

HEATHCOTE HEALTH NEWSLETTER



Best Care; Every Person, Every Time

Issue No. 3 July 2026



Compassion



Accountability



Respect



Excellence



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Heathcote Health, 39 Hospital Street, Heathcote
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TOPIC 01

parkrun Success

Updates in our successful launch of the McIvor Creek Trail parkrun, Heathcote. With an exciting launch day, wonderful connection and reflections from participants, and ongoing participation in the following weeks.

TOPIC 02

Whats On Next Month

From exciting events, like the upcoming film festival and Just a Farmer screening to heartwarming efforts such as the CWA's Share the Dignity Fundraising efforts, August brings a month full of community occasions and wonderful initiatives.

TOPIC 03

NAIDOC Week: 50 Years

We celebrated 50 Years of NAIDOC week in July, coinciding with the launch of Heathcote Health's Reconciliation Action Plan. The day was marked with a community morning tea and a wonderful performance from Rhaedel Pickett.



Would you like to have a say in the ongoing development of services at Heathcote Health?

Your local health service is looking for more members for the **Consumer Partnership Committee (CPC)** to ensure it provides representation of the community to the health service. We welcome community experience, skills and perspective, as well as suggestions and feedback on the services we offer, or may offer in the future.

We are seeking:

- People from a diverse range of ages and backgrounds
- People with an hour or two to spare every second month
- People who have used, or may use, Heathcote Health's services – including residents, clients, patients and their family members.

Meetings are held in person at Heathcote Health. Joining remotely is also an option for some meetings.

To find out more please contact Michelle Chapman at Heathcote Health
mchapman@heathcotehealth.org or phone 5431-0900





A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Hi all,

July has been a busy month here at Heathcote Health.

We have been managing the results of our NSQHS accreditation and getting organised for our NDIS accreditation.

What this has resulted in is the Team coming together to work towards a safer, person centred approach to care across all standards. A commitment to improvement and identifying what we do well. I want to thank everyone for your input and commitment to supporting best practise, and continuous quality improvement.

We have had great engagement with the Flu vaccinations across all areas of the Health Service thanks to you all for your commitment to keeping yourself well and our residents, consumers and the general population of Heathcote.

Wearing pink for Breast cancer week is also an important reminder to us all to have regular check-ups with our GPs and to stick to our screening schedules.

Heathcote Park Run has been a huge success and thanks to the Heathcote Health Team for supporting this great initiative.

We now have the final results of our People Matters Survey and have had a number of volunteers to be apart of the PMS working group. We will develop a live action plan and continue to report through to the All-staff meetings what actions and how we plan to implement these.

A number of initiatives have already been started- Respect X training and implementation. Rounding for staff with your managers Close watch on ensuring everyone has completed their mandatory training and has received a PDR – Performance Development Review.

The donkey visit to our Aged Care went really well as it became quite the community event. My most special moment was to be able to introduce the Donkeys to Pricilla as she was about to head off to Bendigo in the ambulance.

She was thrilled to get the opportunity to meet 'Buddy and Anzac' before she left. Animals are so important in our lives and it was a privilege to make this happen and the up date for Buddy and Anzac is they are now trained into harness, so who knows maybe cart rides are next.



Jackie Kelly
Heathcote Health CEO

LIGHTS ON PROGRAM

Stay active, connect with others, and keep moving through the cooler months with Lights On Heathcote, a free series of outdoor fitness sessions designed for people of all ages, abilities, and fitness levels. Funded by City of Greater Bendigo Council and Heathcote Health and facilitated by our local Exercise Physiology (EP) Clinic, this program aims to create more opportunities for community members to be physically active during the darker months of the year. Whether you're looking to improve your fitness, build confidence exercising outdoors, meet new people, or simply enjoy moving in a supportive environment, these sessions are for you.

Sessions run for 6 weeks, starting on August 3rd at 5.30pm, located at Barrack Reserve.

Barrack Reserve Netball Courts will also be lit up on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday evenings from 5:30pm-8pm from Monday 27 July to Sunday 4 October.

Sessions are:

- Free, instructor-led outdoor fitness sessions
- Activities suitable for all fitness levels
- A friendly, inclusive, and supportive environment
- No gym membership or prior experience required

Cost: Free

Come along, give it a go, and keep active this winter. Spaces are limited, so book your place today.

