



# Annual Report

2019-2020

Ballarat Community Health acknowledges the Wadawurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our sites are located.

We are a Rainbow Tick organisation and welcome people from all cultures and backgrounds to our service.

BCH acknowledges the financial support of:

- Australian Multicultural Education Services
- Ballarat Foundation
- Berry Street
- Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs
- Commonwealth Department of Human Services
- Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation and Science
- Commonwealth Department of Social Services
- Commonwealth Home Support Program
- Dental Health Services Victoria
- Medicare Australia
- Victorian Department of Education
- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation.

BCH also thanks the individuals and families we have received donations from this year.



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# About us

Ballarat Community Health (BCH) exists to ensure that people from all walks of life can access quality health care, no matter their circumstances.

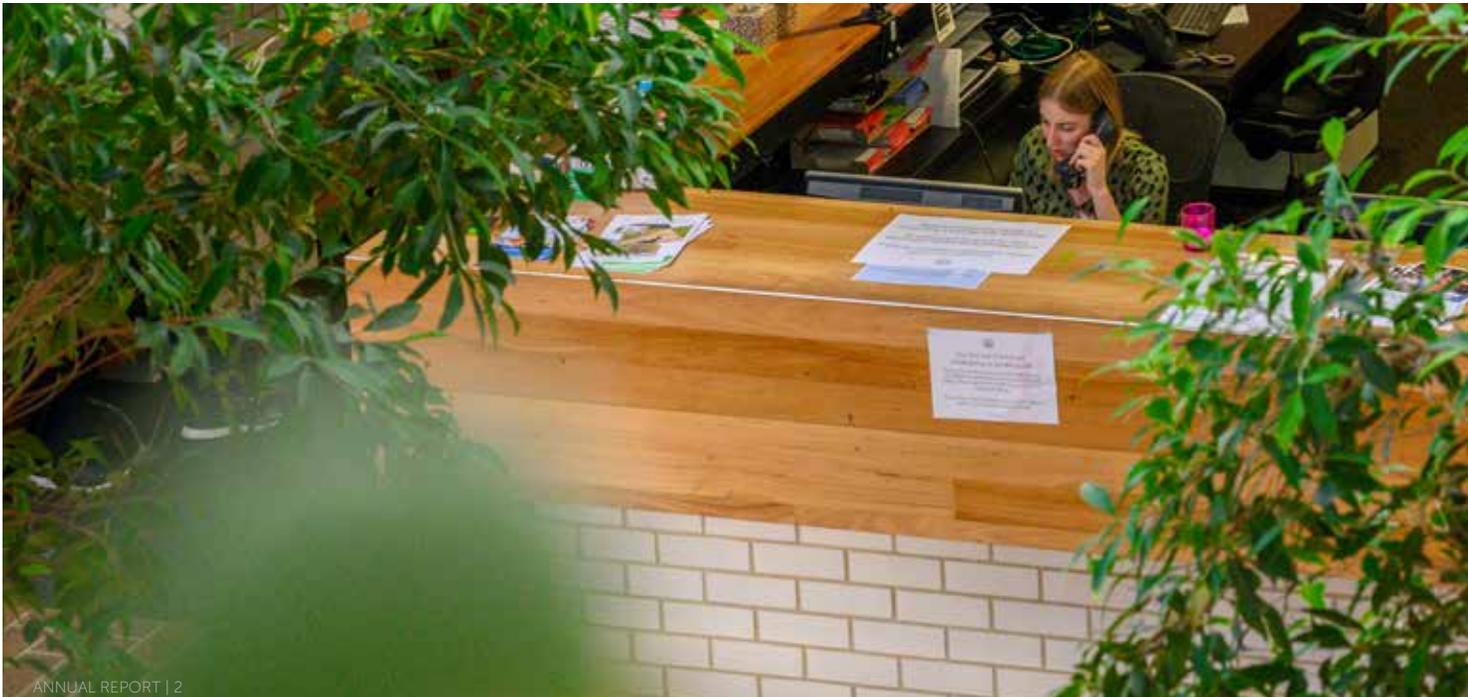
Our Vision is that the people and communities we support achieve the best possible health and wellbeing.

Our services are wide-reaching and include both a health and wellbeing focus. From primary care to community programs, we work to ensure a holistic approach is taken to better health.

We know everyone is different and we work with the community wherever possible to create consumer-led and informed services, ensuring more effective

care for individuals and their individual needs.

BCH operates across the Central Highlands and throughout Western Victoria at permanent sites and in an outreach capacity. In addition to general practice and allied health services, we offer specialist clinics, mental health support programs, family-centred supports, alcohol and other drug treatment services,



community wellbeing programs and more.

BCH is a trusted healthcare provider, with a team of highly trained experts who understand that clients (and their needs) are unique and require a tailored approach to better health.

Our team works hard to ensure that clients feel comfortable,



**OUR MISSION:**  
To work in partnership with the community to create opportunities and supportive environments which empower people to develop and maintain optimal health and wellbeing.

listened to, cared for and informed on their journey through the health care system. We stay true to our values and strive to show these attributes at all times:

- **Respect**  
Valuing other points of view and treating all people as individuals with worth and dignity.

- **Integrity**  
Acting with sincerity and honesty.
- **Responsibility**  
Being reliable and accountable to others.
- **Optimism**  
Focusing on potential and abilities.
- **Courage**  
Facing challenges head on and standing up for our convictions.
- **Resilience**  
The ability to be strong in adversity and bounce back with renewed energy and hope.

Visit our new and improved website (launched at the inaugural BCH Annual Public Meeting in October 2019) – [www.bchc.org.au](http://www.bchc.org.au) – for more information about the range of services we deliver across the city of Ballarat, the Central Highlands area and neighbouring regions.

# Our organisation

Strategic priorities:



## EXCELLENCE IN CLIENT-CENTRED CARE & INTEGRATED HEALTH PROMOTION

- Deliver high quality services that meet client needs and deliver improved client outcomes.
- Deliver integrated services that provide a holistic response to client and community needs and expectations.
- Evidence-based health promotion and service delivery responding to changing population health needs.



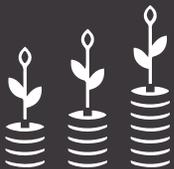
## CULTURE OF QUALITY, LEARNING & INNOVATION

- Support and promote an organisation-wide approach to Continuous Quality Improvement which addresses all aspects of quality, safety and governance.
- A learning organisation that is recognised as a provider of evidence-based services and programs informed by a continuing process of research, evaluation and innovation.
- Leverage efficiencies to improve health outcomes.



## LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY & POSITIONING

- Maintain, grow and extend BCH's profile, reach, influence and credibility to drive improved health outcomes for individuals and communities.
- Actively lead and contribute to system development to improve health outcomes for changing population health needs.



## SUSTAINABILITY & GROWTH

- Ensure a financially sustainable business model that includes a focus on social enterprise.
- Maintain and expand a highly skilled, healthy and motivated workforce including Board, staff, students and volunteers.
- Deliver contemporary, fit-for-purpose infrastructure and integrated information and communication technology solutions.
- Maintain and develop best practice governance.



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Corporate Governance Committee

Finance & Audit Committee

Quality of Care Committee



### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Sean Duffy

EXECUTIVE SUPPORT TEAM

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS  
Manager - Lauren Wall

GOVERNANCE & QUALITY  
Coordinator - Scott Sherritt



**SOCIAL SUPPORT  
GENERAL MANAGER**  
Jane Measday



**PREVENTION  
& SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT  
GENERAL MANAGER**  
Katherine Cape



**CORPORATE SERVICES  
GENERAL MANAGER**  
David Stevens



**PRIMARY CARE  
GENERAL MANAGER**  
Darlene Henning-Marshall

ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS  
Manager- Suzanne Powell

YOUTH, FAMILY & COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT  
Manager - Katrina Leehane

HEADSPACE  
Manager - Janelle Johnson

ADULT MENTAL HEALTH  
Manager - Amanda Ford

PHARMACOTHERAPY  
NETWORK  
Manager - Pauline Molloy

HEALTH PROMOTION  
Manager - Louise Feery

INTERCULTURAL &  
ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT  
SERVICES  
Manager - Jessica Trijsberg

RESEARCH  
Coordinator -  
Deborah Greenslade

SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION

FACILITIES & FLEET  
Coordinator - Clare Bigarelli

HUMAN RESOURCES  
Manager - Janelle Murphy

FINANCE  
Financial Accountant - Sean Bourke  
Management & Systems  
Accountant - Kelly Rolfe

VOLUNTEER & STUDENT  
Coordinator - Michelle Graffeo

INFORMATION SERVICES  
Manager - Jason Panosh

CUSTOMER SERVICE  
Manager - Michelle O'Brien

ALLIED HEALTH  
Manager - Kristen Kelly

MEDICAL SERVICES  
Manager - Mary-Anne Gould

# From the Chair & CEO

We are pleased to present this Annual Report to our members, partners, participants and stakeholders.

