

# KOOWEE CONNECT Newsletter

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May/ June 2025



**Kooweerup**  
REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICE



## Together Towards Tomorrow

On 1 July 2025, KRHS, Bass Coast Health, Gippsland Southern Health Service, Peninsula Health, and The Alfred officially joined forces as the Bayside Health Network (working title).

Led by a dedicated Transition Steering Committee, this collaboration is focused on improving access to care closer to home. The full merger is planned for 1 January 2026, marking a new chapter in healthcare. Please see page 11 for the full story.

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# Messages from Management



## Louise Sparkes

**Acting Chief Executive Officer**

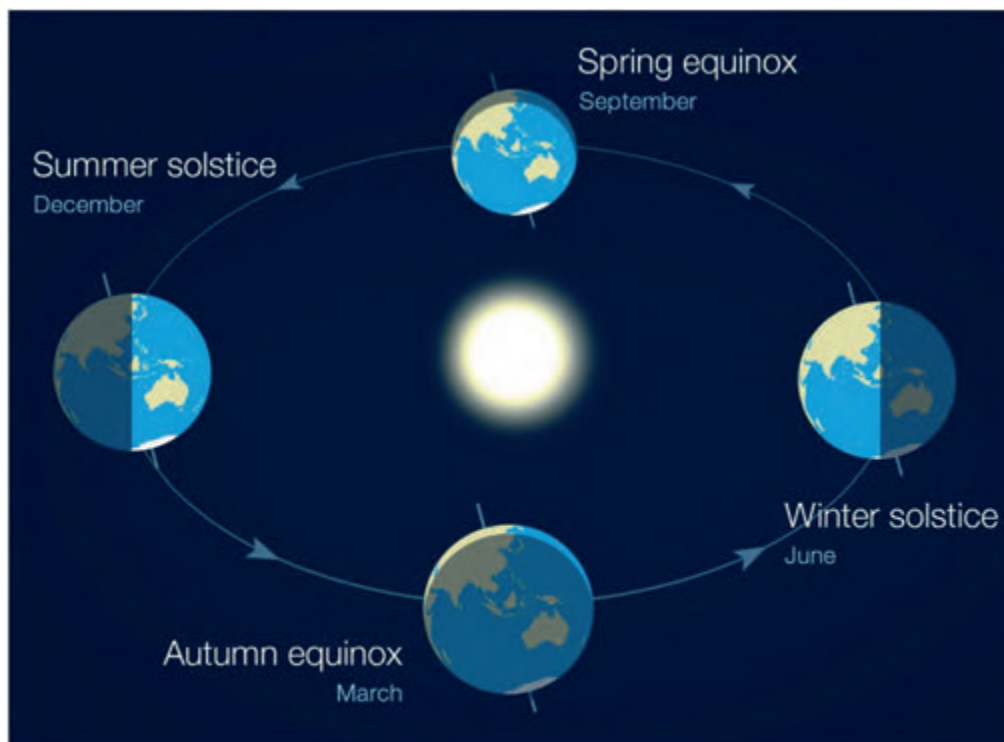
Hello everyone,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff and volunteers for your warm welcome whilst I support KRHS during Aileen's well-deserved leave.

KRHS is a lovely health service and I am enjoying my time here. There is a strong and very visible connection to the community and you can see how all staff are proud of the work they do each day.

There have been lots of opportunities for some staff to attend meetings and education sessions with our Bayside Health partners, and you can see some wonderful connections forming. The next few months will be exciting as we move closer to the merger date and start to form stronger connections with other Bayside Health services.

Please keep warm and well now that we are well into winter. The good news is that we are past the winter solstice, and we will start to see more sunlight from this week as we move through winter into spring!



*The Earth's slight tilt is what gives us our seasons (Bureau of Meteorology)*

Keep up the great work!



## Brenda Birch

### Director of Nursing



It is with tremendous pleasure that I celebrate our teams' outstanding achievements: "Excellent" recognition with five stars for Killara and four stars for Western Port Unit.

This rating reflects performance across compliance, quality measures, resident experience, and staffing.

Achieving this requires an exceptional team with the collective commitment to place residents, families, and loved ones at the heart of everything we do.



I am incredibly proud of the collaborative efforts of our Leisure and Lifestyle, Nursing, Health Care Workers, Allied Health, Maintenance, and Support Services teams.

It's been just over six months since I joined Kooweerup Regional Health—and what an amazing team and community this is! Our Nursing focus has been 'back to basics': recruiting the right people, retaining them, and refocusing on streamlining access, strengthening safety, and enhancing quality, particularly in partnership with our Bayside Health Network colleagues.

Nursing Services across Kooweerup Regional Health continue to grow with further investment in nurses' career journeys. I'm excited to extend a warm welcome to new team members, students, graduate nurses, and senior staff across a variety of roles. We consistently receive an overwhelming number of applications, reflecting our positive reputation and our success in retaining the right people.

Most importantly, our work centers on the safety of both staff and residents. We have been actively engaged locally, regionally, and in state-wide projects. Locally, we understand that high-quality beds and pressure mattresses are crucial for preventing staff injuries and maintaining skin integrity to avoid pressure injuries. Following an audit and with strong support from the Board, we are progressing with replacing aging beds and expanding our range of king beds, guided by consumer preference. Thanks to the leadership of the Allied Health Manager and a clinical working group, we also look forward to increasing the availability of floor lines to minimize falls.

