

Ballarat Community Health

Annual Report
2024 - 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

Ballarat Community Health Limited would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, learn, and provide care — the Wadawurrung People of the Kulin Nation. We recognise their deep and enduring connection to Country, community, culture, and healing. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As healthcare providers and members of this community, we honour the knowledge systems that have supported the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for generations.

We commit ourselves to listening, learning, and walking together on the journey toward genuine reconciliation — where culturally safe care, equity, and truth-telling are central to our practice and relationships. May our work contribute to healing and to a future grounded in respect, justice, and shared responsibility.



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We were proud to deliver a year of impressive results and impact for Ballarat Community Health Limited (BCH) in 2024-2025

We present this Annual Report, to capture and share with you the tangible difference we make by delivering accessible, affordable, and quality health and wellbeing services across Ballarat and the broader region.

Strategic Plan 2024-2029

We consulted with our workforce, stakeholders and the community to develop our Strategic Plan 2024–2029, reaffirming BCH’s deep commitment to community health and wellbeing. The plan sharpens our focus on tackling health inequality and inequity, — ensuring our services reach those who need them most, when and where they need them.

We’ve translated strategy into action, which has resulted in our services growing across the region. We deepened our partnerships, and continued to respond with agility in a health system facing significant change and challenges.

Notable achievements and new programs

- Advancing our commitment to support people with complex health conditions, commencing a multidisciplinary primary care service in partnership with rural general practices, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and bush nursing centres.
- Developing a multicultural primary care access program in partnership with the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council.
- Developing a Homeless Primary Care access service in partnership with Uniting VicTas.
- Facilitating community resilience and recovery case management support to members of the Beaufort and Raglan communities in need, following the aftermath of bushfires in early 2024.
- Commencing a specialist paediatrics program, ‘Pathways to Good Health’, a multidisciplinary service providing health assessments, referrals and health histories for children with complex health needs within, or with a risk of being in, out-of-home care.

Further to the above, we have strengthened our commitment to general practice and allied health, through the acquisition of property adjacent to our Howitt Street centre, expanding our footprint in the Wendouree area and creating future opportunity to grow primary and community health services to this community.

Aged Care Services

BCH has seen significant advancement in our aged care services, with our commencement of Home Care Package management services in 2025. We have also increased exercise therapy facilities at our Lucas site, which will expand the number of sessions available to our ageing population.

As we have developed services and facilities, we made a conscious, considered decision to transition out of NDIS Support Coordination, and collaborated with Grampians Community Health to support a smooth transition of business. We identified that NDIS Support Coordination clients would be well-supported by a partnering community health organisation with a broader suite of disability supports and services.

Influencing Reform

Whilst sector-wide challenges remain, BCH has stayed proactive. We have embraced opportunities to influence reform and strengthen our voice. By engaging with government, peak bodies, partners, and clients, we’ve championed the role of community health in shaping a fairer, more effective health system.

As active members of Alliance of Regional and Rural Community Health (ARRCH) and Community Health First, we’ve continued to advocate for place-based, early-intervention services that keep people healthy and connected within their communities. The community health model works, and it requires the policy and funding support to scale its impact.

In acknowledging the significant impact violence has on our local community, BCH has invested heavily in the development of Respect Ballarat – a whole of community approach to preventing gendered violence. We’re excited to be working with businesses, organisations and community over the



Sean Duffy
Chief Executive Officer
Ballarat Community Health

Dr Jessie Harman AM
Board Chair,
Ballarat Community Health

coming years to implement tailored local approaches to create a community where everyone is respected, safe and free from violence.

In 2025, we marked our fourteenth year of measuring our workforce culture through BPA Analytics, with a consistently high engagement score over this period. Our workforce reports a sense of purpose, high achievement and performance, with over 80% of employees reporting BCH is a truly great place to work.

We also acknowledge and thank our service partners, funders and sector colleagues for their collaboration and shared commitment. Most importantly, we thank the individuals and families who placed their trust in BCH this year. It is a privilege to support your health and wellbeing.

We look forward to the year ahead, driven by our purpose to create healthy communities through the provision of accessible, affordable, quality health and wellbeing services. On behalf of BCH, we recommend this Annual Report to our members, stakeholders, staff, clients, and our community.

"We have much to celebrate and be proud of during 2024, and our workforce's capability and dedication is key to our successes."

Sean Duffy Ballarat Community Health CEO

Special Acknowledgements

Each year we recognise, with gratitude, the contribution and leadership of BCH Board Directors.

We particularly acknowledge Robert Hook AM, who concludes a third and final term with the Board at the 2025 AGM (9 years), and Mathew Muldoon, who resigned from the Board in June 2025 (8.5 years).

BCH has benefited significantly from the commitment, expertise, and wisdom these directors have offered over many years of service.

Gender Based Violence - Our Approach

AT BCH we witness on a daily basis, the impact that violence has in our community, and with our clients. As a community health service, we focus our efforts in prevention, early intervention and support. We work in partnership with the community, early childhood and education settings, social and health sectors and workplaces, to implement evidence-based approaches to address gendered violence.

Prevention

BCH is supporting the implementation of the Ballarat Saturation Model – Respect Ballarat. As part of the initial steps of Respect Ballarat, our staff have worked with young people and men to identify the causes of gender based violence and co-design local approaches to address the issues.

We continued our commitment to the Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance, which was formed by Women’s Health Grampians to address the prevalence of violence against women in the Grampians Region.

BCH implements an organisational action plan as well as works collectively with members of the Alliance to bring about change.