**Starting
Aug 3rd**

**Local
Exercise
Physiologist
led sessions**

Free

**Scan here to
book tickets**



COMING SOON: HEATHCOTE DIRECTORIES



Heathcote Community Directory

Finding What's On in Your
Community



Health Directory

Finding Services in Your
Community



Heathcote Health has partnered with Advance Heathcote and Heathcote Community House to make two complementary directories. These Directories aim to make sure the Heathcote community has easy access to up-to-date information about local services, community groups, and sport & recreation activities. There are many ways to support your health, whether that's accessing the services you need, staying active, or connecting with others, these directories aim to make that easier.

Available Online at the Advance Heathcote website and Heathcote Health website, or Pick up your printed copy from Heathcote Health, Heathcote Library, the Information Centre, or Heathcote Community House after August 20th

For more information email eobree@heathcotehealth.org

PARK RUN SUCCESS

After two years of planning, the McIvor Creek Trail parkrun in Heathcote officially launched on Saturday 11 July. Despite a chilly morning, and a weather-related delay the previous weekend, community members and visitors turned out in force to embrace the new weekly event.

Participants gathered beside the Heathcote swimming pool entrance, where Aunty Jo from the Taungurung Land and Waters Council welcomed everyone to Country with a smoking ceremony.

Heathcote Health is very proud to have partnered with parkrun Australia, Healthy Loddon Campaspe and La Trobe University Bendigo to bring this event to life.



Pictured: Roy Munro, Heathcote parkrun Event Director, excited to launch the event

The idea began when Heathcote residents expressed interest in a local parkrun, which was then explored and developed through a project by La Trobe University occupational therapy students Josh Christensen, Ben Williams and James Saliba. Their research highlighted the health, wellbeing and community benefits a local parkrun could offer and from there, Heathcote Health and Healthy Loddon Campaspe worked to bring the idea to reality.



Pictured: Aunty Jo welcomed parkrunners with a smoking ceremony at the launch

PARK RUN SUCCESS

The launch has been a huge success: 60 people turned out for the first week, growing to 70 for the second week, reflecting just how enthusiastically the community has embraced the initiative.

parkrun was made possible by an incredible team of local volunteers, supported by generous mentors from neighbouring parkruns and experienced ambassadors who shared their knowledge and guidance throughout the journey. Community organisations, local businesses, land managers and countless participants, walkers, runners and supporters have all played a part. McIvor Creek Trail parkrun is not the achievement of any one person or organisation — it's a true community collaboration, built on a shared vision and sustained by the generosity of many people working toward a common goal. Heathcote Health looks forward to seeing the community continue to grow, week after week.



Pictured: All volunteers and parkrunners joined for a picture before the run began

KITCHEN UPDATES

Fakeaway continues

Continuing on from last month, our kitchen is keeping up the popular "Fakeaway" offering for aged care residents. These healthier, homemade alternatives to takeaway favourites give residents a delicious treat to look forward to, without missing out on good nutrition.



Pictured: An example of last months "fakeaway" fish and chips



For our Staff

Soup's on! Warming up your winter

We're now offering soup on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for six weeks to staff members, giving staff a healthy option during the colder months. Simply bring your own bowl and enjoy a warm meal.

Healthy Choices policy directive

The Healthy Choices policy directive is a Victorian Department of Health guideline that promotes healthier food and drink across public health services, covering retail outlets, vending machines, catering and menus. This month, we're completing our assessment ahead of reporting in September, to make sure we're offering healthy options for residents, staff and visitors.

Healthy
Eating
Advisory
Service

MONTHLY RECIPE

Ingredients

- 350g grated pumpkin
- 350g grated sweet potato
- 3 eggs, beaten

Directions

Step 1. Preheat the oven to 180°C and line a tray with baking paper, or grease lightly.

Step 2. Grate the pumpkin and sweet potato. Squeeze out any excess moisture with a clean tea towel or paper towel so the fritters hold together well.

Step 3. Combine the pumpkin, sweet potato and beaten eggs in a large bowl, mixing thoroughly until evenly coated.

Step 4. Using your hands or a spoon, shape the mixture into even fritters and place them on the prepared tray, leaving space between each.

Step 5. Bake for 10–12 minutes, or until golden and set through.

Step 6. Serve warm with a side salad or roasted vegetables for a wholesome winter meal.

Sweet Potato Fritters

Now that we're in the depths of winter, it's common to see those around us getting sick. Cold, dry air can impair our respiratory tract's immune defences, while many viruses survive longer in these conditions, making it the perfect time to eat foods that support our immune system. Root vegetables are a great place to start. Sweet potatoes are high in beta-carotene, which the body converts into immune-essential vitamin A. Pumpkin brings vitamin C and antioxidants that help protect against oxidative stress and inflammation. Try this simple fritter recipe to warm up your winter plate.

