



Heathcote Health

Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024

Version 7.0: 17 November 2021

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1 Commitments, values, mission

Heathcote Health's first commitment is to the patient experience:

- The consumer is at the forefront of everything we do:
 - Patient experience is the sum of all contact with our health service
 - Everyone's Perceptions Matter

Heathcote Health's mission statement is:

- We strive to provide excellent, sustainable local health care services; continuously seeking service improvements

Heathcote Health's values are:

- **Compassion**
Consistently acting with empathy and integrity
We demonstrate compassion by:
 - genuinely understanding, feeling and identifying with the needs of others;
 - actively listening to fully understand and genuinely empathize with people's realities; and
 - responding with compassion in service and advocacy for each individual, group and community, and for society as a whole.
- **Accountability**
Taking responsibility for our decisions and actions
We demonstrate accountability by:
 - working to clear objectives in a transparent manner;
 - accepting responsibility for our decisions and actions;
 - seeking to achieve best use of resources; and
 - submitting ourselves to appropriate scrutiny.
- **Respect**
Respecting the rights, beliefs and choice of every individual
We demonstrate respect for others by:
 - treating them fairly and objectively;
 - ensuring freedom from discrimination, harassment and bullying; and
 - using their views to improve outcomes on an ongoing basis.
- **Excellence**
Inspiring and motivating, innovation and achievement
We demonstrate excellence by:
 - being prepared for change and striving for continuous learning and quality improvements;
 - acknowledging and rewarding innovation in practice and outcomes; and
 - developing and contributing to an environment where every member of the team is the right person for their job and is empowered to perform to the highest possible standard.

Person Centred Care (PCC) is a philosophical approach to how Heathcote Health provides care to consumers and interacts with other key stakeholders, including our staff. PCC is based on the principles of respect, value of the individual and the need to deliver service in an environment that supports peoples' physical, emotional, social and psychological needs. PCC is underpinned by a culture of collaboration and partnership and all staff of Heathcote Health are required to adhere to these principles.

Aligning closely to PCC, Heathcote Health has implemented a Montessori approach which focuses on the persons' abilities, capturing their interest and showing respect. PCC supports people to stay as independent as possible through involvement in meaningful roles and activities.

2 Background and context

This strategic plan was developed during late 2020 and early 2021, and is based on:

- High-level population and demographic analysis of Heathcote and surrounds.
- High-level analysis of the health status enjoyed by residents of Heathcote and surrounds.
- Workshops with Board and Executive of Heathcote Health.
- Workshops with a community reference group, who considered a series of questions about the role of Heathcote Health in partnership with its communities, and commented on draft priorities. In particular, mental health services were identified as a key need. While Heathcote Health has a very limited role in the direct delivery of mental health services, it has a key role in supporting people to access mental health services by co-locating mental health services at the hospital site, and/or by appropriately referring people to external services.
- Consultations with managers, staff and volunteers of Heathcote Health, including via All Staff Zoom sessions.
- Consultations with members of the Heathcote and district community, including community groups via the Heathcote Community Capacity Builders and members of the general public at the Heathcote Community Festival.
- Liaison with Loddon Mallee Health Network regarding alignment with the LMHN Regional Plan 2020+.
- Liaison with Loddon Mallee Rural and Regional Health, Victorian Department of Health.

2.1 About Heathcote Health

Heathcote Health is a small rural health service delivering acute, urgent care, primary, aged and community health services to people living in Heathcote and surrounds. The community hospital and residential aged care facility in Heathcote provide the following services:

- Acute services: inpatient and transition care services
- Urgent care: available 24 hours every day
- Aged care: residential services, and delivery of Home Care Packages for older people living in the community
- Primary health services: District Nursing, personal care, health promotion, respite care, general homecare, home maintenance, Meals on Wheels, Planned Activity Groups provided by Heathcote Health to community members in Heathcote and surrounds.

Heathcote Health supports a number of co-located providers to provide key health services for people living in Heathcote and surrounds, including a general practice, cardiology, counselling, diabetes education, hearing services, optometry, physiotherapy, podiatry, and radiology.

Activity levels have reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic but in recent years Heathcote Health had been experiencing significant growth in transition care services, home care package clients, community services programs and primary care services. Occupancy levels in residential aged care have been maintained at high levels despite the pandemic and Heathcote Health is anticipating continued strong growth in the recovery phase of the pandemic in relation to remote patient monitoring, telehealth consultations and hospital in the home.