Regionally, our collaboration with Health Service Partners continues to strengthen. We are actively building these relationships and prioritizing work to ensure solutions that improve bed access and address high-priority activities.





# Messages from Managemnet

In June, Bayside Health Nurse Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to working closely together to better understand the current Nursing and Midwifery landscape. This collaboration will focus on strengthening Workforce, Learning, and Education, as well as Quality and Safety. I look forward to sharing further updates as this important work progresses.



**Picture 01:** Left to right **Brenda Birch** (Director of Nursing – Koo Wee Rup Regional Health), **Jenny Dempster** (Director Clinical Operations / Nursing – Gippsland Southern Health) **Ged Williams** (AO, Chief Nursing Officer – Alfred Health), **Christine Henderson** (Chief Operating Officer / Chief Nurse- Bass Coast Health) and **Fiona Reed** (Executive Director Nursing and Midwifery – Peninsula Health)



**Picture 02:** **Geordee Ward**, our Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO), delivered the Acknowledgement of Country.

## Delirium Project

At the state level, Kooweerup Regional Health Service (KRHS) has joined a collaboration with Safer Care Victoria aimed at reducing and standardising care related to delirium. Delirium is a serious medical condition characterized by sudden changes in thinking, attention, and memory, often causing confusion, agitation, or drowsiness.

Typically lasting from a few days to weeks, delirium can lead to severe complications such as falls, pressure injuries, extended hospital stays, and in some cases, death.



**Picture 03:** Anna Jacob (Nurse Unit Manager), Annie Barwise (Manager – Quality), Kuldeep Kaur (Registered Nurse), and Lucinda Reid (Project Officer & Enrolled Nurse) joined SCV and other teams at Melbourne Zoo for a hands-on learning session.

## Aged Care Transition Guidance and Minister's Message

Nationally, the implementation of the Aged Care and Home Care providers with additional time to transition smoothly. For more information, please visit the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing website.

Please refer to the next page to read the open letter from the Minister for Aged Care and Seniors.



## **The Hon Sam Rae MP** MinisterforAgedCareandSeniors

### **AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE MINISTER FOR AGED CARE AND SENIORS**

I am honoured to be your new federal Minister for Aged Care and Seniors.

I have spent my first three weeks as your Minister listening to older people, your families and carers, aged care providers, workers and others in the sector who have generously shared their views and feedback with me. I am privileged to be taking on an immensely important job.

The Australian Government is working to deliver once-in-a-generation reforms to build a high-quality, respectful and sustainable aged care system.

In order to deliver on the intent of these reforms and following careful consideration, the government has decided to briefly defer the start of the new Aged Care Act from 1 July 2025 to 1 November 2025.

The new Act is changing aged care laws to put the rights of older people first. It includes a Statement of Rights and a Statement of Principles to guide how providers and workers must behave and make decisions.

This extra time will allow participants to better understand the changes, so you can prepare and make informed decisions. Importantly, you will continue to receive the safe, quality care you deserve.

I am committed to building on the work we have done so far to improve aged care in Australia. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's number one recommendation was to deliver a new Act that puts you at the centre of your aged care, and this is what we are doing.

We are further committed to delivering the new Act and its benefits to you as soon as possible. However, a pause is needed to allow for a smoother implementation of the new Act and with the Support at Home program.

You deserve these improvements; it is as important to me to get them right as it is to you. Thank you for your patience and continuing to work with us on these changes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Rae'.

Sam Rae

4 June 2025



# Welcome Onboard! – Meet Our New Staff



## Beaula Manuel (ANUM)

I bring over 16 years of nursing experience in Australia. I began my career in 2009 and have worked extensively in acute care, including roles as a Clinical Nurse in medical and surgical wards, as well as an ANUM in an acute medical unit.

I also have leadership experience in aged care, having previously served as a Care Manager—a role that deepened my passion for providing compassionate, high-quality care.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my family, tending to my garden, and relaxing with some good music.

## Tegan Stamatopoulos (Health Care Worker)



My journey in aged care began when I was just 18, working as a Personal Care Assistant. That early experience sparked a deep passion for supporting others, which eventually led me to a role as a mental health support worker. Outside of work, I enjoy the simple pleasures—reading, cooking, and spending quality time with my daughter. These moments keep me grounded and bring balance to my life.

## Shelley Brewer (Enrolled Nurse)



My career actually began in accounting, but 16 years ago I made the shift into the Aged Care sector—and I've never looked back. I've continued to upskill over the years, and I truly see nursing as a privilege.

The Westernport unit holds a special place in my heart, as both my mother and grandmother spent their final days there. Being able to give back in that same space means a great deal to me.

Outside of work, I have a lifelong passion for horses—my hobby, my joy, and I thank my husband every day for putting up with my expensive hobby.

I still compete in eventing, though not at the level I once did, but I cherish every moment of my “horse time.”



## Professional Growth in Action: Guiding Safe Driving Choices

On 6 June 2025, I had the opportunity to attend a two-hour online professional development session titled “Driving Clinical Decision Pathway.”

The session focused on equipping generalist occupational therapists—like myself—with a structured approach to supporting consumers who may be facing

challenges with driving due to health conditions. The goal is to ensure that decisions around driving are well-informed, person-centred, and not made prematurely.

For example, if a consumer in the Transition Care Program (TCP) has experienced a stroke (CVA) and wishes to return to driving, we mustn’t automatically assume driving cessation is the only option. Instead, we can guide them through a thorough assessment process and refer them to appropriate health professionals such as an optician, orthoptist, or even a specialist driver-trained OT, depending on their individual needs.