Did you know: One medium baked sweet potato contains approximately 1,400 micrograms of vitamin A, which is more than 150% of the daily value for adults.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

What happened in the community this month?

21 JUNE

Gratitude Day Success

Heathcote came together on Sunday 21 June to celebrate something truly special: a community fundraising event honouring the volunteers of our local SES and CFA.

Heathcote Gratitude Day was organised by the Mudbrick Motley Theatre group in collaboration with Heathcote R.S.L., held to coincide with the Winter Solstice, turning the shortest day of the year into a meaningful day of community support and appreciation.



Pictured: CFA Volunteer Peter Duncan accepts a cheque from The Heathcote & Melbourne Freemasons Foundation

Held at the Heathcote R.S.L. Hall from midday to 5pm, the event brought locals together over a light luncheon and an afternoon of live entertainment, featuring The Tuans, the Heathcote Ukulele Group (H.U.G.), Amanda Collins and Dave Munro. A silent auction and raffle rounded out the day, with prizes generously donated by local businesses and wineries including Gaffney's Bakery, The Commercial Hotel, She-Oak Hill Winery and Heathcote Winery.

The generosity on display was extraordinary. In total, the community raised \$20,011.03 on the day, with all funds going directly to support the SES and CFA. The Heathcote & Melbourne Freemasons made a standout contribution of \$10,000, and in a wonderful final gesture, Heathcote R.S.L. topped up the total with a further \$988.97 after the event — bringing the grand total raised to an incredible \$21,000.

Heathcote Gratitude Day is a beautiful reminder of what this community can achieve when it comes together — celebrating music, food and connection while honouring the volunteers who keep us safe all year round.



NEW SOUP KITCHEN

The Uniting church and Christian Catholic Church's has opened a new Soup Kitchen, a free community event open to anyone in need. Running every Thursday from 12 to 2pm at 61 Ebdon Street, Heathcote, the soup kitchen requires no bookings, no cost and no questions asked, simply a warm meal and a welcoming space for anyone who walks through the door.

\$21,000

RAISED

toward SES 4WD Medium Rescue Truck

WHATS ON NEXT MONTH?

All Month

CWA is Sharing the Dignity

CWA is once again taking part in the national Dignity Drive, which will run from 1 to 31 August and aims to support women and girls doing it tough. Donations can be dropped at official collection points, including Woolworths supermarkets and participating local businesses, with Heathcote Pharmacy serving as the local drop-off point. Any products in original packaging, including pads, tampons, reusable pads, period undies, menstrual cups and incontinence products are warmly welcomed as donations.

August 28th and 29th

Heathcote Film Festival

The 14th annual Heathcote Short Film Festival will return on 28 and 29 August 2026, held at the Heathcote RSL Hall. Tickets are on sale now, scan the QR code below to buy yours. If you'd like to stay in the loop with festival news, you can also subscribe for updates.



Scan here
to learn
more



August 15th

SES Quiztriviganza: 'The Return of the Riffs'

The Heathcote SES Unit is bringing back its popular trivia night, this time raising funds for a new 4WD Medium Rescue Truck. Quiztriviganza 2 will be held on Saturday 15 August 2026 at the Heathcote Golf Club, 61 Patterson Street, Heathcote, with doors opening at 6:00pm and trivia kicking off at 6:45pm. Tickets cost \$25 per head, with tables limited to teams of eight. For anyone without a team, organisers are happy to pair you up on the night. Local "Trivia Meisters" will be putting everyone's general knowledge to the test, with live music provided by house band Larsen Young. Guests are invited to bring their own picnic or party platter, while wine generously donated



Scan here
to book
tickets!



by local winemakers will be available at the bar in support of the SES, alongside beer and soft drinks sold in support of the Golf Club (note: no BYO alcohol). A raffle, prizes and games will round out the evening. Tickets are on sale now via Humanitix or by scanning the QR code, early booking is recommended. The event is proudly supported by Bendigo Bank / Community Bank Heathcote & District and Nagambie.



CORNELLA CANOLA WALK

Twenty minutes outside Heathcote, the countryside undergoes a remarkable transformation each winter and spring. From late July through late September, the canola fields of Cornella and neighbouring Colbinabbin burst into bloom, turning the landscape into a sweeping expanse of brilliant yellow, its one of Central Victoria's most striking seasonal sights.

