Message from the Chairman

With Albury Wodonga Health five years old on 1 July, it is timely to present an overview of some of the achievements so that you can reflect on the progress of the health services.

I would like to acknowledge the members of our community who have served on the Board and made significant contribution to the progress achieved. They are:

- Matt Burke OAM*
- Judy Charlton
- Prof Julia Coyle*
- Chris Halburd
- Vic Issell
- Allison Jenvey*
- Nicki Melville*
- Ian Thompson
- David Whittle
- Phillip Williams*
- Graeme Welsh*
- Dr Peter Vine OAM*

*indicates currently serving.

Albury Wodonga Health is deeply involved in the community, all our staff live in this community and many have done so for a lifetime. So we are acutely aware of the need to ensure you are informed of the direction of AWH and the work we do.

In the last five years almost 300,000 people have attended the Emergency Department, many more than once. And there have been over 150,000 admissions to hospital.

This publication is largely about the work of the doctors, nurses, allied health and support services staff and I am sure you will join my Board colleagues and I in congratulating them on what they have achieved.

I would also like to acknowledge many of our suppliers and contractors who have participated in this publication.

I hope you enjoy reading the work of the first five years of Albury Wodonga Health.

Ulf Ericson
Chairman
Albury Wodonga Health Celebrates five years

The past five years has seen many changes to the border’s health industry with major alterations experienced across both the Albury and Wodonga hospitals since the amalgamation of the two services in 2009. Whilst the integration presented a vast range of challenges, Albury Wodonga Health’s Chief Executive Officer Stuart Spring said the improvements and benefits have been enormous.

Albury Wodonga Health (AWH) has become one of the most significant regional health services in Australia. It has the second highest emergency attendances, more than 60,000 per year, in regional Australia, second only to Townsville in Queensland, and the second busiest in maternity with around 1750 babies delivered every year.

“The first and really important change came with the establishment of a single senior medical specialist staff in July 2009, this was with the strong support of the specialists and pointed to the future,” said Stuart.

Prior to 2009, the 2000 staff members identified with one hospital or another but today there are 17 different sites from which care is provided and many of the staff now work across a range of facilities, on both sides of the border, at all times of the day and night.

“Over the last five years, more than eight million dollars has been spent equipping both hospitals, including the replacement of 20 year old air conditioning plant at Albury, new infusion pumps, cardiac monitors and anaesthetic machines and a two million upgrade in information technology.”

Looking back, Stuart said, once the strategic and master plans had been bedded down in 2010, identifying Wodonga hospital as a specialty centre and Albury as the acute services campus, the capital funding started to flow from the NSW and Victorian governments. This has provided a range of positive developments including:

- An expanded renal dialysis unit
- Ronald McDonald family room
- An expanded emergency service
- A new dental unit
- Parents and babies unit (transferred from the Mercy Hospital)
- The endoscopy unit
- The PARC mental health accommodation - part of the wider North East and Border Mental Health Services established in 2012
- The new rehabilitation unit (early 2015)

AWH is really about the 25,000 patients who are admitted into the hospitals each year and the 60,000 who are treated in the emergency departments and the nurses, doctors and allied health staff together with the staff who work the ‘back of house’,” said Stuart.

The AWH facilities are only one part of the array of health services of north east Victoria and southern NSW. The Mercy Hospital together with the private hospitals and specialist and general medical practitioners of the area are part of a supportive network of health services serving the community.

“Taken as a whole, we, the community, are well served,” he said.

Facts at a glance

Over the past five years AWH has:
- Treated 126,499 patients in hospital
- Delivered 8242 babies
- Attended to 306,665 patients in emergency departments
- Conducted 63,777 surgical procedures

Staff and students in community services and health at Wodonga TAFE warmly congratulate their friends and colleagues at Albury Wodonga Health.

Albury Wodonga Health
Celebrates five years.
A wealth of knowledge and experience

Get involved and have your say about our health service

Community members are being encouraged to have their say about the service and experiences offered by Albury Wodonga Health and it can be as easy as sitting at your home computer if you want to get involved.

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is made up of members from the general community and its aim is to invite input from the public in order to improve the consumer experience within the health service.

