



**Kapel
Telkuna**

Through water we heal

MESSAGE STICK

January – February 2026

Issue 15

Happy New Year!

The Kapel Telkuna Unit would like to wish our community and colleagues a Happy New Year, and we hope you all had a safe and Merry Christmas.

As we begin 2026, we acknowledge that our community has already been carrying heavy hearts, with sorry business touching many families. We pay our respects to those who have passed, and we extend our deepest condolences to mob who are grieving during this time.

Looking ahead, the Kapel Telkuna Unit remains committed to walking alongside mob with care, respect and understanding. In 2026, we look forward to continuing to support our community, strengthening our connections, and growing our unit to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We are proud to continue creating and holding a culturally safe space where mob feel seen, heard and supported within the hospital setting. We thank our community for their trust and our colleagues for their ongoing collaborations, as we move forward together into the year ahead.



**YARNING
SAFE 'N' STRONG**

1800 959 563

Free and confidential phone support • 24 Hours • 7 days a week

Contact Info



(03) 5033 9323 or (03) 5033 9868



44 High Street, Swan Hill VIC 3585



AHU@shdh.org.au

Close the Gap Initiatives at SHDH:

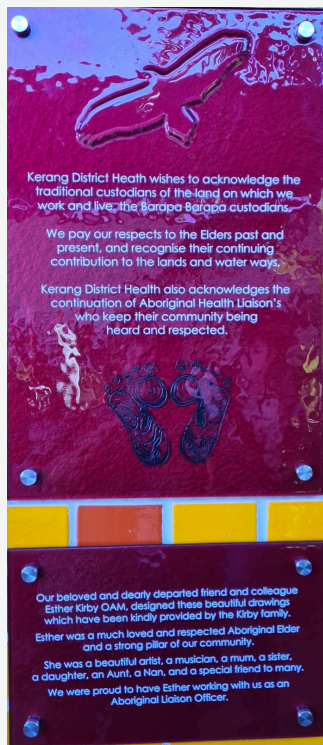
At our last ARG meeting, a community member asked what Close the Gap recommendations are in place at SHDH. Although SHDH don't specifically have a Close the Gap campaign, we do however have the following initiatives in place.

- Dispense medications from Pharmacy to First Nations people at no cost as part of Close the Gap scheme.
- No client co-payments for Community Care services for First Nations People.
- SHDH Aboriginal Cultural Safety Plan which aims to improve access to the health service.
- Yet to be finalised but looking at bulk billing for all First Nations People at the SHPHMC.
- Developing and meeting the Aboriginal Employment Plan of increase First Nations employment at SHDH
- Increase in Kapel Telkuna EFT plus introduction of Yarn Safe position
- SHDH Midwifery partnership with MDAS for antenatal and postnatal care.
- SHDH Primary Care Medical Centre supporting the MDAS Medical Clinic.

Unveiling of Kerang District Health's First Nations Acknowledgment Plaque

On Friday 16th January 2026, the Kapel Telkuna team travelled to Kerang to attend the unveiling of the First Nations Acknowledgement Plaque at Kerang District Health.

The plaque was supported and coordinated with the assistance of Pearl Dunn, Aboriginal Liaison Worker at Kerang District Health. It was a deeply special moment to witness Pearl following in the footsteps of her mum, Aunty Esther Kirby, who worked as the Aboriginal Liaison Worker for many years before entering the Dreaming.



Aunty Esther was a much-loved and highly respected Elder within the community, remembered for the many roles she held - as a beautiful artist, musician and a devoted family woman. Her strength, knowledge and cultural contributions continue to live on through her family and community.

The designs featured on the plaque are taken from artwork created by Aunty Esther, generously shared by her family. The Plaque stands as a meaningful tribute to her life, culture and enduring legacy.

It was a powerful and heartfelt moment, honouring culture, family and community.