This year, a new walking trail and viewing platform, developed in partnership with the Shiraz Republic and Cornella Brewery, offers visitors the chance to take in 100 acres of flowering canola up close. The trail has been carefully designed to let people explore and photograph the fields without setting foot on them, preserving the crop for the farmers who depend on it.

A visit to the fields pairs naturally with the surrounding area. The Shiraz Republic's cellar door offers a place to stop for a drink and something to eat, while a short drive to Colbinabbin brings visitors to the town's celebrated Silo Art. For those wanting to linger longer, on-site cabins are available, with early morning and evening light offering particularly rewarding conditions for photography.

Visitors are encouraged to wear enclosed shoes, bring water, and carry a camera or drone if they wish. Above all, guests are asked to remain on the designated track at all times and to avoid touching or walking through the crop, out of respect for the working farmland it represents.

The fields are open from 24 July to 27 September 2026, daily from 8:30am to 5:30pm. Entry is \$18 for adults, \$15 concession, \$12.50 for children aged three to fifteen. Further details are available by emailing info@shirazrepublic.com.au or phoning 5433 6338.

For those looking for a short, scenic outing close to home, the Cornella canola fields offer a rare and worthwhile detour this season.

GOING PINK FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH

Heathcote Health's Pinks and Giggles team turned pink for a morning tea, raising \$894 to fund life-saving breast cancer research.

Heathcote Health went pink in June, with staff hosting an afternoon tea to raise funds for breast cancer research through the GO PINK campaign.

Decorated in pink, the event was the work of Michelle and Tracey, who brought together a team of colleagues under the playful name Pinks and Giggles of 3523. Their hard work paid off, with the event raising an impressive \$894.



Pictured: Organisers Michelle Edwards (left) and Tracey White (right) celebrated the outcome of their hard work

Every dollar raised goes toward funding world-class breast cancer research focused on prevention, early detection, stopping progression and recurrence, and effectively treating hard-to-treat and metastatic breast cancers. This research ultimately saves lives, and the more that's raised, the more research can be supported and funded. Every donation, no matter the size, makes a real difference.

For our Heathcote community, this fundraiser meant much more than a fun afternoon tea. It supported not just the memory of our valued staff member, but honoured everyone touched by breast cancer, staff, residents, families and community members alike, many of whom will have their own story to tell about the disease.

Thank you to Michelle, Tracey, and the whole Pinks and Giggles of 3523 team for organising such a heartfelt event, and to everyone at Heathcote Health who got behind it, wore pink, and donated to such an important cause.



Pictured: Phil Goggin (left) and Jackie Kelly (right) joined the afternoon tea celebration

Bug of the Month

Heathcote Health staff infection prevention information

Whooping Cough

Whooping Cough, also called Pertussis, is a highly contagious infection of the respiratory tract caused by the bacteria *Bordetella pertussis*. Its symptoms can look like those of a common cold or other respiratory infections, so many cases go undiagnosed, especially in adults who may only have mild symptoms.

Symptoms

Early symptoms of whooping cough can include:

- Sore throat
- Mild fever
- Ongoing cough

After a few days, the fever and sore throat may improve, but the cough often becomes:

- Dry and irritating
- Severe and forceful
- Long-lasting

The cough can continue for weeks or even months, which is why whooping cough was once called the "cough of a thousand days."

How It Spreads

Whooping cough spreads through tiny droplets released into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Early diagnosis and treatment are important because the infection spreads very easily. If someone in a household has whooping cough, 70–100% of close household contacts may also become infected.

People Most at Risk

Babies under 2 years of age are at the greatest risk of serious complications.

In infants, severe coughing fits can:

- Cause breathing to stop temporarily
- Reduce oxygen levels in the body
- Lead to vomiting

Serious complications can include:

- Brain injury
- Aspiration pneumonia
- Seizures
- Coma
- Death

Urgent medical attention is needed if an infant develops symptoms of whooping cough.

Complications in Adults

Although babies are at the highest risk of severe illness and death from whooping cough, adults can also develop complications. The risk of complications increases with age, particularly in older adults and those with underlying health conditions.