Our Healthy Communities team facilitated relationship and sexuality education across 20 schools in Ballarat and surrounding areas.

Support

This year, BCH provided counselling support to 167 women impacted by family violence. We continue to advocate for additional resources, as we have a further 186 women on waitlist needing urgent support.

167

Women impacted by family violence provided BCH counselling support



“Students feel empowered, and we [school staff] feel empowered knowing that we have the content and knowledge to deliver the [RSE] program”

Relationships and Sexuality Education Health Promotion Officer - Tameaka

Comprehensive Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is most effective when implemented as part of a whole-of-school approach. This embraces the partnership between the student, the home, the school and the community.

The goal of RSE is to build on knowledge, skills and behaviours which enable children and young people to make responsible and safe choices.

Although RSE is outlined in both the Victorian and Australian curriculum, there has been great disparity in the rollout of this program between schools and within schools, as it is dependent on the teacher’s own knowledge and confidence in delivering the content.

Additionally, knowing where and how to access up-to-date, evidence-based resources that are inclusive and engaging for students can be a challenge and barrier for many teachers.

To help schools overcome these challenges, BCH developed the BCH Relationships and Sexuality Education Toolkits for schools.

The aim of the toolkits is to assist schools in navigating the complexity of teaching RSE that is correct, age and stage-appropriate and delivered in a safe and non-judgemental manner. The toolkits are a compilation of activities and resources from leading national and international agencies that support schools’ curriculum planning and establish clear referral pathways into local support services for students, principals, teachers, parents and carers.

20

Schools engaged in RSE (Relationship & Sexuality Education)

11,000

Students participating

7,000

Families impacted

1,670

School Staff involved

Tameaka - Relationships and Sexuality Education Health Promotion Officer

Creating healthy communities through the provision of accessible, affordable and quality health and wellbeing services.

Commitment to our community

Address health inequity and inequality

Improve the health and wellbeing of the community

Have impact and be sustainable

Pillars

Healthy ageing in the community

Health and wellbeing for children and young people

Supporting people with complex health and wellbeing needs

Improved mental health and wellbeing in the community

Enablers

- Sustainable primary care services
- A commitment to public health strategies, promoting optimal health and wellbeing
- Strategic workforce innovation and support
- Strong brand, organisational reputation and visibility
- Systems and facilities supporting integration, accessibility and efficiency
- Elevating the voice and value of community health services

Our values

RESPECT – INTEGRITY – COURAGE - RESPONSIBILITY – RESILIENCE – OPTIMISM



Healthy Ageing in Our Community

BCH is committed to supporting people in our region by tailoring our services to promote healthy lifestyles, wellbeing, and independence.

1 in 3

BCH Clients supported are over 70 years old

5,000

Clients aged over 60 supported

People aged over 65

- **20,000 in Ballarat**
- **19% of the population**
- **25,000+ projected by 2030**

Data from The City of Ballarat Ageing Well Strategy 2022-2026

We're responding to the changing demographics in our community. We are expanding programs to meet the needs of our older community members.

Home Care Package Services

In May 2025 we took an important step under our Strategic Plan, adding Home Care Package (HCP) Services to our program offerings as a government-supported program helping older people who want to stay at home.

Our Home Care Package Services extend our services to older people in Ballarat, spanning our Allied Health and Exercise Groups programs, GP and Nursing, Medication Management, Vaccinations, Alcohol and Other drugs (including Smoking and vaping support) and Mental Health Support services.

Healthy Lifestyles

In 2025 we added a second new gym space to our Lucas site, increasing the number of clients we can support in physiotherapist and exercise physiologist led small group programs for cardiac rehabilitation, falls prevention and neurological conditions including Parkinson's disease and stroke, healthy ageing and chronic disease management.

We have added a cardiac testing bike to enable precise fitness testing, and tailoring of exercise programs for clients. Feedback has been positive.

Clients who require a low sensory environment (such as those with Autism Spectrum Disorder) report feeling more comfortable in this space, as there are fewer sensory distractions, including background music, other participant conversations, and bright lighting.

Clients with reduced mobility find the space easier to move around in due to the lower number of people and equipment.

Next year we will commence a new program aimed at supporting people with mild to moderate frailty. A new team of allied health professionals and care coordinators will be established to start this exciting initiative.

100

Additional BCH Gym group clients per week can now be supported

45

NDIS/HCP clients per week will benefit from more frequent and extended appointments

"Nothing but supportive and encouraging! I've loved all the people I've met. I'm impressed with the staff's enthusiasm and what BCH do for the community. I have been linked with services in the past but this is by far the best service I've ever received."

Christine, Ballarat Community Health Home Care Package Client



A retired nurse, Christine has spent her life caring for others. These days she finds joy and independence in her artwork, which provides her with peace and a strong sense of purpose. Maintaining this connection to creativity is vital for her wellbeing, and at BCH we make sure that her support plan reflects that.

Children and Young People

BCH is proud to deliver a wide range of services for children and young people, in a range of settings, using tailored approaches.

headspace Ballarat

Was again proud to support thousands of young people in the Ballarat and surrounding areas.

