

ECHO



East Grampians
Health Service

EAST GRAMPIANS HEALTH SERVICE



“EGHS celebrates 5-Star success across all aged care” Full story on page 3

CE Report

Across Victoria, emergency departments and urgent care centres are under unprecedented demand. In both metropolitan and regional centres, demand continues to rise, resulting in longer waits and making it more challenging for patients to access timely care when they need it most.

Emergency care is one of the most complex services in healthcare. Patients may require urgent treatment following an accident, a sudden illness, or the worsening of a chronic condition. While demand remains high and keeps the attention of the community and media, it is important to recognise that stronger government policy and, at the local level, increased community-based care we now take for granted have dramatically reduced the need for emergency care in our community.

Road safety initiatives are a powerful example. Measures such as drink and drug testing, mandatory seatbelts, improved vehicle safety standards and stricter enforcement of road rules have significantly reduced the number of serious and fatal road accidents. Today, it is rare for us to see patients presenting with severe injuries from motor vehicle crashes, and when major trauma occurs, patients are quickly transferred to specialist trauma centres such as the Royal Melbourne Hospital or The Alfred.

Equally important has been the impact of occupational health and safety reforms. Local employers' commitment to creating safer workplaces has transformed the risk profile of our community. Given the significance of agriculture and manufacturing across the Ararat district, it is remarkable how uncommon serious industrial injuries have become.



NICK BUSH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Yet despite these achievements, one challenge continues to grow. Across Victoria, older people now clearly make up the largest age group in emergency department and urgent care presentations. Many are living with multiple chronic conditions that require ongoing support, monitoring and timely intervention. When those supports are unavailable, hospital care often becomes the only option.

CE Report cont. page 2

CE Report cont.

The solution is not simply to expand emergency departments. A truly effective health system invests in keeping people well at home. It provides care close to home and supports independence.

This is where Ararat stands apart.

Our community benefits from two bulk-billing general practices, ensuring affordable access to primary healthcare for everyone. Just as importantly, both practices maintain a strong GP workforce, making appointments available on most days. Early access to medical care, including engaged pharmacies, helps manage chronic conditions before they become emergencies, improving outcomes for patients and reducing pressure on hospital services.

In recent years, Ararat Rural City Council transitioned its home care services to East Grampians Health Service. This has enabled a more integrated model of home-based care, bringing clinical and support services together under one organisation. Today, EGHS provides a wide range of services in people's homes, including domestic assistance, home maintenance, personal care, phone calls to check on our community members, community nursing, Hospital in the Home and aged care packages. More than 100 Support at Home packages currently support residents to remain safe, healthy, and independent.

The impact has been significant. Nearly 800 residents, representing around 10 per cent of our population, now receive support through EGHS community and home-based services. These services allow people to remain where they most want to be, in their own homes, while receiving the care they need to maintain their health and wellbeing.

The results suggest this approach is working. While many comparable health services across Victoria are experiencing increases in emergency and urgent care presentations, some by as much as 25 per cent, EGHS has seen a 5 per cent reduction compared with the same period last year. While no single factor can explain this outcome, it is reasonable to conclude that strong primary care, integrated community services and investment in community aged care support are making a real difference.

Home and Community care is at its best when it prevents and treats illness, supports independence, promotes general wellbeing, and keeps people connected to their communities. Ararat's experience demonstrates that when general practice, community services and hospital care work together, better outcomes are possible for patients, families and the broader health system.

As healthcare demand continues to grow across Victoria, our community should be proud of the model we are building and the difference it is making in residents' lives.

EGHS ATTENDS CAREERS' EXPO

EGHS Education staff Nicola McMahon and Joey Collins attended the 2026 Careers' Expo at Federation University in Ballarat in July.

During the Expo they met students studying nursing, psychology, IT, cybersecurity, marketing, social work and other allied health courses, and spoke to many about pursuing a career at EGHS.



Pictured are Joey Collins and Nicola McMahon



EGHS CELEBRATES 5-STAR SUCCESS ACROSS ALL AGED CARE

JODIE HOLWELL – COMMUNITY LIAISON

East Grampians Health Service is proud to announce that all three of its residential aged care homes have achieved a 5-star rating under the Australian Government's Star Ratings system, placing them among the highest-performing aged care services in the country.

The result is particularly notable given the rarity of the achievement, with only six percent of aged care facilities nationally holding a 5-star rating.

The achievement represents an exceptional outcome for residents, families, staff and the wider community, reflecting a sustained commitment to excellence in care, quality, safety and resident experience.

Director of Clinical Services, Rebecca Peters, said the result was a testament to the dedication and professionalism of staff across all three facilities.

"Achieving a 5-star rating is a significant accomplishment in its own right," she said.

"To have all three of our aged care homes recognised with the highest possible rating is an extraordinary result and one that

every member of our team should be proud of."

The Australian Government Star Ratings system assesses aged care homes across a range of measures including residents' experiences, quality indicators, compliance performance, staffing and care quality. Receiving five stars indicates that a service is performing at the highest level across these important areas.

Ms Peters said the achievement reflects the organisation's strong focus on person-centred care and its commitment to helping residents live fulfilling and meaningful lives.

"At the heart of this achievement are our residents and their families," she said.

"We strive every day to provide safe, compassionate and high-quality care while creating environments where people feel valued, respected and at home. This recognition confirms that commitment."

EGHS remains committed to continuous improvement and ensuring older members of the community receive the highest standard of care close to home.



East Grampians Health Service Director of Clinical Services Bec Peters, Manager of Garden View Court Natalie Wohlers, Manager of Willaura Health Care Liz Atkinson and Manager of 70 Lowe Street Chris Jordan celebrate EGHS achieving a 5-star rating for its residential aged care homes.



**East Grampians
Health Service**

*improving the health
of our community*

East Grampians Health Service
invites you to attend our annual

Research Showcase

*Join us to launch the Modified
Sport for Older Adults in Rural
Communities Toolkit.*

*Research posters will also be
on display.*



**DATE: 3 SEPTEMBER 2026
TIME: 2:00PM – 3:00PM
VENUE: MT WILLIAM ROOM,
EAST GRAMPIANS HEALTH
SERVICE**

Light refreshments will be provided.