Complications in adults may include:

- Pneumonia (lung infection)
- Rib fractures caused by severe coughing
- Fainting during coughing episodes
- Weight loss
- Sleep disturbance and exhaustion
- Worsening of existing heart or lung conditions

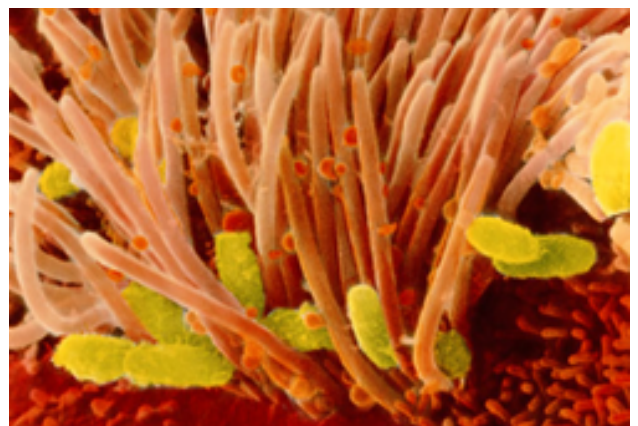
Older adults are more likely to experience serious complications and may require medical treatment or hospital care.

Treatment

Whooping cough is treated with antibiotics, such as Azithromycin, Clarithromycin, or Erythromycin

People are generally no longer infectious after 5 days of antibiotic treatment.

People who are not diagnosed or treated can remain infectious for around 3 weeks after symptoms begin.



References:

1. Department of Health Blue Book– Pertussis. Available at: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/disease-information-and-advice>
2. Page image credit: Courtesy of WebMD (http://img.webmd.com/dtmcms/live/webmd/consumer_assets/site_images/article_s/health_tools/whooping_cough_slideshow/PRinc_rm_SEM_of_whooping_cough_bacteria_in_cilia.jpg)

Prevention

Vaccination is the best way to prevent whooping cough.

In Australia, the pertussis vaccine is combined with tetanus and diphtheria vaccines in products such as Adacel® and Boostrix®.

The routine childhood vaccination schedule includes doses at:

- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months

Babies do not have strong protection until they have received all three doses. This means infants are most vulnerable to whooping cough during the first 6 months of life, particularly before completing their primary vaccination course.

Additional Protection for Adults and Pregnant People

Adults are recommended to have a whooping cough vaccination at 50 years of age, and before a new baby is born into the family. This helps reduce the risk of passing the infection to vulnerable infants.

Pregnant people are advised to receive a whooping cough vaccine during every pregnancy, even if they have been vaccinated before. Vaccination during pregnancy allows protective antibodies to pass from parent to baby during the third trimester, helping to protect the baby during the first few months of life before they are fully vaccinated.

In adults, the whooping cough vaccine provides protection for approximately 10 years, although immunity gradually decreases over time. Keeping vaccinations up to date is an important way to protect both yourself and those most at risk of severe illness, especially young babies.



Time Out: Transmission-based Precautions

Transmission-Based Precautions, also known as isolation are additional infection prevention measures used alongside Standard Precautions when a person has, or is suspected of having, an infectious disease that can spread easily to others. The type of isolation used depends on how the infection spreads. This also determines the personal protective equipment that healthcare workers need to wear to protect themselves and prevent transmission to other patients. Whooping cough spreads mainly through respiratory droplets that are released when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can infect people who are nearby. Infection may also spread indirectly through contaminated equipment or frequently touched surfaces if cleaning and hand hygiene are inadequate.

Droplet Precautions ask staff to:

- Place the patient in a single room with their own bathroom, where possible
- Display a Droplet Precautions sign on the door and keep the door closed
- Before entering the room, put on: a surgical mask, eye protection, and a plastic apron
- These items should be worn for the entire time you are in the room
- Perform hand hygiene regularly, including at the 5 Moments for Hand Hygiene
- Avoid touching your face or mask. If you do, clean your hands immediately
- Explain to the patient why they are being isolated and ask them to remain in their room until they are no longer infectious
- Encourage the person to: cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, perform regular hand hygiene, and wear a surgical mask if they need to leave their room for urgent tests or treatment
- If the person needs to leave their room, they should avoid visiting other people and only access essential areas or designated outdoor spaces as directed by staff

Partnering with Consumers: Standard 2

It's important that staff help people with Whooping Cough understand their condition. To help this process, the Victorian Department of Health have made an excellent handout staff can provide to these people



You can download and print a copy from the internet:
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/whooping-cough>

NAIDOC WEEK 2026: 50 YEARS OF DEADLY

Heathcote Health was proud to join with the Heathcote Reconciliation Group to host our community for a NAIDOC Week morning tea on 7 July at Barrack Reserve Stadium, celebrating this year's theme of 50 Years of Deadly.