“Consumer participation is about involving people in decision making about their own health care, about health service planning, policy development, setting priorities and addressing quality issues across the organisation” said Felicity Fox, CAC resource officer.

“We have released a community participation plan which is a vehicle for promoting and encouraging participation. We want to make sure we are responsive to community needs and have processes for involving people in everything we do.

Volunteers can contribute in a range of ways from providing input on policy, governance and delivery of services to working within a specific area or just helping review the information pamphlets that are designed for visitors and patients.

Felicity said no prior experience in the health service is necessary, just a desire to be involved and want to contribute.

Volunteers are provided with a formal orientation and training material and are supported by mentors or ‘buddies’ along the way.

If you want to know more or get involved contact the quality office on 02 6051 7649 or email enquiries@awh.org.au with the words ‘consumer participation’ in the subject title.

More than 200 staff members at Albury Wodonga Health are about to be officially recognised for their length of service to the health organisation.

Chief executive Stuart Spring said employees who had been with the health service for 10 years or more would be issued with certificates of service.

“The 200 staff has together provided 3100 years of service to us. This is yet another example of the commitment and dedication of our staff. Well done and still counting!”

A total of 30 staff has been employed for 20 years or more with four of those in the thirty plus category.

One of those who have dedicated most of their lives to caring for others is Pam Hume, in her 35th year at AWH.

Nursing was a given for Pam considering her eldest sister and mother were nurses. She said it held a real appeal to community needs and have processes:

“Consumer participation is about involving people in decision making about their own health care, about health service planning, policy development, setting priorities and addressing quality issues across the organisation” said Felicity Fox, CAC resource officer.

“We have released a community participation plan which is a vehicle for promoting and encouraging participation. We want to make sure we are responsive to community needs and have processes for involving people in everything we do.

Volunteers can contribute in a range of ways from providing input on policy, governance and delivery of services to working within a specific area or just helping review the information pamphlets that are designed for visitors and patients.

Felicity said no prior experience in the health service is necessary, just a desire to be involved and want to contribute.

Volunteers are provided with a formal orientation and training material and are supported by mentors or ‘buddies’ along the way.

If you want to know more or get involved contact the quality office on 02 6051 7649 or email enquiries@awh.org.au with the words ‘consumer participation’ in the subject title.

More than 200 staff members at Albury Wodonga Health are about to be officially recognised for their length of service to the health organisation.

Chief executive Stuart Spring said employees who had been with the health service for 10 years or more would be issued with certificates of service.

“The 200 staff has together provided 3100 years of service to us. This is yet another example of the commitment and dedication of our staff. Well done and still counting!”

A total of 30 staff has been employed for 20 years or more with four of those in the thirty plus category.

One of those who have dedicated most of their lives to caring for others is Pam Hume, in her 35th year at AWH.

Nursing was a given for Pam considering her eldest sister and mother were nurses. She said it held a real appeal after completing secondary education.

Most people know the challenges associated with nursing but Pam says the most rewarding part of nursing now is working as part of a multi-disciplinary team with rehabilitation doctors and allied health professionals in helping patients reach their maximum potential, both physically and emotionally before discharge.

“The friendships you make whilst nursing are very special and I have had much laughter and tears over the years,” she said.

Lyn Mulraney has been in environmental services for 33 years. Doing the rounds from 6.30pm to 2.30pm every day would be enough to keep most people fit yet Lyn still heads off to the gym and goes walking to keep herself in peak condition.

“Working so long for one organisation has many benefits,” she said. “I’ve been able to use my long service leave to travel overseas and spend time with my son who lives in Germany.”
Dental services increasing and expanding

The team at the Albury Wodonga Health Dental Service certainly has something to smile about. Over the past five years the service has tripled its service capabilities and more recently implemented a range of initiatives to improve dental education, broaden their reach to remote areas and ensure they consistently offer best practice standards at the centre.

The dental service has gone from strength to strength and has gone from offering three dental chairs to now providing 11, with the last chair added in April this year. The good news for patients is that waiting times have been significantly reduced as a result.

In one of several recent developments, the dental facility has launched an outpost service in Corryong where remote residents can gain access to specialist dental care through the Corryong hospital one day per fortnight.