2019/20 has been a year like no other for the individuals, families, and communities of our region. We have all lived with the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and adapted as well as possible to this new way of life. Ballarat Community Health (BCH) embraced the challenges brought about by the pandemic, demonstrating the organisation's agility and versatility. More broadly, Community Health across Victoria was responsive to the virus spread. We quickly re-designed and established services to meet local needs.

Specifically, BCH services pivoted into remote and virtual service implementation - offering telehealth appointments as well as online individual and group programs. BCH ensured safe service continuity was at the forefront of all actions, keeping connection with our participants and partners high

in our priorities. While navigating this new and ever-changing environment, we continued our focus on the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Despite the wide-spread impacts of COVID-19 on the community in 2020, BCH continued to evolve and grow in its delivery of services.

In 2019/20 we delivered several key organisational projects and initiatives which will help build BCH's capacity and capability into the new year. Key achievements in this space include:

- the opening of a new community health clinic in Howitt Street, Wendouree (see page 42 for details)
- finalisation of our first Reconciliation Action Plan (see page 36 for details)
- developing the Participant Engagement Framework
- establishment of plans for a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub at our Cooinda site (Learmonth Road, Wendouree).

Achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes for our community is a collective effort. BCH is fortunate to be able to work in partnership and as a collaborator with many agencies across our region. We thank our funders, partners and collaborators for their ongoing support this year and we look forward to continuing to work together in the design and delivery of services that benefit our communities.

We thank our staff and volunteers for their commitment, flexibility, and genuine support of one another during a period that has stretched our capacity and demonstrated our resilience as an organisation.

2019/20 was a year when we, as leaders in the community health space, were called to live to our purpose and our values. We sought to appropriately respond to community and individual needs and continued to provide safe, quality services to those in need at a time that they most needed our support.

On behalf of the members of the BCH Board, I thank Sean Duffy, our CEO, and the wider leadership team of BCH for their work in such a demanding year. You have navigated a rapidly changing operating environment and done so with poise, respect and integrity.

Thank you also to Lisa Pickering for her contribution to the Board of Directors over the past five years and in particular, for her work during the CEO recruitment process (2018).

Finally, to the participants who utilised our wide range of services this year - thank you for allowing us to be a part of your health and wellbeing journey and we hope we can continue to make a positive impact in your lives into the new year and beyond.

Stay safe, stay well, stay connected.



PAUL RYAN  
Board Chair

SEAN DUFFY  
CEO





# Primary Care

The Primary Care division provides responsive and timely services to individuals, organisations and the community. Working across a range of locations, the team works to strengthen BCH's quality healthcare provision and to build the organisation to be a preferred provider of General Practice, Allied Health and Specialist Services. All facets of our Primary Care division operate within effective clinical governance and quality frameworks.

## General Practice

General Practice operates from four BCH sites in Lucas, Wendouree, Sebastopol and Smythesdale. Eleven GPs and six Practice Nurses, a Senior Lead Nurse, three diabetes educators and a respiratory nurse deliver a full range of services including:

- general check-ups
- chronic disease management coordination & care planning
- mental health planning
- women's health services
- vaccinations
- minor surgery and skin checks

- diabetes education
- respiratory education and care.

Opening hours are 9am–5pm each day with extended hours available at Sebastopol on Wednesdays until 7pm and a Sunday morning clinic at Wendouree from 9am–12pm.

Our skilled team of GPs and nurses ensure our clients have access to multidisciplinary care, linking them to Allied Health and Social Support services at BCH, as well as other external specialist services when needed.

2019/20 clinic services included:

- 504 health assessments (including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients, clients from refugee backgrounds and clients aged 75+)
- 613 care plans developed (including chronic disease management plans)
- 1,401 mental health consultations
- the introduction of telehealth consultations (March – June)
- ongoing provision of specialist clinics.



31,600  
primary  
care  
appointments



8,640  
patients attended  
appointments  
with our GPs



8,949  
telehealth  
consultations  
since March



2,570  
mental health  
consultations for  
791 patients



2,232  
GP management  
plans developed



1,258  
GP-led sexual  
health clinic visits  
with 408 patients



PICTURED: Dr Shaun Mohammadsaeedi working from our newest clinic in Howitt St, Wendouree

#### *APNA Nursing Project*

The GP clinic nursing team commenced the "Balanced Life Health Coaching clinic" project in partnership and with funding from the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA). It aimed to specifically support people aged 45-49 years of age at risk of a chronic disease. Unfortunately despite many interested and engaged clients it had to put on hold due to the pandemic. Fortunately it did allow five of our nurses to access advanced training via APNA – and this has proven useful in all the work the nurses do

with supporting our patients in managing their chronic disease. We look forward to recommencing this project as soon as it is safe to do so.

#### **Sexual Health Clinic**

The BCH Sexual Health Clinic operates five days per week with a dedicated team of GPs and nurses providing family planning advice, access to contraception (including long acting reversible contraceptives [LARCs]), pregnancy testing, options counselling,

medical terminations, cervical screening, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and sexual health counselling.

#### *Improving access to sexual and reproductive health services*

Outreach delivery began in July 2019 in Ararat, Ballarat East, Wendouree, Sebastopol and services increased at our Lucas site at that time. In 2019/20 we saw 568 women for:

- implanon insertions (23)
- cervical screenings (200)
- medical termination of



- pregnancies (28)
- screens for sexually transmitted infections (169).

We have also built our expertise in specialist areas via various training opportunities, including:

- 2 nurses received competency in Implanon insertion and removal
- 2 GPs are in the process of gaining competency with IUD insertion.

Although COVID-19 did slow face-to-face service provision, it did highlight the benefit of telehealth

services, especially for women living in rural areas to gain better access to our services.

### Trans and Gender Diverse Clients in Community Health project

In 2019, Ballarat Community Health began running peer navigation services as part of the Trans and Gender Diverse (TGD) in Community Health initiative, funded by the Victorian Government. This project was run in partnership with Your Community Health, Austin Health and Thorne Harbour Health.

The TGD clinic increases access to safe healthcare services for the local TGD population and, in-turn, helps improve the health outcomes for this community, (members of which often find it difficult to engage with health services that are respectful and affirming).

The trans and gender diverse multi-disciplinary clinic has already supported more than 40 local trans and gender diverse people with better access to peer

navigation services, counselling, GP appointments and referral to a range of specialist services.

In November 2019, the TGD team hosted a special event, including Q&A panel session, clothes swap, displays from program supporters, food stalls and more. The event helped to introduce the program to the local community and welcome new clients and allies into our settings. In June 2020, during Pride Month, BCH launched a short-term television campaign (via Channel 31 and social media) encouraging TGD clients to reach out for healthcare services and support where needed. The successful campaign saw social media interactions increasing significantly throughout the six-week air time.



40

trans and gender diverse people accessed the new peer navigation services for better access to counselling, GP appointments and referral to specialist services

### Paediatric specialist clinics

BCH provides three specialist paediatric clinics, two of which are delivered in partnership with Ballarat Health Services. The Paediatric Immigrant Health Clinic provides Vitamin D treatment for immigrant and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children with a Vitamin D deficiency and their immediate families; and the Paediatric Neurodevelopment Behavioural Clinic provides

assessment, planning and treatment options – in consultation with a range of Allied Health professionals – for children and their families.

In 2019, BCH commenced a new Paediatric Planning Clinic for children aged 0-5 years who are in contact with Family Services. The clinic has a focus on assessment, planning and referrals for children to access the

specialised health care they need. This clinic, established thanks to partial funding by the Central Highlands Family Services Alliance, has been successful in starting to address a gap for this vulnerable group of children and harnesses opportunities for early intervention. A specialist room with interactive elements was fitted-out at our Lucas site to better suit these very young clients. More funding will be sought in 2020/21 to continue this important work.