Despite operating in a challenging environment, Heathcote Health has been able to maintain strong and effective partnerships with local GP clinics, other healthcare providers and local community groups and organisations, maintain capability and strengthen our workforce, secure essential infrastructure funding, and enhance our ability to identify and respond to the health and wellbeing needs of the Heathcote and district community.

2.1.1 Heathcote Health plans

Consistent with the key high level priorities and objectives in this Strategic Plan, Heathcote Health has developed a number of subsidiary plans. These are set at a more granular level to enable accountabilities and resources to be allocated to the underpinning strategies and actions. These subsidiary plans include:

- Heathcote Health Workforce Plan

- Heathcote Health Patient Experience Strategic Action Plan
- Heathcote Health Quality and Safety Plan
- Heathcote Health Social Procurement Strategy
- Heathcote Health GROW Bendigo Action Plan
- Heathcote Health Aged Care Continuous Improvement Plan.

These plans can be accessed via the Heathcote Health website under the 'publications' tab Website link.

2.1.2 Other related plans

2.1.2.1 Loddon Mallee Health Network Regional Plan 2020+

The Loddon Mallee Health Network (LMHN) is an unincorporated joint venture governed by CEOs of public hospitals from the Loddon Mallee region. LMHN launched the LMHN Regional Plan 2020+ on 1 July 2020.

The vision of LMHN is:

- Shaping the future of health service delivery to give our communities a great experience throughout the Loddon Mallee Region.

The strategic priorities set out in the LMHN Regional Plan 2020+ are:

- Region-wide service and workforce planning;
- Central functions and shared services;
- Local solutions; and
- Quality, safety and patient experience.

LMHN is the Health Service Partnership (HSP) for the Loddon Mallee Region and aims to:

- Share expertise
 - Bring together leadership, insight and specialised skills from across the region.
- Achieve scale and coordination
 - Reduce implementation costs through scale, specialisation and load sharing.
- Create common goals
 - Maintain health service accountability for individual operational performance, while taking on collective accountability for a small number of system goals.

LMHN will develop plans for the following four Victorian Government priorities:

1. Better at Home
2. Elective surgery and emergency access
3. Mental health reform
4. Pandemic response

LMHN has also included an additional regional priority which will focus on Aged Care, and will work and engage with other care providers to progress work against these five priority areas where collaboration offers the opportunity to pool and align efforts, integrate care, and share learnings and best practices.

2.1.2.2 Heathcote and District Community Plan

This plan was developed by the Heathcote and District Community with Advance Heathcote Inc. as the lead. Heathcote Health has responsibility for implementing a number of key health and wellbeing initiatives from this plan, particularly in development of inclusive policies, partnerships and projects resulting in better community connections and quality of life.

2.1.2.3 Heathcote Community Wellbeing Action Plan

The Heathcote Community Wellbeing Action Plan was launched in early October 2020. The Plan defines "wellbeing" as a feeling of safety, security and connection that enables to people actively engage in community activities. The Plan aims to improve community wellbeing, in order to reduce individual experience of isolation, anxiety and depression.

2.2 Victorian Government: Policy context

Victoria's health system and service planning framework is underpinned by the role of the Victorian Department of Health as a translator of government policy into a vision and strategic direction for the health system, the expression of this vision and direction into the design and planning of the state-wide service system, and the realisation of that design in the service delivery plans of each health service. The relationship between these components represents the creative interface of the planning process: an interplay between policy and strategic direction setting, operational intelligence, service design, and delivery. One of the main purposes of health service strategic plans is to demonstrate the contribution of the health service to system-wide goals, including addressing specific performance and policy priorities set by the Victorian Government. To achieve this purpose, a health service's strategic plans must demonstrate a clear understanding of the policy and regulatory environment in which it operates. In developing this Strategic Plan, Heathcote Health has considered the following key state and federal government policy documents and legislation:

- Health 2040: Advancing Health, Access and Care
- Targeting zero - Supporting the Victorian hospital system to eliminate avoidable harm and strengthen quality of care: Report of the Review of Hospital Safety and Quality Assurance in Victoria
- Better, Safer Care: Delivering a world-leading healthcare system
- Victoria's 10 Year Mental Health Plan
- Mental Health and Wellbeing in Victoria: Our priorities and progress in system reform and delivery
- Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report: Care, Dignity and Respect
- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023
- Gender Equality Act 2020

3 About the Heathcote communities

The town of Heathcote and its surrounding district is located in the City of Greater Bendigo, with a population of about 2,793 people in the community or 4,529 including the broader Heathcote SA2 region¹. Heathcote is located approximately 100 kilometres northwest of Melbourne and about 50 kilometres south east of Bendigo. The Rural Catchment of Heathcote adds a further 10 localities to the catchment.

