



# Community Health



## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

From all the team here at Community Health we would like to wish you a warm and relaxing festive season however you celebrate the end of the year! We hope you have had some great times in 2025 and have new adventures to look forward to in the coming year.

Here at Community Health, we reflect on our work and achievements over the past 12 months and share with you some tips and services for getting the most out of some down time with family, friends or solo, whatever suits you.

## Some Community Health achievements for 2025

- Establishment of the Paediatric Nurse Led Clinic
- Commencement of the Transgender & Gender Diverse Social Support Group in Swan Hill
- Fresh Food Swap partnership with the Swan Hill Regional Library
- Antipoverty week Toiletries drive with Swan Hill Food Hub
- Development of the 2025-2029 Health Promotion Plan
- Promotion and implementation of gender equity activities
- 24 early learning centres supported with the Smiles 4 Miles program
- Breastfeeding education at monthly ante-natal group
- Diabetes education and telehealth Endocrinologist appointments
- Continued growth of the Men's sexual health clinic
- Weekly breastfeeding support group sessions
- Refugee Health support to individuals and groups
- Work with a local primary school implementing healthy food choices
- Emergency Food Relief provision via the Swan Hill Food Hub, provision of 25,000 meals/14 tonne of food
- 23 INFANT sessions onsite and 47 at playgroups and other group of young families
- Early Years Online Hub website upgrade to include language translation and fresh look
- Commencement of SHDH Smoke & Vape free environments working group





## MEET JESS

We're delighted to welcome Jess to our Health Promotion team! Jess joins us in a part-time role, supporting our key health promotion priorities of Healthy Eating; Breastfeeding, Food Systems, and Healthy Lifestyles.

Jess is already enjoying her new position and the opportunity to contribute to projects that make a real difference in our community.

Living locally in Swan Hill with her family, Jess keeps busy with her three children and enjoys taking walks along the river with her border collie, Stella.

Passionate about social inclusion and creating positive change, Jess is dedicated to helping foster a healthier, more connected community for everyone.

## SMILES 4 MILES

The Smiles 4 Miles program ([Oral Health Victoria](#)) promotes oral health for children aged 0-5. Promoting positive oral health from an early age is important as it encourages healthy teeth habits which continue into adulthood. There are different ages and stages for oral health care which include:

**0-6 months:** Wiping gums and any teeth with a damp face cloth.

**6-18 months:** Introduce a toothbrush with water to clean gums and teeth. Tooth brushing at this stage is about exposure to the new texture.

**18 months + :** Continue using a toothbrush but now you can add a pea sized amount of children's toothpaste to use.

Any toothbrushing that happens is a positive! Ways to promote toothbrushing can include through songs, books, role modelling and getting children to pick out toothbrushes with their favourite colours or characters on it.

When choosing toothpaste for children choose one with fluoride included as that helps protect teeth from dental caries. Unfortunately, not all children's toothpaste includes fluoride. Drinking fluoridated tap water in Swan Hill is another way to protect and look after teeth from the start once appropriate for their age.



**eat** fruit & veg **move** more often **smile** together





## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

Swan Hill has once again joined the International 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign. To help raise awareness of the 16 Days of Activism campaign and spark conversations, 10,000 coffee cup stickers were distributed to local cafes across Swan Hill. Each sticker acknowledging the campaign and highlighting the 1800RESPECT line ensuring that support service information was visible and accessible to the community.

Starting the 16 Days of Activism on the 25<sup>th</sup> November, more than 100 people dressed in orange and came together for the **Walk Against Family Violence**. The walk was a powerful display of solidarity for those affected by violence in our community and our commitment to creating a safer and more respectful community where women and girls are free from violence.