Youth Employment Program (YEP)

Offering work and study assistance for young people seeking support for their mental health at headspace Ballarat, YEP this year

118

young people supported

4,826

occasions of service

1,033

young people

25%

went into study

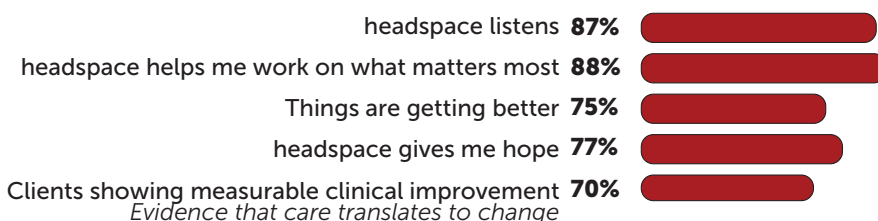
60%

gained employment



Hannah, Sexual and Reproductive Health Nurse

Across every measure, young people tell us that headspace makes a real difference to their wellbeing



Wybggurwil Murrup, Wybggurwil Ngat (Strong Spirit, Strong Mind)

Many young Mob have shared that one of the biggest barriers to engaging with headspace is the feeling that our service wasn't built for them.

Across the country, we see lower engagement from minority groups in community-based services, and a big part of that comes down to perception. If young people can't see themselves reflected in the support on offer, how can we expect them to feel safe using it?

What began as a simple, one-off activity for a local community event has since grown into something much more substantial. The Strong Spirit, Strong Mind activity cards became an approachable way to start conversations and build connections.

Designed in response to feedback from young Mob, the cards offer a chance to pause, reflect, and talk. They include Wadawurrung language, general trivia, and prompts that help open discussions around mental health, headspace supports, and cultural identity.

Since their creation, the cards have helped shift conversations—not just with young people, but also among services. The Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation approved the use of language in the cards and asked for support in creating their own version. The cards have also been requested by services such as BADAC, the Victorian Education Koorie Engagement Team, and local schools and universities.

They've helped to strengthen relationships across community, build trust, and support culturally safe engagement. Most importantly, they're helping young Mob feel seen and heard, increasing their understanding of supports available and tailored to their needs.



***"I'm excited about my future,
a feeling I don't think I've ever
felt before."***

*Maddy, Ballarat Community Health
Youth housing program client*

Prior to entering the Youth Housing Program at Ballarat Community Health, Maddy had been living in unstable accommodation for almost three years. Maddy had been couch surfing after fleeing family violence, and as a result of the instability of her accommodation, had not had the chance to work through the emotional impacts of the family violence. Maddy had also been unable to concentrate on getting back into employment as her primary focus had been attempting to find stable accommodation.

Maddy was very excited to be given the opportunity to enter the Youth Housing program, and by gaining the stability in accommodation that it offers.

Through the support of the Youth Housing team, and by her own initiative, Maddy linked into services that provided her beneficial support, strategies and counselling to aid in addressing the trauma she suffered as a result of the family violence.

After a couple of months in the transitional property Maddy, feeling more settled and having begun to work through the issues that had been preventing her from moving forward, began seeking employment.

Within weeks, Maddy had secured full-time employment. A month later, Maddy was successful in being offered a rental property.

Maddy is very thankful for the support she received through the Youth Housing Program, and believes that without this support, she would not be in the positive position she is in.

Supporting People with Complex Health and Wellbeing Needs

Early Years

The School Readiness Funding (SRF) Program aims to address educational disadvantage by building the capacity of educators and families to support children's learning and development in three priority areas: Communication (language, literacy, numeracy), Wellbeing (social, emotional, executive function), and Access, Inclusion, and Participation. SRF supports 3- and 4-year-old children in all early childhood education and care services delivering state-funded kindergarten programs across Victoria, including long day care.

BCH's SRF Allied Health Team, comprising speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and psychologists, provides discipline-specific support to kindergartens based on each service's submitted plan. Sessions are scheduled across the year to meet service needs, with flexibility applied where required—for example, completing sessions early or scheduling initial sessions later due to planning or communication factors.

Educator feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Mid-year survey results showed 100% of respondents agreed that the themes, ideas, and strategies were relevant and useful. The program has positively impacted educators' confidence and knowledge in supporting children across the three SRF priority areas. Feedback illustrates real-world impact, such as educators using collaborative reflection sessions to engage families in challenging conversations, resulting in timely referrals to Early Childhood Approach services.

The SRF Allied Health Team actively fosters collaboration through informal professional dialogue, structured team meetings, joint professional development with educators such as Trauma Informed Practice training and psychology consultation sessions and engagement with relevant Communities of Practice to support ongoing shared learning and professional growth.

92

Early Childhood and Care Services Engaged

6

Local Government Areas Serviced

1,727

Sessions delivered

3,454

Hours of support delivered


"This outcome went far beyond the family's expectations and highlighted the AAC principle of 'presuming competence'—believing in the individual's capacity to communicate and learn when given the right tools and support."

*Ballarat Community Health,
Paediatric Speech Pathologist*

As a speech pathologist at the Ballarat Community Health Lucas clinic, I have had the rewarding opportunity to support a child and their family in exploring Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). The child presents with both receptive and expressive language delays, particularly in expressive language, not using verbal speech to communicate intentionally.

Our initial therapy goal was to trial AAC in the format of an electronic communication device, with the focus on building functional communication and supporting spontaneous novel utterance generation (SNUG), rather than the child relying solely on pointing to express needs.

To access NDIS funding for such a device, at least three AAC systems must be trialled. For the first trial, the parent set modest expectations, hoping the child would simply observe and be present during modeling. However, the child quickly exceeded these goals—actively selecting or "saying" words after seeing them modeled by the parent. There were also moments of intentional and contextually appropriate use, such as saying "eat" at mealtime. This outcome went far beyond the family's expectations and highlighted the AAC principle of "presuming competence"—believing in the individual's capacity to communicate and learn when given the right tools and support.



BCH Client participating in an
Exercise Physiology Class

Multidisciplinary Care at BCH

We work with clients living with diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson's disease, heart failure and other chronic health conditions. These conditions can cause significant distress and impacts on their quality of life.