Figure 1 Map of the Heathcote SA2 region



3.1 Population

Over the 20 year period from 2016 to 2026, the population of Heathcote and its surrounding area (Heathcote SA2 region) is expected to grow by 19.0 per cent, from 4,529 in 2016 to 5,389 in 2036.

Table 1 Heathcote SA2 population: 2016 actual, forecast to 2036

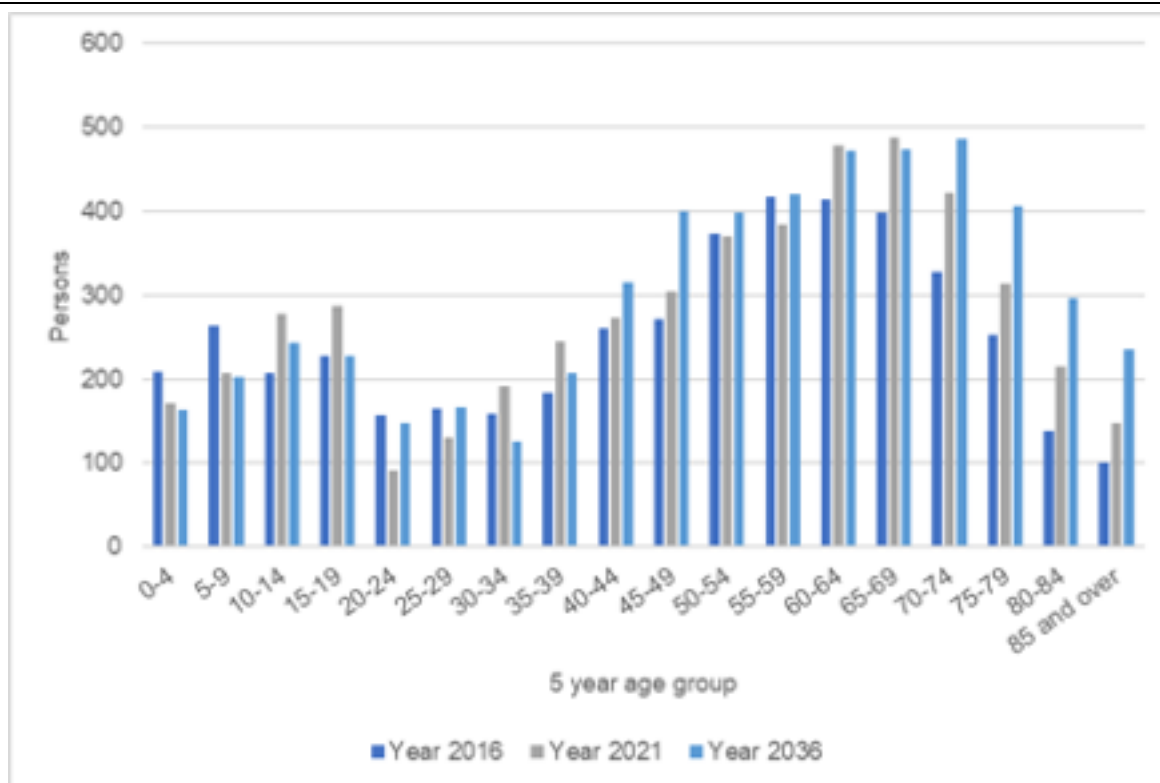
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	Change 2016 to 2036	Per cent growth
Population	4,529	4,791	4,999	5,189	5,389	860	19.0%

Source: Victoria in Future 2019

During the next two decades, Heathcote is projected to experience significant growth in the number of persons aged 60 years and older (Figure 2). According to the 2016 Census, the average age of a person living in the Heathcote SA2 region is 53 years old.

