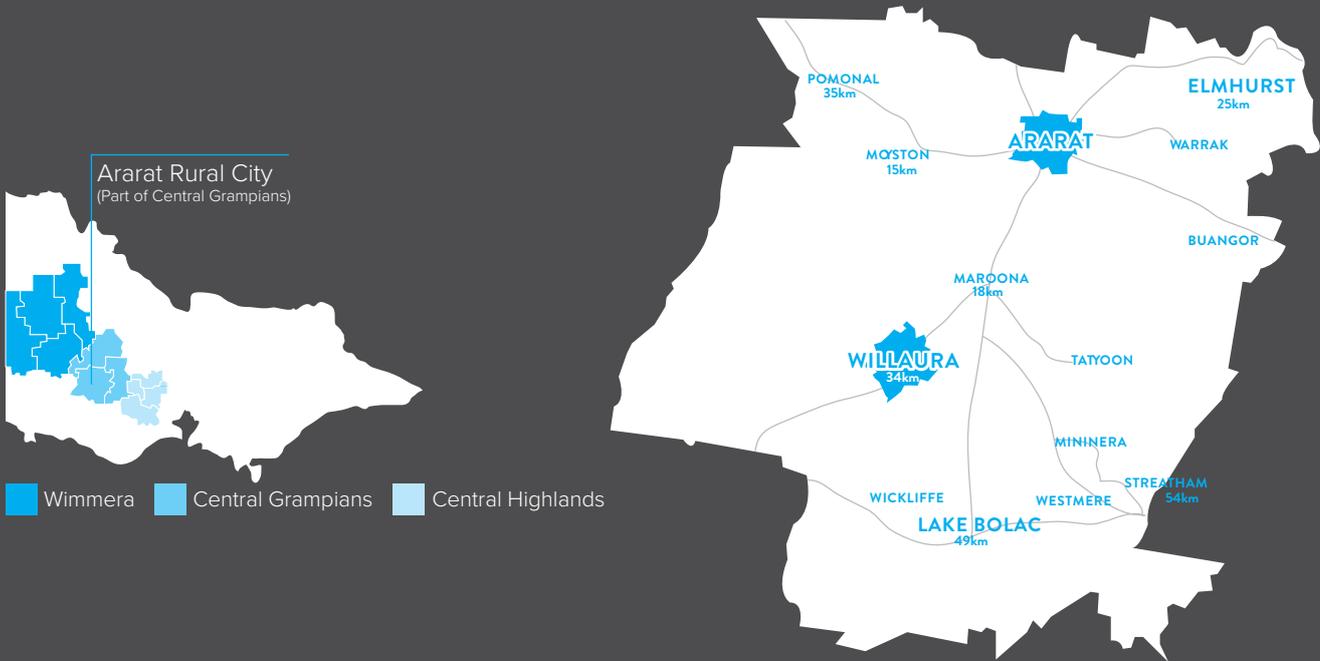
Pressure injuries are complications to a person's skin integrity. Across EGHS it has been pleasing to note that pressure injuries have reduced over the past year. We often get patients or residents admitted with pressure injuries from home or other care facilities. Our dedicated wound nurse plays an integral part in educating staff and providing expert advice on best treatments for any injuries identified. EGHS has a Review Committee to continually review our practices and seeks continual improvement in the management of pressure injuries.





East Grampians  
Health Service

# SITE DIRECTORY AND LOCATION MAPS



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**GARDEN VIEW COURT**  
 Lowe Street, Ararat 3377  
**P:** 03 5352 9324  
**PATRICIA HINCHEY CENTRE**  
 Girdlestone Street, Ararat 3377  
**P:** 03 5352 9326

**WILLAURA HEALTH CARE**  
 Delacombe Way, Willaura 3379  
**P:** 03 5354 1600  
**PARKLAND HOUSE**  
 Delacombe Way, Willaura 3379  
**P:** 03 5354 1613



LEADERS IN RURAL HEALTH CARE