



**Kapal
Telkuna**
Through water we heal

MESSAGE STICK

March – April 2026
Issue 16

Understanding Triage: How Our Emergency Department helps you get the right care at the right time!

When you enter the ED, your treatment begins straight away with our triage nurse. Their role is to assess how serious your condition is so we can make sure the sickest patients are seen first.

Australia's Triage System has five levels as shown below and is designed to prioritise urgency - not arrival time.

If your condition isn't an emergency, there are many safe and accessible alternatives that can support you without the need to attend ED.

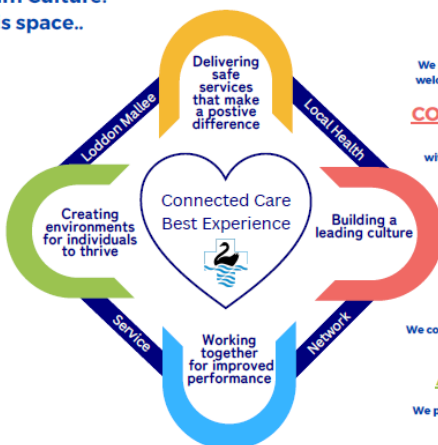
For more information please visit:
<https://www.shdh.org.au/our-services/emergency-department/>

We appreciate your assistance in helping us to provide you Connected Care, Best Experience.

1	Level 1 – Immediate: life threatening
2	Level 2 – Emergency: could become life threatening
3	Level 3 – Urgent: not life threatening
4	Level 4 – Semi Urgent: not life threatening
5	Level 5 – Non-urgent: needs treatment when time permits

Swan Hill District Health's Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Our One Team Culture:
Watch this space..



OUR VALUES

INCLUSIVE

We provide an experience that welcomes and values everyone.

COMPASSIONATE

We respond to our people with understanding, empathy and kindness.

PROGRESSIVE

We continue to strive for the best experience outcomes.

ACCOUNTABLE

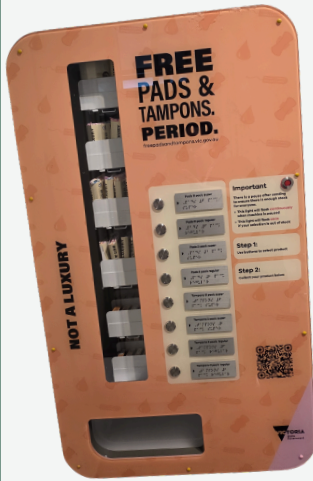
We personally commit to taking responsibility for all our decisions and actions.

SHDH Board Chair, Janice Kelly has officially launched the Swan Hill District Health Strategic Plan 2026-2029 on behalf of the Board of Directors. The core of our new plan is our Purpose, which is unchanged from our previous Strategic Plan: **Connected Care. Best Experience.**

The full plan can be found on the SHDH website - <http://www.shdh.org.au/about-us/our-organisation/>

Contact Info

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



FREE PADS & TAMPONS. PERIOD. - NOT A LUXURY!

The Kapel Telkuna Unit are pleased to let community know that we have had a vending machine for FREE pads & tampons installed in our bathroom.

This is accessible Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm, at 44 High Street. Walk in or call us on 5033 9868.

More people now have access to free pads and tampons when and where they need them. We know pads and tampons aren't a luxury and are essential to health and wellbeing. That's why the Victorian Government are making free pads and tampons available across the state.

For more information or to find locations of vending machines, you can visit - <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/free-pads-and-tampons>

headspace Swan Hill turns 10!

On Monday 16th February 2026, headspace Swan Hill invited community to come together to celebrate 10 years of headspace here in Swan Hill - 10 years of showing up for our young people. Over that time, headspace has played an important role in supporting the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of young people across this community. For many of our mob, it has been a place of safety - a place where they are heard, supported, and respected.

We extend an acknowledgement to the previous YARN Safe Workers over these years, who walked alongside our First Nations young people. The work you do is important, building trust, holding space, and helping our young people stay connected to culture, to community, and to hope.

Thank you headspace Swan Hill for the work you have done over the past 10 years, we look forward to the next 10 years of ongoing commitment to this community.