Another scenario discussed involved consumers in the community whose families have expressed concerns about their ability to drive. Rather than immediately advising them to stop driving, we can play a valuable role in supporting both the consumer and their family by conducting assessments and making the appropriate referrals.

This session served as an important reminder that the decision to stop driving should be approached with care. Premature driving cessation can have significant negative impacts on a person’s health, independence, and overall well-being. As occupational therapists, we are in a unique position to ensure these decisions are balanced, safe, and respectful of the individual’s autonomy.

**- Ronan Chiong (Occupational Therapist)**



## Strengthening Partnerships to End Violence: Insights from the PRET Think Tank

In June, I attended the PRET Partners Think Tank organised by WHISE at the Springvale Community Hub. This event marked a significant milestone, celebrating the final year of the Promoting Respect and Equity Together (PRET) Strategy, which has guided efforts over the past four years to prevent violence against women in Southern Metro Melbourne.

The Think Tank provided a valuable opportunity for partners to come together, share insights, and discuss key priorities.





It fostered collaboration to leverage the diverse strengths and expertise within the partnership, with a focus on enhancing our collective impact through improved coordination, shared decision-making, and innovative practices.

A highlight of the event was the keynote speech by Emily Maguire, a distinguished leader in family violence prevention. Emily's extensive experience includes leadership roles as CEO of Respect Victoria and the Domestic Violence Resource Centre (now Safe and equal)

, as well as contributions to the National Framework at Our Watch. Her insights helped focus the discussion on the current strengths and opportunities within the primary prevention of the gender-based violence sector.

As we look forward to the next phase of the strategy (2025-2029), this Think Tank laid a strong foundation for continued collaboration and innovation in ending violence against women in our community.

**- Kim McCartney (Social Worker)**



## Inspiration in Action:

### Fresh Ideas for Dementia Care from National Conference

In May, we had the opportunity to attend the Health and Aged Care Education – Dementia and Recreation Conference, representing KRHS as part of the Leisure and Lifestyle team.

The two-day event brought together a diverse range of speakers, including representatives from Dementia Australia and various aged care facilities across the country. Presenters shared their innovative strategies and insights into supporting residents living with dementia, offering practical tools and fresh approaches to enhance care and quality of life.

In addition to the speaker sessions, the conference featured a wide array of exhibitors showcasing the latest resources and products in dementia and recreational care. Many of these sparked new ideas and inspiration that we're excited to explore and potentially implement within our own Leisure and Lifestyle programs at KRHS.



This conference has re-energised our team and reinforced the importance of creativity, compassion, and collaboration in providing meaningful experiences for our residents.

**- Paula Francis (Leisure & Lifestyle Co Ordinator) and Leah Ruprecht (L & L Team Member)**



# Staff Updates – The road to retirement

In May 2025, we said farewell to Damian Burns, Manager of Education and Training at KRHS, as he retired after an extraordinary 40-year career in the nursing profession.

Damian's journey has been one of deep commitment, pride, and purpose. A respected senior nurse leader, mentor, emergency management expert, and educator, Damian has played an instrumental role in shaping the learning environment at KRHS.

Under his guidance, countless new nurses have found their confidence, knowledge, and professional footing.

Always leading with compassion, Damian was known for walking tirelessly in the shoes of both patients and beginner nurses. Shift after shift, he gave his all, ensuring residents, patients, and staff felt supported and cared for.

His legacy is more than years of service—it's the generation of nurses he coached to provide care with empathy, excellence, and heart. Damian's contribution to KRHS will be remembered not just for the standards he upheld but for the humanity he brought to every interaction.

Thank you, Damian, for walking the path with us and lighting the way for so many.



Happy  
Retirement  
Damian!



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09/28

# Staff Updates – The road to retirement

In May 2025, we farewelled our dedicated Podiatrist, Tristan Bate, and thanked him sincerely for his outstanding service to KRHS. Tristan's professionalism, care, and commitment to his patients have made a lasting impact, and he will be greatly missed by both colleagues and clients. We wish him all the very best in his future endeavours.



## Farewell, with Thanks and Warm Wishes!

In May, we gathered to farewell three much-loved team members of our Patient Services Department – Chris O'Hehir, Nicky Sieviewright, and Judy Dwyer.

After more than a decade of dedicated service at KRHS, Chris, Nicky, and Judy leave behind a legacy of care, commitment, and countless memories.

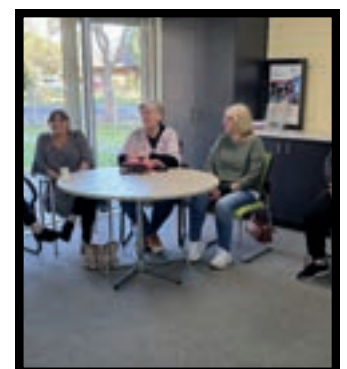
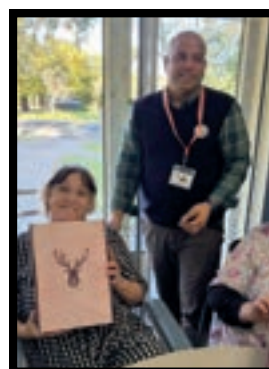
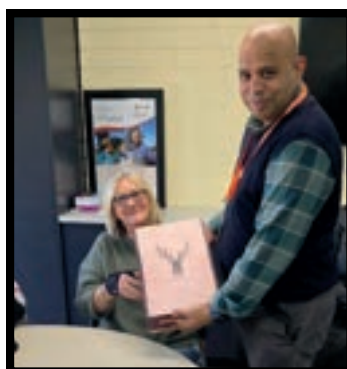
Their contributions have been felt by patients, families, and colleagues alike, and their presence will be greatly missed.