Please register via the QR code.

For further information, contact
developmentandimprovement@eghs.net.au
or ph: (03) 5352 9467

This event is supported by:



CLINIC SUPPORTING WOMEN DURING WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEK AND BEYOND

JODIE HOLWELL – COMMUNITY LIAISON

'Do it anyway' is the theme of this year's Women's Health Week, which encourages women to take small, realistic steps towards personal wellbeing and health priorities despite busy schedules.

Women's Health Week runs from September 7 to 11 and is one of the nation's largest events for women's health, and with the expansion of the new Women's Health Clinic at East Grampians Health Service, clinicians are now available to help women achieve their health goals.

The EGHS Women's Health Clinic (that also encompasses the Sexual and Reproductive Hub) is expanding and offering new services, operating out of the EGHS Community Health Centre.

"With a caring multidisciplinary team providing quality care all in the one place, the clinic enables women to access services and gain the advice they need to live a long and healthy life," Manager Tracey Walters said.

"At the clinic, women can access specialised women's health physiotherapists, GP obstetricians and a women's health nurse to provide these services.

"Women also have access to a dietician, social worker and a breast care nurse and in future we are aiming to have more specialists join the team and expand our services even more."

The women's health physiotherapy team provides assessment, treatment and support for a wide range of pelvic health concerns across all stages of a woman's life, particularly during times of hormonal shifts such as the childbearing years and menopause

The physiotherapists are experienced in managing bladder and bowel dysfunction, including incontinence, urinary urgency and chronic constipation, as well as pelvic organ prolapse symptoms.

The team also supports women during pregnancy and after birth, providing pelvic floor screening and rehabilitation to promote recovery and a safe return to everyday activities and

their chosen level of exercise. The clinicians also support women experiencing pelvic pain, including painful intercourse and symptoms associated with conditions such as endometriosis.

"Women's Health Week will be celebrated by the staff at the clinic with the aim to get the word out to women of all ages that we are expanding our services for women in the Ararat region and beyond, and providing specialist services closer to home," Ms Walters said.

"The clinic is for all women and women assigned female at birth who are going/gone through puberty through to and during/after the menopause years.

"No referral is required, and we will assist you to work through your health needs in a supportive and confidential environment."

The Women's Health Clinic provides services in:

- Sexual Health: STI testing and treatment
- Pelvic Pain: Comprehensive care for persistent pelvic discomfort
- Menopause and Perimenopause: Support for navigating hormonal changes and the symptoms that affect daily life.
- Menstrual issues: Diagnosis and treatment of menstrual pain and heavy bleeding.
- Continence: Management of pelvic floor health and continence support
- Contraception: including the insertion of IUD & Implanon in the clinic.
- Pregnancy counselling

To book an appointment you don't need a referral, and the clinic offers most services at no cost and low cost for some ongoing services.

Women who would like to attend for an appointment in a confidential and caring environment, call to book an appointment on 5352 9430 or email the clinic at womenshealth@eghs.net.au



Pictured L-R, Caroline Hamilton, women's health physiotherapist, Tracey Walters, Manager of Women's Health, Sarah Woodburn, Director of Community Services, and Ellen Harland, women's health physiotherapist

DONATIONS AND LASTING LEGACIES TO FOUNDATION SECURE HEALTH SERVICE'S FUTURE

JODIE HOLWELL – COMMUNITY LIAISON

Family bequests generously given to the East Grampians Health Service Building for the Future Foundation are a meaningful way in which to honour a loved one's memory as well as contributing towards vital capital projects and ensuring a strong future for the health service and its staff.

The Foundation is a charitable Trust established in 2009 with the purpose of providing funding for staff development, special purpose projects and equipment for East Grampians Health Service.

The Trust is governed by seven independent local Trustees who manage the Trust's assets and the distribution of funding for the sole benefit of the health service. The current Trustees include Chair David Hosking, Vice Chair Graeme Foster, Geoff Laidlaw, Jill Tivey, Heather Fleming and EGHS Board Directors Sybil Abbott-Burmeister and Megan Shea.

Chair David Hosking said the Foundation funds educational scholarships to staff, assists with purchasing equipment and funds large scale projects.

The Foundation currently manages assets of just over \$7.5 million, comprising an investment portfolio and some leased farmland, and consults a Financial Planner for advice on investment holdings.

Since 2010, the Foundation has distributed \$1,280,066 (\$536,650 for large capital items – including \$200,000 for a new CT Scanner, \$100,000 for roof replacement and \$50,000

for the renovation of the birthing suite. The remainder is for education disbursements).

The Foundation annually offers scholarships up to the value of \$125,000 to staff to enhance and develop their knowledge and learn new skills, thereby ensuring quality of care for the community well into the future.

Since its inception, the Foundation has allocated 83 scholarships including Foundation scholarships along with Laidlaw Family and Epworth Foundation scholarships.

Mr Hosking said a donation to the Foundation via a person's Will ensures the future of East Grampians Health Service.

"The Foundation is looking to attract family bequests donated to the Building for the Future Foundation. One way of doing this would be to consider donating a percentage of a person's estate to the Foundation. This would be a great way to remember a loved one and have them acknowledged annually and make an ongoing contribution to the community.

"If you choose to donate or leave the Foundation a gift in your Will, you can be assured that it will be of immense value to the health service."

If you would like to consider leaving a donation or lasting legacy in your Will, please contact the Foundation via buildingforthefuture@eghs.net.au or phone 5352 9300 and one of the Trustees will contact you.



Pictured is Building for the Future Foundation Chair David Hosking presenting a scholarship to EGHS Chief Medical Imaging Officer Sabrina Lewicki



CLINICAL CONVERSATION VIRTUAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (VED)

Current state, future direction and opportunities for rural health services

Join Dr Sunny Sharma and the Virtual Emergency Department (VED) team to explore how the service has evolved, current models of care, referral pathways and opportunities to strengthen access to specialist advice across rural health services.

