

Care For Our Region

Healthier, stronger, together

Introduction

Welcome to the third Care For Our Region update. In this issue:

- We update you on the first executive staff meeting with all four health services
- We talk to Sherryn Elworthy – Clinical Midwife Consultant, Grampians Region about her role and hopes for the new Grampians health service
- We address your questions around staff opportunities
- We answer additional key questions raised over the past fortnight

In our next issue, we'll look at how coming together will enhance aged care.

Joint Executive Workshop

The four health services had their first Joint Executive Workshop on Thursday 2 September. A team of more than 30 executives and health service team members, representing all work streams (finance, support services, people and culture, clinical etc), came together for two days to work on how we can integrate our services.

Each service had an opportunity to share the history and values of their health services – and what was astonishing – is how similar we all are in our values and dreams for new and improved health service.



This is what some participants said:

“There is a strong commitment from the partners and team members to provide world class care and services to our communities and ensure people living in rural and remote areas are not disadvantaged by kilometres,” – **Jodie Cranham**

“It was great to understand that all four health services were facing similar challenges and by the end of the workshop there was a shared view that together we can deliver vastly improved healthcare to the communities we serve,” – **Mark Knights**

“The potential is unlimited. Everybody is so passionate and positive as we look at what is best for everybody to try and expand and improve all of the health services. It’s the health of the Grampians region that will benefit and grow,” – **Sue Roberts**

“The words honesty and integrity were a consistent theme. It was evident from the discussion that there is a common purpose to the group, to deliver the highest of standard of healthcare for our respective communities,” – **Luke Baker**

“I was surprised how we are all the same! We have the same dreams, same care and concern about our community and the same challenges,” – **Sally Taylor**

Moving forward “stream teams” have now been established, with representatives from each health service, to plan and support the creation of the new health service

At this stage the streams will come together with regular monthly meetings with the second workshop scheduled in October. There is a lot to plan for!

You can message and send your ideas and feedback to the streams through the Care For Our Region website careforourregion.com.au. This feedback will be shared with the stream teams.

Next Steps

We look forward to working together to explore the possibilities for health in the Grampians. Should the new health service be approved by the Minister, we hope to run these workshops across the organisations to ensure everyone has the opportunity to shape our shared vision, values and goals as the new Grampians health service.

Staff Spotlight



Sherryn Elworthy – Clinical Midwife Consultant, Grampians Region

Sherryn Elworthy has worked as the Grampians Region Clinical Midwife Consultant since May 2021. This new regional role links health services providing maternity care and ensures a consistent regional approach to quality maternity and newborn care.

“While I’m based in Horsham, my role involves working with Ballarat Health Services, Maryborough District Health Services, East Grampians Health Services and Wimmera Health Care Group,” Sherryn said.

“I work closely with the midwifery and nursing managers and senior midwives to ensure there is a midwifery voice across the region. Sitting on different committees for governance of each hospital, I work on quality and safety to ensure each woman has a happy and safe experience.

“I anticipate this new health service will strengthen obstetric and midwifery alliances. By strengthening the relationships, we will be able to improve our patients experiences, quality, safety and consistency of care provided.

Our aim is that people can be safe in the knowledge that the structured care is the same at Wimmera as it would be if you walked into Ballarat and vice versa.

“One database can provide seamless care. If you did need to be transferred, your data would be easily accessible and your care consistent, which will enhance patient safety.

“Opportunities for education are also increased with greater support, a shared knowledge base and additional resources. In discussions with the unit manager in Horsham and the education team in Ballarat, I’ve identified further needs for midwifery education in Horsham which can be provided through simulation training.

“The Maternity Connect program allows rural and regional midwives to work in bigger hospitals to gain additional clinical experience they don’t routinely get exposed to. In Horsham, midwives are exposed to less emergencies due to a lower number of patients, so by rotating to a larger hospital, they receive training and gain expertise and familiarity with emergencies.

“Increased levels of partnership can only be a good thing and lead to better models of care, with people receiving more of their care as close to their home as possible,” Sherryn said.

Your Questions Answered – Staff Opportunities

This fortnight, we answer key questions about opportunities for staff.

Why is this a good thing for staff?

Should the proposal to come together be approved, a range of strategies, building off its greater scale of operations, services, workforces and other resources, would be employed to develop a more stable and higher capability local workforce.

These opportunities encompass a range of areas including:

Greater scope and breadth of practice

As a single health service, we can offer a greater scope and breadth of practice which in turn can offer greater opportunities for staff to develop and maintain their skills. This can include clinical rotations through different sites or specialty areas, joint training and development, and practice support to enable a greater scope of practice locally.

Medical or clinical training placements

With a combined health service there is a real opportunity to expand and coordinate clinical placement across the region. A new regional health service can create rural-focussed student placement models to provide positive and extended rural training experiences.

Training and development

Employment within a leading rural training institution provides prospective and current employees with greater learning, development opportunities and career pathways. A strong training environment is a major drawcard for clinicians across disciplines and levels of seniority.

For more information on these opportunities see the full fact sheet [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

We're listening to your feedback. Please see below answers to your questions. Remember, if you have questions, email us at info@careforourregion.com.au

1. How can you guarantee that funds raised locally will be spent at the health service to which they are dedicated?

All boards made commitments in this respect. We have Specific Purpose Funds in our accounting system, which are managed and audited locally.

Local identity and connection to the local community remains, with place names, hospitals and health services remaining in place and local representation on the new board.

Local fundraising will go directly to that local health service and volunteers will be recruited and work locally, just like now. Individual Health Service Foundations have constitutions that ensure funds must remain local, and these arrangements are written into new bylaws and policies.

2. What consultation led to this decision?

The four health services consulted with staff, stakeholders and their communities, with more than 2000 people. Dialogue focused on the strategic environment of the health services, the opportunities and challenges faced, and potential options for healthcare through expanded partnerships and closer ties.

You can access the engagement outcomes reports from these consultations through the below links:

- [Wimmera Health Care Group and Ballarat Health Services](#)
- [Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital](#)
- [Stawell Regional Health](#)

Communication with local communities is ongoing and we know we have more work to do. We are currently talking with staff, having one-on-one discussions with key organisations and representative groups, and ensuring there are regular and direct communication updates.

We will gladly talk to anyone about the new service and answer all questions any time. Should the proposal be approved, our health services will also conduct a service planning process with our staff and community, defining a shared vision and future, while retaining local ownership and identity.