We wish them all the best in their next chapters and thank them sincerely for everything they've given to KRHS.

Enjoy some photos from their farewell celebration below.



Happy Retirement!





# Major Updates

## A New Era Begins

As of 1 July 2025, Kooweerup Regional Health Service, Bass Coast Health, Gippsland Southern Health Service, Peninsula Health, and The Alfred have officially begun working together as the Bayside Health Network (working title). This marks the first step toward a full voluntary merger, which is planned to take place on 1 January 2026.

The creation of this network is a significant milestone in our shared vision to deliver more connected, comprehensive healthcare to over 1.2 million people across Victoria's south-east.

By bringing together the expertise, resources, and passion of five leading health services, we are working to ensure better access to care — closer to home — for all the communities we serve.

Leading this transition is the Bayside Health Transition Steering Committee, made up of Board Chairs, a Board Director from each service, and the Chief Executives of all five merging health services. This team is responsible for shaping the strategy, managing risk, and keeping communications transparent and consistent as we move forward together.

The journey has only just begun, and we're excited to keep you informed and involved as Bayside Health Network grows into a truly collaborative and community-focused health service.



This photo was taken at the June Steering Committee meeting held at KRHS in June.

### What does this mean for our community?

- Better access to care, closer to home.
- Stronger collaboration between health services.
- More specialist services and expertise.
- Better outcomes for patients and families.

L-R: **Karen Corry** (Board Director – Peninsula Health), **Aileen Thoms** (Interim CEO – Kooweerup Regional Health Service), **Rachael McGann** (Board Director – Kooweerup Regional Health Service), **Ryan Heath** (Executive Director – Bayside Health Transition), **Adam Horsburgh** (CEO – Alfred Health), **Kushal Shah** (Board Chair – Kooweerup Regional Health Service), **Gwendoline Scheffer** (Board Director – Gippsland Southern Health Service), **Julia Oxley** (Board Director – Bass Coast Health), **Martin Foley** (Board Director – Alfred Health), **Louise Sparkes** (CEO – Gippsland Southern Health Service), **Helen Cooper** (CEO – Peninsula Health), **Athina Georgiou** (Board Chair – Gippsland Southern), **Simone Alexander** (Interim CEO – Bass Coast Health) and **Liz Camilleri** (Board Director – Bass Coast Health)



# Major Updates

## Staff and Community Voices Guiding Our Transition

In May 2025, KRHS successfully hosted a Staff Forum to open up conversation around the upcoming transition to the Bayside Health Network (working title).

The session provided an opportunity for staff to ask questions, share thoughts, and hear directly from leadership about what this change could mean for the future of our service and the care we provide.



We also hosted a consultation session with our Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) to ensure community voices are heard and considered in shaping this next chapter. These conversations are essential — they help ensure our direction remains grounded in the needs, values, and experiences of the people we serve. This is your health service, and your voice will continue to guide the path forward.



# Major Updates

## GP Information Session: Strengthening Local Partnerships

In June 2025, Kooweerup Regional Health Service (KRHS) brought together local General Practices for a dynamic and engaging General Practitioner Information Session.

The event fostered a constructive two-way dialogue, featuring lively discussions, practical insights, and shared ideas aimed at supporting better-integrated care within our community.

Participating GPs actively engaged throughout the session, raising thoughtful questions and providing valuable feedback on existing care pathways. They also contributed to discussions about future directions in light of the upcoming health service merger.

This interactive forum underscored the critical role of collaboration in delivering seamless, person-centred care. We extend our sincere thanks to all the GP clinics for their time, input, and ongoing support.

We look forward to continuing to strengthen these vital partnerships as we work together to provide more connected, high-quality care across Kooweerup and the wider region.

## Mapping the Future: Early Insights for Stronger Services



*L-R: **Joe Sheppard** (Manager - HR), **Osman Ali** (Health Promotion Practitioner), **Aileen Thoms** (Interim CEO), **Alastair Haigh** (Director, Planning and Partnerships at Alfred Health), **Brenda Birch** (Director of Nursing), and **Ragul Karun** (Chief Financial Officer).*

An initial situational gap analysis was presented to the Executive Team to prompt discussion around local service needs and opportunities for improvement.

The session featured valuable input from **Alastair Haigh, Director of Planning and Partnerships – Strategy & Planning Leadership at Alfred Health**, part of our new health service network. His insights support the identification of quick wins and alignment with broader network priorities.

These early reflections will inform ongoing dialogue and collaborative planning across the network.

# Health Promotion

## Promoting Safer Communities: Gambling Harm Awareness with Heads of Shed

Kooweerup Regional Health Service (KRHS) recently partnered with **Better Health Network** to deliver a tailored **Gambling Harm Awareness Session** for the Heads of Shed—a collective of **Cardinia Shire's local Men's Sheds**, committed to supporting men's health, well-being, and connection through shared skills and community projects. Held in June 2025, the session aimed to raise awareness about the risks and signs of gambling harm, promote early help-seeking, and reduce the stigma around discussing gambling-related challenges.