Clients involved with the BCH Integrated Chronic Disease Counsellor are supported over a six month period, which includes counselling support. This service focuses on mental health and care management from a wellness and reablement perspective.

97%

of Clients achieved a measurable clinical improvement in their psychological distress

Clients report improvements in being able to manage their chronic illness and have increased comfort in seeking help to further manage their condition.

Improving Access to Primary Care

Homelessness Access Program (HAP)

A new health clinic is being trialled in central Ballarat for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to help break down barriers and improve access to health care and well-being.

This program provides nurse led clinics, podiatry, outreach services and access to a range of other supports. The clinic is at Breezeway, the multidisciplinary hub run by Uniting VicTas in Dana Street.

Multicultural Access Program (MAP)

BCH, in partnership with the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (BRMC) is providing healthcare assistance to people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The program includes a nurse-led clinic located at BRMC.

The nurse-led clinic delivers both prevention and early intervention activities, such as health assessments, care planning and referrals to other healthcare professionals. Consumers with complex needs are assigned a case manager who will assist them in coordinating their care across health and social services.

245

HAP Clients

550

Occasions of service

255

MAP Clients

408

Occasions of Service

"Coming from a multicultural background and being new migrants, we value what you do to support us and so many people. Please keep up your good work. We need you."

Multicultural Access Program (MAP) Client

BCH Nurse Robyn and a MAP Client at BRMC



Wimmera Grampians Multidisciplinary Team Care Program (MDT)

BCH, commissioned by Western Victoria Primary Health Network, is delivering the Wimmera Grampians Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Care Program in partnership with Harrow Bush Nursing Centre, Woomelang Bush Nursing Centre, Budja Budja Aboriginal Cooperative, and Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative.

Funded until June 2028, the program improves access to allied health services and enhances care for people with complex chronic conditions, particularly cardiovascular disease and diabetes, across the region.

The MDT Care Program takes a person-centred approach, integrating allied health services within local primary care settings and providing

coordinated care through dedicated chronic disease nurse coordinators. The model blends in-person multidisciplinary health assessments at local clinics with telehealth follow-up, reducing travel burdens and increasing service accessibility.

Consumers benefit from tailored care planning, case conferencing, and access to a broad range of allied health professionals. Services include individual assessments, group programs, telephone health coaching, and education resources to support self-management.

Through its integrated partnerships and coordinated approach, the MDT Care Program strengthens service accessibility, empowers self-management, and enhances long-term health outcomes for communities across the Wimmera Grampians region.

Our Commitment to the Community

BCH's commitment to our community lies in addressing health and social inequality, improving health and wellbeing, having impact and being sustainable. In working to achieve this commitment, BCH must consider the social determinants of health in service and program design.

103

Community health programs at BCH

160,670

Occasions of service

670

Clients seen per day

15,033

Clients

56%

of Clients access multiple services at BCH

75%

of clients live in areas of social disadvantage

82%

of clients said the services accessed at BCH help achieve their goals and manage their health

89%

of clients said BCH provides a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment

"Social determinants of health are factors that influence how likely we are to stay healthy or to become ill or injured. Many of the key drivers of health reside in our everyday living and working conditions – the circumstances in which we grow, live, work and age. These social determinants can strengthen or undermine the health of individuals and communities."

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

BCH has been collecting data to measure the extent to which we are reaching the most vulnerable people in our community.

The data indicates that in 2025 the vast majority of our clients live in areas experiencing relative disadvantage.

Pyrenees Shire Community Recovery and Resilience

In 2025 BCH delivered trauma-informed case management to residents impacted by the 2024 Bushfires in the Pyrenees Shire community. The program was adapted to provide support in drought impacted regions by continuing case management of fire-impacted clients, provision of grant information and referrals to mental health and financial counselling services.

These important community services are reliant on grant funding, which we will continue to advocate for in partnership with other impacted regions in Victoria through our Community Health First partners.

We are continuing to design and advocate for enduring, efficient, sector-wide services that could be scaled and redeployed to areas of need.

"I have hope for the future."

*Mary, Recovery and Resilience
Program Client*

Mary, 69, lives on a 10-acre property near Raglan with her pets. After the February 2024 fires and storms, her home was left covered in soot and ash, forcing her to evacuate for a month. With no working car and limited mobility due to health issues, Mary became isolated and her mental health declined.

Her family lives in Melbourne but had limited contact, leaving Mary feeling unsupported and overwhelmed. Managing insurance claims and restoring her home alone was beyond her capacity. The Pyrenees Recovery Support Officer referred her to the Community Resilience and Recovery Program (CRRP) at Ballarat Community Health for help.

Within 24 hours, a Case Manager (CM) began supporting Mary—advocating with her insurer, arranging professional cleaning, and purchasing an air purifier to ease her breathing. "The purifier is helping my breathing, and I am sleeping better," Mary said.

The CM also provided transport to exercise classes and social outings, helping Mary reconnect with her community. With encouragement, Mary undertook driving lessons after 2.5 years off the road and purchased a new car through her insurance claim. She now drives independently to medical appointments and social activities.

Mary is now exploring future housing options, reviewing her will, and seeking mental health support to rebuild family connections. She shared, "I have hope for the future."

Through CRRP's holistic, person-centred approach, Mary has regained independence, improved her wellbeing, and re-established community connections—demonstrating how practical and emotional support after disaster can restore resilience and hope.