First Nations community members, City of Greater Bendigo representatives, our own staff and locals from across Heathcote gathered for a morning of connection, reflection and celebration. CEO Jackie Kelly welcomed everyone and opened proceedings, before Katie Christensen delivered the Acknowledgement of Country and shared some words on behalf of the 2026 Bendigo NAIDOC Committee.

A highlight of the morning was the official launch of our Heathcote Health Reconciliation Action Plan, now available on our website and via Reconciliation Australia. Many of our staff marked the occasion wearing our new First Nations polo shirts, featuring an original design by Taungurung Elder Aunty Jo Honeysett.

Attendees were treated to a moving performance from Rhaedel Pickett, a proud Noongar woman. A soul, rhythm and blues singer, Rhaedel has performed at First Nations events, council gatherings and music festivals across Victoria, and shared both classic songs and original music with the crowd.

We're grateful to everyone who helped make the morning so special: the Bendigo NAIDOC Week Committee, the Bendigo & District Aboriginal Cooperative, the Heathcote Reconciliation Group, City of Greater Bendigo, Ironstone Park Nursery for gifting every attendee native and rare plants, Hoo-gah for a delicious morning tea, and our own kitchen team for their support on the day.

It was a morning full of yarning, old friends reconnecting, new friendships forming, and time spent reflecting together on 50 years of NAIDOC. Thank you to everyone who joined us.



Pictured: Jackie Kelly holding Heathcote Health's Reconciliation Action Plan



Pictured left to right: Katie Christensen, Fiona Machin, City of Greater Bendigo Andrew Cooney, mayor Thomas Prince, and Heathcote Health CEO Jackie Kelly



Pictured: Rhaedel Pickett performed

ANZAC THE DONKEY

Donkeys Bring Joy to Aged Care as Purple Poppy Project Takes Shape



Pictured: Heathcote Craft Group president Jan Rowe presented Jackie Kelly with more than 130 poppies made by the group

Two visitors made quite an impression on our Aged Care residents recently, when CEO Jackie Kelly brought her donkeys, ANZAC and Buddy, in for a visit.

The pair are part of our growing Purple Poppy Project, an initiative connecting residents, staff and the wider Heathcote community. Purple poppies are worn to honour the animals who served alongside soldiers in wartime, horses, mules, dogs, pigeons and even elephants, recognising the vital roles they played carrying supplies, delivering messages, detecting danger and offering companionship, often in incredibly dangerous conditions. While the red poppy remembers the human soldiers who served and fell, the purple poppy is a tribute to their animal counterparts.

Local knitters have embraced the project wholeheartedly. Members of the Heathcote Craft Group, led by Jan Rowe, have produced more than 130 poppies in a range of colours,

with enough support now that blankets are planned for both ANZAC and Buddy. Heathcote RSL has also thrown its weight behind the effort, with members continuing to knit more poppies ahead of the finished blankets making their debut at an upcoming RSL commemoration.

For residents, the donkeys' visit was about more than the poppies. Many spoke about how much they missed having pets of their own, and how special it was to spend time with gentle animals again. Jackie, who has owned donkeys for a decade and is a member of the Bendigo and District Donkey and Mule Club, says the visits benefit ANZAC and Buddy just as much as the residents. She's now planning to bring her miniature donkeys in too, so residents with limited mobility can enjoy a visit indoors.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

Michelle Stirling

This month, we're shining a light on Michelle Stirling, one of the talented team members in our kitchen.

Michelle joined Heathcote Health in December 2017, arriving with years of experience from her background in delis. "I thought I had all the knowledge," Michelle reflected, but what she found was a new perspective, and the powerful role food can play in people's lives, especially for our elderly residents.



Pictured: Michelle Stirling

Through the Maggie Beer Foundation program, Michelle discovered just how vital protein is to day-to-day life for older people. "Protein is a huge part of care in Aged Care, to help with muscle mass and to sustain weight," she explained. Since then, she's built her knowledge of texture-modified food and the many ways protein can be fortified, from mashed potato and main meals through to desserts, milkshakes and flavoured water. It's knowledge she now brings home too, cooking for herself and her grandchildren with a whole new understanding of nutrition.

But for Michelle, the role has given her far more than technical skill. Working in Aged Care, she says, has helped her grow as a person, teaching her to be more accepting of death and end of life, and building her empathy, patience, resilience and compassion along the way.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

Michelle Stirling

Michelle sums up her journey simply: "I go home every day knowing I have contributed to the best job in the world."



