

BENDIGO HEALTH YEAR IN REVIEW

2023-2024



Bendigo Health is an organisation deeply connected to its community.

As the largest employer in the region, our staff often care for people they know—friends, family, and neighbours.

This connection fuels our commitment to providing the best possible care for our community. We also feel the support of our community through a strong spirit of philanthropy and volunteerism.

I am pleased to present the Bendigo Health Year in Review, which highlights some of our key achievements over the past 12 months.

Eileen Hannagan
Chief Executive Officer





OUR CARE AT A GLANCE



1,735
Babies
Delivered

136,749
Service events provided
by our specialist clinics

57,463
People admitted
to our hospital



60,238
People came to
our Emergency
Department



17,608
Operations
performed

1,600
Admissions of children
aged 16 and under to
our Children's Ward

17,454
Ambulance arrivals
handled by our
Emergency Department



5,329
Staff
employed



Bendigo Health Fundraising & Foundation

Bendigo Health Fundraising & Foundation funds specialised medical equipment and services so more people in our region are treated closer to home and their loved ones. Supporting your hospital to provide Excellent Care, Every Person, Every Time.

During 2023-24 financial year the Fundraising & Foundation team raised a combined total of \$2,208,229 in philanthropic revenue received into both Bendigo Health and the Bendigo Health Foundation Charitable Trust.



Achievements

This year, \$440,512 worth of specialised equipment was purchased for Bendigo Health that was not otherwise available through government funding.

Children in our region will benefit from our commitment to support paediatric rehabilitation through the installation of a new indoor play space and mini gym within the new Clinical Services Campus and the future development of a \$700,000 outdoor paediatric children rehabilitation play space, which has been fully funded thanks to our annual Christmas Appeal and a commitment from the Good Friday Appeal.

Patients within the Dual Diagnosis (DDU) residential unit, which is designed to treat individuals with mental health and drug and/or alcohol dependency, have updated décor and furniture thanks to funds received In Memory of Sue DeAraugo.

Our community's support continues to make a huge impact, including community-led events such as the Bendigo Ford Fun Run and recent McKean McGregor

Gala Ball - which raised an incredible \$254,358.21 for our Cancer Wellness Program.

The Fundraising & Foundation team was awarded a State High Commendation from the Fundraising Institute Australia (FIA) in the category of Fundraising Team of the Year.

Montana (pictured on previous page) is one of the many children who will benefit from the paediatric rehabilitation play space. Montana was just six weeks old when she began physiotherapy and occupational therapy sessions with the Victorian Paediatric Rehabilitation Services at Bendigo Health. Eighteen months later little Montana is a confident and fun-loving toddler thanks to the treatment she has received.

Ben Smith (below left) participates in an exercise program funded through Move for Mental Health. Ben, who attends three weekly sessions, said the exercise is a good way to get out of the house. "I feel like I am getting fitter. It's patients from Dual Diagnosis Unit (DDU) and Community Care Unit (CCU) all coming together which is really good," he said. James Long, a Peer Support Worker at Bendigo Health, expressed gratitude for the ongoing support, emphasising the positive outcomes observed.

"It has been fantastic to be able to use the patient transport bus with funds raised last year and to see people's wellbeing improve, thanks to these programs," he said.

Harry Pearce and Sandra Leuci (below middle and right) received the Fundraising & Foundation Non-clinical Education Scholarships in 2023/24. Harry, an Operating Theatre Technician, used the scholarship to undertake a Certificate IV Management and Leadership, while Sandra will use the qualifications completed in her Certificate IV Health Administration to formalise her 10-years plus experience in health administration.



Looking forward

Next year, we plan to break ground on the new Kids Rehab Play Space at the Clinical Services Campus. We will support Palliative Care patients at Bendigo Health by raising funds required for an internal refresh of Bendigo Health's Specialist Palliative Care Evaluation Unit.

Our fundraising team will progress the redevelopment of the Superintendent's Residence in collaboration with our facilities teams thanks to funds received from the Hazeldene family and Bendigo Health Charitable Trustees.

We thank the generosity of our community, our funding partners, corporate supporters, community groups and the Bendigo Health Foundation Trustees who have assisted us to fund specialised equipment, provide low-cost accommodation, offer staff scholarships and support new and existing programs for our regional health service.