While gambling is often viewed as a social activity or form of recreation, for some, it can lead to significant emotional, financial, and relational stress.

The session explored:

- Common types of gambling and early warning signs of harm
- How stress, loneliness, and life transitions can increase risk
- Strategies to support mates and foster non-judgmental conversations
- Information about local and confidential support services

The relaxed, peer-based format encouraged open discussion, with many participants appreciating the opportunity to reflect and share their own experiences.

"It's not just about the pokies or betting apps," said one participant. "It's about understanding the stress behind it—and knowing where to turn before it becomes a bigger problem."

"It was great to talk about something that affects more people than we realise," one Heads of Shed member shared. "The fact that there's support out there—and that it's confidential—makes a big difference."

This initiative is part of KRHS's ongoing commitment to **preventive health and community wellbeing**, working in partnership with local organisations like Better Health Network to deliver practical, evidence-based sessions that resonate with our community.

If you or someone you know is experiencing gambling-related harm, confidential support is available. Contact **Gambler's Help Southern** via **Better Health Network** on **1800 858 858**, or visit [gamblershelpsouthern.org.au](https://gamblershelpsouthern.org.au).

Together, we're building a safer, more connected Cardinia—one conversation at a time.



**King Ewelike** from **Better Health Network** led the session with Heads of Shed members.

**Dr. Osman Ali (Health Promotion Practitioner)**



# Health Promotion



Despite the chilly weather on 27 May, we enjoyed a wonderful turnout at the **Forget Me Not Café**. Our **Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner, Meagan Daley**, joined us to share insights about her important role here at KRHS.

In recognition of **National Palliative Care Week**, Meagan also brought along some treats from Palliative Care Australia to share during morning tea. This week helps raise awareness about the value of palliative care and encourages open conversations about end-of-life planning.

Mark your calendars—the next Forget Me Not Café will be held on **29 July**. For more information, please contact **Joanne Cain** at [joanne.cain@krhs.net.au](mailto:joanne.cain@krhs.net.au) or call **03 5997 9655**.



Forget Me  
Not Café



03 5997 9679



[info@krhs.net.au](mailto:info@krhs.net.au)

15/28

## Nurturing Culture and Connection: KRHS Supports Students on a Journey of Reconciliation

In recognition of Reconciliation Week, Koo Wee Rup Regional Health Service (KRHS) proudly supported local Year 11 and 12 students to participate in a cultural awareness tour and smoking ceremony hosted by the Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association.

This immersive experience offered students a profound insight into the cultural significance of Aboriginal ceremonies and key dates in the Australian calendar that honour First Nations peoples.

During the tour, students engaged directly with Aboriginal culture, learning about traditional customs, hearing stories passed down through generations, and sampling edible native plants that highlighted Indigenous bush foods and sustainable practices.

These students are part of a committed group—including KRHS staff, volunteers, and community members—working together to create an Aboriginal garden within the local community garden. This special space will feature a variety of native edible plants and serve as a hub for cultural gatherings, educational activities, and community events.



**The group admire a traditional Aboriginal “humpy”.**



**Brian wearing a traditional possum skin cloak.**

Through this garden, the team aims to foster connection, inclusivity, and continuous learning about Aboriginal heritage, land stewardship, and traditional knowledge.

KRHS is proud to champion initiatives that celebrate Indigenous culture and support reconciliation, ensuring future generations embrace respectful cultural exchange and understanding.

**- Brian Harlow (Youth & Community Development Officer)**

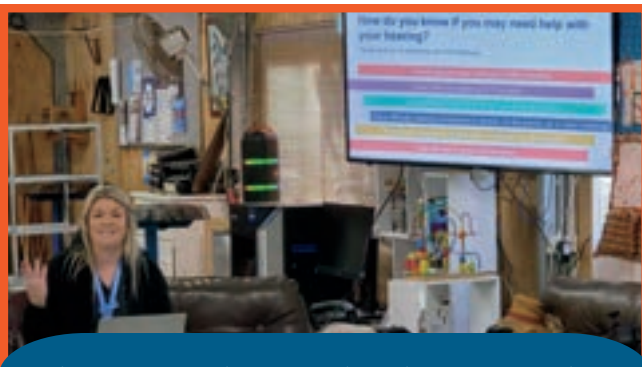


# Health Promotion

## Celebrating Men's Health Week and Our Hearing Health Success!

As July begins, we look back with pride at Men's Health Week 2025, which took place from 9 to 15 June. This year's national theme, "See Your GP," truly resonated with our mission to encourage blokes to prioritise their health. Here at Kooweerup Regional Health Service, we were thrilled to host a dedicated Hearing Australia session during the week.

This vital event provided free hearing checks and expert advice, empowering our community to take proactive steps for their ear and hearing health. It was a perfect fit for the "See Your GP" theme, emphasising the importance of early detection and professional guidance for all health concerns.



Belinda from Hearing Australia delivered the session



The success of this session highlights the incredible dedication of our staff, our partners at Hearing Australia, and the strong support from our community. Thank you for making our Men's Health Week event a resounding success!

Our commitment to men's health—and community health more broadly—continues year-round. We encourage everyone to keep these meaningful conversations going and to utilise the resources available through Kooweerup Regional Health Service.

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## Coming up next: National Diabetes Week (13–19 July 2025)

Diabetes is one of Australia's fastest-growing health issues, and early detection can make all the difference. This year's campaign is all about recognising the signs early and taking steps to prevent or manage diabetes before it impacts your quality of life.