- How VED has evolved
- Current models of care
- Referral pathways
- Common clinical presentations suitable for VED
- Future direction of the service
- Live Q&A with Dr Sunny Sharma



REGISTER & SUBMIT
A QUESTION



Tuesday, September 29



2-3pm



Online via Teams

Trouble with the QR Code? Try this link

[Clinical Conversation – Virtual Emergency Department \(VED\) – Fill out form](#)

For enquiries email Deb Hutton deb.hutton@gh.org.au



National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards Accreditation
Articles of interest
UPDATED August 2026

Grampians Health continuously improves its services in alignment with [NSQHS Standards](#).

[Grampians Health Library](#) can assist with literature searches, access to best evidence, full text articles and other clinical resources from reputable and trustworthy sources to underpin quality improvements relevant to each standard.

Partnering with Consumers Standard

Soeters, C., Doig, E., Olufson, H., Baxter, K., King, R., Sarri, O., Sherring, J., & Anemaat, L. (2026). Improving the accessibility of consumer orientation: Co-designing infection control training for consumers partnering with health services. *Health Expectations*, 29(4): e70792 [ACCESS HERE](#)

Young, A.M., Chrisoffer, J., Trevor, D., Stringer, S., Cudmore, T., Sanderson, L., Nasato, G. [...], & Campbell, K.L. (2026). Better healthcare together: Co-designing a framework for health service Co-Design. *Health Expectations*, 29(4): e70784 [ACCESS HERE](#)

Ravi, S., Ayre, J., Serrano, J., Maberly, G., McCaffery, K., & Bonner, C. (2026). Diabetes priorities questionnaire (DPQ): A codesigned preclinic priority setting tool to enable patient-centred care for people with type 2 diabetes. *BMJ Open*, 16: e109436 [ACCESS HERE](#)

Borquez-Arce, P., Ignatious, E., Berchtenbreiter, K., Gonzalez Cruz, J.L., Frayne, J., & Stone, J. (2026). Community co-design of a quick guide to inform digital health promotion strategies for asymptomatic women at risk of chronic disease. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, 37(4): e70222 [ACCESS HERE](#)

Sullivan, R., Ramadan, T., Lee, S.E., & O'Halloran, R. (2026). Patient and carer participation in reporting patient safety incidents during hospital admission: A scoping review [Early view]. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*: 1-23 [ACCESS HERE](#)

Kumar, S., Moore, V., Smith, D., & Matson, A. (2026). Aligning clinical care with consumer priorities: An adult cystic fibrosis centre experience of co-designing a model of care [Early view]. *Internal Medicine Journal*: 1-6 [ACCESS HERE](#)

Want more full text articles to support your work towards quality improvement in clinical governance? Email Grampians Health Library at library@gh.org.au or complete our [Request a Literature Search](#) form.

Health Libraries: Better Evidence: Better Health

THANKFUL THURSDAY

“A stronger rural community starts with dedicated volunteers.
Thank you for your kindness, commitment and the difference you make every day.
We are grateful for all that you do.”

HANNAH JENNINGS
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT

STAGE ONE OF WILLAURA HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT TO COMMENCE

JODIE HOLWELL – COMMUNITY LIAISON

Willaura Health Care is set to mark another significant milestone in its history, with Stage One of the redevelopment of the acute area commencing soon.

Members of the Willaura community were invited to visit the hospital and hear about the project from East Grampians Health Service staff including Chief Executive Nick Bush, Director of Support Services Scott Wilson, Willaura Health Care Manager Liz Atkinson, and Project Clinical Lead Leeanne Atkinson, showing great interest in the project and providing valuable feedback.

The \$3.425 million project will deliver a contemporary acute care environment, including five acute beds, each incorporating a modern hospital room and private ensuite facilities. The redevelopment will also provide a dedicated quiet area for inpatients, creating a more comfortable and welcoming environment for patients and their families.

The redevelopment builds on a proud history of healthcare provision in Willaura, dating back more than 90 years.

In 1935, the Willaura Bush Nursing Hospital was built to address the district's critical need for local medical care. The hospital was officially opened on August 22 1935, establishing an important healthcare service that has continued to evolve alongside the community.

Now, more than 90 years after the original hospital opened its doors, Willaura Health Care is preparing for its next chapter.

Mr Wilson said the Stage One redevelopment represents a significant investment in the future of local healthcare and will ensure Willaura continues to provide contemporary, high quality facilities for patients, staff and the broader community.

"As part of the Stage One redevelopment, the existing doctor's clinic located beside the Willaura Hospital will need to be removed to make way for the new front entrance to the hospital," he said.

"The clinic holds an important place in the history of the Willaura community, having been donated by Nellie May Morton. While the building will no longer remain on the Willaura Healthcare site, every effort will be made to ensure it is given a new purpose.

"A specialist removals company will relocate the building from the site, with members of the community having the opportunity to contact the company and explore the possibility of purchasing the building for future use.

"Importantly, any funds received by East Grampians Health Service from the removal and sale of the building will be reinvested directly into capital works. This will help support and enhance the new hospital development and ensure the value of this community asset continues to contribute to the future of healthcare in Willaura."



Pictured: Shirley and John Walter from the Willaura Historical Society receive plaques from the doctor's clinic, Nellie May Morton House, from Willaura Health Care Manager Liz Atkinson



Pictured standing, Heather Fleming and Heather Higgins, sitting Denise Haslett and Val Albert



Mr Wilson said the doctor's clinic will relocate to the Community Health building, ensuring the medical service continues to be available to the Willaura community.

A dedicated waiting room and doctor's consulting rooms will be established within the Community Health building to accommodate the ongoing service.

"This relocation will allow the existing clinic site to be cleared for the new front entrance to the redeveloped hospital, while ensuring patients continue to have access to local medical services," he said.

"The redevelopment of the five acute rooms and dedicated quiet room will be linked directly to the existing hospital building, creating a seamless connection between the new and existing facilities and bringing the service together as one integrated healthcare environment."

POP Architecture has been engaged to design the new building and surrounding areas at Willaura Health Care. The design has been developed with the local rural setting in mind, with the plans, finishes and overall feel of the development intended to complement the existing environment.

While the redevelopment will provide a contemporary clinical setting, consideration has also been given to creating a warm, welcoming and comfortable environment for patients, visitors and staff.