Supporting Healthcare Professionals

Orticare

Orticare, the Grampians Loddon Mallee Pharmacotherapy Area Based Network, is one of five such networks in Victoria. Orticare work to improve access to treatment for people experiencing opioid use disorder and to support the health care professionals working in the treatment space. Ballarat Community Health is the lead agency of Orticare and work is overseen by a multi-agency Orticare Governance group.

In the last year the team delivered

5

Clinical Network Meetings with

125

Meeting Attendees in Ballarat, Bendigo, Mildura and Echuca

220

General Practitioners

262

Patients

91

General Practice Visits/Meetings

79

Pharmacy Visits

This year saw the expansion of the OMC following positive evaluation outcomes and a funding increase from the Department of Health. Next year will see the further expansion of the clinic to support communities across Barwon and Gippsland.

Capacity Building

In partnership with Co-health, Orticare supported four registrars working in regional and rural areas to complete the GP Registrar Addiction Medicine Exposure Program. The feedback from participants was universally positive, enabling the program to continue into the next year, with the intention of improving the uptake of MATOD prescribing in the longer term.

Pharmacy assistant online training 'Opioid Dependence and Stigma' developed by Orticare in collaboration with Federation Uni. The training is Quality Care Pharmacy accredited and housed on the Australian College of Pharmacy Practice website.

Building the Knowledge Base

2

Journal Publications

ORTICARE
Grampians Loddon Mallee Pharmacotherapy Network

Community Sector Development Grampians

The Community Sector Development Grampians team (CSD Grampians) work with funded aged care providers across the Grampians region of Victoria and Australia to support change management, the sharing of good practice and encourage inclusive access and person centred care.

The objective of Sector Development is to provide support to CHSP service providers, through the aged care reforms, operate effectively in line with the objectives of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and within the context of the broader aged care system.

This was a significant year for the CSD Grampians team as they provided support for transition into the new Aged Care Act. The team provided targeted training, guidance, resources and capacity-building initiatives to ensure providers were well-informed and supported through the transition.

The team's work has extended beyond the Grampians region, where the team has successfully supported aged care providers across five states, demonstrating their adaptability and responsiveness to diverse local needs and regulatory contexts.

Impressively, the team have had more than 35,000 points of contact throughout the year, through face-to-face engagements, online training and knowledge sharing as well as their successful 'Best Practice' conference which hosted up to 100 industry professionals from across the Grampians and Barwon regions with guest speakers, and federal members present to critically inform the sector through these dynamic times.

35,000+
Points of contact



Jimmy, from CSD Grampians presenting at Best Practice Forum

Mental Health and Wellbeing

BCH provides integrated mental health and alcohol and other drugs support to clients across a variety of programs using a range of approaches.

77%

of clients achieved a measurable clinical improvement across Head to Health & Step Thru Care programs

434

Head to Health Clients

3,686

Head to Health Service Contacts

Connecting2community Cooinda Garden Overhaul

When Connecting2community received additional funding from the Primary Health Network (PHN), the team looked for ways to make a lasting impact. Through conversations with staff and clients, the idea *bloomed* to create a sensory garden for everyone to enjoy.

The revitalised garden now offers a peaceful, nature-based alternative to a counselling room. Visitors can explore plants chosen for their colours, scents and textures, or join in the year-round gardening program supported by a new greenhouse and shed.

Raised vegetable beds and fruit trees provide seasonal produce, helping to ease food insecurity and inviting neighbours to share what's grown.

"It's become a space where people can relax, connect and feel proud of what we've created together."

Staff member, Connecting2Community

Thanks to the dedication of staff, volunteers and community members, Cooinda has been transformed into an open, accessible space that nurtures wellbeing and connection for all.



BCH Mental Health Team at Cooinda

Finding Hope and Purpose Through Support

When Jordan first came to the Head to Health program, they were in crisis and struggling with suicidal thoughts. Over the following year, Jordan received care through two separate support periods with the service, as well as joining the Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Group Program — a skills-based approach that helps people manage emotions and build healthier relationships.

With ongoing encouragement and coordinated support, Jordan began to make meaningful changes in their life. Six months after completing their sessions, Jordan returned to share an update with the team — they had finally received a formal diagnosis of ADHD, something they had long suspected and had been working toward with the help of Head to Health referrals and advocacy.

Today, Jordan is taking important steps forward. They are medicated and managing their ADHD, working as a Learning Support Officer at a local high school, and studying for a Certificate IV in Mental Health (Peer Work). Their goal is to use their own lived experience to support others facing similar mental health challenges.

“Head to Health gave me the space to understand myself and find a direction again. Now I want to do the same for others.”

Jordan, Ballarat Community Health, Head to Health Client

Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Programs

This year has seen a further expansion of AOD programs delivered by BCH. We have increased AOD Nurse Practitioner support, as well as increased the number of clinic sessions within the Opioid Management Clinic.

We continue to see our programs be a catalyst for change for our clients in our Making A Change Program, a structured 8 week alcohol and other drug day rehab program.

The Making A Change Program...

“Reminded me that I can do this and I am worth it. It reminds me all the positives and changes I have made in my life and when I do that you see how far I have come and it gives me strength to come back from the 2 lapses I had during the program, and how I have changed and haven’t let it consume me and turn into a relapse and I need to focus on the changes and positives”

Making A Change (MAC) Program Client

1,006

Step Thru Care program referrals

2,015

Step Thru Care appointments

96%

of MAC clients said the program improved their coping skills

93%

of MAC clients decreased their AOD use whilst engaged in the program

Quality Care and Access for All

GP Clinics

BCH continue to provide accessible and quality Primary Health Services across the Ballarat Region. We have a team of GPs, nurse practitioners, nurses and allied health professionals working across our Wendouree, Sebastopol and Lucas sites.