Pictured: Oliver Stewart from Clontarf starting off with a Welcome to Country. Well Done Oliver! You spoke with great confidence and pride.



Pictured: Some of our community members alongside the civil team from VALS.

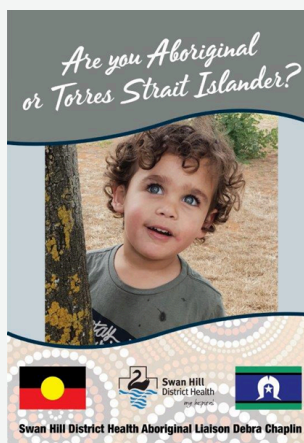
Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service visits KTU.

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Civil Team recently visited our office to deliver a community legal education session focused on civil and mental health legal issues. The session was well attended by community members, with feedback highlighting how informative it was and how valuable it was to meet the team face to face, particularly as they are based in Melbourne. We sincerely thank the Civil Team for taking the time to travel to our community and provide this important session.

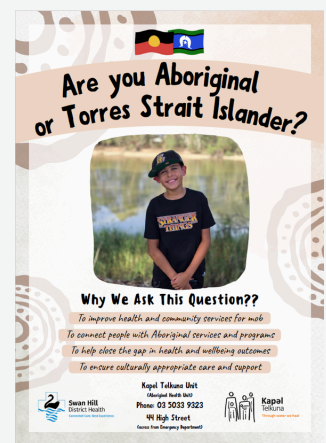
SHDH "Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?" posters -

Kapel Telkuna Unit is refreshing our "Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?" posters - and we would love our community to be part of it. We're inviting community members to have their photo included to help represent and celebrate our mob.

If you would like to take part, please contact the unit on 5033 9868 or message 0486 017 986. We're happy to come to you - whether at home, at the park, by the river, or here at our unit - wherever you feel most comfortable.



Current Poster



New Poster

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

Your story,
your choice.

National Advance Care Planning Week, is a reminder of the importance of having conversations with family, loved ones and community about what matters most to us.

Advance Care Planning is about making sure your wishes, values and choices are known and respected if there comes a time when you are unable to speak for yourself. It is about have a yarn early, so the people around you understand what is important to you and can feel confident supporting your choices.

Planning ahead can help reduce stress and uncertainty for family and loved ones during difficult times, while giving everyone peace of mind.

Advance Care Planning can include:

- having a yarn with family and loved ones about your wishes
- thinking about the care and support that is important to you
- choosing someone you trust to speak on your behalf if needed
- making sure you voice remains at the center of decisions about you care

Taking the time to start these conversations now can make a real difference later on.

Getting Started -

A- Appoint Another

C- Chat and Communicate

P- Put it on paper

If you would like support or more information, please contact our Advance Care Planning Coordinator -Merridee Taverna on 03 5033 9236.

Advance Care Planning Coordinator

Merridee Taverna

Merridee has held a variety of roles at Swan Hill District Health since first commencing here in 1980. Merridee supports community with Advance Care Planning on a part time basis. When she isn't providing support with ACP - she is working with Swan Hill Community Palliative Care, she has been in this role for 15 years and had taken on the Nurse Unit Manager position 5 years ago.



Merridee loves spending time with her grandchildren.

International Women's Day

8th March

International Women's Day is a time to recognise the strength, resilience and contributions of women in our community, and the important role they play in supporting the health and wellbeing of families and future generations.



For Aboriginal communities, it is also an opportunity to honor Aboriginal women as strong leaders, carers and cultural knowledge holders who continue to strengthen community through care, connection and culture.

"Strong women carry culture, nurture community, and inspire future generations"

At Swan Hill District Health, we encourage women to prioritise their health and wellbeing at every stage of life by staying up to date with age-related health checks and accessing local support services.

For more information about women's health, aged-related health checks and local services, visit <https://www.shdh.org.au/our-services/womens-health/>

Upcoming Events/Notices

JOIN OUR FIRST AID INFORMATION SESSION



Learn Life-saving skills that make a difference.

Thursday, 23rd April
1:30pm - 3:00pm
70 Nyah Rd, Swan Hill

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ Basic Wound Care & Bandaging
- ✓ Handling Choking and Breathing Emergencies

Be prepared for emergencies with hands-on first aid training led by certified instructors.