¹ Census 2016, Australian Bureau of Statistics; Victoria in Future 2019

Figure 2 Heathcote and surrounds population projections by age group 2016 to 2036



Source: Victoria in Future 2019

Figure 2 further illustrates the expected change in population by 2036, with a slight decline in the total number of children and young people, but a large increase in numbers of older people. The population aged 65 years and older is expected to increase by 55.6 per cent by 2036, or 678 more people.

3.2 Socioeconomic indicators

The Australian Bureau of Statistics uses census data to produce its Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage. It is based on a range of census variables considered to reflect levels of disadvantage, including income level, employment status and level of educational attainment. A number of studies have indicated a consistent correlation between low socioeconomic status and poor health.

These data are collated to create the Socio-economic Index for Areas. Scores are standardised so that the average score across Australia is 1,000. Scores lower than 1,000 indicate relatively more disadvantaged areas and higher scores indicate relatively less disadvantaged areas.

The Index of Economic Resources “focuses on the financial aspects of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage, by summarising variables related to income and wealth.” Financial aspects include the number of owned or rented homes, the amount of rent paid, household income and other economic variables. The Index of Education and Occupation reflects a communities’ educational and occupational level, including qualifications achieved, number of people undergoing further education, and the number of people in low or high skilled occupations.²

Table 2 demonstrates that Heathcote and its surrounds is a highly disadvantaged area, scoring in the bottom 40 per cent for economic resources and bottom 30 per cent for education and occupation and relative socio-economic disadvantage. Many of the immediately surrounding areas to Heathcote have scored well above 1,000, for example Bendigo South and Strathfieldsaye.

Table 2 Socio-economic indexes (SEIFA) for the Heathcote SA2 region and other surrounding SA2 regions

SA2 Region	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage		Index of Economic Resources		Index of Education and Occupation	
	Score	Decile	Score	Decile	Score	Decile
Heathcote SA2	1000	10	1000	10	1000	10

² <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2033.0.55.001~2016~Main%20Features~The%20Indexes~12>

SA2 Region	Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage		Index of Economic Resources		Index of Education and Occupation	
	Score	Decile	Score	Decile	Score	Decile
Beaufort	969	4	994	5	963	4
Golden Plains - North	993	5	1018	7	959	4
Maryborough (Vic.)	873	1	897	1	882	1
Maryborough Region	914	2	954	3	901	2
Bendigo	919	2	895	1	954	4
California Gully – Eaglehawk	899	1	920	2	888	1
East Bendigo – Kennington	996	5	962	3	1016	7
Flora Hill - Spring Gully	991	5	930	2	1034	7
Kangaroo Flat - Golden Square	949	3	945	2	926	3
Maiden Gully	1074	9	1092	10	996	6
Strathfieldsaye	1085	9	1090	10	1048	8
White Hills – Ascot	1007	5	1009	6	963	4
Bendigo Region - South	1063	8	1079	9	1010	6
Castlemaine	984	4	964	3	1025	7
Castlemaine Region	1008	5	1014	6	1018	7
Heathcote	944	3	974	4	934	3
Kyneton	1017	6	1022	7	1017	7
Woodend	1071	9	1069	9	1080	8
Bendigo Region - North	994	5	1028	7	959	4
Loddon	941	3	969	4	965	5

Source: Socio-economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), 2016, Australian Bureau of Statistics

4 Strategic Priorities

In consultation with its community, Heathcote Health has adopted the following five strategic priorities:

- Providing quality health services, safely.
- Helping people in Heathcote and surrounding communities to live a healthy life.
- Creating specific health services for people who are at risk of poor health.
- Building resilience in Heathcote and surrounding communities.
- Referring people to other health services when necessary.

In discussion, we found that community members most highly prioritised the provision of high quality and safe services, and creating specific health services for people who are at risk of poor health.

Note that the strategic priorities have been developed with a primary focus on how Heathcote Health operations can achieve positive health and wellbeing outcomes for the Heathcote and district community.

4.1 Pillars

The Heathcote Health Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020 rested on the following pillars, which remain current for 2021-24:

- **Community:** a commitment to be an exemplary public citizen, making a difference in the community and stewarding the environment
- **People:** a commitment to create a values-driven culture, and to attract the best and brightest people.
- **Growth:** a commitment to better manage resources, to improve infrastructure, and to innovate.
- **Service:** a commitment to provide excellent services.
- **Partnership:** a commitment to collaborate and engage with stakeholders for the benefit of Heathcote and surrounding communities.
- **Finance:** a commitment to maintain financial viability and invest in new technologies.
- **Quality:** a commitment to clinical excellence and safety.