## Allied Health

From young children to people with (and at risk of) chronic disease, the BCH Allied Health team provides a range of services, programs and activities supporting individuals to improve their health and wellbeing. Operating across four BCH sites and in an outreach capacity in the Golden Plains Shire, our team specialises in clinical disciplines including:

- Dietetics
- Exercise Physiology
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Social Work
- Speech Pathology
- Allied Health.

BCH's Allied Health team provides access to services for eligible clients with funding from the State and Commonwealth Governments. The team works in partnership with GPs to provide coordinated care to clients with complex or chronic conditions.

Our services to clients accessing both My Aged Care and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) have been steadily increasing, as has provision of contracted services to aged care facilities. This year our Allied Health staff have provided high quality treatment, education and care including:



55,000

hours of funded service



4,945

consultations via Medicare (+9% from previous year)



841

hours of NDIS service provision (establishing services in this space)



1,300

hours of Physiotherapy



520

hours of Dietetics



312

hours of Exercise Physiology (to Nazareth House)



*PICTURED: A room with interactive elements was fitted-out to better suit our paediatric specialist clients*

## Intake

The 2019-20 financial year saw the clinical intake department process 2,722 new requests through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Community Health program, Commonwealth Home Support Program, Home and Community Care – Program for Younger People and private funding streams. A significant number of Medicare Benefit Scheme referrals were also processed. The implementation of efficient new statistical recording procedures allowed referrals into funding streams and origins of referrals to be recorded. This will support the use of trend data to inform future planning.

## Dietetics

Our Dietitians provided individual assessments and support, as well as education opportunities in cooking and food preparation this year. BCH partnered with Ballarat Regional Industries, Link Up and Peplow House to deliver these education sessions which generally focused on basic skills and using

fresh ingredients. We also provided dietetic group services such as: BRI transition-to-retirement cooking sessions, and nutrition sessions in other towns including Dereel and Bannockburn. We sincerely thank the volunteers who supported this work.

## Physiotherapy

In 2019-20, BCH expanded the physiotherapy team and we continue to provide high quality services to NDIS clients and other community members as required.

### *Weight Bias & Stigma: Audit & Awareness project*

The Weight Bias & Stigma: Audit & Awareness project was funded via a BCH Staff Innovation Award. The project aimed to build on the knowledge of our staff to reduce weight bias and stigma, and promote weight-neutral practices. The project highlighted that staff support size acceptance, understand the complexities of weight and health, and are sensitive to weight-based discrimination - as well as some of the impacts of these elements on health. It also highlighted a gap in knowledge, though a willingness to learn as the science regarding weight and health evolves. This project successfully raised awareness about staff attitudes and beliefs regarding our consumers in larger bodies. It is now important to understand how these attitudes translate to the healthcare services provided to our clients. This project is planned for the future.



## Speech Pathology

Paediatric Speech Pathology continues to grow at BCH with an increase in the number of services provided this year, helping to improve the speech development of children in our community.

## Exercise Physiology

Our Exercise Physiologists provided individual assessments and support to all clients. This year we offered a number of exercise groups that supported clients to meet their health and fitness goals.

Our exercise groups include:

- McCallum Exercise Group
- Remedial Gym
- Stroke Group
- Parkinson's Group
- PD Warrior
- Living Longer Living Stronger
- Kallara SRS Exercise Group
- Hydrotherapy
- Falls Prevention
- Seniors Group Fitness
- Pilates
- Tai Chi for Arthritis
- Tai Chi.

### Podiatry

Our Podiatry team provided approximately 4,000 hours of State and Commonwealth Government funded services and over 3,700 consultations throughout 2019-20. Our Podiatrists provided education sessions to new mothers at Maternal & Child Health groups (about the development of children's feet) and to people in the community (about *Self Care and Understanding For Feet*) to enable better self-care.

### CASE STUDY:

*Thirteen-year-old Ava\* attended a BCH Podiatry appointment for help with pain in her left big toe joint. Ava was about to start wearing footwear again, after having surgery on this joint approximately 6 weeks prior to her appointment. The BCH podiatrist provided education and advice about footwear choices and designed orthotic inserts for her shoes. The inserts were designed to reduce her pain and improve the function of her foot.*

*Initial results were very positive with significant improvements, but after 12 months Ava still had some pain in the joint and her gait was becoming affected. After re-assessing Ava, the BCH Podiatrist provided a referral to a visiting foot surgeon for opinion, and a second surgery was conducted in early 2020.*

*The surgeon and Podiatrist worked together to provide Ava with a plan for recovery from this second surgery and as of August 2020, her pain has completely resolved.*

**"Ava is now participating in physical activities that were previously not possible..."**

*Ava is now participating in physical activities that were previously not possible due to her pain levels and she continues to visit BCH Podiatry periodically for advice and help with shoes and orthoses.*

*\*not client's real name*

2019/20 HIGHLIGHT:

# COVID-19 Response

Ballarat Community Health's Primary Care team, with support from across the organisation, swiftly responded to the COVID-19 outbreak, to be able to continue to provide important health services and information to our community.

The BCH team adapted quickly to the introduction of telehealth services and practitioners provided all initial consults in this way, with only those needing urgent care or physical assessment invited to BCH sites for a face-to-face appointment.

Staff from all areas of operation were deployed or re-deployed to new roles – such as triage at our front entrances – to accommodate the rapidly shifting healthcare landscape. Buildings were transformed to be COVID-19-safe sites with restricted access to staff and the community. We changed walk flows (the flow of foot traffic through a building), installed sneeze guard screens (at customer service desks and other locations as appropriate) and implemented hand sanitising stations throughout the buildings. Supplies of personal protective equipment were immediately reinforced and new guidelines on how to don and doff equipment were made available to all staff.

Once the initial emergency response and the Victoria-wide stage three restrictions lifted, we undertook extensive risk assessment and planning for each program, tailored to its own specific needs. At that time, some preventive services were given the green light to be delivered on-site, alongside the already-operating primary care services.

Over this time, to bolster the face-to-face work being done on-site, BCH developed significant health promotion resources, signage, social media messaging and other community information to keep stakeholders, staff and clients informed of all changes to the (ever-changing) working environment.

We've continued to work from home wherever possible and, where necessary, have implemented new ways of working to ensure we are keeping the community and our staff safe. Our staff have done an extraordinary job over this unprecedented time to continue to adapt as needed. They have been focused firmly on how we can provide the most extensive range of services safely, under the changing pandemic conditions.





*PICTURED: Rachel is one of many staff who have contributed to the success of triage and other new processes introduced due to COVID-19, including mandatory temperature checks at site entry points*



# Social Support

The Social Support division provides a range of services to children, young people and adults. Social Support staff work with individuals and families who want to make positive changes in their lives. Our purpose is to assist people to achieve their goals and do so by empowering them to recognise their strengths, learn new skills, link to their community and practice new ways of dealing with the barriers to meeting their goals.

PICTURED: Artwork on display at the BCH Victoria Street site, depicting a journey through addiction

## Youth, Family and Community Supports Team

Our Youth, Family and Community Supports teams consist of our Youth Team, Counselling and NDIS Support Coordinators. We deliver a range of social welfare and outreach services across Ballarat and surrounding areas. We provide services that support individuals, families and communities, empowering people to bring about positive change while building community capacity.

The Youth Services Team provides a range of youth services to vulnerable children, young people and their families in our community including:

- Ballarat Youth Housing
- Creating Connections
- Child Health and Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
- Youth Health Law
- Youth Support Services.

We assist children, young people and their families to make positive changes, connect and contribute to their community.