RAFFLES

Get Ready to Hunt
The Easter Bunny is Coming!

01
APRIL

MDAS COMMUNITY EASTER EVENT



FACE PAINTING | BALLOON MAKING | PETTING ZOO

FUN GAMES FOR THE KIDS

Please grab your raffle tickets at the sign in table on arrival

Wednesday, 1st April
2:30 PM to 4:30 PM
70 Nyah Road Swan Hill, MDAS



For more information please contact Malinda: 0427998104



**Kapal
Telkuna**
Through water we heal

- Share your knowledge and experiences to better support SHDH and Community
- Light lunch provided!
- Help shape the future of the service delivery at SHDH



Join Us for Our Next

ABORIGINAL REFERENCE GROUP

WEDNESDAY
8TH APRIL 2026

KAPEL TELKUNA UNIT
(44 HIGH STREET)

11 AM - 12:30 PM

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME
AND EVERYONE'S EXPERIENCE &
KNOWLEDGE IS VALUED**

For more information, contact us on:
(03) 5033 9868 or (03) 5033 9323
AHU@shdh.org.au



Swan Hill
District Health
Encompassing Local Health Services

National Close the Gap Day: Supporting Breastfeeding to Close the Gap

National Close the Gap Day, led by the Close the Gap Campaign, reminds us that everyone deserves the same opportunity to live a long, healthy life. One important way we can improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families is by supporting and promoting breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is more than just nutrition - it is culture, connection, and community.

WHY BREASTFEEDING MATTERS FOR BUB

Breastmilk is a baby's first immunisation. It:

- Strengthens the immune system
- Protects against ear, chest and tummy infections
- Reduces the risk of asthma and allergies
- Supports healthy growth and brain development
- Lowers the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes later in life

For our communities, where chronic disease rates are higher due to the ongoing impacts of colonisation and inequity, breastfeeding plays a powerful role in prevention and long-term health.

HEALTH BENEFITS FOR MUM



Breastfeeding also supports mothers' health by:

- Reducing the risk of breast and ovarian cancers
- Lowering the risk of type 2 diabetes
- Supporting emotional wellbeing and bonding
- Assisting recovery after birth

Strong mums raise strong families.

BREASTFEEDING IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

Creating environments where women feel safe, supported and culturally strong to breastfeed is part of closing the gap. That means:

- Family encouragement
- Culturally safe health services
- Community spaces that welcome breastfeeding
- Workplaces that support expressing and flexible return to work

Breastfeeding has always been part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Reclaiming, protecting and supporting this practice is a step toward self-determination and improved health outcomes.

On National Close the Gap Day March 19th 2026, we acknowledge that improving maternal and child health is key to breaking cycles of disadvantage. By supporting breastfeeding, we are investing in the health of the next generation.

If you would like support with breastfeeding, please contact our breastfeeding support service at Community Health on 5033 9337 - we are here to walk alongside you.



'Marry me' Chicken Fried Rice

Prep - 15m / Cook - 15m / Serves - 4

enjoy!

Step 1

One at a time, microwave 450g pkt of rice and 250g pkt of rice following packet directions or until warmed through. Squash the bags slightly to break up the grains inside.



Step 2

Meanwhile, drain sun-dried tomatoes, reserving 2 tbsp oil. Coarsely chop the sun-dried tomatoes.

Step 3

Heat the reserved oil in a large frying pan or wok over medium-high heat. Add broccolini and stir-fry for 2 minutes or until bright green. Add garlic and stir-fry for 30 seconds or until aromatic. Add pesto and stock, and stir-fry for 1-2 minutes or until the liquid reduces and thickens slightly.