The tender process for the Stage One redevelopment has now closed and the submitted tenders will now progress through a formal evaluation process, which will help ensure the successful builder has the appropriate experience, capability and understanding to deliver the project to the required standard.

Once the evaluation process has been completed and a builder appointed, detailed construction timeframes will be established.

At this stage, construction is anticipated to commence in late October or early November 2026, subject to the completion of the tender evaluation, appointment of the successful builder and finalisation of the construction program.

Mr Wilson said Stage Two and Three are currently pending funding.

Stage Two will consider further improvements to Parkland House, the aged care centre, and will hopefully be funded by the Federal Government.

This stage will include the development of two additional resident rooms, each with a private ensuite, along with a reconfigured common room area. The changes will provide residents with improved accommodation and a more functional and comfortable shared space.

Stage Three will focus on the development of a three bed sub-acute area, providing additional capacity for patients requiring sub-acute care. This area will also incorporate a dedicated living and lounge space, creating a more homely environment for patients during their recovery.

"Together, these future stages will build on the Stage One acute redevelopment and continue the long-term transformation of Willaura Health Care, providing contemporary facilities across acute, sub-acute and aged care services while maintaining the strong connection to the local community," Mr Wilson said.



Pictured are members of the Willaura community and EGHS staff at the recent Willaura Health Care Community Open Forum

MURRAY TO MOYNE TEAM RAISES \$16,100 FOR MAMMOGRAPHY UNIT

JODIE HOLWELL – COMMUNITY LIAISON

East Grampians Health Service's Murray to Moyne Cranks and Defibrillators have raised \$16,100 towards the Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation Ararat Branch's \$250,000 Mammography Unit project.

The team wrapped up its fundraising for 2026, after a successful 525-kilometre Murray to Moyne Cycle Relay from Echuca to Port Fairy earlier in the year, and the team of 14 riders, and support crew of four bus drivers, were thrilled to exceed their goal.

The Blue Ribbon Foundation Ararat Branch and EGHS Board and Executive staff thanked and acknowledged the work of this year's Murray to Moyne team at a function at the health service.

"Thank you to this year's Murray to Moyne team for raising the significant amount of \$16,100 towards the Blue Ribbon Foundation's Mammography Unit project," EGHS chief executive Nick Bush said.

"Funds raised came through events such as the Ararat Market and popular Trivia Night, as well as two raffles and generous sponsorship from family, friends, work colleagues and of course our generous Ararat business community.

"The Murray to Moyne team has been representing EGHS for around 25 years and in that time has raised approximately \$250,000 for vital equipment and services for EGHS. Not only that, but they ride 525 kilometres from the Murray in Echuca to the Moyne in Port Fairy, supporting each other with training and acting as great ambassadors for EGHS."

Mr Bush also thanked the many businesses, organisations and

individuals who provided sponsorship and donations to the team.

"We are very grateful for the generosity of our community, who have provided valuable funds towards the Mammography Unit project, as well as in-kind donations that enable our team to run successful fundraisers," he said.

Blue Ribbon Foundation Ararat Branch president Dianne Radford said the fundraising effort by the team was to be commended.

"The Mammography Project is the largest project undertaken by the Ararat Branch since we started in 2002, and since announcing this project last November we have been overwhelmed with support from the Ararat and district community," she said.

"Murray to Moyne is a great example of community coming forward not only to do the cycling relay but to help raise the funds for this vital equipment which will be of benefit to East Grampians Health Service's medical officers, staff and most importantly residents in our communities and beyond.

"Pleasingly, recently at our Gala Night we handed over the first instalment of \$100,000 to the health service which included the team's donation – a pretty good effort all round in just six months, and with our forthcoming fundraising events in the next few months we are hoping we will reach the target much sooner than originally anticipated.

"For all of us, we are so fortunate to be part of such an inclusive and generous community whose support for projects like the Mammography Unit is paramount, and to the Murray to Moyne team thank you, we are indebted to your wonderful contribution."



Pictured L-R are members of the EGHS Murray to Moyne Cycle Relay Team, Blue Ribbon Foundation Ararat Branch members and EGHS staff, Graham Bull, Dianne Radford, Graeme Foster, Loretta Sanders, Garry Brumby, Erin Thomas, Kate Gleeson, Tessa Sargent, Andy Sanders, Roxane Moos, Sarah Woodburn and Jodie Holwell

EGHS MURRAY TO MOYNE CRANKS AND DEFIBRILLATORS

Would like to thank businesses, organisations and individuals for their generous support of this year's Murray to Moynes Cycle Relay, which has raised over \$16,100 towards the Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation Ararat Branch Mammography Unit project.

Significant sponsors

Ararat Physio and Co Martin Grace Ararat Medical Centre
Nevetts Lawyers West Vic News P/L Doug Robertson



Major sponsors

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Ararat RSL
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Fred and Bet's Cafe
Ararat Dental
Maroona Hotel
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Brendan Hinchliffe
Hopkins Correctional Centre
Hotondo Homes
Paul Brumby
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Linda Meech
Nola Hinchliffe
Julie Klauss
Marg Canham
Nicki Blackie
Rhonda Malcolm
Ian and Leonie Foster
Max and Bernadette Perovich

*WILLAURA HEALTH CARE
OUTDOOR MARKET
21 FEBRUARY 2027*
SAVE THE DATE!



**East Grampians
Health Service**

EGHS RESEARCH IS SHAPING THE WAY WE DELIVER CARE

PRISCILLA PRESTES

RESEARCH LEAD – DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT

Research at East Grampians Health Service is continuing to grow and it is becoming increasingly connected to how we deliver care to our community.

Over the past few months, four research articles led by EGHS staff have been published, shining a spotlight on the impact of our work. Together, they demonstrate how research can build our capability as a health service, strengthen our workforce, improve the way we deliver care and ultimately support better outcomes for our community.

Research published in the Rural and Remote Health journal explored what it takes to successfully host student researcher placements in a rural health service and build research capacity. The project interviewed staff from seven health services across Victoria and found that well-designed placements can strengthen university partnerships, increase research capacity, support workforce development and contribute to a culture of evidence-based practice. Importantly, the study produced a practical, 11-step implementation tool to help rural health services establish and sustain effective research placements. Covering areas such as ensuring the student projects align with organisation need, creating effective partnerships, setting expectations and immersion in the rural environment, this resource could make hosting future student placements more sustainable and help us continue to grow our research workforce.