In the FY25 BCH GP clinics were successfully re-accredited against the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Standards. As part of this accreditation, we surveyed our patients and received a 96% satisfaction score.

GP clinics delivered a full range of services including chronic disease management, aged care, aboriginal health, minor surgeries and general family health. BCH welcomed a new senior GP, Dr. Mobina Kashif in FY25. Dr. Mobina's role is to work with GPs to continue to deliver quality care and grow our practice to enable better access for all.

96%

Average Patient Satisfaction Score

47,634

Appointments
GP Clinics

6,296

Patients
GP Clinics

2013

Patients supported who were at medium /urgent risk of needing to be admitted to hospital

67%

(on average) of patients at risk of hospitalisation received regular review & treatment

"I consider that both my doctor and the practice as a whole function exceptionally well. I am a highly anxious individual, and the kindness and empathy shown towards me, certainly puts me at ease. Thank you for the wonderful service."

Clinic Patient, Ballarat Community Health

"This practice is outstanding! Staff are caring, kind and considerate. My experience has been the highest level of care in years."

Clinic Patient, Ballarat Community Health

"This was my first time here and I was very impressed with the level of care from the reception staff through to the doctor."

Clinic Patient, Ballarat Community Health

Sexual and Reproductive Health

BCH provide a range of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services across 4 of our sites including Lucas, Wendouree and Sebastopol. Our highly experienced and empathetic GPs and Sexual Health Nurses support people of all ages and backgrounds.

Our Sexual Health Services include provision of information to both women and men about all forms of contraception including options for women who wish to use long-acting-reversible

contraception(IUDs), termination of pregnancy options, sexually transmissible infections testing and treatment, menopause, HIV treatment and gender affirming care.

BCH are able to offer affordable sexual health services to the Ballarat community, with the support of state government funding, including being a host of Ballarat Women's and Sexual Reproductive Health Hub.

5,074

Appointments
Sexual &
Reproductive
Health Clinic

1,869

Patients
Sexual &
Reproductive
Health Clinic



**Women's Sexual
and Reproductive
Health Hub**

"I had a great experience here. Made an appointment to see a nurse. She was polite, empathetic, knowledgeable and has planned a pathway suited to me as an individual."

Clinic Patient, Ballarat Community Health

BCH Sexual Health Nurse Hayley

Commitment to Public Health Strategies

In line with the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, BCH led 22 local initiatives across

- 1** Increasing healthy eating
- 2** Reducing harm from tobacco & e-cigarette use
- 3** Improving sexual and reproductive health

The Healthy Communities team worked across a range of settings, including early childhood services, schools, sporting venues and workplaces. Using the Achievement Program – an evidence-based framework that supports a whole-of-service approach to health and wellbeing, BCH has been able to demonstrate active participation in the Achievement Program across Ballarat, with more than twice the number of achievement program members than the Victorian LGA average.

The Achievement Program

Achievement Program Members in Ballarat	Program members in Ballarat Victorian LGA Average
98	44

Health Priority Area	Participation in Ballarat	Average Victorian LGA Participation
Healthy Eating & Oral Health	36	15
Smoking, Vaping, Alcohol & Other Drugs	39	10
Mental Health & Wellbeing	44	13
Physical Activity & Movement	33	12
Sun Protection	41	12
Sexual Health & Wellbeing	11	2
Safe Environments	32	11
Climate & Health Actions	21	1

Healthy Eating - Vic Kids Eat Well

22
Vic Kids Eat Well Settings

57
Vic Kids Eat Well Small Bites Achieved

19
Vic Kids Eat Well Big Bites Achieved

60
Achievement Program Education Settings

29
Achievement Program Schools

19,500
Achievement Program Students

13,500
Families impacted by The Achievement Program

2,600
School staff involved in The Achievement Program



“ Watching the children actively participate in planting, tasting of different fruit and vegetables, listening and participating in stories and activities. The children’s nurturing of the plants has been amazing, and our garden beds are flourishing”

Vic Kids Eat Well School Staff Member

4

Farms to Families Markets

851

Farms to Families Market Attendees

12,460

Kilograms of Fresh Produce

25,000+

Meals

Healthy Eating

Ballarat Community Health has prioritised increasing healthy eating and improving access to nutritious food as a key focus area. Good nutrition supports overall health, helps prevent chronic disease, and strengthens mental wellbeing. Multiple strategies are needed to improve healthy eating across all age groups. Prioritising action in communities at greater risk of diet-related poor health and food insecurity is crucial to improving health equity. Through initiatives like the Farms to Families Markets and our collaboration with the Food Access Network and Foodbank, BCH is helping to create better access to food and healthier food environments, ensuring everyone in our community can access affordable, nutritious food that supports wellbeing.

Tobacco & e-cigarette Related Harm

Ballarat Community Health has identified reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use as a key priority area in line with the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027. Despite major progress in lowering smoking rates, tobacco remains a leading cause of preventable illness and death, with growing concern over rising e-cigarette use, especially among young people aged 12-17. Research shows a gateway effect with young people who had ever vaped being five times more likely to start smoking in the future than those who had never vaped. By supporting community education, prevention, and equitable access to cessation resources, BCH aims to educate our community to reduce the uptake of smoking & vaping, to lower the rates of current smokers, and create a cleaner, healthier future for all Victorians

840

Screenings of *Escape the Vape* at Showbiz Cinemas

17,929

Showbiz Cinema patrons reached

1280

Students participating in vaping education



BCH People and Culture Manager Alicia.