Throughout the week, Kooweerup Regional Health Service will be sharing practical tips, screening tools, and expert advice to help you understand your risk and take action.

**Scan the QR code to check your risk now.**

If you have any questions or would like a personalised assessment, contact our **Diabetes Educator, Beena George**, on **(03) 5997 9641**—available **Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays**.

**- Dr. Osman Ali (Health Promotion Practitioner)**



# Health Promotion

## Planting Hope for a Healthier Planet!

On 5 June, we celebrated **World Environment Day** by gifting each staff member **a native plant** to take home and grow, promoting sustainability and biodiversity in a meaningful way.

The event was held in our beautiful community garden, and it featured inspiring words from **Brenda Birch (Director of Nursing)** and **Ragul Karun (Chief Financial Officer)**, highlighting our commitment to caring for both people and the planet.

We know that a **healthy environment** is essential for a **healthier community**.

Thank you for being part of a health service that cares, not just for people, but for the planet we all share.

See how we turned a simple gift into a celebration of sustainability.





# Leisure and Lifestyle

## Blooms, Smiles & Little Visitors: A Mother's Day to Remember

Our residents were delighted to receive some very special visitors from the KWR Community Toybox, who came bearing beautiful flowers and warm Mother's Day wishes.

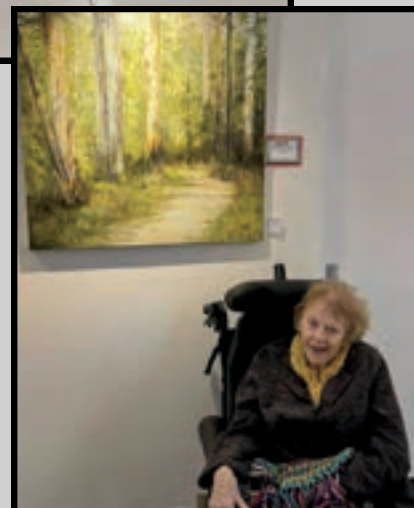
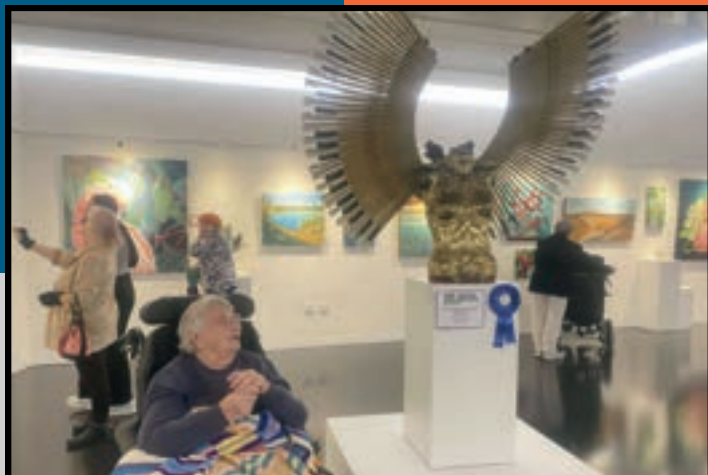
A heartfelt thank you to our local Woolworths for the generous donation of flowers — your support helped create so many smiles and truly heart-warming moments between the children and our residents.





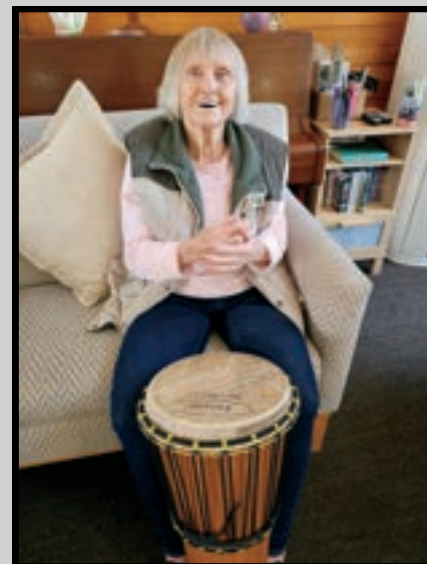
## A Day of Inspiration: Residents Explore Local Art

Our Residents attended an art show at Cardinia Cultural Centre and looked at all the local artists' work that was submitted and admired their personal favourites.



## Feel the Beat: Drumming Up Joy and Movement

We invited the residents to a drumming session where they all played different beats with drums and maracas to enhance mobility and sensory stimulation.