Our research is also helping us think differently about how we evaluate the care we provide. The International Journal for Quality in Health Care published our evaluation of the Just Cos Initiative, which gives staff a structured, psychologically safe way to question if existing practices are supported by evidence and identify opportunities for improvement. The evaluation found the model successfully identified low-value practices that needed to change, showing how bringing research and quality improvement together can influence culture and support meaningful improvements in care.

The Australasian Journal on Ageing featured our work using a co-design approach involving staff, consumers and organisational representatives to design a wellbeing program to support staff working in aged care. Rather than implementing a generic wellbeing program, the research identified the strategies that matter most. The findings indicated that peer support and structured whole-of-facility debriefing are feasible, evidence-informed approaches to support staff wellbeing reinforcing the importance of building solutions with, rather than for, the people who use them.

Finally, a narrative review published in the Journal of Palliative Medicine examined interventions that can improve advance care planning in primary care. The review found that approaches combining education, decision aids, system improvements, support and reminders can improve completion of advance care directives, while highlighting the importance of testing approaches within local contexts. The findings offer a clear evidence base as we look at how to better support patients and families to document their wishes early.

This growing research activity is helping us build our capability as a learning health service and it's exciting to see local, practical research increasingly informing how we work and how we improve care for the community we serve.

We would like to invite all staff to our upcoming Research Showcase, an opportunity to celebrate the growing research activity across East Grampians Health Service and discover how research is shaping the future of our services. The event will include the launch of the Modified Sport for Older Adults in Rural Communities Toolkit by Jake Romein and research posters for viewing. This is an exciting opportunity to learn more about this and other initiatives and what it means for our community.

The Research Showcase, supported by Western Alliance, will be held on 3rd September 2-3pm at Mt William Room. For more details, see the flyer.

The full articles can be found here:

Conlin M, Romein J, Bishop J. (2026). Enhancing rural health service research culture and capacity: a qualitative exploration of student research placements. Rural and Remote Health, 26:10086. <https://doi.org/10.22605/RRH10086>

Bishop J, Ottrey E, Fitzgerald A, Romein J, Conlin M. (2026). Evaluating an integrated quality improvement and research approach: the Just Cos Initiative. Int J Qual Health Care, 38(2):mzag041. <https://doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/mzag041>

Bishop J, Thomas A, Ottrey E, Hitch D, Dow B. (2026). Identifying Key Components of a Well-Being Program for Rural Aged Care Staff Managing Responsive Behaviours Through a Co-Design Process. Australas J Ageing, 45(2):e70192. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajag.70192>

Fraser M, Ottrey E, Hutchins G, Fitzgerald A, Bishop J. (2026). Interventions to Improve Advance Care Planning for Adults in Primary Care Settings: A Narrative Review. Journal of Palliative Medicine. Online ahead of print. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10966218261476382>

FIRST NATIONS NEWS

CLARE STACPOOLE – FIRST NATIONS LIAISON LEAD

NEWS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's day was on Thursday 4th August. This years theme was living our truth. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day is a national celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, held each year on 4 August since 1988. The day is led by SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak body representing children, young people and families, and is an opportunity for all Australians to recognise and celebrate the strength, pride and potential of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

This year, to celebrate, First Nations staff with Children or grandchildren were given a book and a bag of activities.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1984, 9 Aboriginal family members met white people for the first time. The Pintupi nine lived a traditional nomadic life near Lake Makay in Western Australia, and were unaware of European colonisation, white people, clothes or processed food.

The group consisted of two co-wives and seven children who were all in their teens. After the father went to the dreaming, the nine travelled to the Gibson desert where they had seen smoke and thought their ancestors might be. Medical tests showed that the nine were in excellent physical health.

At the time this story made international headlines.



Pictured: Isabel Kettle and Clare Stacpoole

Workdays:

Monday: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Tuesday: 12:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Friday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

You can reach me at:

✉ Email: ahlo@eghs.net.au or ☎ Phone: 0474 079 031

Please contact me for anything First Nations or just to have a yarn



UPCOMING EVENTS

Our next staff yarn is scheduled for Monday September 28th at 1pm. Hope to see all Deadly mob there.

First Nations Staff Yarn

Date: Monday 28th September

Time: 1pm

Where: Outdoor area outside cafe

Come along and meet with fellow Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff members.

Please RSVP to Clare with your drink order.

clare.stacpoole@eghs.net.au

FOOTY TIPPING COMPETITION



Winners!

Jo Summers

Rank	Name	Score	Margin	Prize Money
1	Cam Montgomery	174	654	\$1,347.50
2	Rod Summers	172	631	\$385.00
3	Les Pyke	170	597	\$192.50

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's footy tipping competition. Congratulations to our winners, particularly Cam, who has won the competition for the second consecutive year. Well done to all involved, and we look forward to doing it all again next year!



WHISTLEBLOWER ACT & COMPLAINT PROCESS

Protecting your voice. Protecting our community.

The new Aged Care Act starts on 1 November 2025. One important change is better protection for whistleblowers - people who speak up or report problems. This means older people, their families, carers, and aged care workers can make a complaint or share concerns without worrying about being punished or treated unfairly.

You can make a complaint at East Grampians Health Service by:

- Talking to a staff member.
- Filling out a feedback form.
- Emailing info@eghs.net.au
- Via our website at www.eghs.net.au/contact/your-feedback

You can make a report to:

- Us, as a registered aged care provider.
Ask to speak with:
 - Someone in charge.
 - Facility manager.
 - Clinical care manager.
- Any aged care worker.
- An independent aged care advocate:
 - Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN): 1800 700 600.
- The Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission: 1800 951 822.
- The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing: 1800 020 103.
- A police officer.

You can make the report in person, over the phone or in writing. A report can be made without giving your name.

For further information follow the link or scan the QR code:
www.eghs.net.au/contact/your-feedback

16.03.20 - V1.0 - Oct 25

WELCOME NEW EGHS STAFF

ROS BLOOMFIELD, HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

ZULFIQUAR ALI OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

ALL ABOUT ME...