"I am very grateful for the support I have in my direct team, they have supported my growth in my career and push me to do my best every day. We have positive outcomes for clients coming through our service. Coming to work everyday is enjoyable."

*Ballarat Community Health Employee
BPA ANALYTICS PTY LTD
July 2024 Employee Survey*

27.3%

Workers with Lived Experience

299

Number of Employees as at June 2025

195

FTE as at June 2025

10.9%

Sexually Diverse Staff

5.5%

CALD Staff

76.7%

Women

68.4%

Staff with Tertiary Qualifications

15.2%

Neurodiverse Staff

1.7%

First Nations Staff

An Inclusive Workforce

Our people are our greatest asset, and this year we focused on continuing to build a skilled, supported, and inclusive workforce in an environment where our people feel genuinely engaged, heard, and valued.

This year we strengthened our workforce capability and culture through targeted initiatives and training such as our sector wide Common Leadership Program (CLP).

We increased our perspective and appreciation of diversity, equity and inclusion and what that means to our community clients and staff. Our employee survey showed how diverse our workforce truly is, and how we value our commitment to delivering inclusive health services across our region.

Equally important is that all staff and clients feel safe here at BCH. We continued our good safety performance, but also focused on improving our responses to our biggest safety risks such as occupational violence and our programs that support psychosocial safety.

We continue to invest in our culture and capability to help grow our services across our community, have great impact through our people, and continually strive to make BCH a truly great place to work.

Is Ballarat Community Health a truly great place to work in 2024?

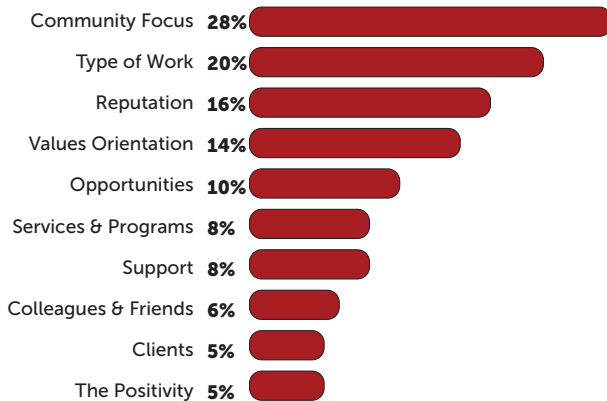
81%

Respondents answered **YES**

79%

Response rate from 280 employees

What attracts people to work at BCH?



Service Recognition

20 Years of Service

Gail Trembath Alcohol & Other Drug Counsellor
Tim Oates Youth Housing Worker

15 Years of Service

Karen Ashby Podiatrist
Liz Bolland Counsellor

10 Years of Service

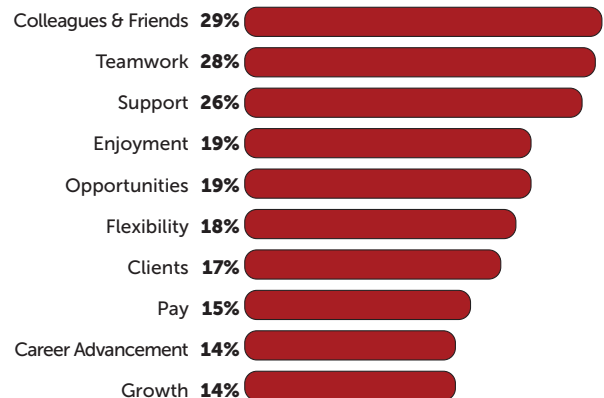
Claire Coutts Senior Alcohol & Other Drug Counsellor
Mel Lishman Care & Recovery Coordinator
Amanda Howlett Allied Health Intake Officer
Bernie Gladman Practice Nurse

5 Years of Service

Alice Istvan Customer Service Officer
Lisa Ford Customer Service Officer
Sandra Skipper Corporate Services Administrator
Sheridan Kraus Allied Health Intake Officer
Gail Schuler Diabetes Educator
Jordan Phillips Business Analyst
John Williams Alcohol & Other Drug Counsellor
Mitch Rhook Peer Support Worker (Connecting2 community)

Dr David Tickell Special mention for 15 years of service to BCH Paediatric Immigrant Health Clinic

What are the reasons why people stay?



Investing in our Future Leaders

ARRCH Common Leadership Program (CLP)

Ballarat Community Health was proud to support five staff members who successfully completed the course, all obtaining a Diploma of Business from Federation University Australia.

Dr Leanne Duggan, Manager Adult Mental health, Leo Arnold, Youth Case Manager, Janelle Johnson, Senior Manager Child & Youth Health, Mark Simmonds, Marketing & Communications Coordinator and Warren Faneco, Exercise Physiology Coordinator.

The relationship with ARRCH organisations continues to strengthen, with Ballarat Community Health CEO, Sean Duffy, now as Chair of ARRCH. BCH are also proud to have multiple staff either chairing or contributing to Communities of Practice within ARRCH to strengthen relationships across the sector.

5

BCH staff members successfully obtained a Diploma of Business

ARRCH

The focus of ARRCH, the Alliance of Rural and Regional Community Health, is to reduce health inequity in rural and regional Victoria by addressing the social determinants of health.

Each of ARRCH's community health organisations is an expert in the social determinants of health, a specialist in rural and regional health service delivery, and a service provider deeply connected and invested in its local community. ARRCH comprises of 10 Victorian Community Health services.