These Pillars describe the critical organisational capabilities for Heathcote Health to effectively deliver the communities' Priorities.

4.2 Priority One: Providing quality health services, safely

Success in this Priority is demonstrated when people living in Heathcote and surrounding communities experience improved health outcomes and greater confidence in the quality of care provided by Heathcote Health and its partners.

Heathcote Health's role is to deliver high-quality, safe and appropriate services for people living in Heathcote and surrounding communities, and to provide leadership for communities and service providers.

Underpinning this work, Heathcote Health will focus on its human resources by:

- Continuing to implement its workforce development plan.
- Continuing to build a positive and innovative workforce culture, where commitment to values aids in recruiting and retaining excellent staff.
- Ensuring cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, patients and residents.
- Supporting innovators and thought leaders within Heathcote Health, amongst the Heathcote and surrounding communities, and in partner agencies.

Table 3 Providing quality health services, safely

Objectives	Actions	Measures
Use the Safer Care Victoria Organisational Strategy for Improvement Matrix (OSIM) capability measurement tool and process to identify organisational accelerators and barriers to improvement.	Review the four domains for organisational readiness for change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational systems and structures Workforce capability and development Measurement and review of results Improved culture and behaviour 	Organisational readiness reviews completed and action plan endorsed by the Board
Providing pandemic-related services where possible such as education, screening, testing and vaccinating	In partnership with Bendigo Health and other key stakeholders, continue to monitor the Heathcote communities' need for education and services	Delivery of COVID health promotion and education, testing clinics and virtual home monitoring of COVID+ cases targeted to the Heathcote and district community
Continuing to deliver the Patient Experience Strategic Action Plan, and the Quality and Safety Plan	Review the <i>Partnering in healthcare</i> framework, to engage consumers as partners in care	Review of partnering framework completed and action plan endorsed by the Board

4.3 Priority Two: Helping people in Heathcote and surrounding communities to live a healthy life

This Priority highlights the Social Determinants of Health, and recognises the key role of Heathcote Health in promoting the factors that underpin population health and wellbeing. Within this framework, Heathcote Health's key role is in primary health promotion: helping communities to reduce individuals' risk of ill-health through education and community development.

Underpinning this work, Heathcote Health will focus on community needs and advocacy by:

- Developing and implementing a Community Engagement Strategy through which the health service and communities will jointly identify and respond to community health needs
- Advocating within regional and sub-regional health and planning networks for services that meet the needs of people living in Heathcote and surrounding communities.

Table 4 Helping people to live a healthy life

Objectives	Actions	Measures
Building allegiances with community organisations and developing shared understanding of the causes of disadvantage and the tools available to address them	Participate in existing forums such as Heathcote Community Capacity Builders and Bendigo Safe Community Forum Implement Community Engagement Strategy using in-person and on-line forums to identify health priorities for the Heathcote and district community and local community collaboration opportunities.	Community-agreed tools developed, including education, improving access to employment, housing and transport, and/or delivery of new services
Particularly advocate for the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within regional and sub-regional health and other service networks	Implement policies and procedures consistent with the Victorian Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework Agree with other relevant health services about shared responses to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Heathcote area	Strategies developed and implemented to improve the health care experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients

4.4 Priority Three: Creating specific health services for people who are at risk of poor health

This Priority recognises that a number of Heathcote and surrounds residents are at particular risk of poor health outcomes because of lifestyle issues, lack of access to primary health care services, low socioeconomic status, and/or existing health conditions. Some population groups disproportionately experience poor health outcomes, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, older people, immigrant communities, people with disabilities, and members of LGBTQ communities.

Heathcote Health's role is to lead a health promotion response, working with these groups to identify health barriers, improve service delivery and wellbeing amongst the group, and empower people with information and advocacy. Success is demonstrated by the development of new service models that respond to the needs of people from these vulnerable groups.

Underpinning this work, Heathcote Health will focus on service development, by:

- Continuing to develop new service models, particularly models that are based in the community and in people's homes to enhance access for hard to reach groups.
- Building partnership networks to innovate and support these new service models. This is summarised as "we partner before we start to build something new"
- Continuing to contribute to the SMARt Rural Health research team, in collaboration with La Trobe University, Swinburne University, and other rural Victorian health services to improve our knowledge and understanding of rural and remote health needs and opportunities for service improvements.