“This is a new service we have just established and it means that residents who are isolated and removed from the main hub of health services can access important dental care without having to travel long distance,” said Helen Mitchell, acting program manager Dental Services.

In another move, the organisation has employed a health promotion worker to increase the education around oral health and improve access to dental services for priority access groups in the catchment area.

The role will focus on oral health promotion and prevention strategies to combat dental diseases before they present in the clinic as issues.

“And just four weeks ago we also employed a senior dental nurse educator who will be working with the dental nurses to ensure best practices,” said Ms Mitchell.

“She will monitor the latest industry trends, techniques and technologies and will provide a new direction for dental care and more importantly, how we can deliver it consistently.”

And for those who struggle to access dental services the new mobile van has been fitted out and is ready to hit the road sometime in the next three months.

“The van will be used for the transportation of modern state of the art equipment. It has a portable chair, light and set up which we then take to the clients,” said Ms Mitchell.

“The outreach van carries our portable dental equipment and gives us the flexibility of setting up at the service we are attending, be it a school, nursing home, supported residential service or any other community facility. This makes it easier for people with reduced access to our services receive the dental care they need.”

Dental student Alexander Reid shows Olivia Malcolm, 2, the children’s dental chair at Albury Wodonga Health Dental Service.

Melinda Dendunnen, senior dental nurse educator and dental student Emily Prew.
Patients benefit from improved elective surgery access

If you take a look behind the scenes at Albury Wodonga Health you’ll find a passionate group of people working hard to ensure that quality patient care is their priority.

And you’d be hard pressed to find a more dedicated leader than Rachael Andrew RN who directs the team in the Elective Surgery Access Unit.

In 2011, Ms Andrew was charged with the enormous task of integrating the waitlists of both Albury and Wodonga hospitals into one register. This also meant bringing together the team of 12 employees and creating a single unit of contact for both patients and surgeons.

Taking on the challenge seemed a natural progression for Ms Andrew who has been with the health service for 20 years and worked in a variety of areas including, at one time, bed management at Albury.

“Were the first team to be integrated after the amalgamation,” she said.

“When we combined the elective surgery waitlists it involved undertaking a comprehensive audit of the new combined waitlist to see exactly what we were dealing with. This was difficult as the record keeping was very different in each area.”

A further improvement saw a model of care introduced that meant a patient was managed by the same administrative and clinical staff members all the way through the process, from submitting the initial paperwork to the actual surgery and even the post operation follow up.

“What we have created is in essence a one stop shop for patients and surgeons. We can now book the procedure, arrange for pre-admission, organise tests, follow up and ensure you get into surgery safely.

“We have the bigger picture in mind. We can see what’s happening at both hospitals and if necessary reschedule surgeons and patients to ensure the surgery is done in the appropriate way and within bed availability.

Ms Andrew is extraordinarily proud of her team who she says is very patient focused and have worked hard to improve the flow of elective patients through the hospital theatres.

“Our new model is now seen as a benchmark in regional health services. We have had visits from other hospitals such as Bairnsdale, Warrnambool, Bendigo and Wagga Wagga who are looking at adopting these processes.”

Five years on and the results are evident. Despite 800 – 1000 new referrals for surgery coming in every month they have been able to reduce the waitlist by nearly 20%.

“We have a huge catchment area and offer a large variety of surgical procedures from orthopedics, ear nose and throat, gastroenterology, gynecology and paediatrics to ophthalmology, pain management and general surgery.

“We are managing 800-900 surgical procedures per month so it’s a great result that we’ve been able to reduce the waitlist so significantly.”

Ms Andrew said the reduction had been achieved through the new processes and also with relationships developed in the past 12 months with private sector organisations such as Albury Day Surgery and Albury Wodonga Private who have been granted funding to assist with certain types of surgical procedures for public patients.

“What we have now is a real face to face unit. It’s more expedient and safer and offers a lot more certainty to patients. Previously most of the communication was done by phone and letter but now it can be achieved by person to person,” she said.

INtelephony

We provide IT and Communication solutions to match your business requirements. INtelephony take an overview of your business and design a communications network to support your core business services.

INtelephony specialize in PABX & Microwave Data networks. Working in partnership with Alcatel Lucent and Wave 1, we can tailor a professional solution to suit your business needs.