Pictured: (left) Bee O'Keefe and (right) Michelle Stirling

With guidance from her supervisor, Jenny Casey, Michelle has been stepping up into the role of Food Safety Supervisor, a challenge she's embracing with enthusiasm. She's also a driving force behind one of our residents' favourite traditions; the special Fridays, where the kitchen team, led by the talented Bee O'Keefe, whips up mock KFC, McDonald's and fish and chip days, all fortified and made safe for residents to enjoy.

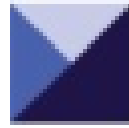
It's the relationships, though, that Michelle treasures most. "My heart has become more rich with the friendships I have made with our residents," she says. "It has made me a better person and a better team member."

Michelle sums up her journey simply: "I go home every day knowing I have contributed to the best job in the world."

Thank you, Michelle, for everything you bring to Heathcote Health and for making our residents' days more delicious.

ONE YEAR OF COLLABORATION

Celebrating with Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network



Loddon Mallee
Local Health
Service Network

This 1st of July marked one year since Victoria's Local Health Service Networks began, a big step forward in bringing healthcare organisations together to deliver better care, closer to home.

Heathcote Health is proud to be part of the Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network, working alongside neighbouring health services to improve access to care, strengthen our workforce, and develop new shared services that benefit our community.

Heathcote Health is in the Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network and is partnered with:

- Bendigo Health
- Boort District Health
- Cohuna District Hospital
- Dhelkaya Health
- Echuca Regional Health
- Swan Hill District Health
- Inglewood and Districts Health Service
- Kerang District Health
- Mallee Track Health and Community Service
- Mildura Base Public Hospital
- Robinvale District Health Services
- Rochester & Elmore District Health Service.

Over the past year, this collaboration has made a difference for our community. By working together on workforce and training initiatives, quality improvements, digital projects and emergency care, we're helping create more consistent, connected care for people right across the Loddon Mallee region.

A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful Heathcote Health staff, who have generously given their time and expertise to regional working groups and collaborative projects over the past year. Your willingness to embrace new ways of working reflects the very best of rural healthcare.

Thank you to our partner organisations across the Loddon Mallee network, and to colleagues in Local Health Service Networks right across Victoria, for your shared commitment to improving healthcare for communities like ours.

A Chance to Have Your Say: Provide Input into the Next Heathcote Community Plan

There will be many opportunities to engage, including via this survey monkey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8DVHDTTH>, or the QR code attached.

For more information or to get involved:

Website: <https://www.advanceheathcote.com/>

Email: info@advanceheathcote.com



Completed surveys can be delivered by 30th September 2026 to -

- Heathcote Community House in Hospital Street;
- Heathcote Library;
- Heathcote Tourist Information Centre;
- Libertas Legal, 81 High Street Heathcote;
- Or scanned and emailed to Advance Heathcote Inc. info@advanceheathcote.com

Why Contribute Your Say?

Community Planning is a process by which community members help to create a shared vision for our town. It helps identify desired changes or new initiatives that will help make Heathcote a better place to live.

Your input is important. By completing this survey, you can help influence the future direction of Heathcote and ensure local priorities are heard and represented. Whether your interests relate to community facilities, events, health services, recreation, youth opportunities, environment, tourism, transport or the overall liveability of our town, every response contributes to building a stronger and more vibrant, connected and resilient community.

The Heathcote community is responsible for this plan and the achievement of the goals contained within it. Individuals and community groups are encouraged to read the plan and take on goals which they wish to see accomplished. Together, we can achieve our collective goals for Heathcote.

C.A.R.E VALUES IN ACTION

Highlighting the wonderful work of our staff in April

April 2026

Staff Member Name and Department	C.A.R.E Value
Lee Ridsdale – stepped up to pick up extra shifts	Excellence
Michelle Edwards & Tracey White – organised the Breast Cancer Morning Tea	Excellence
Simone O'Brien, Ann Mills, Michelle Chapman, Ella O'Bree – put on an excellent NAIDOC Week Morning Tea	Excellence
Karen (Chef) – prepared soup for staff every Monday, Wednesday and Friday	Excellence
Michelle Stirling – backfilled the Catering Supervisor role while Jenny Casey was on leave	Excellence
Michelle Chapman – led the successful launch of Parkrun Value	Excellence
Justine O'Bree – organised a Social Worker from the LMLHSN Pool	Excellence
Jen Stewart – supported students and education initiatives	Excellence
Will Garnsey – created visual displays for Aged Care	Excellence
Jacinta Cochrane – picked up extra administrative work	Excellence
Emma Millard, Sam Harvey, Gerry Canny, Phill Goggin – completed NDIS accreditation work	Excellence
Malony Christofi – saved a resident who was choking	Excellence
Monica McHugh – delivered community vaccinations	Excellence
Karra King – created visual displays for Aged Care	Excellence
Jeff Safstrom – returned Heathcote Health fleet car keys promptly upon realising he still had them in his pocket	Accountability
Jess Thomas – helped out the Kitchen Team	Excellence, Empathy
Linda Henness – helped with Meals on Wheels	Excellence
Michelle Chapman – followed up on tasks and went above and beyond	Excellence
Greg Reilly – stayed calm under pressure and showed great leadership	Excellence