Table 5 Creating new services for people at risk of poor health

Objectives	Actions	Measures
Continue to develop community-based models of aged care, noting and supporting the work done by the Heathcote Dementia Alliance Inc.	Continue to implement the Aged Care Continuous Improvement Plan.	More of the older people in Heathcote and surrounds are able to receive care at home.
Work with community agencies to identify the needs of at-risk groups, and to locate the resources needed to respond to these needs.	Develop awareness of local community groups (formal and informal). Create forums for community groups to meet each other, and to meet Heathcote Health staff and managers.	Implement strategies in response to identified needs.
Partner with schools and early childhood services in Heathcote and surrounding communities to respond to the needs of at risk children.	Develop and implement strategies to benefit children and young people by helping their families and communities to create environments where they can flourish.	Partnership initiatives with schools and early childhood services are developed and implemented.

4.5 Priority Four: Building resilience in Heathcote and surrounding communities

Heathcote and surrounding communities fared relatively well during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, other crises will continue to emerge, ranging from climate change impacts to new disease outbreaks.

Heathcote Health's communities and partners look to us for immediate response and for ongoing leadership in development and delivery of community and health services responses. Community wellbeing is about feeling safe, secure and connected to your environment so that you can actively engage in your community. Individual wellbeing and issues like isolation, anxiety, depression and suicide can be linked to how 'well' a community is able to function to support each other. There are many community-level initiatives that can help to prevent individual wellbeing issues. Through local collective impact workshops conducted during 2019-2020, ways to help support the mental health and wellbeing of the people in the Heathcote and district community were identified and documented in the Heathcote Community Wellbeing Action Plan.

Underpinning this work, Heathcote Health will focus on leadership, by:

- Working within community forums to identify community needs and challenges

- Working with partners and communities to reduce community members' isolation, and to build community resilience.

Table 6 Building resilience in Heathcote and surrounds

Objectives	Actions	Measures
Improve access to community health and wellbeing data.	Access local health and wellbeing data through the Greater Bendigo Data Co-Op and share with the Heathcote and district community.	Community health and wellbeing data reports.
Improve social connections for people living in the Heathcote and district community, especially for those who are socially isolated.	Implement social connection strategies from the Heathcote Community Wellbeing Action Plan.	Social connection strategies implemented.
A stronger community identity for the Heathcote and district community.	Implement community identity project ideas from the Heathcote Community Wellbeing Strategy.	Community identity project ideas implemented.

4.6 Priority Five: Referring people to other health services when necessary

As a small rural health service, Heathcote Health is responsible to make sure that people living within Heathcote and surrounding communities can promptly access the health and mental health services they need. Success in this Priority is demonstrated when all community members are able to access prompt and appropriate health services, whether or not provided by Heathcote Health. Heathcote Health's role is to continue to participate in regional health networks that work to bring services into Heathcote, and to provide prompt and appropriate referrals for people who need to access services not available locally. During consultations, access to mental health care was particularly important.

In order to enhance access to services, Heathcote Health will focus on partnerships, particularly with:

- Individuals, groups and service providers within Heathcote and surrounding communities
- The Loddon Mallee Health Network, and its member health services
- City of Greater Bendigo, particularly noting that Heathcote Health will contribute to the Greater Bendigo Health and Wellbeing Plan developed during 2021
- Aboriginal-Controlled Community Health Organisations that provide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within Heathcote and surrounding communities.

Table 7 Referring people to the right health service to meet their needs

Objectives	Actions	Measures
Work with partners to increase Heathcote residents' access to mental health services	Partner with Loddon Campaspe / Southern Mallee Area Mental Health Services to improve access to their mental health services by Heathcote communities. Develop effective referrals to primary mental health services, such as general practices.	Residents of Heathcote and surrounding communities report better access to mental health care. Referral pathways with relevant local mental health services.
Continue to develop and deploy community-based models of care	Build on initiatives during the pandemic to increase patient access to services through participation in the Loddon Mallee Telehealth Strategy Partner with health services to improve access to home-based services for the Heathcote and district community.	Increase telehealth appointments Increased access to community health, palliative care, home-based hospital care and other services provided by partner health services.