**RESPECT  
VICTORIA**

Despite the wind, the Swan Hill Regional Library had a fantastic turnout for the **16 days of Activism Storywalk** which had families inside the library reading *No Difference Between Us* by Jayneen Sanders. This beautiful story is about twins, a brother and sister, and teaches children about gender equity, respectful relationships, feelings and choice. This story was paired with children playing with costumes talking about providing opportunities and choice, regardless of gender.

The **Elephant in the Room** project is also currently on display in the new Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery. During it's open day, children had the opportunity to paint their own small ceramic elephants, using art as a way to open conversations about difficult topics such as violence against women and gender equity in a gentle, creative way.

The 16 Days of Activism campaign continues in Swan Hill, with the upcoming **Protecting What Matters** Session on the 10<sup>th</sup> December. This session offers community members to come together and discuss the legal steps to safeguarding health and independence and prevent violence before it occurs.

Overall, the Swan Hill community has put in a massive effort to recognise the 16 Days of Activism in our community and steps we could take to address violence against women and how we can help to prevent violence through gender equity and respectful relationships.

More information here: <https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/>



**RESPECT  
WOMEN** **CALL  
IT OUT**



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## DIETETICS - MEAL PREP MONDAYS



Youth Inc Swan Hill supported by Swan Hill District Health Dietetics have worked together for three pilot sessions of a new initiative called **Meal Prep Monday**. Youth Inc received funding for this initiative through the ABC Haywire Youth Innovation grant with Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal. The idea behind this initiative was created by a local young person experiencing food insecurity. Meal Prep Monday is about providing young people with a chance to meal prep nutritious lunches for the week which are stored at school. This initiative focuses on vulnerable youth who may not always have a lunch to bring to school due to high levels of food insecurity in our region.

The pilot partnered with Swan Hill College FLO campus with a group of five students who completed 3 meal prep session over 6 weeks. The meals cooked included chicken pasta bake, curried sausages and cottage pie. This pilot was successful in confirming that the model works. The **Meal Prep Monday** initiative will be expanded in 2026 within Swan Hill secondary schools.



*Dietetics*

## SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Our sexual and reproductive health services including the Women's Clinic, Nurse Practitioner Clinic and Clinic 60 (youth clinic) will be taking a short break from Monday 15 December 2025, resuming services in the week of January 5, 2026.

If you need services or support during this time, see options below:

### For all genders and ages

- see your local GP

### For women

- Virtual Women's Health Clinic  
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/services-and-support/virtual-womens-health-clinic>
- 1800MyOptions <https://www.1800myoptions.org.au/>

### Other resources:

- Royal Women's Hospital <https://www.thewomens.org.au/>
- Sexual Health Victoria <https://shvic.org.au/>
- Melbourne Sexual Health Centre <https://www.mshc.org.au/>
- Jean Hailes <https://www.jeanhailes.org.au/>
- Australian Menopause Society <https://www.menopause.org.au/>
- Breastscreen Victoria <https://www.breastscreen.org.au/>
- Cancer Council <https://www.cancer.org.au/>



*Sexual Health*



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## BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP

A big thank you to all who participated in our Breastfeeding Support Group this year! We truly appreciate the sense of community you bring.

Our group will be taking a short break and will return on Thursday February 5, 2026 from 9.30am - 11am.

If you need support during this time, our Breastfeeding Support service remains available for individual appointments. To book or learn more, contact Community Health on 5033 9337.

We look forward to seeing both new and returning faces in 2026!

## WE'RE TAKING A SHORT BREAK



*Breastfeeding*

## FRESH FOOD SWAP - NOVEMBER

On November 15th the Swan Hill Regional Library in partnership with SHDH Health Promotion team held the second Fresh Food Swap. We had 19 community members come along with generous local growers bring there produce for the community to take. We had a variety of items brought in including tomato seedlings, assorted seeds, avocados, rhubarb, Silverbeet, pumpkin bread, eggs and much more!