Research and Innovation

There were 157 active research studies undertaken across Bendigo Health in 2023-24, including 63 clinical trials, 46 health research/ social science, 31 clinical research, 6 data linkage and 11 registry trials. The majority of research was undertaken by the Cancer Centre (40%) and there was an increase in other specialty areas across the organisation with 24 other departments undertaking research over the past 12 months.

Publications

Bendigo Health staff were authors/co-authors on 101 publications in academic journals.

Research Week & Symposium 2023



Research Week 2023 kicked off Monday 23-27 October with a hybrid program of interactive sessions each day designed to support staff in undertaking research. The highlight of the week was the Research Symposium, held Wednesday 27th October. CEO, Eileen Hannagan, opened the Symposium and her address set the tone for the day which was all around promoting a vibrant culture of research and innovation to achieve the best possible health outcomes for our community.

We were excited that Olivia Payne, Executive Manager of the Research Corporate Services Unit at VACCHO, was able to Zoom in to introduce us to marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri: The Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medical and Wellbeing Research Accord.

Narelle McPhee, Cancer Research Manager, facilitated a discussion with clinical trial participants John, Shannon and Maureen. Their stories reminded attendees of how research can benefit the health and wellbeing of rural and regional communities.

As well as the wonderful speakers, we also had an amazing display of posters showcasing research at Bendigo Health at the Symposium and on display in the hospital atrium. The winning poster at the Symposium also took out the people's choice award in the public vote and was "Embedding survivorship into standard care for early breast cancer patients" Authors: Zeina Hayes, Lisa Carson, Rosemary Gillies, Tegan Nash, Kate Cridland.

Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) Trial of the Year Award winner

The Australian clinical trials sector was celebrated at the 2024 Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) Trial of the Year Awards ceremony, held on International Clinical Trials Day, Monday 20 May 2024. The ACTA Trial of the Year Award was awarded to the ASAP (Australian Surgical Antibiotic Prophylaxis) Trial: Trial of Vancomycin and Cefazolin as Surgical Prophylaxis in Arthroplasty. The research was led by Alfred Health and Monash University, and funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council. Mr Glenn Boyce, Orthopaedic Consultant, was the study's Principal Investigator at Bendigo Health. At Bendigo Health, almost 900 people were screened and 335 participants were enrolled in the ASAP trial. More info: www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2301401.





Staphylococcus aureus Network Adaptive Platform Trial (SNAP trial)

Bendigo Health infectious diseases physician Andrew Mahony and his team are helping improve methods of treating *Staphylococcus aureus* bloodstream infections, commonly known as golden staph, through participation in a worldwide trial. So far 36 Bendigo Health patients have been enrolled in the trial which will ultimately influence worldwide guidelines on how best to treat golden staph infections.

Bringing clinical trials closer to home - Teletrials

Bendigo Health Cancer Centre's first trial operating under a teletrial model was called TARGET-TP. The aim of the study was to assess the efficacy and safety of enoxaparin pharmacologic thromboprophylaxis among patients with lung or gastrointestinal cancers, receiving anticancer therapy, at high risk of thromboembolism. The study used telehealth technology, which allowed the study coordinator to meet with the participant in Bendigo, and then together attend an appointment with the Principal Investigator located in Melbourne via telehealth. TARGET-TP received RGO approval in December 2018, and recruited 75 participants. The teletrial model gave participants access to a trial that they may otherwise not have and facilitated appointments closer to home. Since TARGET-TP, Bendigo Health's Cancer Centre has opened five more teletrials.

Looking ahead

Building capacity and capability in clinical trials and teletrials

A focus for Bendigo Health research over the next 12 months is to expand teletrials and to build clinical trial capability across Bendigo Health and the region. Attracting commercial trials and increasing consumer engagement, particularly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, is a priority. Increasing our clinical trial maturity will help us to meet the requirements of the National Clinical Trial Governance Framework (NCTGF).

Climate change health impacts

Climate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century. In November 2024, Bendigo Health will convene our third Datathon – a Health Climate Data Dive – which will focus on climate change and its impact on health. Over a two-day event, collaborative teams will access large, linked health datasets to gather evidence and explore priority research questions.

We will also undertake collaborative research with La Trobe University to better understand 'Climate Change and Health in the Loddon Mallee' to understand vulnerability and resilience for identified groups across our region. The study will involve young adults with neurodiversity, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and the elderly.