Microwave data, virtual servers and onsite, more traditional servers are all options we have for you. Contact us to discuss options available to your business.

‘Proud to provide ALBURY WODONGA HEALTH with their communication services’

Contact Details

Phone: 02 6040 4330
Email: info@intelephony.com.au
Address: 991 Mate St, Albury
State of the art techniques for border medical students

Gone are the days of student health professionals using an orange distributor to practice an intramuscular injection. Today students from across the border can safely practice their skills on mannequins who have human qualities, including speaking, a heart rate and blood pressure. Our future doctors, nurses and allied health professionals are benefitting early in their training from exposure to real life scenarios with the introduction of state of the art simulation recruits Sim Man and Sim Mum.

In the past two years more than 600 students from training institutes such as Charles Sturt, La Trobe and the University of NSW have benefitted from the partnership Albury Wodonga Health formed with the Hume Simulation Alliance. The $120,000 high tech medical mannequins were secured through funding from Health Workforce Australia. It now means students can gain confidence through experiencing situations that are common in clinical practice, said Debbie Stockton, manager of Professional Development and Research.

“The scenarios can range from procedures in the operating theatre to emergency traumas and childbirth,” she said.

“The pooled resources means we have access to a much broader range of expertise and can provide training opportunities not available before.”

The program has been in place for 18 months and uses the mannequins, which can cry, bleed and vomit, in range of training situations at both Albury and Wodonga hospitals.

“Not only is it very safe, it provides an opportunity for the person facilitating the exercise to fully debrief the students afterwards. We also use simulation scenarios for the continued professional development of our staff. It provides a really powerful learning situation for both students and staff.”

Dr Sam Daly trained at Monash University and chose to come to Albury Wodonga for a diverse experience. She is considering pursuing a career in rural general practice and has completed her two years are undertaking further medical training in the region.

Dr Davies said AWH now has a comprehensive education program for these young doctors, with many of the senior specialists supporting them as they develop their career.

Medical students at the local rural clinical school also have the opportunity to continue as new graduates in Albury Wodonga. Many who have completed their two years are undertaking further medical training in the region.

“Our clinical experience has been diverse and rewarding. The staff at the hospital has always been supportive and approachable. We have learnt a lot over the past six months. Being taught by very experienced clinicians and given opportunities to get hands on experience is a rarity of settings.”

Dr Shanel Bappayya and Dr Sam Daly are two of the 30 junior medical doctors at Albury Wodonga Health.
Mental health expanding borders

One of the major achievements of the past five years being celebrated by Albury Wodonga Health has been the successful integration of mental health services across the region.

Nearly two years ago a range of services from Wodonga, Wangaratta and Beechworth were amalgamated and now operate under the banner of North East and Border Mental Health Services.

North East and Border Mental Health Services (NEBMHS) was launched in December 2012 by the Minister for Mental Health Mary Woolridge and combined the services of the former Beechworth Health Service and Northeast Health Wangaratta with Albury Wodonga Health.

Stuart McIntosh, the transition manager of mental health, reflects on the hard work of the past few years and realises that once a few more milestones are achieved in the near future the North East and Border Mental Health Service will be one of the biggest services of its kind in regional Australia.

"Over the last 18 months the integrated mental health service has realised opportunities for improved governance and management under the one auspice agency," he said.

"The establishment of the new body also meant that Albury Wodonga Health has become an approved provider of residential aged care and we were granted aged care accreditation following an audit of the Beechworth campus' Blackwood Cottage Older Persons Mental Health Service in December 2012."

Mr McIntosh praised the work of the clients, carers and staff whose efforts resulted in achieving a challenging accreditation in such a short period following the integration.

"As of today plenty of work continues as the changes are bedded down in order to gain the benefits integration provides. The next steps include the integration of Albury based mental health and drug alcohol services with NEBMHS in the coming financial year."

It is expected the organisation will expand to include these programs in the very near future when the services based in Townsand Street, Smollet Street and Nolan House become part of Albury Wodonga Health.

According to Mr McIntosh significant planning has been underway for 18 months to enable services currently managed by the Murrumbidgee Local Health District to be included in the transition. This has culminated in the Department of Health Victoria and Ministry of Health NSW recently providing approval for the transfer.