CHF

Community Health First is an initiative led by all 22 registered independent community health services in Victoria united by one shared goal – improving the health, wellbeing and quality of life for all Victorians. Community Health First aims to elevate the role of community health in Victoria's health system to deliver better health outcomes for our communities.

Community Health First (CHF) also benefitted from the work BCH does regionally, by contributing to publications, advocating to parliament and providing vital regional insights to ensure that Community Health is well represented across the health sector.

Community Health First employs over 10,000 staff comprised of 22 registered Community Health organisations, collectively seeing over 650,000 clients per year.



ARRCH CLP Team at federation University Ballarat

Board

On behalf of the entire BCH community, we thank our Board of Directors and acknowledge their governance and guidance throughout 2024-25.



Dr Jessie Harman AM (PhD)
Board Chair



Maria Palmer
Deputy Board Chair,
Chair of Quality
of Care Committee



Rebecca Fraser
Chair of Corporate
Governance Committee



Robert Hook AM
Member of Finance
& Audit Committee



A/Prof David Pierce
Member of Finance & Audit
Committee



Kerry Bradley
Member of Quality
of Care Committee



Shelley Wood
Member of Finance
& Audit Committee



Mikel Dean
Member of Finance
& Audit Committee



Andrew Howard
Member of Quality of Care
Committee



David Malone
Member of Corporate
Governance Committee



Mathew Muldoon
(resigned 25/06/25)
Chair of Finance & Audit
Committee

Executive Team



Sean Duffy
Chief Executive Officer



Danielle Walker
Chief Operating Officer



Joanne Gell
Executive Manager
Community & Public Health



Ellery Hickson
Executive Manager
People & Culture



Claire Shaw
Executive Manager
Aged Care Project &
Organisational Governance
& Quality

Financial Summary

Ballarat Community Health Ltd. ACN: 136 362 993 ABN: 98 227 492 950

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income. For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
Revenue and income			
Grant revenue	2.1	24,853,793	23,083,119
Services revenue	2.2	5,727,833	6,168,701
Investment income	2.3	571,690	440,468
Other	2.4	281,312	60,204
Total revenue and income		31,434,628	29,752,492
Expenses			
Employee expenses		25,409,838	24,118,254
Operating expenditure	3.1	5,570,370	5,707,263
Depreciation and amortisation	4.6	1,192,393	1,253,246
Impairment	4.4	194,389	-
Finance costs		27,612	34,351
Total expenses		32,394,602	31,113,114
Deficit for the year		(959,974)	(1,360,622)
Other comprehensive income			
<i>Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss</i>			
Gain on revaluation of properties		623,617	664,296
Gain on the revaluation of equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income		412,726	529,760
Other comprehensive income for the year		1,036,343	1,194,056
Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year		76,369	(166,566)

Statement of financial position.
As at 30 June 2025

	Note	2025	2024
		\$	\$
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6.1	1,902,372	1,138,016
Receivables	5.1	2,273,180	1,322,534
Investments and other financial assets	4.1	7,958,783	8,213,102
Other assets	5.2	321,787	328,989
Total Current Assets		12,456,122	11,002,641
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	4.2	26,333,742	25,613,602
Intangible Assets	4.3	140,397	283,549
Right-of-use assets	4.5	93,638	621,504
Total Non-Current Assets		26,567,777	26,518,655
TOTAL ASSETS		39,023,899	37,521,296
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Payables	5.3	2,308,836	2,083,554
Contract liabilities	5.4	2,655,479	1,126,981
Lease liabilities	6.2	79,708	180,467
Provisions	3.2	2,964,670	2,759,796
Total Current Liabilities		8,008,693	6,150,798
Non-Current Liabilities			
Lease Liabilities	6.2	20,940	476,356
Provisions	3.2	508,090	484,335
Total Non-Current Liabilities		529,030	960,691
TOTAL LIABILITIES		8,537,723	7,111,489
NET ASSETS		30,486,176	30,409,807
EQUITY			
Financial asset revaluation reserve		1,378,115	1,339,575
Property asset revaluation reserve		7,880,389	7,256,772
Retained surpluses		21,227,672	21,813,460
TOTAL EQUITY		30,486,176	30,409,807

Partners and Accreditations

BCH expresses gratitude to its partner agencies for their support and collaboration, highlighting the importance of diversity and teamwork in delivering effective community health services.

BCH is a proud member of the Alliance of Rural and Regional Health (ARRCH) and Community Health First Alliances. We also extend sincere appreciation to all our funders and partners in service delivery across the regions BCH works.

BCH continued to maintain our strong focus on providing quality care across all our services, validated by our successful re-accreditation.

Our commitment to community wellbeing across multiple programs and services were identified as key strengths by the assessors and participants in our Practice Accreditation and Insights Surveys.



Abi from Home Care Package Management

At Ballarat Community Health, we acknowledge the urgent and ongoing need for a coordinated, community-driven approach to preventing and responding to gender-based violence. We strongly support the establishment of Respect Ballarat, recognising its vital role in fostering prevention, early intervention and lasting cultural change.

Our commitment is to help reduce the unacceptably high and rising rates of violence against women in our region.

We wish to honour the memories of Samantha Murphy, Rebecca Young and Hannah McGuire, whose tragic deaths have deeply affected our community and strengthened our collective resolve to create a safer and more respectful Ballarat.

We're BCH! Creating healthy communities through the provision of accessible, affordable and quality health and wellbeing services.

We welcome feedback and enquiries to info@bchc.org.au or visit bchc.org.au



Scan to visit
BCH 2024-2025
Annual Report online

Ballarat Community Health Ltd.
ABN 98 227 492 950
ACN 136 362 993