Quality

At Bendigo Health, we always look for ways to do better. Over the past year, our staff worked on more than 200 projects to improve how we care for patients.

Some of these projects were celebrated at our Excellent Care Awards, where we recognized staff improvement initiatives.

New Team and Projects

This year, we created the Innovation and Improvement (I&I) team, led by Shona Critch, Innovation and Improvement Advisor. This team focus on important goals for Bendigo Health. Working with the Department of Health, the I&I teams first project TEC2, which aims to make it easier for people to get the care they need.

Next year, this team will continue to support our staff to build skills and use methods proven to improve healthcare.

Timely Excellent Care Collaborative

We worked with other health services and the Department of Health in a project called the **Timely Excellent Care Collaborative (TECC)**. This project made it quicker for patients to leave the Emergency Department (ED) and hospital once they have received care. TECC project achievements included:

- Discharge Lounge: We improved the function and opening hours of the discharge lounge – a place where patients can wait safely at the end of their inpatient care. Adding a second nurse means this lounge is now open every day of the week. This has saved around 264 bed days.
- Inpatient Care Coordinator: This new role helps patients and their families when moving from hospital care to a residential aged care and has reduced the length of time people are waiting in hospital to transition to aged care, helping free up hospital beds.
- Short Stay Observational Unit (SSOU): This unit worked on letting patients go home earlier and used its space better to care for more patient



Excellent Care Award projects

1st Place- Day of Surgery Mobilisation: Led by physiotherapist Jacob Moresi, this project helped patients get moving right after hip or knee surgery. This helped patients go home 1 to 1.5 days sooner.



2nd Place- Aged Care Services Wound Management: Led by Director of Aged Care Services, Dodie Bischoff and Quality Consultant Aimee Brabazon this project improved wound care for our aged care residents. They focused on finding wounds early, reducing differences in how wounds are checked, creating a standard way to manage how wounds are checked and improving education for staff on wound care.

3rd Place- Outpatient Prosthesis Fitment and Rehabilitation: Led by Evan Kovesy and Jon Turton, this project provided prosthesis fitting and rehab in an outpatient setting, avoiding long hospital stays and reducing costs.

Medical Student Projects

Shona Critch, Innovation and Improvement Advisor, worked with our partners Monash University to give final-year medical students the chance to work on quality improvement projects. These included studying different medical areas like obstetrics, gynaecology, endocrinology and anaesthetics.

Heart Helper Program

Nurses Carmel Bourne and Janet Bradley led the Heart Helper program to help people with heart failure avoid frequent hospital visits. The program includes home visits after leaving the hospital to help patients understand how best to care for themselves at home. It has been well-received and is now a regular part of our care program.

Looking ahead

Next year, we will:

- Expand the Innovation and Improvement team's projects.
- Support more staff to learn and use methods to improve healthcare.
- Continue our focus of working on projects that help our health service to do better and give the best care to our patients and community.





Volunteer Services

Year in review

After significant loss of volunteers during a post-pandemic, our Volunteer Services team have implemented innovative ways to promote the benefits of volunteering. A highlight has been our school holiday volunteer program engaging high school students or three days of their holidays to support our health service. This program, designed by BH was named as a Finalist in the Volunteering Victoria Innovation Award for 2023. We launched a cinema advertisement promoting the health benefits of volunteering, which run throughout Christmas holiday period. Our team in collaboration with the Loddon Mallee Health Network has commenced piloting a Volunteer Passport to reduce the administrative burden on volunteers who want volunteer at various health services throughout the region.

Generations of Care: Roulston/Gargiulo/Fuller family

The Roulston/Gargiulo/Fuller family have caring in their blood.

Three generations have either taken up a position or plan on doing so at Bendigo Health.

It all began when Kate Fuller saw her father go through his own health battle, and she knew nursing was the career path for her.

The caring apples clearly don't fall far from the tree as Kate's mum Lyn Roulston volunteers at Bendigo Health.

"I have been the carer for my mum for a long time and when she was at a point where she was unable to live at home and went into care, I needed something to do," Lyn said.

"I liked helping people and being at the hospital so volunteering felt like the right step."