Ingredients (11)

- 450g pkt long-grain microwave rice
- 250g pkt long-grain microwave rice
- 270g jar sun-dried tomatoes in oil
- 1 bunch broccolini, cut into small florets
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 130g (½ cup) Sacia tomato pesto
- 80ml (⅓ cup) chicken stock
- 1 barbecued chicken, flesh coarsely chopped
- 100g baby spinach
- 3 green shallots, thinly sliced diagonally
- Sea salt flakes, to serve

Step 4

Add the rice, sun-dried tomato and chicken to the pan or wok. Stir-fry for 1-2 minutes or until well combined and heated through. Add spinach and shallot, and stir-fry for 2 minutes or until the spinach just wilts. Sprinkle with sea salt flakes, to serve



No-bake Hot Cross Bun Slice

Prep - 25m / Makes - 12

Ingredients (13)

- 250g pkt Lotus Biscoff biscuits
- 125g butter, melted
- 2 tbs boiling water
- 3 tsp gelatine powder
- 500g cream cheese chopped, at room temperature
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp cinnamon sugar
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- 395g can sweetened condensed milk
- 65g (⅓ cup) sultanas, chopped
- 100g dark chocolate, coarsely chopped
- Extra cinnamon sugar, to dust

Step 1

Line a 16cm x 26cm ceramic dish with 3 layers of GLAD Wrap. Place biscuits in a food processor and process to fine crumbs. Add butter and process until just combined. Evenly press the mixture over the base of the prepared dish. Place in the fridge while preparing the topping.

Step 2

Place the boiling water in a heatproof jug and sprinkle over the gelatine. Stir until dissolved. Set aside for 5 minutes. Stir to combine.



Happy Easter

Step 3

Using an electric mixer, beat cream cheese, vanilla, cinnamon sugar and spices for 5 minutes or until smooth. Add condensed milk and beat for 2 minutes or until well combined. Gradually beat in the gelatine mixture until combined. Fold in sultanas. Pour mixture over the prepared base and smooth the surface. Cover the dish tightly with GLAD Wrap. Place in the fridge overnight to set

Step 4

The next day, place chocolate in a small microwave-safe bowl. Microwave for 1 minute or until melted and smooth. Set aside to cool slightly.

Step 5

Using the GLAD Wrap to aid you, carefully lift the slice from the dish and transfer to a board. Using a warm knife, cut the slice into squares.

Step 6

Spoon the melted chocolate into a GLAD Snap Lock Sandwich Resealable Bag. Snip off 1 corner. Pipe melted chocolate on top of each slice square to form a cross. Keep the slices in the fridge until ready to serve, dusted with extra cinnamon sugar.



Nursing & Clinical Care Roles

- RN Theatre
- Registered Midwife
- MDTU& Renal Dialysis Registered Nurse
- Grade 2 Registered Nurse or Endorsed Enrolled Nurse
- Deputy Clinical Director ED
- Community Health Nurse Practitioner
- Aged Care EN

Community Care

- Occupational Therapist – Grade 1 or 2
- Physiotherapy – Clinical Lead
- Physiotherapy
- Director of Pharmacy

Corporate & Administration Services

- Consumer Feedback and Compliance Officer

For more information visit our website on www.shdh.org.au or contact our People and Culture Department on 03 5033 9315



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.

National Close The Gap Day 2026

19th March

19 March 2026

**National
CLOSETHEGAP
Day**



Justice, Equality and Healing

✨ "Closing the gap begins with respect, connection and community led change." ✨

National Close the Gap Day is a time to reflect on the ongoing commitment to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. It recognises the importance of working together to address inequities in health, education and life opportunities, while celebrating the strength, resilience and leadership within Aboriginal communities.

For our health service, this day is a reminder that culturally safe care, strong relationships and community led approaches are essential in helping close the gap. By listening, learning and walking alongside community, we can support health futures for current and future generations.

One of KTU initiatives we have in place to ensure our community have a say, is our bi-monthly Aboriginal Reference Group meetings. We discuss all things related to Aboriginal health care within our service to ensure SHDH are providing culturally safe spaces and services. Our next meeting is on the 8th April - details on the flyer included on page 4.

DID YOU
KNOW?

Kinship is a vital part of Aboriginal culture and community life, shaping identity, relationships, and responsibilities across generations. It extends beyond immediate family, connecting people through aunts, uncles, grandparents, Elders, clan groups, and Country. Kinship systems help guide respect, support the raising of children, and ensure cultural knowledge, language, and traditions are passed on. For many Aboriginal people, kinship is central to belonging, wellbeing, and staying connected to community.

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
- Victims' Assistance Program 5036 3200

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



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