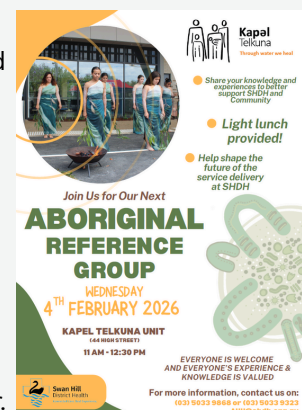
Aboriginal Reference Group

We had our first ARG meeting for 2026, it was great to see some new faces and our regular mob that show up. These meetings are in place to build and strengthen the relationship between SHDH and Community. We strive to create a safe place for community to speak openly about their experiences with SHDH (good or bad).

These meetings are held bi-monthly, keeping regular communication between SHDH and Community. KTU staff share what's happening within the unit, and ensure community are involved in the decision-making process. We end the meetings with a light lunch and a chance to yarn.

Everyone is welcome and everyone's experience & knowledge is valued!

Our next meeting will be held in early April 2026 - keep an eye out for the flyer.





Heart and Lung Health

(Community Rehabilitation Centre)



Respiratory Nurse - Kerry Gilbert

Kerry has just ticked over 40 years of nursing at Swan Hill District Health. She has worked in many areas including Acute Ward, Aged Care, District Nursing, Emergency Department, Chemotherapy/Dialysis Unit and Hospital Admission Risk program (HARP). She took on the Respiratory Nursing role 2 years ago and hasn't looked back.



Kerry loves gardening, family time, a camp oven roast and fire pit in the winter, and travelling in her new caravan.

Respiratory Service

Kerry offers a range of services to help you manage your lung condition and breathing issues:

- Spirometry/Lung Function Testing – measures how well your lungs are working
- Asthma education and management (identify triggers, review inhaler and spacer technique)
- Quit Smoking support
- General support and education to help you to understand and manage your symptoms, and optimise your lung health through:
 - 1:1 appointments with Respiratory Nurse or Exercise Physiologist
 - Pulmonary Rehabilitation Group – 8 x weekly sessions of exercise and education



Cardiac Nurse - Paula Keane

Paula has worked locally as a nurse for over 30 years, across Acute and Medical Wards, Emergency Department and the Hospital Admission Risk program (HARP). She has been in the Cardiac Nurse role for 15 years, seeing many great changes in that time.



Paula enjoys cooking (and is a great cook!), and watching all sports including cricket, horseracing, and footy (Go Hawks!)

i-Heart Service

The i-Heart service aims to connect relevant clients with heart specialists after a heart related hospital stay. After some initial medical tests, Paula arranges a videocall with specialists from Austin Health to assess your condition and risk factors, review your medication, and make a plan for managing your heart health. You can have up to 6 FREE specialist videocalls under this service.



Chronic Disease Nurse- Lisa Gleeson

Lisa has been a nurse for over 20 years, and has done extra study in mental health (post grad). Her wide range of experience in chronic disease management makes her a great asset to both Kerry and Paula in running their Respiratory and Cardiac Services.



Lisa loves being physically active and has even been sky diving. She is also our Continence Nurse at CRC



Upcoming Events/Notices



Let's have a yarn in Swan Hill 🗨️👋

MDAS want to hear from YOU, our community on how they can best offer their Social and Emotional Wellbeing services in our Swan Hill region.

So, please join them for morning tea and let's have a yarn about what services you need, when you need them, how often you need them, and much more.

📅 Friday, 20th February

🕒 11AM - 12:30PM

🏠 Swan Hill MDAS Community Cafe, 70 Nyah Rd

For more information, please contact Rachael on,

📞 (03) 5032 8600



Feeding a baby looks different for everyone 🧡

Our Breastfeeding Group welcomes all parents and carers, all feeding methods, and all identities. Whether you're breastfeeding, mixed feeding, bottle feeding, or just have questions — you belong here.

Drop in, have a chat with the local Breastfeeding Support Service every Thursday from the 12th Feb, 9.30-11am at the Child and Family Hub, 63 McCrae St, Swan Hill



February is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, a time to remind our women to listen to their bodies and seek support if something doesn't feel right.

Ovarian Cancer can be hard to detect, as there is no routine screening test. Knowing the signs is important.