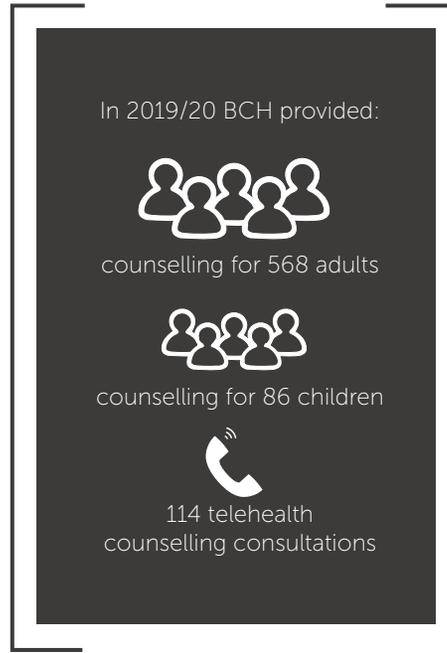
The team has met its targets for this financial year and has worked in innovative and creative ways to provide new service delivery methods to clients due to COVID-19 restrictions (e.g. offering online video resources and tips for children, young people and parents on a variety of themes – such as working on children’s emotional regulation, tips for parents home schooling, self-care during a pandemic and activities

for young people who are required to self-isolate).

Staff have been flexible and continue to engage clients while making the move to home work stations wherever possible.

We have taken COVID-19 safety very seriously and used personal protective equipment (PPE), social distancing, hand sanitising and regular thorough cleaning of all work spaces.

Our counsellors offer a wide variety of therapeutic supports such as generalist counselling, individual, couples and families, family violence counselling, trans and gender diverse counselling and children’s counselling. We also offer Employee Assistance Programs for businesses, responses to critical incidents, support to loved ones after a suicide and options counselling. NDIS counselling for children and adults and MBS-funded psychology for children within the paediatric neurodevelopment and behavioural clinic is available for assessment and treatment options.



Our NDIS Support Coordination team supports NDIS participants to understand and implement the funded supports in their plan and to make links to community, government and mainstream services. Our coordinators focus on building skills and supporting participants to exercise their choice and control. We provide individual person-centered support that helps people with disability and/or mental health conditions to meet their goals and become more independent.

### Adult Mental Health

The Adult Mental Health team is a multidisciplinary team that provides community mental health and treatment services for community members. They deliver:

- Forensic Mental Health
- Services & Treatment for Enduring & Persistent Mental Illness (STEPMI)
- Connecting2community
- Continuity of Support

through partnerships with a range

of organisations, agencies and funders (including Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC), Grampians Community Health, Ballarat Health Services, Uniting Ballarat, WestVic Primary Health Network, Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria and Department of Health and Human Services).

In 2019/20, the team:

- co-designed a project to change the mindsets of staff and other people involved in organisational strategic planning around what adult mental health and wellbeing initiatives should look like
- increased the lived-experience workforce at BCH and

In 2019/20, our emphasis on co-design processes has seen:

3 lived-experience workers employed

4 peer workers employed



*PICTURED: Rick Corney, BCH Senior Peer Support Worker*

increased the number of peer workers on staff

- received 200 referrals to Forensic Mental Health services with 40 clients successfully fulfilling the requirements of a community-based corrections order
- helped clients transition to virtual methods of service delivery (during COVID-19 restrictions and isolation periods) for group sessions such as Healthy Minds and Mental Health Drop-In sessions.





## HIGHLIGHT:

In May 2020, Rick Corney, BCH Senior Peer Support Worker provided a statement about his life experiences to the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System. His words were a visceral account of the breakdown and rebuilding of his life, assisted by the compassionate intervention of police, the courage of his mother and the extraordinary contribution of friends at his local cricket club.

Through his courage and generosity in sharing his personal story, Rick is working to improve mental health services for people right across Victoria. Well done and thank you, Rick.

### Alcohol and Other Drugs

The Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) team provided a range of treatment services for some of the most vulnerable people in our community this year, including:

- counselling
- youth outreach
- care & recovery
- non-residential withdrawal
- Therapeutic Day Rehabilitation Program
- family support
- Drink/Drug Drive Behaviour Change programs
- secondary consultations.

We also participated in health promotion activities and education sessions for schools, workplaces and the community. This year, the Specialist AOD Family Violence Advisor was auspiced by BCH and they provided support to the Central Highlands region. Alongside our consortium partners, we

achieved over 100% of our performance targets this year. Thanks to the dedication of our clinicians, we have adapted and been more creative in the way we deliver treatment for our clients, supporting them to achieve the best possible outcomes in what was a tough year for all.



## FROM OUR SOCIAL SUPPORT TEAM:

*My name is Gab Salkowski and I'm a Youth Intake, Assessment and Engagement worker in the core team at headspace Ballarat. The 2019/20 financial year began with maternity leave for me but headspace Ballarat is such an important part of my life that I popped in with bub a number of times. Baby Salkowski needs to know who's important to her mama and that includes her work family. On leave I spent 10 Keeping-in-Touch Days running client assessments in Ballarat and participating in training in Melbourne (ACT with young people and the neurobiology of trauma). I was well supported by my manager and colleagues when I returned to work.*

*Our team really came together when the pandemic started to affect Australia and we levelled up on creativity and collaboration. We planned our service delivery model together and then re-planned it when things shifted again. Our admin team adapted to going paperless and that's made the client journey smoother too. And, of course, we started to deliver services and groups online. I have found delivering services remotely to be a learning experience. The issues facing our clients have varied but themes of family violence, isolation, disordered eating, and routine disruption are prevalent.*

*I've observed a spike in young women impacted by diet culture messaging on social media; feeling pressure to avoid weight gain or to lose weight aka the "Quarantine 15" (colloquial reference to weight gain during quarantine conditions). I've enjoyed facilitating discussions that help them to challenge their view of beauty, self-worth and health by challenging their food and exercise rules in favour of a more flexible self-compassionate way. It's a conversation I continue when I deliver the Active Body Healthy Mind program. This cross-sector collaborative project, first delivered in 2018, aims to educate local fitness industry professionals on mental health. Our next delivery will also include information about disordered eating.*

*This year also included the development of a new group based on the 7 modules from the Centre for Clinical Intervention's 'Putting off Procrastination' program. Delivered via Zoom, attendees have engaged well with the content and post-evaluation, we will likely run it again in 2020/21.*



PICTURED: The headspace office in Camp St, Ballarat Central is a welcoming space



## headspace

headspace Ballarat is a community based health service for young people aged 12-25 and their families. It is a place where young people can receive free help for mental and physical health, education, employment and AOD issues. The team, comprising of 28 staff members, strive to build the resilience and future potential of young people.

Over the past 12 months we have provided 4,035 appointments to 1,238 young people, 682 of whom were new to our service this year.

76% of the young people who attended our services are being supported for mental health concerns.

headspace Ballarat is supported by our Youth Reference Group (YRG) who work with us to ensure young people's voices and opinions remain front and center. YRG members are passionate about making a difference in the lives of young people. They are from a diverse array of backgrounds, and many of our clients who have experienced

mental health struggles have overcome them to become advocates of youth mental health, sitting on the YRG themselves. The YRG ensures that new initiatives will make a positive difference in the lives of young people and that the financial resources from government and community donations are put to the best use.

*"...the Headspace Youth Reference Group has meant that I have had the opportunity to work alongside like-minded young people to promote headspace and good mental health."*

*"Even with COVID-19 changing our plans for the year, we have still managed to meet and have plans to continue our work ensuring headspace remains youth-orientated"*

- Georgia Harraway-Jones,  
Consortium Youth Co-Chair  
and YRG Member 2018-2020

This year, headspace provided:



4,035  
appointments of various  
kinds



1,238  
young people with care



682  
new clients with care



76%  
services for mental health  
concerns

2019/20 HIGHLIGHT:

# Forensic Mental Health Services

The 2019/20 financial year was Ballarat Community Health's second year of funding for the Forensic Mental Health in Community Health Program. The program is available to clients who are currently on a community corrections order (CCO) or parole, or who have mental illness they are currently not receiving treatment for. A condition of this type of order is the need to obtain treatment for mental health.

Our multidisciplinary team consists of a GP, nurse, social worker, peer worker and psychologist, who work together to ensure that clients receive holistic care. We also work closely with other agencies so that individual needs are met by the most appropriate external service providers.

This year, our team became increasingly aware of the important role they were playing in improving lives and focused heavily on assisting vulnerable clients through the pandemic. The team and our clients quickly adapted to assessments and treatment without always being able to attend an office – though we discovered this actually helped with compliance and engagement in treatment. Clients told us they found it easier to participate when arranging transport, preparation to attend on time and managing underlying anxiety weren't mitigating factors. As a result, 40 clients successfully completed a Community Corrections Order this year.

