



**Swan Hill**  
**District Health**

*my hospital*

# Dear Community of Swan Hill and surrounding townships,

On behalf of the Board of Swan Hill District Health (SHDH) it is my pleasure to provide the attached brochure of key findings in the Swan Hill Sub-region Health Services Plan (September 2017).

The Plan provides a 'roadmap' for the future development of healthcare needs over the next five to ten years.

Our overriding objective is to provide safe care as close to home as possible. This is a key message from our Consumer Advisory Group.

The role of SHDH is described as a sub-regional health service, servicing the communities of the Swan Hill Rural City, Wakool district in NSW, and the more proximal communities in Gannawarra and Buloke shires. This means the provision of a core set of specialist acute and emergency services and a comprehensive suite of primary and community based services.

The demand for acute health services is expected to increase over the coming decades, mainly due to the ageing population. As such, the provision of streamlined and comprehensive care for elderly patients is a priority area for service development.

The Plan identifies several key goals to meet future community health needs. These include: the maintenance of maternity and newborn services; improvements in our emergency service; the delivery of a local fracture clinic, supported by a remote telehealth clinic; the active development of paediatrics by a GP with a special interest in paediatrics with clinical support by a specialist paediatrician from Bendigo; and an enhanced mental health service.

The Plan recognises that many clinical areas are no longer fit-for-purpose and cause operational inefficiencies. As well, the buildings and clinical facilities will not be able to meet future demand and do not enable innovative models of care to generate greater patient care and service efficiency. More capacity is needed if we are to meet the future needs of our community.

Our workforce capability needs to be strengthened to achieve self-sufficiency with a viable hybrid model of medical specialist and GPs along with the development of specialist nursing and allied health workforce. The medical workforce will need to grow in the short and medium term.

An important factor in the success of future delivery of health services in regional Victoria and for the recruitment strategy of senior specialists is the development and 'embedding' of teaching and research into SHDH.

We will work to support the development of services through collaboration with local providers, and harnessing technology to support and strengthen safe patient care.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Koetsveld  
**CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



Our community is changing, and Swan Hill District Health (SHDH) will meet new and more challenging demands in a range of areas.

**AN AGEING POPULATION**

Despite a predicted decline in the region's population, more residents will be aged over 70. An ageing population will drive demand for acute care, sub-acute care, primary and community care.

**A CHANGING HEALTH PROFILE**

The area now has more chronic disease conditions – heart failure, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, hypertension and high cholesterol – and hospitalisations that could be avoided with preventive care.

**INCREASED DEMAND**

An older population with a growing burden of chronic disease will increase the need for emergency services, chemotherapy, dialysis, acute services and community service programs.

**CHANGES TO STATE AND NATIONAL HEALTH POLICIES**

Increased emphasis on service quality, patient safety, early intervention and collaboration with local facilities, as well as a greater focus on care outside the hospital environment will be reflected in our strategic priorities.



**Key Drivers**

Meeting new and changing health needs is important, but Swan Hill faces particular challenges.

#### **REMOTE LOCATION**

SHDH is a relatively remote health service, primarily treating residents in Swan Hill Rural City, Wakool, Gannawarra and Buloke shires. This is one of the smallest sub-regional health services in the state, isolated from other major facilities.

#### **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Whilst SHDH has a history of a strong and diverse workforce, our distance from large urban centres and small population makes it challenging to sustain the critical mass of expertise, career opportunities and the patient complexity needed to attract the professional skill and interest of health, medical and specialist staff.

#### **A DRIFT TOWARDS HOSPITAL**

Historical trends indicate that residents in our area have been less likely to see a General Practitioner (GP) and more likely to present to hospital when compared with Victorian averages. Despite lower primary health attendance, the type of GP services provided are of higher complexity. This may indicate our community delays help-seeking and treatment.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

SHDH's buildings and clinical facilities will not be able to meet future demand and do not enable innovative models of care to generate greater patient care and service efficiency. More capacity is needed if we are to meet the future needs of our community.