STAFF WELCOMED & FAREWELLED

Welcome New Staff

Charlene Young: Health Care Worker

Debra Mulholland: Health Care Worker

Melissa Sharp: Endorsed Enrolled Nurse

Zoe O'Neill: Health Care Worker

Cindy Windsor: Health Care Worker

Farewell Staff

Glenys Bailey: Learning & Development Manager

Jemma Biagioni: Health Care Worker



**Have you had a
positive experience
with a staff member
and would like to let
us know?**

Please email admin@heathcotehealth.org

Make a Difference by Volunteering with Heathcote Health

Volunteers are at the heart of many of the services and programs provided by Heathcote Health. They bring valuable skills, compassion and community spirit, helping us enhance the care and support we provide to local residents.

Whether it's assisting with Meals on Wheels, supporting community programs, helping at events, providing companionship, or contributing behind the scenes, volunteers make a meaningful difference every day. Volunteering is also a great way to meet new people, stay active, learn new skills and give back to the community.

We welcome people from all backgrounds and experience levels. If you have some spare time and are looking for a rewarding way to contribute, we'd love to hear from you.

Volunteer Information Session

Interested in finding out more about volunteer opportunities at Heathcote Health?

Join us for a short information session to learn about the range of volunteer roles available and how you can get involved.

The session will provide an overview of current volunteer opportunities, the benefits of volunteering, and the support available to volunteers. There will also be time to ask questions and meet members of our team.

For more information or to register your interest, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator on (03) 5431 0900 or email awalker@heathcotehealth.org.

Date: Tuesday 8 September
Time: 10:30am to 11:00am
Location: Heathcote Health



Our volunteers make a real difference. Join us and become part of a team committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of our community.

Meals on Wheels

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you have 2 hours a week to spare?
Do you want to give back to your
community?

Volunteering for Meals on Wheels is perfect for all ages, including students, those who are unemployed, working part-time or casual hours, or retirees. We would like to welcome more volunteers, so if you'd like to roll up your sleeves and help warm the stomachs and hearts of people living in your community, get in touch with us today.

Pick up an application pack from
Heathcote Health Reception.



WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK

Introducing Our New Feedback Form

We are pleased to introduce a new Heathcote Health Feedback Form designed to make it easier for patients, residents, clients and community to share their feedback about our services. Feedback might be a compliment, complaint or suggestion.

What is the purpose of the Feedback Form?

The new Feedback Form provides a simple and accessible way for people to tell us what we are doing well and where we can improve. It captures feedback about all aspects of service delivery and care, so that we can continue to ensure that the services and care provided at Heathcote Health meet the needs of our community.

Why is feedback important?

Feedback plays a vital role in improving the quality, safety, and experience of care. By listening to voices in the community, we can:

- Identify what is working well and continue to build on it
- Recognise areas for improvement and take meaningful action
- Strengthen partnerships between patients, residents, clients and staff
- Support a culture of openness, learning, and continuous improvement

Every piece of feedback is welcomed and valued and contributes to shaping better services for our community.

Consumer involvement in development.

The Feedback Form has been carefully reviewed and endorsed by Heathcote Health's Consumer Advisory Group. Their input has helped ensure the form is clear, inclusive, and accessible, and that it reflects what matters most to health service consumers.

Feedback can be provided in a range of ways

Completed Feedback Forms can be:

- Placed in a Feedback Box located across Heathcote Health's facilities
- Provided to a staff member
- Mailed to Heathcote Health at: 39 Hospital Street, Heathcote 3523

Feedback can also be emailed to Heathcote Health at: feedback@heathcotehealth.org or can be provided through the online Feedback Form on Heathcote Health's website at: www.heathcotehealth.org

Scan this QR code to provide feedback through the online Feedback Form on Heathcote Health's website:



We encourage everyone - patients, residents, clients and community to share their experience and perspectives. Your feedback helps us improve and deliver the best possible care.