Peter provides hope

If you happen to see Peter Brown sporting a red Volunteer polo-shirt at Bendigo Health, he will likely be wearing shorts to display his prosthetic leg in the hope that you will say hello and want to ask him questions.

Peter volunteers four hours or one morning a week on the rehabilitation ward.

During his multiple stays in hospital wards following over twenty operations and the eventual amputation of his leg, two defining moments planted the seeds in his mind that led him to volunteer his time to help people.

“I was in hospital and there was a knock on the door and a little elderly lady walked in with a big cross around her neck and turns out she was pastoral carer. I’m not religious, but we ended up talking for several hours. Before she left, she said to me; ‘you should do this,’” he said.

But it wasn’t until Peter stayed on the rehab ward at Bendigo Health for a week, where he met his roommate who had been in hospital for many months and had only had one visitor, that he decided to become a volunteer.



Looking forward

In the coming financial year our aim will be to increase awareness of and participation in volunteering. Through this, we hope to increase the number of Bendigo Health services our volunteers support.

To ensure that we are providing the right level of care to our volunteers we will undertake a volunteer engagement survey to understand where improvements can be made.

Volunteer with us

Our volunteers are vital members of the Bendigo Health family and provide invaluable support to staff and those who pass through our health service. Bendigo Health currently works in partnership with almost 150 volunteers who generously give their time, skills, energy and care to help improve the health care experience of our patients, staff, residents and visitors.

Volunteers can be found in many areas across our health service including administration, wards and clinics. They also help out in areas such as palliative care, residential care and some community programs.

To volunteer at Bendigo Health, visit: bendigohealth.org.au/volunteering or call 03 5454 7639



Aboriginal Services

The Aboriginal Services team has continued to focus on Culturally Safe care over the past 12 months, with more than 3,600 staff completing the online e-Learning Cultural Safety modules and more than 120 completing face to face training. Business Managers have been offered the opportunity to attend one of two On Country Cultural Awareness days with Djaara in May, which were well attended. Bendigo Health has employed a Culturally Safe Birthing Co-ordinator to assist Aboriginal mums and their babies throughout the antenatal and birthing journey. Our Culturally Safe Birthing Group is now led and attended by Aboriginal staff which have created culturally safe gift bags to give to mums and families when birthing at Bendigo Health. These gift bags include cultural gifts such as mini shields, mini coolamons and clap sticks as well as culturally appropriate antenatal information.

Culturally Safe Birthing Co-ordinator

Tammy Nancarrow has taken on the new role of Culturally Safe Birthing Coordinator at Bendigo Health. The position was developed to further support Aboriginal patients through their pregnancy and birthing journey, and provides an exciting opportunity for improvements in our care for both Aboriginal mothers and their babies.

Tammy has entered this new space with an existing passion for advocacy within the healthcare sector. Her career started as an Aboriginal Health Worker at Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC) before pursuing her nursing degree.



Tammy is motivated to reduce barriers to accessing healthcare faced by Aboriginal people. She works closely with the Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers (AHLOs) ensuring community are supported throughout their healthcare journey.

The scope of Tammy's role is quite fluid based on the needs of the community. Her role has enough flexibility to be able to meet the nuanced requirements of each Aboriginal patient. The new position aligns with the priorities in Korin Korin Balit Djak and a Safer Care Victoria project called Safer Baby Collaborative as well as with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.





Celebrating Staff Achievement

During NAIDOC Week one of our Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers (AHLO), Jade Heavyside, was recognised with the Aboriginal Aspiring Leader Award at the Bendigo NAIDOC Awards dinner. The award recognised Jade's dedication, passion and commitment to supporting Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, not just in her work at the hospital but also out in community. It's an integral part of her caring nature to help those around her.

NAIDOC Week is a significant event that honours and celebrates the oldest living culture in the world and recognises the contribution that Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people have made and continue to make in this country, and in this context Jade's award was very deserving.



Baby Welcome to Country

Bendigo Health supported Djaara in hosting the Welcome Baby to Country this year during NAIDOC Week. The special Cultural ceremony and celebration of birth helped us come together as a community to celebrate First Nations Culture for everyone and acknowledge the importance of a child's sense of identity and belonging through connection to the traditional lands on which they're born. This was the fourth year Bendigo Health has supported Djaara with the Welcome Baby to Country and during that time more than 200 babies have been welcomed to country, including 54 this year.