This initiative opens up both the Kerferd Clinic in Wangaratta and Nolan House in Albury to the community of North East Victoria and Southern NSW.

“This is an exciting development for NEMBHS as the new cross border entity becomes one of the bigger mental health services in regional Australia and provides greater opportunities for future initiatives around improved client outcomes,” Mr McIntosh said.

Mental Health in Focus
The Willows - helping people recover

The Willows is an 18 bed unit located at Gilchrist Avenue and Mayday Court in Beechworth. The unit provides short to medium term accommodation for those people who have significant mental illness and require assistance to develop skills which will help them to live independently in their community. The aim of the program is recovery.

Using the Recovery Star model, people are encouraged to be self determining in what they would like to achieve during their stay. A range of support services are available as required to assist with goal attainment.

Dorevitch Pathology Proudly supporting Albury-Wodonga Health and the local community

Dorevitch Pathology is a leading provider of pathology and medical diagnostic services to doctors, specialists and hospitals throughout Victoria, as well as commercial and Government organisations in Australia and internationally.

- We offer a pathology service which provides superior quality, speed and convenience of service, via the most modern facilities and processes and pathologist consultation across all medical disciplines.

- Our pathologists and scientists make countless scientific contributions to improve the application of laboratory diagnostics to aid treating doctors in bettering patient care.

- Our team of pathologists are leaders in their respective fields and work in a network of over 30 laboratories across Victoria and the border of southern New South Wales.

- We provide services to over 70 hospitals in Melbourne and regional Victoria/southern NSW and operate over 400 collection centres.

- We are proud of our association with Albury/Wodonga Health and now operate 3 laboratories and 20 collection centres. We have over 100 staff making a valuable contribution to our business, in collection centres, laboratories, delivery and other administrative/support functions.

- We provide high quality, convenient and accessible pathology services and patients are Bulk Billed (no charge to patients) for all Medicare tests.

For further information, please visit
www.dorevitch.com.au
or call (03) 9244 0444

Specialist Diagnostic Services, ABN 84 007 190 043 APA, trading as Dorevitch Pathology June 2014
Volunteers making a big difference

A welcoming smile and friendly greeting is not something you always expect when first entering a very busy hospital but that’s exactly what you’ll get when entering the Albury and Wodonga Hospitals. A fresh approach to volunteer services at Albury Wodonga Health (AWH) means patients and visitors are given an almost hotel style welcome when they enter the facility. The ‘Concierge’ program was introduced in 2012 by volunteer coordinator Elaine Hill who was recruited by AWH in 2011. She had experienced a similar service when she had to attend the Royal Melbourne Hospital as a patient. “It can make a huge difference for people coming to hospital. If you are not feeling well or visiting someone who is sick visiting a large hospital can be very daunting,” she said. “Our volunteers are there right at the door to greet you, to direct you to where you need to go, give you the information you need and even help you carry your bags if you are being admitted for surgery.”

She said the pet therapy program is particularly popular, not just with patients but with visitors and staff. “Having the dogs on site helps bring the outside world in,” she said. “It breaks down the institutional feel of hospitals.” She said the volunteers make a huge difference to hospital patients. “They love to talk to people. They are not in rush, they are not giving bad news or doing tests, they are just there to have a chat.” Mrs Hill said her job was enormously satisfying. She gets the most joy from her interaction with the volunteers and the friendships that have been formed. “I really enjoy their company and building relationships with them and the patients and their families. It’s also really lovely to see the relationships that grow between the patients and the volunteers, it really adds warmth to the hospital environment,” she said.

Our Radiologist’s specialist expertise means they will provide an accurate answer to your referring doctor.


Clinic Locations:
3 Raeysay Place, West Albury
Appointments: 02 6022 5202
AWH – Albury Campus
Appointments: 02 6058 8300
Corner Street, Yarrawonga
Appointments: 03 5743 9200
Cunlack Street, Wangaratta
Appointments: 03 5723 3100

Regional Imaging

L – R Volunteer Coordinator Elaine Hill with Thunder, volunteer Margaret Clayton with Rain and Teacup Poodle owner Christine Jones with Blizzard and Storm.