Favourite Music | **Classical**

Favourite Food | **Biryani**

Interests | **Reading, playing chess, cooking, long drives.**

One thing I'm good at | **Care collaboration**

One thing I want to do in this lifetime | **Travel across Australia in a campervan**



JENNAE DIBBEN REGISTERED NURSE

ALL ABOUT ME...

Favourite AFL Team | **Not very sporty**

Favourite Food | **Anything sugary or spicy**

Favourite Music | **Heavy metal/alternative**

Interests | **Baking, music, sleeping**

One thing I'm good at | **Making sweet treats**

One thing I want to do in this lifetime | **See real fireflies and Northern Lights**



SAMAR FATTAL HEALTH CARE WORKER

ALL ABOUT ME...

Favourite Music | **All kinds of music**

Favourite Food | **All kinds of food**

Interests | **Depends on the season**

One thing I'm good at | **I am a good friend and a good listener**

One thing I want to do in this lifetime | **Travel to Niagara Falls**



ELLEN HARLAND PHYSIOTHERAPIST

ALL ABOUT ME...

Favourite AFL Team | **North Melbourne and Hawthorn**

Favourite Music | **Old school classics**

Favourite Food | **Chocolate**

Interests | **Shopping, exercise, food, going to the movies**

One thing I'm good at | **Pouring a decent latte**

One thing I want to do in this lifetime | **Take my kids to Disneyland!**



WELCOME NEW EGHS STAFF

ROS BLOOMFIELD, HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

SAM KOTTAGE - REGISTERED NURSE

ALL ABOUT ME...

Favourite AFL Team | **I'm still choosing one - happy to be recruited!**

Favourite Music | **Classic rock and acoustic**

Favourite Food | **Sri Lankan cuisine and anything full of flavour**

Interests | **Music, art, travel, community involvement & spending time with family**

One thing I'm good at | **Staying calm under pressure and paying attention to detail**

One thing I want to do in this lifetime | **Travel around the world and experience different cultures**



INIKA MCKINNIS CATERING ASSISTANT

ALL ABOUT ME...

Favourite AFL Team | **Bulldogs**

Favourite Food | **Sushi and fruit**

Favourite Music | **Tate McRae, Raye, Harry Styles**

Interests | **Animals, arts and crafts, nature**

One thing I'm good at | **Art**

One thing I want to do in this lifetime | **Live in London**



LYDIA POLINAR HOME CARE WORKER

ALL ABOUT ME...

Favourite AFL Team | **Yet to choose, just moved from North Queensland. Go Cowboys!**

Favourite Music | **Pop music**

Favourite Food | **Seafood**

Interests | **Gardening**

One thing I'm good at | **Gardening**

One thing I want to do in this lifetime | **Travel the world**



JODY TAYLOR CLEANING ASSISTANT

ALL ABOUT ME...

Favourite AFL Team | **Collingwood**

Favourite Music | **Country**

Favourite Food | **Chicken**

Interests | **Reading and gardening**

One thing I want to do in this lifetime | **Travel overseas**



MORE THAN A MEAL: CELEBRATING MEALS ON WHEELS MEALS ON WHEELS DAY – 26 AUGUST

JANELLE SMITH – MANAGER, EGHS@HOME

When we think about Meals on Wheels, it's easy to think first about the meal – a nutritious lunch, prepared by our EGHS kitchen staff and delivered to someone at home.

But Meals on Wheels is about so much more than food.

I see the difference this service makes to people in our community. It helps people remain independent, connected and supported while living in their own homes.

Monday – Friday, our EGHS kitchen staff prepare and pack the meals with care. Then our wonderful team of Meals on Wheels volunteers takes over.

Our volunteers don't simply deliver a meal. For many of the people we support, seeing a familiar and friendly face can be just as important. A quick chat at the door, a smile and a "How are you going today?" can make a real difference, particularly for people who may spend much of their day on their own.

Over time, volunteers get to know the people they visit. They become familiar with their routines and can notice when someone doesn't seem quite themselves. That regular contact provides an important sense of connection and reassurance.

That is what makes Meals on Wheels so special. It is a team effort – our kitchen staff preparing the meals, our Home Support team coordinating the service, and our dedicated volunteers delivering not only meals, but friendship and connection.

On Meals on Wheels Day, I want to say a sincere thank you to everyone who makes this service possible.

To our EGHS kitchen staff and Home Support team – thank you for everything you do behind the scenes.

And to our amazing volunteers – thank you for your time, energy and kindness. What you do matters. To the person waiting at the door, your visit may be the highlight of their day.

Meals on Wheels really is more than a meal. It is connection, independence, care and community – delivered one meal and one friendly visit at a time.

Happy Meals on Wheels Day and thank you to everyone who helps make this such a valuable service in our community.



Celebrating Meals on Wheels Day, L-R, EGHS catering staff member Danah Burton, Meals on Wheels coordinator Jamie-Lee Bennett, with volunteers Marg Young and Rachel Young, Mary Stapleton, Jenni Armstrong and Di Pickering

EGHS STAFF FITNESS

JONAH PIDGEON - EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST

Join us every Tuesday from 5:15–6:15 pm for Staff Fitness — a free, weekly session open to all fitness levels. Whether you're brand new to exercise or already active, this is a relaxed and supportive way to move your body and boost your wellbeing.

Each week offers something a little different, with sessions ranging from strength and conditioning to fun, modified sports. Activities run:

- Indoors at the Ararat Fitness Centre during the winter months
- Outdoors when the weather warms up

Why join?

Regular exercise helps strengthen muscles and bones, reduce the risk of chronic conditions, and improve mood, energy, and focus. Just as importantly, Staff Fitness is a chance to unwind, have a laugh, and connect with colleagues in a welcoming environment.

We aim to create a fun, inclusive space where everyone feels comfortable giving it a go – no pressure, just movement.

For weekly updates and last-minute changes, join the EGHS Staff Fitness Facebook group. Keep an eye on the EGHS home page for exercise timetables.