Unfortunately though, a number of clients have not engaged in the offer of treatment and have failed to comply with their order. With a high level of either non-attendance or disengagement, our team began to think about why this might be (as the level of disengagement is consistent across the state). With the commitment of our consortium partners, we commenced the process of co-design. We wanted to challenge and work through why clients were not engaging in treatment options. We sought first-hand experience from existing clients who then became our 'insight gatherers', and we used their knowledge and lived-experience to build more appropriate services and communication. Our findings from this process are now being trialled.

Forensic Mental Health in Community Health is a free service that operates from the BCH Victoria Street site, though is run as part of a consortium with Grampians Community Health and BADAC, covering the Grampians region, including Horsham, Ararat and outlying areas.





*PICTURED LtoR: The Forensic Mental Health team at our Victoria Street site, Central Ballarat: Sammi, Chrissie, Tristan, Rick and Wendy*



# Prevention & System Development

The Prevention and System Development Division reduces barriers to good health and wellbeing and addresses priority health issues using a mix of individual and population-based initiatives. The division leads the planning and delivery of BCH's health promotion, health advocacy and community development work. We partner with a variety of services and programs to aid local and immigrant communities and we work with local government, non-government organisations, workplaces, health and educational providers on a range of initiatives to address health, wellbeing and educational needs.

## Refugee & Migrant Services

Services provided by BCH help people from refugee, migrant and asylum seeker backgrounds:

- to access health care services
- to meet settlement needs (including English language supports, education and employment help and community connections)
- access projects that prevent and respond to family violence.

These programs are delivered across a broad catchment (up to and including the Wimmera region) and our staff work closely with other services to enhance their accessibility and cultural responsiveness. In the last year we updated our promotional materials to ensure people know who we are and what we do. We have expanded our presence in Ararat, supporting the establishment of new English language programs and providing services to increasing numbers of clients living in that area. We have provided Emergency First Response programs and through our It Takes a Community program recruited peer educators from refugee or immigrant backgrounds. We have

also organised women's safety and legal rights workshops, prevention of family violence presentations and parenting programs. Through Safer Pathways we have delivered workshops for service providers to build their skills in identifying and providing culturally appropriate, respectful and flexible services to refugee and migrant women experiencing or at-risk of family violence.

During the last few months of the financial year, particular attention was paid to supporting newly-arrived, asylum seeker and immigrant communities to deal with issues arising from the COVID-19 outbreak. Particular focus was placed on access to food, emergency relief and effectively communicating health and safety information in accessible formats. Many Ballarat community members have been affected by COVID-19 but asylum seeker, refugee, newly arrived migrant, international traveller and international student groups have particularly struggled as, due to visa restrictions, they are not able to access the government funding or Centrelink safety nets that have been put into place. Many of these community members are without

income and are reliant solely on charity groups whose resources are stretched. In response, the Refugee & Migrant Food Program was established to provide weekly food baskets to around 40 people living in Ballarat.



BCH provided weekly food baskets & other essential items to approximately 40 community members without any income due to COVID-19

Initially the baskets comprised of fresh foods rescued through BCH's SecondBite program, however not knowing from week-to-week what might be available made consistency difficult. Instead, BCH appealed to the local community – via radio and social media – for fresh goods to be donated to the program. BCH partnered with the City of Ballarat and the Ballarat Foundation to purchase non-perishable foods and toiletries from Food Bank to support the existing deliveries to people with a refugee, asylum seeker or migrant background as well as for international students studying at Federation University Australia.

## School Focused Youth Service

The School Focused Youth Service (SFYS) is a Department of Education and Training-funded program available to support students from year 5 to 12 who are attending school but who are vulnerable to or who are showing signs of disengaging from their education. The service is available to students in all government, Catholic and independent primary and secondary schools in Ballarat as well as Moorabool Shire, Golden Plains Shire and Hepburn Shire.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent period of learning-from-home in Term 2, SFYS coordinators dedicated their work to supporting school communities by providing online access to innovative resources for teaching staff, students and families. The SFYS program also curated online peer support and information sharing through closed specialised social media groups for both secondary and primary school wellbeing staff.

SFYS continues to provide support to schools on the return to face-to-face

learning by providing funding for programs that assist school staff to address the needs of students who are experiencing mental health issues. We also provided strategies to support vulnerable students and our coordinators worked closely with local community services, shire offices and other programs within BCH (such as Health Promotion, Counselling, Child Health and Paediatric practitioners, Refugee and Migrant Services and Youth Support Service) to ensure a holistic and place-based approach to student development and wellbeing.

This year, SFYS provided a comprehensive report on the Learning, Identity, Families and Transition project, which addressed student transitions

from Grade 6 to Year 7. The initial aim of the LIFT project, which began in 2017, was to investigate the current practices used in schools to support students, families and school staff in the transition process. SFYS used the LIFT project to streamline and improve current practices, identify and strengthen existing resources and bring together best practice to provide a transition framework for schools. The project successfully increased capacity of teachers and parents to support their children through transition and highlighted that this time of transition brought with it issues that needed to be addressed. The positive impact of this project has been noted with the schools, families and students who have been involved. A DHHS review acknowledged the LIFT project under the area of "Good Practice/Innovation".

In 2019\* the SFYS team provided support to:

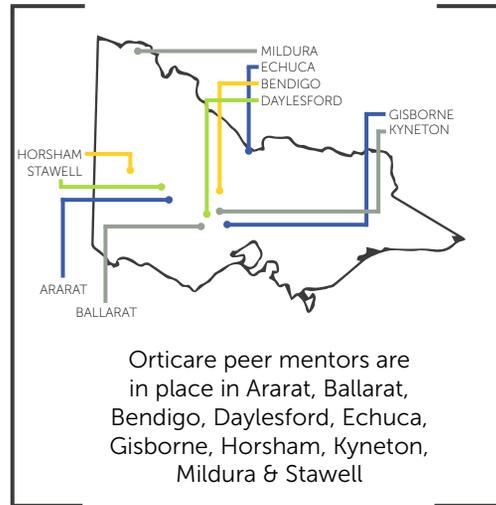
671	students	124	school staff	20	partner agencies
22	schools	93	families	44	partner agency staff

\*calendar year

## Pharmacotherapy & Harm Minimisation

The Orticare Pharmacotherapy network, which covers the Grampians Loddon Mallee area, works to improve access to treatment for opioid dependent clients. Supports are provided to clinicians through the video conferencing Opioid Management Educational Clinic and the Rural Addiction Medicine Pharmacotherapy Specialist Service, linking on-the-ground clinicians with addiction specialists and through area-based clinical network meetings.

This year the Orticare network has been working to enhance and extend our peer mentor program by recruiting mentors from across Victoria to provide a place-based mentoring service. Every GP, nurse practitioner and pharmacist that was approached agreed to participate and there are now Orticare network mentors in place in Horsham, Ballarat, Stawell, Ararat, Daylesford, Bendigo, Echuca, Mildura, Gisborne and Kyneton.



As well as mentoring colleagues, mentors provide an important Suboxone Initiation & Stabilisation Service (SISS) to facilitate better access to treatment for opioid dependent patients and to encourage the integration of the treatment of drug dependence with general medical practice. Through this service GPs can refer a potential candidate for Suboxone (an opioid replacement treatment) to a pharmacotherapy mentor. The mentor will initiate and stabilise the patient then refer them back to the original prescriber. This service reduces barriers to prescribing and increases prescribing capacity.

In 2019/20, 47 participants took part in Introduction To Suboxone Prescribing events in Swan Hill, Mildura Horsham and Ballarat. Events planned in Echuca and Kyneton were cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Ensuring ongoing access to Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) equipment was a priority for harm minimisation during the first few months of the pandemic. BCH commenced 24 hour operation of the NSP Secure Dispensing Unit (in partnership with Uniting), established an NSP postage service for clients in quarantine/ at increased risk and collaborated with Bridge Mall UFS to provide free NSP for clients in East Ballarat while Victoria St was closed. At Lucas and Sebastopol NSP goods were moved to triage desks to reduce the movement of people through the site. Triage staff received NSP/harm minimisation training and stickers with COVID-19 health messages were placed on bulk NSP equipment to help share information throughout the community.