Symptoms may include:

- Ongoing bloating
- Pelvic or tummy pain
- Feeling full quickly
- Changes in bowel or bladder habits
- Ongoing fatigue

If symptoms are new or persistent, please speak with your GP or Aboriginal Health Worker. You can ask for a female clinician and bring a support person if that feels right.

Looking after yourself is looking after family and community. Our women's health matters.

For more information on Ovarian Cancer, you can visit www.ovariancancer.net.au

we want you!

Join our Youth Reference Group

APPLY NOW →

ARE YOU...

- Aged 15-25.
- Living in and around the Swan Hill Region.
- Passionate about mental health and being a voice for young people?
- Eager to be involved in creating change in health and wellbeing support for the community?

THEN YOUTH REFERENCE GROUP IS FOR YOU!

How to Join?

- Complete an application form via the link or come to the centre to pick up a form.
- A staff member will get in touch with you to schedule an informal interview.
- We'll review all applications and reach out to let you know the outcome.
- Set up a time to create your wellbeing plan.
- Meet the other members and kick off the first meeting.

What is the YRC?

Have your say
Share your ideas on youth mental health, lead cool projects, spread the word about mental health, and help make headspace even better!

Engagement and Participation
Join meetings, share your ideas, and get involved in planning, participating in youth events and receive gift vouchers for your time.

Professional growth
Gain valuable skills such as leadership, teamwork, and organization while connecting with other passionate youth.

Apply now

For further information about joining the Youth Reference Group at headspace Swan Hill contact via phone 03 4010 7100 or email headspace@shdh.org.au

enjoy!

Smoothies

'Sip on goodness, glow all summer'

Yummy

METHOD FOR ALL SMOOTHIES:

ADD ALL INGREDIENTS TO A BLENDER, MIX UNTIL SMOOTH. SERVE!

(Makes one adult serving, or two children sizes)

Chocolate Smoothie

Ingredients (7)

- 1 ripe banana
- ½ - 1 tray of ice
- 4 pitted dates or 1 medjool date
- 1 tbsp peanut butter
- 1 tbsp cocoa
- ¼ tsp cinnamon (optional)
- 1-2 cups of milk or milk alternative



Espresso Smoothie

Ingredients (7)

- 1 ripe banana
- 1 tray of ice
- 4 pitted dates or 1 medjool date
- 1tbsp tahini or nut butter
- ½ cup dissolved instant coffee (chilled)
- ¼ tsp cinnamon (optional)
- 1-2 cups of milk or milk altern

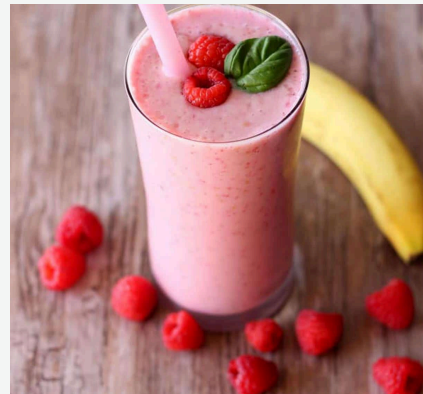


Hint: Make additional servings, pour into icy pole molds and freeze for a healthy alternative dessert

Raspberry Smoothie

Ingredients (6)

- 1 ripe banana
- ½ - 1 tray of ice
- 1 tsp honey
- ½ cup frozen raspberries
- ¼ tsp vanilla essence (optional)
- 1-2 cups of milk or milk alternative



Mango Smoothie

Ingredients (4)

- 1 ripe banana
- ½ - 1 tray of ice
- ½ cup frozen mango
- 1 - 2 cups of coconut milk



Hint: Make smoothies thicker using a frozen banana and extra ice. Serve in a bowl and top with your favourite fruits, nuts and seeds.

Nursing & Clinical Care Roles

- RN Theatre
- Registered Midwife
- Endorsed Enrolled Nurse – Acute ward
- Registered Nurse Acute Ward
- Clinical Director – Emergency Department.
- Resident in Reach- Registered Nurse.