Locations:

- CHC Gym = Community Health Centre Gym

Ararat Fitness Centre: 61–73 High Street, Ararat

Please click the link to join:

[Ararat Fitness Centre : 61–73 High Street, Ararat](#)

Please click the link to join:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/272393883425954>

STAFF FITNESS

+ 1ST SEPT-
13TH OCT



INSTRUCTOR: JONAH (EP)

1 SEPT FLOOR AND CORE (MAT WORK)

8 SEPT BOXING

15 SEPT LOW IMPACT STRENGTH

22 SEPT CARDIO (ALEXANDRA PARK)

29 SEPT GENTLE FLOW & STABILITY

6 OCT HIIT (HIGH INTENSITY TRAINING)

13 OCT BOXING

JOIN EGHS STAFF FITNESS FACEBOOK GROUP FOR
ANY UPDATE/CHANGES





WELCOMING WEEK COMMUNITY EVENT

Celebrating Connection and Belonging

All are welcome to come along and
celebrate our community!

Sunday 20 September 2026
Gordon Street Recreation Reserve
1 Gordon St, Ararat
4pm – 6pm

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT
AFTERNOON TEA PROVIDED



NUDE FOOD CHALLENGE

HANNAH JENNINGS – EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT

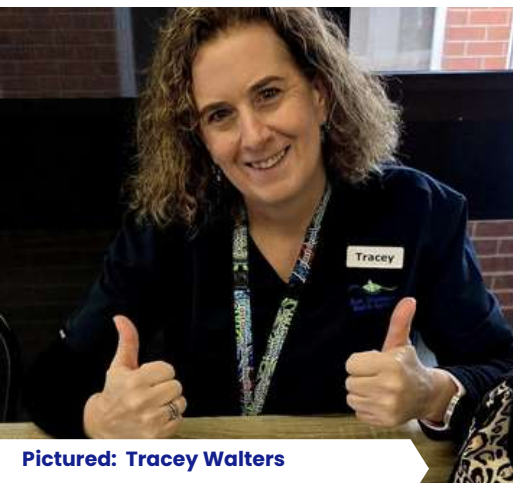
As part of Plastic Free July, staff were invited to take part in the 'Nude Food Challenge', which ran from 13–17 July 2026. Led by the EGHS Environmental Sustainability Committee, the challenge encouraged staff to explore simple ways to reduce unnecessary food packaging and wrapping brought into the workplace.

Participants shared ideas for reducing plastic consumption, including using reusable containers, repurposing jars and preparing homemade snacks. A small number of staff took part by sharing photos of their waste-conscious meals, highlighting practical alternatives to single-use plastic packaging.

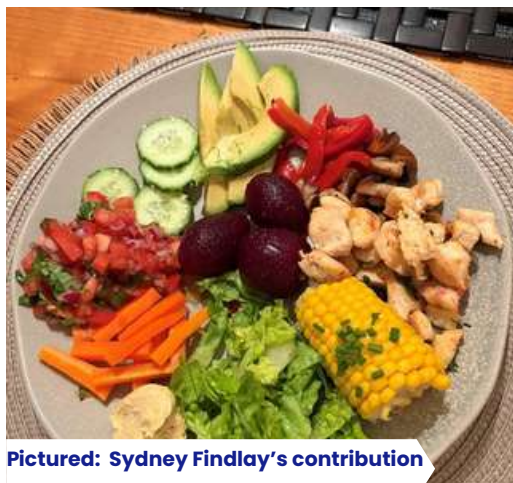
Throughout July, staff were also encouraged to be mindful of their everyday plastic use by bringing reusable containers, avoiding unnecessary plastic-wrapped products, rethinking packaging choices, reducing disposable items where possible and supporting more sustainable alternatives at work and at home.

While the challenge was a small initiative, it demonstrated that every action counts. By making thoughtful choices and sharing ideas with colleagues, we can continue to support a healthier planet and contribute to a more sustainable healthcare system. Website: <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/>

Prize winners: Tracey Walters, Sydney Findlay, Angela Nagpal



Pictured: Tracey Walters



Pictured: Sydney Findlay's contribution



Pictured: Angela Nagpal's contribution

WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

August 1–7 was World Breastfeeding Week, shining a light on the importance of breastfeeding for the health and wellbeing of babies and parents alike.

Breastfeeding provides a sustainable source of nutrition that is both environmentally friendly and safe.

East Grampians Health Service currently has two International Board Certified Lactation Consultants, Sarah Power and Kristy McEvoy.

The EGHS Lactation Clinic is open every Wednesday for appointments and women are welcome to attend the clinic no matter what stage of breastfeeding they are at.

The Lactation Consultants also offer home visits to women in Ararat and the surrounding areas.

They aim to educate women on how to breastfeed their babies and help them initiate and establish breastfeeding so they can confidently breastfeed their babies on discharge.

The Lactation Consultants also review women admitted to the Inpatient Unit on clinic days and during their normal rostered shifts in the Inpatient Unit.

To book an appointment at the Lactation Clinic, please phone the Inpatient Unit on 5352 9321.



Lactation consultants Sarah power (left) and Kristy McEvoy

HINCHEY HIGHLIGHTS

NICOLE FRANC – LEISURE & LIFESTYLE ASSISTANT, PATRICIA HINCHEY CENTRE

August has been another busy and productive month at The Patricia Hinchey Centre. We have travelled to Scotland, enjoyed the weekly exercises, completed art out of recycled materials and had a competitive game of scattergories. We have been lucky enough to enhance our taste buds with a Scottish lunch and a Japanese Lunch provided by the hospital kitchen. It was very exciting to be able to try some different foods.

PHC have celebrated the theme 'Environmental' this month. Celina Day, president of the Ararat Landcare group, kindly came in and spent an afternoon with us. Celina educated us on what wonderful work the Ararat Landcare group achieve around the town. Thank you, Celina, for coming in.

Jackie Dean and her mum Danna conducted a terrarium workshop for us. We all had a lot of fun making our own terrariums to take home. We look forward to when they can do a hold another workshop for us.