## Grampians Regional Sector Development Team

The Grampians Regional Sector Development Team, auspiced by BCH, provides support and

development opportunities for Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and/or the Victorian Government Home and Community Care Program

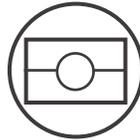
for Younger People (HACC-PYP) service providers across the 11 local government areas of the Grampians Region.



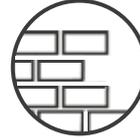
We work with service providers to strengthen client pathways by providing a person-centered wellness & reablement approach across all aspects of service delivery.



We support service providers to understand and embed the principles of the *National Aged Care Diversity Framework* and understand how to address diversity requirements within the *Aged Care Quality Standards* and the *Charter of Aged Care Rights*.



We work with services to develop culturally appropriate processes to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access to a range of aged care services consistent with the *National Diversity Framework* and *Action Plan of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*.



We inform and assist service providers in the region to respond to and implement program initiatives, through workforce capacity building.



We assist service providers to collaborate and explore best-practice opportunities through meetings, networks, alliances and communities of practice.



## FROM OUR HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM:

Protecting the health and safety of clients and the continuation of key programs was a priority for all of Ballarat Community Health during the COVID-19 pandemic. To help mobilise the organisation for this new way of working, staff from our Division were re-deployed to support triage roles and the SecondBite program and we worked to find creative solutions to continue to support health promotion messages in our community. The team re-assessed traditional service delivery methods and our Health Promotion staff developed virtual school health programs to replace face-to-face delivery (in collaboration with headspace Ballarat and other BCH teams). Using pre-recorded and live-streamed video, the virtual sessions supported delivery of secondary school health and wellbeing curriculum to students learning remotely. Using online polling software, we were able to interact with students as they worked through content and live Q&A sessions enabled students to have their questions answered by a 'real' person. Online polling software was used to evaluate the delivery and impacts on student learning which were well received:

*"A sincere thank you for devising and delivering what our staff, parents and more importantly our students described as both a brilliant and vital program for our Year 9 students at Ballarat Grammar.*

*The way the content was delivered to our students was not only safe and respectful, but also interactive... The use of Menti was also a great tool to provide students with the freedom to ask questions and consolidate their learning through the reflection component...*

*The time and collective energy invested in making this experience such a success for our students was a credit to your teamwork, dedication and innovation. The students are so fortunate to have had you as guides during this time and it made the program so worthwhile... the benefits will be long-lasting."*

- James Castles, Ballarat Grammar, Head of House

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black and white striped long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans, and white sneakers, is standing on a stage. She is holding a small object in her hands and appears to be speaking. Behind her is a large screen displaying a blue sky and green foliage. The setting is a modern, well-lit room.

PICTURED: Health Promotion Officer, Tameaka giving a presentation to students

## Health Promotion

The Health Promotion team plans and delivers projects to improve the health and wellbeing of the community. Using a mix of individual and population-based interventions, the team tackles the complex drivers for poor health outcomes and works collaboratively with key community partners to deliver on our three health promotion priorities:

1. Healthier eating and active living
2. Improving mental health and wellbeing (with a focus on youth)
3. Preventing family and community violence.

Preventative work is also undertaken to reduce the incidence of blood-borne viruses and sexually transmitted infections.

Evidence-based frameworks, such as the Achievement Program and Smiles4Miles, enable BCH to support settings including early childhood services, schools and workplaces to create healthier places for staff, children and families. This work is particularly important in the early years of life.

This year we have supported 9 primary schools and 22 early childhood settings in the Achievement Program and 35 kindergartens in the Smiles4Miles dental health program.



**BCH supported:**

- 9 primary schools
- 22 early childhood settings
- 35 kindergartens

**in healthier eating, physical activity, dental health and mental wellbeing activities in 2019/20**

Our suite of schools' education programs complements this work. Many of these programs are delivered by the Creative Learning Team using the performing arts to imaginatively promote health messages and assist teachers to include content from priority areas in the school curriculum.

Access to adequate, fresh healthy food is a basic human right and enhancing food security in the region continues to be a priority. BCH has continued coordinating

the Food Access Network, and managing SecondBite at BCH which re-distributed over 25,000kgs of fresh produce to 20 school and community meals programs.

Successful applications to the Ballarat Foundation provided us with the resources necessary to deliver community cooking demonstrations and to print *The Tight Arse Cookbook*. The demonstrations were held in conjunction with Stockland Wendouree Shopping Centre and the cookbook provides smart shopping tips and simple recipes to increase confidence with cooking and healthier eating on a budget. Over 5,000 cookbooks have been distributed to individuals and families alongside life skills and cooking programs.

Community mental health and wellbeing was supported by BCH through a range of projects. We provided workshops for people from culturally diverse communities delivered by BCH Peer Educators and 'Finding Your Tribe' presentations to young people by our Voices for Change speakers.

A range of BCH Arts & Wellbeing programs for young people and adults in Ballarat and surrounds have proven effective in engaging community members this year. Many participants in these groups also contributed to the annual Mental Health Week Art Exhibition which included an opening event and award ceremony at our Lucas site.

BCH has managed the Central Highlands Elder Abuse Prevention Network, supported the delivery of the respectful relationships program and coordinated the year 9 SSMART ASSK program. Our suite of sexual health and

Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmitted Infections (BBVSTI) health promotion programs target secondary school students, increasing skills, knowledge and confidence for participants.

Our Hepatitis C program has pushed the focus of the test and treat campaign, encouraging doctors, nurses and other health professionals to identify and encourage testing of people who fall into the high risk category. BCH's outreach services, including Fibrosan Clinics, have continued to facilitate easier access of treatment for rural and regional clients.

Trialling and co-designing new approaches to generate improvements in health for our community has been an important component of our work this year with highlights including:

- Healthy Supermarkets Project – Partnering with Ryan's IGA supermarkets (supported by BHS and DHHS), this project is piloting the Health Star Rating system and an accompanying health promotion campaign to increase the promotion and accessibility of healthier food and drink options in supermarkets
- Relationships Education – Based on the 2018/19 program evaluation findings and new research evidence from the 6<sup>th</sup> National Secondary School Sexual Health Survey (2019), Relationships Education programs were redeveloped to better engage participants and communicate key messages for staff working with young people at Federation College to co-design content and delivery and then pilot the programs with students from Damascus College

763 year 9 students participated in SSMART ASSK across 7 secondary schools (substance awareness and harm minimisation program for young people)

677 secondary school students took part in respectful relationships learning across 5 secondary schools

570 students took part in sexual health and BBVSTI sessions across 3 primary schools





*PICTURED: Linda was one of a group of volunteers who donated their time to help BCH develop a suite of posters and social media collateral to promote alternate activities to gambling, as part of the All-In: Reducing The Harm From Gambling project in Ballarat*

- All-in: Reducing The Harm From Gambling – This project, launched in March 2020 with the help of a \$100,000 grant from the Responsible Gambling Foundation, allowed us to work closely with partners to reduce the significant harms associated with gambling in the Ballarat region. BCH engaged 10 local organisations and sporting clubs to take actions that increase the understanding of gambling harms, reduce stigma and

promote help-seeking and alternative recreation activities within their stakeholder groups. It promoted review, analysis and improvement within each participating organisation’s regular practices to eliminate gambling-friendly or gambling-encouraging behaviours and culture

- Impacts & Evaluation – BCH worked with Deakin University’s School of Health and Social Development to review evidence and further strengthen the delivery,

impact and evaluation of our health promotion activities, particularly those related to the impacts associated with our Healthier Eating and Active Living priority area.

### Research

BCH is committed to credible research, robust evaluation and the alignment of practice with theory and current evidence to achieve



the best possible outcomes for our participants. This year, research in areas including weight stigma, pharmacotherapy, settlement outcomes, food insecurity and mental health have helped to build understanding of local and regional needs and raise public awareness of health issues. BCH staff have also supported external evaluations of funded projects including evaluation of the Youth Crime Prevention Project and Safer Pathways.

The profile and reputation of community health has continued to grow this year with staff

presenting at eight national and local conferences and collaborating with academics to publish outcomes of pharmacotherapy research. Our staff have also shared research findings and practice knowledge at a range of forums and panels. Partnerships and alliances with external partners, including universities, have assisted BCH to resource and progress research projects and build staff skills and capacity. BCH has continued its commitment to support research led by external organisations where clear benefits for BCH and its participants are identified.