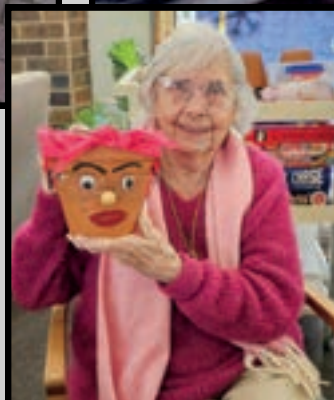
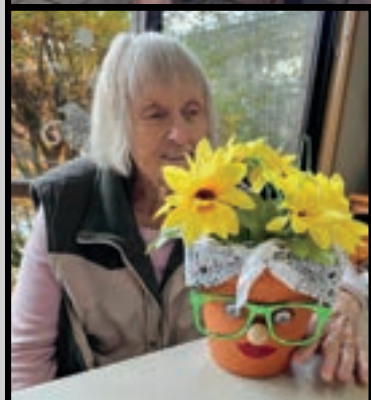
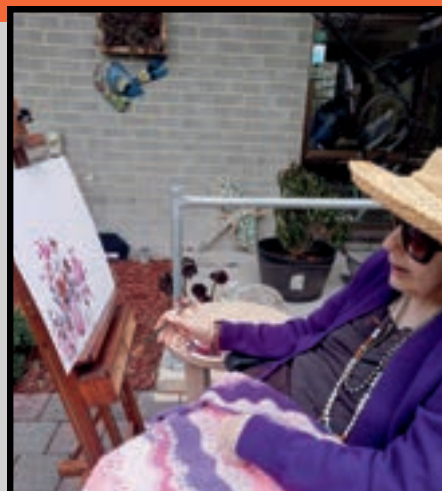
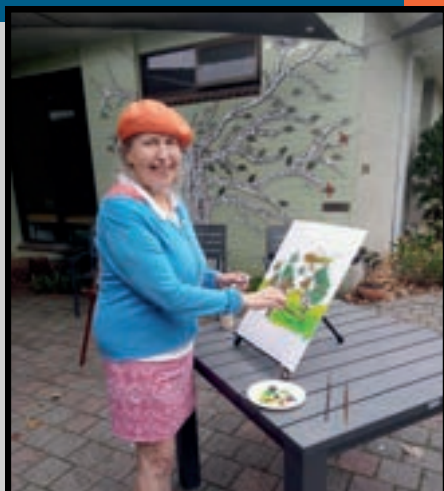


# Leisure and Lifestyle

## From Canvas to Craft: Colourful Moments with Our Residents

Our residents embraced their artistic side with a freehand painting session, capturing the beauty of the KRHS gardens through their own eyes.

The creativity continued with a fun craft activity where they made cheerful flower potheads to brighten up their rooms. These hands-on experiences brought plenty of smiles and sparked joy throughout the day.



## Feathered Friends and Thoughtful Hands

Residents in our Westernport Unit made bird feeders to hang in the trees outside their windows. It's a lovely way to enjoy birdwatching and help our local birds through the colder months.



## Hugs, Goodbyes, and New Hellos: Volunteers Make It All Warmer

Volunteer week was celebrated with messages of thanks, Facebook Posts, gift-giving, and a very enjoyable lunch held at the Koo Wee Rup Hotel.

It was lovely seeing those of you who were able to make it, and to thank everyone personally for the wonderful work that you do in supporting us here at KRHS.

It was great to acknowledge our volunteers and to catch up with those of you I might not always get to see, as well as some of you catching up or, in fact, meeting for the first time.

Please take a moment to review the infographic following this article, which highlights the incredible hours you all contribute to making our Health Service one we can truly be proud of. Also, enjoy some photos of the day below.



**Aileen Thoms (Interim CEO) with Jenny Bayliss (Manager - Volunteers and Leisure and Lifestyle)**



### Lucy's Last Shift

Most of you will be familiar with a very special volunteer who has recently retired, so a small party was held in her honour with many residents able to attend and give her a pat and a cuddle! Hmmm, I hear you say, do we always give pats and cuddles to our volunteers?! Well, Lucy has brought much joy and laughter to us here in the form of a very sweet Cavalier King Charles Spaniel!

Many of you looked forward to her visits weekly, and she also had a special way of going to those who needed her most.



She will be very missed, but as a lady of a certain age (one should never ask the exact age, of course ), it was time for her to hand in her badge and lanyard and enjoy some much-needed naps in front of the fire.

Thank you for bringing so much comfort to so many, Lucy, and enjoy your well-earned rest.

She did enjoy the treats that the staff and residents made for her (dog biscuits in the shape of bones), and she gulped them down gratefully! If anyone would like the recipe of these healthy dog treats please see the L&L team.



## A Warm Welcome to Sandra



Meet our newest volunteer, Sandra! Sandra comes to us with an extensive background in working as a marriage and funeral celebrant and would love to hear the interesting stories our residents have to tell. It would be nice to create a booklet or something similar of all the fascinating people we are lucky enough to have living here at KRHS.

Please welcome Sandra if you see her, and feel free to have a chat!

## Handmade Gifts of Love

We have again been very lucky to be gifted some beautiful new quilts for our new residents to enjoy. These quilts are beautifully made by the very generous Ladies of the Swamp Charity Quilting Group, who are all volunteers who donate to us regularly.

It is lovely to welcome a new resident with one of these, and they are always received with a smile and many compliments regarding the designs and quality of the quilts.



Pictured below is Jules from the Ladies of the Swamp with one of our residents, Shirley who was very grateful and full of praise for the kindness of the hardworking ladies.

As always thanks for all that you do and try and stay warm this Winter!

**-Jenny Bayliss (Manager – Volunteers and Leisure and Lifestyle)**



## KRHS VOLUNTEERS:

MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE

### TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

**85** dedicated individuals giving their time and heart.

### HOSPITAL SUPPORT

**3,328** volunteer hours.  
Helping hands making every patient's day better.

### L2P PROGRAM (LEARNER DRIVER MENTORING)

**1,140** hours driven by volunteer mentors.

Average: **63 hours per participant.**

5 participants reached  
120+ hours.

1 participant obtained their  
license!

### LADIES AUXILIARY

**\$16,300** raised this year alone!

Supporting KRHS for almost  
70 years.