Pictured: Diane with her terrarium



Pictured: Gwen with her terrarium



Pictured: Katie with her terrarium



Pictured: Karl with his terrarium



Pictured: Jackie and Danna Dean - Workshop leaders for the day



Pictured: Linda with her terrarium



Pictured: Land care president Celina Day



Pictured: Noela with her terrarium



LOWE STREET NEWS

WENDY DUMESNY – RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT COORDINATOR, 70 LOWE STREET

Our residents enjoyed a lively Scottish Day celebration, with our catering team serving a delicious themed menu featuring Scottish Broth, traditional Scottish pies, and a sweet savoury mince that quickly became a favourite. The afternoon was filled with fun as residents explored Scottish legends and myths, including the Unicorn, Ghillie Dhu, Loch Ness Monster, Kelpie and more. Laughter, storytelling and plenty of curiosity made the day truly memorable, and it was wonderful to see everyone getting involved and having such an enjoyable time.



Pictured is Gary



Pictured are Katerina and Mel



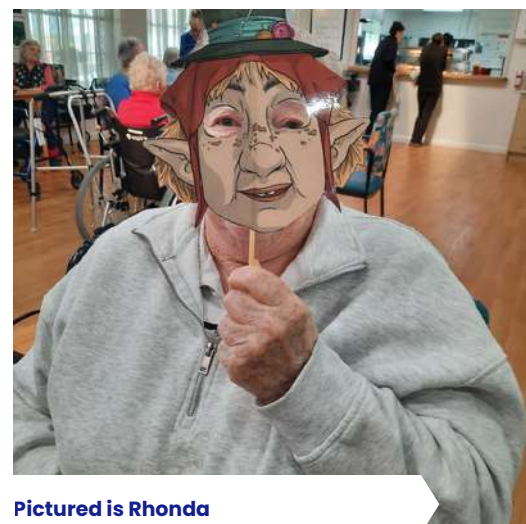
Pictured is Kevin L



Pictured is Val K



Pictured is Regina



Pictured is Rhonda



Pictured are Mel and Jan



Pictured are Mel, Jaydah and Lachie



WINTER OLYMPIAN VISITS 70 LOWE STREET

Ararat's Winter Olympian Sarah Blizzard visited 70 Lowe Street and spoke to residents from Lowe Street, Garden View Court and the Patricia Hinchey Centre about her recent experience at the Milano Cortina Winter Olympics.

Sarah competed in the two-woman bobsleigh event.

A former track sprinter, and Stawell Gift competitor, Sarah was a reserve for the bobsleigh team at Beijing 2022, and after proving herself as an outstanding pilot and athlete, she achieved her Olympic dream in the 2-woman event at Milano Cortina 2026 alongside fellow debutant Desi Johnson.

Sitting 22nd after the first run, and with the emotion of their Olympic debut settled, the pair applied their learnings in the second heat to produce an even stronger run.

Going into the provisional lead, Sarah and Desi watched on from the leader's box as back-to-back crews failed to surpass them, eventually finishing the second run in 19th place.

They finished their third run in 21st position, narrowly missing the top-20 cut off by just 0.02 seconds, meaning they missed a chance at a fourth and final run.

Residents were excited to watch the videos Sarah showed them of her training and Olympic runs and asked many questions about her experience.

Thanks Sarah for giving up your time to visit our residents!



Pictured Pub Lunch with Sally Pipora and Marj Brown



MOVIE DAY FUN FOR THE TOY LIBRARY

The EGHS Ark Toy and Activity Library held their annual movie day in August, with more than 160 people warming up a winter's day with a heartwarming movie and a delicious afternoon tea.

The event, featuring the movie Holy Days, raised more than \$2000 for the Toy Library, with funds to be used to purchase new toys, games and activities for members.

The Toy Library is open every Wednesday from 10am-11.30am at the EGHS Community Health Centre in Girdlestone Street.

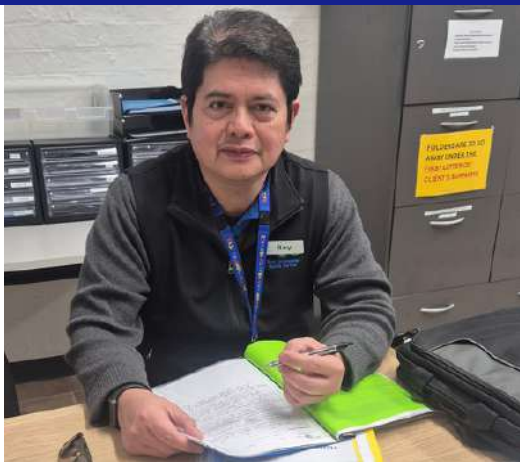
It is open to all families and is FREE to attend.

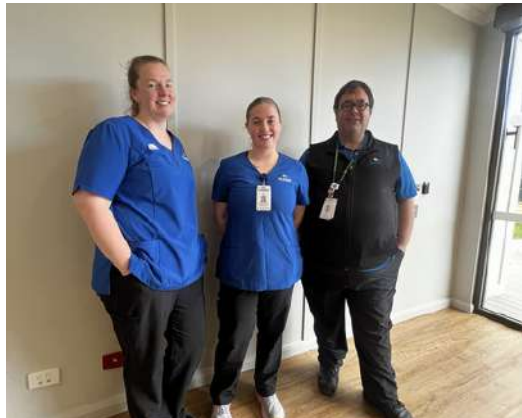
With a huge range of toys, games, puzzles and activities to borrow, the Toy Library is also open for play time, with parents and carers encouraged to bring along their babies and pre-schoolers and meet other mums, dads and carers, with a purpose built indoor play area as well as a great outdoor play area with fantastic play equipment.

See you at the Toy Library!



AGED CARE EMPLOYEE DAY







East Grampians Health Service

East Grampians Health Service
Girdlestone Street (PO Box 155) Ararat VIC 3377

 **5352 9300**

 **5352 9333**

 **info@eghs.net.au**

The Echo is published on the 4th Friday of the month. The deadline for submissions of articles is the Tuesday prior. The ECHO Editor is Lisa Nolen. Information can be sent through, preferably by email, to lisa.nolen@eghs.net.au. Printed copies of the ECHO are distributed to IPU, Theatre, 70 Lowe Street, GVC, Day Centre and the Cafeteria. The ECHO is sent via email to all staff, Board of Management, Ararat Medical Centre, Ararat Psych Services as well as the staff at the Ararat Ambulance Station.