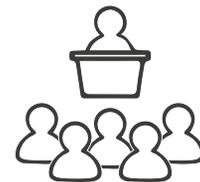
During 2019/20 BCH endorsed support for projects exploring anxiety for people in older life; Hepatitis C; and the experiences of young people detoxing from social media.

In February 2020, BCH conducted a two-part planning session to explore future directions for its research

activities and to consider the scope and functions of its new Research, Innovation and Outcomes Committee. As its name suggests, the new committee has an expanded focus to build knowledge, foster innovation and drive results-based accountability to help improve participant outcomes.

Whilst COVID-19 has negatively impacted research activities with conferences cancelled and data collection restricted, it has also expedited a range of practice changes and innovations by BCH staff. Into the new financial year, the Committee will support the organisation to ensure promising practice changes and innovations are documented and tested, especially prior to their incorporation into ongoing practice.

Ballararat Community Health staff presented at 8 national, state-wide and local conferences throughout the 2019/20 financial year



2019/20 HIGHLIGHT:

# Reconciliation Action Plan

Over the last couple of years BCH has been working with Reconciliation Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to affirm and formalise our commitment to building and maintaining respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Organisations and Communities. It is also helping to ensure:

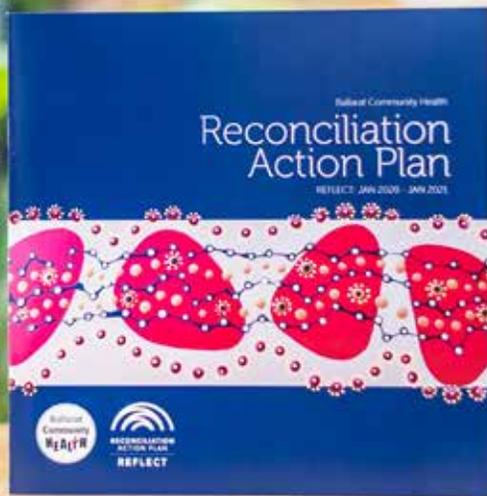
- we enhance our knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, history and issues and their ongoing connection to Country, Land and Waters
- we provide improved services and opportunities to reduce gaps in educational and employment opportunities and in the burden of chronic disease and shorter life expectancies that impact so severely upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities
- we create and maintain a workplace that is culturally safe
- we challenge and address structural discrimination that perpetuates inequalities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

The RAP has three key pillars – Respect, Relationships and Opportunities – with specific actions and deliverables of relevance to each. In developing the RAP, BCH has worked closely with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Community members, the BCH Board, Executive Management Team and staff to ensure there is shared understanding and ownership of our RAP with both internal and external stakeholders.

The document was launched on Close the Gap Day – a national day of action to pledge support for achieving Indigenous health equality by 2030 – though the formal celebration event was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

BCH will continue to work through the action items included in the document into 2021, while also starting to work on our next plan. The RAP is available to view online at: [bchc.org.au/rap/](http://bchc.org.au/rap/)





*PICTURED: The new Reconciliation Action Plan document is now available online and in hard copy at our sites*



# Corporate Services

The Corporate Services division provides high quality support services to the whole of BCH in the areas of Customer Service, Finance, Human Resources, Information Services, Facilities, Fleet, Volunteers and Student Placements. As a highly dynamic group, the division remains continually focused on both efficient service and continuous quality improvement.

## Customer Service

This year, the Customer Service team smoothly transitioned from the Primary Care division to Corporate Services. We implemented significant changes to support the safety of the team (i.e. sneeze guard screens) while ensuring clients continued to receive a high level of customer service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Information Services

Information Services supported the organisation's mobilisation to an at-home (wherever possible) workforce with technical support and supply of hardware. The team deployed over 100 laptops for staff to allow services to be continued remotely and overhauled the telephone system to improve function and reliability.

The team helped activate the new Wendouree site on the BCH network and evaluated then recommended a new clinical information management system to be implemented in the new financial year.

## Finance

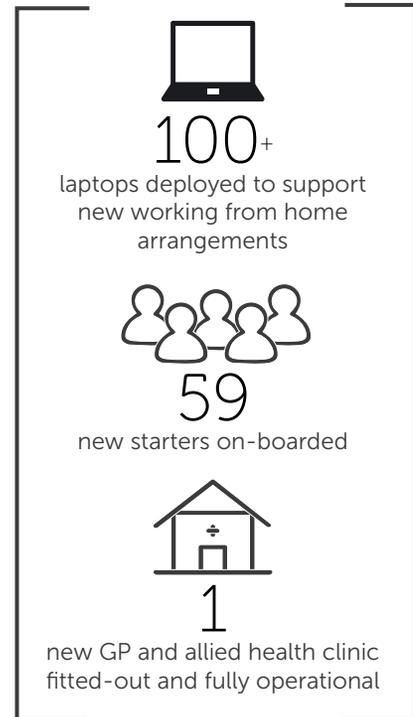
The Finance team developed electronic process flows for remote working and accounts batch payments this year while evaluating and recommending a new budget and finance reporting system. The team processed over \$20M of revenue and expenditure for the organisation.

## Human Resources

In 2019/20, the Human Resources team replaced the stand-alone Talent Propeller eRecruitment system with ActionHRM – a recruitment module for candidate management, shortlisting and interview scheduling. The process involved digitisation of existing hard copy employment records and included the launch of electronic timesheets. The team also supported recruitment processes for 59 new starters in the BCH team over the year.

## Facilities and Fleet

Our Facilities and Fleet team managed the fit-out of the new BCH Wendouree site in Howitt



Street, leading to the grand opening in January 2020. We also supported PPE supply – managed ordering and distribution – during the COVID-19 outbreak and began work on the Cooida refurbishment project (to be completed in 2020/21) including solar light installation as part of a safety grant.

## Volunteers & Students

This year BCH welcomed 17 new volunteers: Amarni, Bill, Travis, Pam G, Helen, Torie, Laura, Kimia, Marion, Peter M, Ella, Marg M, Neelam, Ellena, John K, Maria J, Alexis, Maria C and farewelled our longest-serving volunteer, June Andrews, who retired from service.

Volunteers support a wide range of programs and projects in a number of ways including help with recycling, SMARTASSK, art & music groups, administration, gardening, data entry and Voices for Change (a peer-led public speaking program).

Walking groups, mail delivery and SecondBite were our longest-running volunteer programs while new programs have also benefited from volunteer support this year.

Some of the newer programs requiring volunteer support included:

- citizenship support
- Styled for Success
- Digital Literacy Volunteers (which we look forward to ramping up once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted).

Our staff welcomed and supported students from a wide range of courses and disciplines throughout 2019/20. These included:

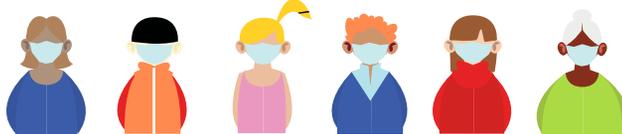
- human & community services
- counselling
- dietetics
- exercise physiology
- health promotion
- clinical psychology
- public health
- medicine
- nursing
- physiotherapy and podiatry
- social work
- work experience.

78 average number of volunteers working with BCH

3+ average number years spent in volunteer service

5+ 20% of volunteers have been with BCH for over 5 years

69 number of students July 2019-June 2020



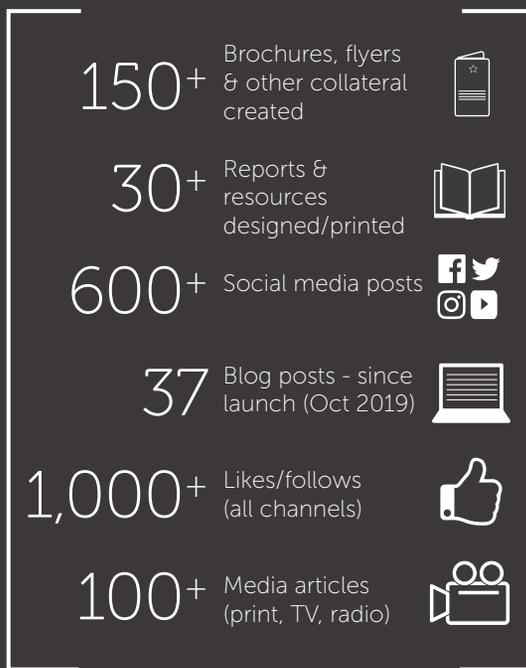
The nature of student placements varies greatly, from projects that help research and/or enhance the work we do, to hands-on practical placements in allied health, nursing and medical disciplines.