**12-14**  
volunteers

### LEISURE & LIFESTYLE VOLUNTEERS

**57 hours/week = 2,964 hours/year.**

Equivalent to **371 days of Full-time work.**

**104** HOURS OF LIVE  
ENTERTAINMENT

Valued at **\$10,000-\$15,000**  
in performances!

### PALS PROGRAM

**7 volunteer hours/week.**

**590** visits this financial year.

Providing presence, comfort,  
and companionship.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Our volunteers also support:**

- Community Art Group
- Community Garden
- Men's Shed
- Church Services
- Op Shops
- Township Committees
-  RSL & Lions Club

**THANK YOU to our volunteers**

You're the heart of KRHS –  
we couldn't do it without you!



**Kooweerup**  
REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICE





# Kindness Works Here!

## Stitched with Kindness, Shared with Love

Many of you know our fabulous volunteer gardener, Ernie, who works tirelessly in the community garden for all to enjoy.

It turns out his wife, Sue, is also a hardworking volunteer who makes quilts (among other things), and she has very kindly donated some for us here at KRHS.

Our Early Parenting Unit has been using them for their gorgeous little ones to share and use as a lovely play space to hang out in between sleep!

We are very grateful for the kindness of Sue and her very generous donations for our families who are very appreciative. The colourful quilts combined with the smiles and laughter of the babies in our care certainly brighten up the room.

It is our connection to our community that is just one of the many things that makes KRHS such a special place.



## When Care Comes Full Circle

Starting as a graduate nurse at KRHS in February 2025 has been a journey full of learning, laughter, and little moments that stay with me. One of those moments happened during my second placement in the Memory Support Unit—something I'll always carry close to my heart.

It was the morning after a long PM shift. I had left work the night before, tired but content. As I walked in the next day, one of the consumers I often cared for quietly came up to me. She looked at me, gently touched my arm, and asked, "Are you okay, dear? I saw you leave late yesterday." Then she hugged me and added, "I was just worried. Please let me know when you finish next time, so I know you're safe."

Her words stopped me in my tracks. In that brief exchange, I felt something so pure—genuine care. It surprised me, not because I didn't think they cared, but because sometimes we assume people living with memory loss may not notice or remember these little details. But they do. Maybe not always in the way we expect, but they feel, they connect, and they care deeply.



As someone who's lost both parents, her concern reminded me of my mum—the way she would have checked on me, and made sure I was okay. That small moment made me feel seen, valued and loved. It reminded me why I chose nursing in the first place.

**- Hetal Desai (Graduate Nurse at KRHS)**





## Learn How to Access Support Through My Aged Care

Cardinia Shire Council, in partnership with COTA Victoria, Care Connect, Monash Health, and Wintringham, is hosting an information session to help residents understand the My Aged Care and Care Finder programs.

### Topics include:

- How to register for My Aged Care
- The application and assessment process
- How to book an appointment with an Aged Care Specialist Officer
- The Care Finder service

**When:** Tuesday, 9 September 2025

**Where:** Emerald Hills Hub

(402 Belgrave-Gembrook Road, Emerald)

**Time:** 1pm – 3.30pm

**Cost:** Free (includes refreshments)

**Bookings:** Ageing Well team on 1300 787 624 or by email to [mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au](mailto:mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au)

## Let's Talk Aged Care – Community Information Session

Join for a valuable community session designed to support older people and their families in navigating aged care services. Let's Talk Aged Care will cover available services, common challenges, and how to access the right support when it's needed most.

You'll also hear from:

- **City of Casey Council**
- **Services Australia (Aged Care Navigation & Financial Info)**
- **Elder Rights Australia (OPAN)**

**When:** Tuesday, 5 August 2025

**Where:** Cranbourne West Community Hub (4 Flicka Blvd, Cranbourne West VIC 3977)

**Time:** 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

**Refreshments:** Morning tea and coffee will be provided

**Bookings:** Ageing Well team on 1300 787 624 or by email to [mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au](mailto:mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au)

This event is hosted by the department's South-East Regional team.



To register, **scan the QR code** or contact **Rebecca** on **(03) 7041 0711** (please leave a message if not answered).





# Recycling Drive & Drop event

Drop-off the below items for free at our upcoming Recycling event without leaving your car.



## Accepted items

- E-waste; Electronics, devices, appliances and vapes
- Polystyrene
- Soft plastics
- Clothing and Textiles (wearable and non-wearable)
- Cardboard

All accepted items will be reused, repurposed or recycled.



## When :

Saturday 5 July: 9am – 1pm

Sunday 6 July: 9am – 1pm

## Where :

Council depot: 18a Purton Road, Pakenham

For Cardinia Shire residents only.  
Unlimited residential volumes of accepted items allowed, no commercial vehicles.

For more info, go to  
[www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/dropoff](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/dropoff)

# Community

## Raising Cups and Spirits at Australia's Biggest Morning Tea

In June, our **Men's Shed** and **Grow2Be** hosted a beautiful **Biggest Morning Tea** event to support **Cancer Council Australia** — the nation's largest and most successful fundraising event of its kind.

Our wonderful residents and staff joined in with smiles, laughter, and plenty of delicious treats! It was a heart-warming morning filled with community spirit and generosity.

A huge thank you to Koo Wee Rup Men's Shed and Grow2Be for organising this fantastic event and helping raise funds for such an important cause.

Here are some photos to see just how much everyone enjoyed the day!