**Key  Challenges**

# Key Goals

SHDH will remain a sub-regional health service to the communities of the Swan Hill Rural City and environs, providing core specialist acute and emergency services, and a suite of primary and community-based services.

**This is how we'll meet future community health needs.**

## **STRENGTHEN LOCAL ACCESS TO SPECIALIST SERVICES**

Ensure more residents are treated locally, without needing to travel long distances from their homes and families. This does not mean that we can provide all specialist services at Swan Hill; it means progressively developing better access to mainstream specialists, on-site or through videoconferencing.

## **PROVIDE STREAMLINED AND COMPREHENSIVE CARE FOR ELDERLY PATIENTS**

Enable easier movement between hospital departments and community-based services. Elderly acute patients will be assessed more quickly to evaluate their individual needs, which may include acute hospital-based or home-based services.

## **MAINTAIN MATERNITY AND NEWBORN SERVICES**

Improve access to community maternity clinics, strengthening the local paediatric workforce and the existing clinical support from Bendigo Health.

## **SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR EMERGENCY SERVICE**

Create new infrastructure, a strengthened senior medical workforce, and established pathways for direct admissions to sub-acute beds when suitable.

## **ENHANCE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Provide more responsive services for patients presenting at Swan Hill emergency, as well as a community psychiatric nurse, and capacity for after-hours clinical mental health response.



# Key Enablers

SHDH has identified critical areas of focus to achieve our goals.

## **STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE CAPABILITY**

We'll increase primary medical services, expand roles in specialist medical, nursing and allied health, with teaching and training embedded into the workforce.

## **IMPROVE FACILITIES**

We'll increase bed capacity in acute, maternity, chemotherapy, dialysis and emergency areas. We will see the development of clinical facilities and maintain two operating theatres to facilitate the implementation of modern and efficient service models.

## **HARNESS EHEALTH TECHNOLOGIES**

We'll improve efficiency, support suitable patients in the home, enable improved clinical decision making, and organise care to focus on individual patient welfare.

## **COLLABORATE**

We'll improve services, workforce planning and referral pathways with Bendigo Health, Echuca Regional Health, and Melbourne-based health services. We will work to support the development of services matched to community needs through collaboration with local providers including Mallee District Aboriginal Services, Murray Primary Health Network, Swan Hill Rural City Council, and Ambulance Victoria.

## **STRENGTHEN PATIENT SAFETY**

We'll create protocols across collaborating health services, and leadership roles in obstetrics, anaesthetics, emergency medicine and geriatrics.



## OUR SERVICES

- Aboriginal Liaison
- Acute Care
- Adult Day Service
- Aged Care Residential
- Breast Care Nurse
- Cardiology
- Care Co-ordination
- Chemotherapy
- Community Health Nursing
- Community Rehabilitation
- Continence Service
- Counselling Service  
(including alcohol and other drug services)
- Dental Dietetics
- District Nursing
- Domiciliary Midwifery Service
- Drink Driver Program
- Emergency Department
- General Medicine
- General Surgery
- Geriatric Medicine
- GP - Primary Health Clinic
- Gynaecology Haemodialysis
- Headspace
- Health Clinics
- Health Promotion
- Hospital Admission Risk Program
- Hospital in the Home
- Lymphoedema Service
- Meals on Wheels
- Midwifery Unit
- Nephrology
- Occupational Therapy
- Oncology
- Ophthalmology Surgery
- Orthopaedic Surgery
- Otorhinolaryngology Surgery
- Paediatric Medicine
- Palliative Care
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Post Acute Care Services
- Preparation for Childbirth
- Radiology
- Rural Primary Health Services
- Speech Pathology
- Stomal Therapy
- Transitional Care
- Urology Surgery
- Vascular Services

## SERVICES AT MAIN CAMPUS PROVIDED BY OTHERS

- Ophthalmology Clinic
- Loddon Mallee Integrated Cancer Service
- Australian Clinical Labs