Aged Care

- Residential Aged Care – Logan – ANUM

Community Care

- Dental Clinic Manager
- OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST – Grade 1 or 2
- Physiotherapy
- Resident in Reach- Registered Nurse.
- Dental Assistant
- Medical Services Manager

Corporate & Administration Services

- Organisational Wellbeing & Psychosocial Lead.



YARN SAFE Worker (Aboriginal Engagement)

Only Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are eligible to apply. headspace Swan Hill are looking for a dedicated worker to join their team as the YARN SAFE Worker. Working alongside the headspace team, this role will focus specifically on facilitating and improving relationships with headspace Swan Hill and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

For more information/Position Description, please contact Hayley Neuschafer, headspace Manager on 03 4010 7100.

SWAN HILL DISTRICT HEALTH

**JOIN US FOR OUR
UPCOMING OPEN DAY**

Wednesday 18th Feb 2026
9.30am to 12.30pm

Are you interested in pursuing a career in the healthcare sector or looking for a chance in Administration? Come and join us for our open day!

**WE'RE
HIRING
ADMINS**

**FULL-TIME,
PART TIME &
CASUAL**

Please bring your resume
& cover letter to:
114 Beveridge Street.





**For more information visit our
website on www.shdh.org.au**

**or
contact our People and Culture
Department on
03 5033 9315**



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

The 26th January has been recognised as a Day of Mourning since 1938, when William Cooper and other protesters marched through the streets of Sydney and over a thousand people attended a congress afterwards. Australia Day wasn't officially established until 1994 - that's 56 years after the first day of Mourning.

The Day of Mourning has become an annual occasion for First Nations Australians to come together and raise awareness about the lasting trauma and impact of invasion. It is a powerful reminder of the need for reconciliation and truth-telling.

Contact Numbers

SHDH Contact Numbers

- Swan Hill District Health 5033 9300
- Dental Services 5033 9336
- Community Health Services 5033 9337
 - Women's Clinic
 - Diabetes Services
 - Dietetics
 - Health Promotion
 - Men's Sexual Health Clinic
 - Clinic 60 (Youth Health Services)
 - Breastfeeding Support Services
 - Refugee Health Nurse
 - Nurse Practitioner Clinic
- Emergency Department 5033 9231
- headspace 4010 7100
- Midwifery 5033 9269
- Allied Health Services 5033 9390
 - Physiotherapy
 - Podiatry
 - Speech Pathology
- Cancer Services 5033 9201
- Swan Hill Primary Health Medical Centre 5033 9900
- Counselling and AOD Services 5033 9880
- Palliative Care Community Services 5033 9236
- Community Rehabilitation Centre 5033 9321
 - Physiotherapy
 - Exercise Physiologist
 - Cardiac Nurse
 - Respiratory Nurse
 - Continence Clinic
 - Falls & Balance Clinic
 - Persistent Pain Services
- Radiology Service 5033 9286

Other Contact Numbers

- Mallee District Aboriginal Services 5032 8600
- Rumbalara 5032 1580
- Domestic Violence 5033 1899
- Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services 1800 064 865
- The Salvation Army 5033 1718

Free and Confidential Phone Support for Aboriginal & TSI People **Available 24hours, 7 days a week.**

- Yarning Safe 'N' Strong 1800 959 563
- 13 YARN 13 92 76



The Victorian Virtual Emergency Department allows you to access care for non-life-threatening emergencies, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You will be connected to our doctors and nurses via a video call, and receive medical advice from the comfort of your home.

How do I register?

- You will need a phone, tablet or computer with a camera to use this service.
- To register, please use your phone camera and scan the QR code.

You can also visit vved.org.au



**Do you have an idea or item to be included in this newsletter? We would love to hear from you.
Contact the Kapel Telkuna Unit on details listed below.**



Contact Info

- ☎ (03) 5033 9323 or (03) 5033 9868
- 📍 44 High Street, Swan Hill VIC 3585
- ✉ AHU@shdh.org.au



**Swan Hill
District Health**
Connected Care. Best Experience.



**Kapel
Telkuna**
Through water we heal