BCH's major education partners are Federation University, ACU, Deakin University, University of Melbourne and La Trobe University.

Students speak highly of their experiences and frequently cite teamwork, expertise and support as highlights of their placement.

# Communications & Media

The Communications team had a busy year of resource development and organisational positioning. In October 2019, we launched the inaugural Annual Public Meeting (APM) – a new opportunity for staff to connect with clients and other stakeholders. The APM gave our community a chance to hear directly from program providers about what it is they do and the health and wellbeing benefits of their work. At that same event, we unveiled a photography exhibit and our Client Journey film - both of which depicted the breadth of the services we offer and showcased our wonderful and diverse client group.



been pivotal to effective communication during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March 2020, BCH staff mobilised to a new service delivery model, with virtual and telehealth formats adopted wherever possible. To keep staff connected during this time, daily updates from the CEO commenced and new policies and procedures were created and distributed. The Communications team was critical in sharing information with the community and internally with staff about changes to the healthcare landscape, restrictions being enforced and about public health and safety precautions.

The 2019/20 financial year also saw the launch of a new website for BCH ([www.bchc.org.au](http://www.bchc.org.au)) with an improved look and feel, as well as more advanced functionality. The online booking form and donation ability gave users a new connection with BCH and the newly added 'give feedback' function relieved much incoming

call traffic for our customer service team – helping further streamline our feedback process.

In January we launched the organisation's newest communication channel, an Intranet, which acts as a central hub for internal news and information. The intranet has

The team developed several health and wellbeing campaigns during the pandemic isolation period in 2020. These included encouraging nominations for 'BCH Legends' to recognise those doing outstanding work as well as All Staff virtual meetings to keep connections strong and 'Pulse Check' surveys to monitor fatigue.

2019/20 HIGHLIGHT:

# Howitt Street clinic development

In January 2020, Ballarat Community Health officially opened Ballarat's newest GP and Allied Health clinic in the heart of Wendouree. Located on Howitt St – the hub for health and wellbeing services in the city – the clinic was custom-fitted (after extensive consultation with community, practitioners and trades) to create a safe and welcoming space for people from all backgrounds.

The grand opening event in January attracted more than 150 people including politicians, Board members, staff, community members and neighbouring service providers.

Clinical operations began at the Wendouree location on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 with training and staff orientation provided to all staff deployed to the new site.

The clinic was a shift from the original plan for refurbishment of the clinical space at our existing Cooina centre, but after a period of review and due diligence the BCH Board approved the purchase with the view that this new solution would better meet the needs of our clients and community members.

Dubbed a "welcoming oasis of calm and colour" by the Ballarat Courier, the site boasts state-of-the-art facilities and equipment for the resident GPs and allied health professionals – including podiatrists, counsellors and dietitians.

BCH CEO Sean Duffy said the clinic was a welcome boost for Wendouree, bringing further expert healthcare to the area.

"Ballarat is a growing city with a need for professional and affordable healthcare options. The Wendouree community will have greater access to GPs and other health professionals with the opening of this new site."

There are plans to forge a network with other health care groups in the burgeoning medical precinct so clients can be referred to other services within a short walk.





PICTURED LtoR (inset): Sean Duffy (CEO) addressing the crowd at the opening of the new Wendouree site | Michelle & Alithea (CSO team) cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony | Board Chair, Paul Ryan speaking at the launch event | Sean Duffy & Dr. Shaun Mohammadsaeedi unveil a commemorative plaque | Project Manager, Clare Bigarelli speaks with Cr Ben Taylor (Mayor), City of Ballarat



PICTURED LtoR: John Laursen, Robert Hook, Maria Palmer, Mathew Muldoon, Megan May, Stephen Bigarelli, Paul Ryan, Jessie Harman

# Board of Directors

Current Board members:

**Paul Ryan | Chair**

DipT, B. Theol, Grad. Dip. Psych. Stud,  
BSc(Hons), GAICD

**Jessie Harman | Deputy Chair**

PhD, MBA, BA(Hons), MAICD

**Stephen Bigarelli | Chair  
of Board Finance & Audit  
Committee**

Certified Practising Accountant (CPA)

**Robert Hook**

F CPA

**John Laursen**

Chair of Board Corporate  
Governance Committee  
GradDipACG, MDefStud, BA, CertIV  
(Compliance Management), FGIA, FCIS,  
GAICD

**Megan May**

Chair of Board Quality of Care  
Committee  
BSc, MHSc (Osteopathy), Grad Cert  
AHM, Cert IV (Breastfeeding Education)

**Mathew Muldoon**

B.Ec (Accounting), Chartered  
Accountant

**Maria Palmer**

BSc, GAICD

**Lisa Pickering (to Feb 2020)**

M.Bus, Dip. Bus (Banking & Finance),  
Cert IV (TAA)



# Quality & Safety

## Risk management

BCH applies a risk management lens – in accordance with international standards – to all of our work. We promote development and implementation of safe, effective and responsive services which help to prevent unexpected outcomes for clients and staff. In conjunction with other key measures (clinical governance methodologies, planning and evaluation of programs etc.), effective risk management reduces adverse events and allows us to manage potentially negative outcomes. This year we expanded our understanding of risk across financial, legislative, environmental, human resources, clinical and other categories of risk, working towards a culture of continuous improvement in this space.

## Quality & safety

BCH has a strong commitment to quality and safety. This focus helps us to achieve the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for our clients and our community.

In February 2020 BCH participated in our three-year accreditation review – conducted by Quality Innovation Performance (QIP).

We were assessed against five sets of independent standards including:

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Standards
- Victorian Human Services Standards
- Rainbow Tick Standards for LGBTI Responsive Services
- National Standards for Mental Health Services
- Quality Improvement Council Health and Community Services Standards.



488

BCH achieved compliance against all 488 indicators within the five accreditation standards.

Maintaining accreditation fosters our culture of continuous quality improvement and ensures a safe and holistic approach is taken to everything we do. To continue this great work, in 2019/20 we also developed the Quality Improvement Plan 2020-23 and strengthened clinical governance across the organisation.

## Occupational health & safety

We consider both the physical and emotional wellbeing of staff in every decision we make at BCH, and have maintained a strong record of avoiding serious harm. We work hard to create an environment where staff feel safe and respected and can carry out their work without risk to self or others.

Processes are in place and are constantly reviewed to ensure that service delivery also happens within a safe environment. With a particular emphasis on cultural safety, we strive to create sites that are welcoming to people of all backgrounds. This year, we have particularly focussed on creating safe environments for staff and visitors from the LGBTI community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. Given these groups' historic battles with discrimination and significant barriers to care, BCH considered this to be especially important. Our commitment was formally recognised this year through the implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan (PG36) and continuation of our Trans and Gender Diverse Clients in Community Health project (PG11).

# Locations



**Wendouree**  
1042 Howitt Street



**Lucas**  
12 Lilburne Street



**Sebastopol**  
260 Vickers Street



**Ballarat Central**  
28 Victoria Street



**Coinda**  
10 Learmonth Rd,  
Wendouree  
(currently under development)



**Smythesdale**  
19 Heales Street



**headspace Ballarat**  
28 Camp Street

# Financial summary

## Statement of Profit & Loss and Other Comprehensive Income For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Operating Revenue	19,504,003	17,984,052
Operating Expenditure	(20,157,426)	(18,804,075)
Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year before other items	(653,423)	(820,023)
Other Items	(35,145)	106,823
<b>Total Comprehensive Income/(Loss) for the year</b>	<b>(688,568)</b>	<b>(713,200)</b>

## Statement of Financial Position As at 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
Current Assets	12,344,206	14,573,720
Non-Current Assets	18,841,022	16,535,660
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>31,185,228</b>	<b>31,109,380</b>
Current Liabilities	6,828,856	5,964,480
Non-Current Liabilities	1,088,951	1,188,911
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>7,917,807</b>	<b>7,153,391</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>23,267,421</b>	<b>23,955,989</b>
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>23,267,421</b>	<b>23,955,989</b>

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