The Fresh Food Swap initiative will not be running in December but will be back up and running January through to November in 2026. We are still on the look out for volunteers to help out on the day with weighing and recording items and having conversations with participants. If your interested in the volunteering please contact the Swan Hill Regional Library on 5036 2480 or go see a staff member when you visit the library at 53-67 Campbell street.

We look forward to seeing where this initiative takes the community and encouraging surplus produce to be provided to community at the Food Swaps. This initiative hopes to increase access to locally grown produce and create connection between home & community gardeners.



**FOOD FOR ALL**  
SWAN HILL REGION



**eat fruit & veg move more often smile together**

## FOOD HUB OATS PUT TO GOOD USE



Frankie Merrett preparing Peach Crumble

Each Friday, a small group of St Mary's Primary School students roll up their sleeves for a hands-on cooking skills program; planning, preparing, and learning in the school kitchen. Recently, the group has been getting creative with oats after an excess supply was donated through our local Food Hub.

So far, the students have whipped up homemade horse treats, a classic Anzac slice, and most recently a delicious peach and custard crumble featuring locally grown peaches and, of course, more oats!

It's wonderful to see young people engaged in their learning, building confidence in the kitchen, and exploring new ways to use nutritious ingredients. The students proudly share their creations with family and teachers and even set aside portions for the following week to support classmates who may need a snack at recess.

Projects like this highlight the strength, creativity, and community spirit thriving in our region and we love to see it.



## SMOKE & VAPE FREE

*Did you know that it is illegal to smoke or vape in any Victorian public hospital or registered community health centre, or within 4 metres of the entrance?*

This ban aims to protect people from exposure to second-hand smoke and the aerosol from e-cigarettes, reduce the presence of smoking and vaping in public places, and help those trying to quit.

Here at Swan Hill District Health we are currently working together to provide improved communication and to support those who currently smoke or vape and wish to quit.

Keep an eye out for more information to come in 2026 but if you have any questions about Smoke and Vape free environments contact Tara at Community Health on 5033 9337.



*For support to quit smoking see below link*



[quit.org.au](https://quit.org.au)



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## INFANT

INFANT is designed to help families with healthy eating, active play and reduced screen time from the start of their baby's life.

Information is provided before it is needed and is provided as an opportunity to share support with others and learn through shared experiences, tips and strategies. Our facilitator Kerri provides contemporary, evidence-based information, tailored to families, while promoting group dynamics and idea sharing. Kerri is an experienced Accredited Practising Dietitian.

4 group sessions are provided over the first year of life, at around 3, 6, 9 and 12 months. Each session runs for around 90 minutes and are informal and held here at Community Health. Guest presenters are invited to attend in some sessions, including an Occupational Therapist at the 12 month session discussing emotional regulation and sleep.

For more information call us on 5033 9337.

<https://infantprogram.org>



## SWIM CLUB SWAN HILL

'What is move Swim?

Like a run club, but swimming! For individuals who want to start swimming, who are scared to try, those who have a goal or those who are willing to try something new.

If you are a beginner, intermediate or advanced, or just in recovery come have a go in a safe, fun environment. Bring a friend!

Your own pace, your own distance and your choice!'



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## RECIPE - CHRISTMAS SALAD

Are you looking for a festive style lighter salad for your Christmas eating? It is really quite easy and you can choose whatever is in season or you have available.

Try these salad items to create a dish to match the Christmas spirit!

Start with some orange fruits such as mandarin segments or mango (sliced or cubed) or fresh or grilled yellow peach or nectarine slices, place in a bowl of mixed greens along with feta cheese, candied pecans and pomegranate seeds or fresh raspberries.

Make a homemade dressing with a few simple ingredients, then pour it over the salad and toss to combine. Serve immediately and enjoy!

Simple salad dressing options:

- olive oil, white wine vinegar or lemon juice, salt and freshly ground black pepper, whisk together
- natural yoghurt, olive oil, 1 tsp dijon mustard, 1-2 tsp lemon juice, salt and freshly ground black pepper, mixed



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