

HEATHCOTE HEALTH NEWSLETTER



Best Care; Every Person, Every Time

**Issue No. 4 August
& September 2026**



Compassion



Accountability



Respect



Excellence



Pictured: Staff sported the colours of their favourite AFL teams ahead of the AFL Grand Final

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Heathcote Health, 39 Hospital Street, Heathcote
03 5431 0900
www.heathcotehealth.org

Heathcote Food Resilience

How we are working with passionate locals to support the Heathcote food system, because everyone should have access to healthy and nutritious food. Learn more about how we're starting this conversation on pg. 6

Whats On Next Month?

Ahead of the upcoming fire season, there is an opportunity to talk through your plans and get prepared with several emergency preparedness events in October. Learn more about the Heathcote Wine & Food Festival too! Information is on pg. 13

New Faces at Heathcote Health

Meet our new Director of Clinical Services, Natalie Retallick, as well as our newest Board Director, Alex Cole. Both Alex and Nat have shared what they are most excited to bring to Heathcote Health. Read more about Nat's introduction on pg. 8 and Alex's on pg. 20

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.





ACTING CEO MESSAGE

As we move further into spring, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible commitment, resilience and professionalism demonstrated by our staff across every area of Heathcote Health.

Over the past month, our teams have continued to deliver high-quality care and services to our community while also progressing a number of important projects and initiatives across the organisation. Whether providing compassionate care to residents and patients, supporting clients in their homes, welcoming visitors, maintaining our facilities, or working behind the scenes in corporate and support services, every contribution plays a vital role in our success.

We are currently undertaking several key improvement activities that will strengthen our organisation for the future. These include ongoing preparations for accreditation, enhancements to our digital systems, and continuous quality improvement initiatives designed to ensure we remain responsive to the evolving needs of our community and the health and aged care sectors.

As Acting CEO whilst Jackie has been on leave, I have been privileged to see firsthand the dedication and collaboration that exists across Heathcote Health.

It is this collective commitment that enables us to provide safe, person-centred care and to continue building on our reputation as a trusted and valued health service.

I would also like to thank our volunteers, community members, residents, patients, clients and families for their continued support and partnership. The strong relationships we share with our community remain one of our greatest strengths.

As we approach the final quarter of the year, let us continue to focus on supporting one another, embracing opportunities for improvement, and celebrating the achievements that make Heathcote Health such a special organisation.

Thank you for everything you do each day to make a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.

Andrew Walker
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Heathcote Health

JOIN THE CONSUMER PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

THE ROLE OUR CONSUMERS PLAY IN HEATHCOTE HEALTH'S SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Heathcote Health is seeking new members to join our **Consumer Partnership Committee (CPC)**, providing an opportunity for community members to play an active role in shaping the services we deliver.

The CPC brings together people with diverse experiences, skills and perspectives to help ensure Heathcote Health remains responsive to the needs of our community. Members provide valuable feedback, share ideas, and contribute to discussions about current services and future opportunities.

One important way the CPC makes a difference is through reviewing information and resources developed for consumers. Committee members help ensure documents are clear, accessible and easy to understand, particularly for people without a clinical background. They provide feedback on language, readability and relevance, helping to make health information more inclusive and user-friendly. Once a document has been reviewed and endorsed by the committee, it receives the Consumer Reviewed Tick, signifying it has been assessed through the eyes of the community it is designed to serve.



Pictured: The 'Consumer Reviewed Tick', used on documents that have been approved for sharing by our Consumer Partnership Committee members.



For many members, the committee offers a meaningful opportunity to turn lived experience into positive change.

One CPC member, Bronwyn, shared why being involved is important to her:

"Having used many of Heathcote Health's services over the years, I was pleased to be able to join the Consumer Partnership Committee (CPC). The committee relies on diverse skills from its community members, so Heathcote Health can respond to local need."

“Having access to senior staff at these meetings - which are only once every two months - is a way to have your opinions heard where it matters. I would encourage people to think about nominating and sharing not only their experiences, but their knowledge gained through their work and study.”
- CPC Independent Member

We are looking for people from a wide range of ages, backgrounds and experiences who can spare an hour or two every second month. Whether you have used Heathcote Health services yourself, supported a family member, or simply want to contribute to the wellbeing of our community, your voice can help shape the future of local health care.

Meetings are held at Heathcote Health, with remote participation available for some meetings.

Joining the Consumer Partnership Committee is a rewarding way to ensure community perspectives are heard and reflected in the care we provide. Your experience, insights and ideas could help make a real difference.

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

HEATHCOTE'S FIRST FOOD SYSTEMS WORKSHOP

The Food Resilience Workshop was the first in a series being led by Heathcote Health in partnership with local dietitian Jo Stanford, whose two decades of experience across community food projects made her a natural guide for the evening.

Retail

Old Thyrner Grocer (Ben)
3 Seeds Homestead.
IGA
Roadside/farmgate stalls.
at wine hub (sawdayh)

Small grassroots food share/
Bulk buying

Bulk out on road

ended with res.

Consumption

Trinity Larder (children's food & biscuits from the larder) + 3 seeds (fruit, veg, morning, afternoon tea + lunch)

Details just shared with food planners by DENISE HARRIS - 10-12 year old kids to food producers and food models

Butcher has local organic veggies

UTILISING OF OVER PRODUCTION LOCALS selling their own eggs

M.O.W.

Community Food + Donations

Food Relief Meal Program

Heathcote Soup Kitchen June, July August this year

Donations to Bendigo Foodshare

SEAGATREDONS BAKERY

3 Seeds

Food donation, has school and chicken and library and library (subsidies)

Local to support local businesses for business and food bank for school

Community garden

Family & residents growing + consuming food indepth but data on this may not exist. How can we increase what is not yet measured etc

lots of

SAKGP at Heathcote Primary School. kids + adults (Alameda kitchen garden) garden, cook + eat

Trinity Childcare & Kinder - students fed healthy meals, morning, lunch & afternoon tea.

The evening opened with a showcase of food resilience initiatives already happening right here in Heathcote, a reminder of just how much is already being given through local donations, food sharing, growing and cooking. From there, attendees worked through a community mapping exercise, using sticky notes to chart what's currently happening across five parts of the food chain: production and transport, retail, community food and donations, consumption, and waste.

BUILDING FOOD RESILIENCE TOGETHER

HEATHCOTE'S FIRST FOOD SYSTEMS WORKSHOP

The conversation that followed drew out both the strengths to build on and the gaps and vulnerabilities that need attention. These findings have since been captured in a summary report available to the group.

The energy in the room reflected something important: there are already so many people in this community with a deep passion for food, whether that's growing it, cooking it, sharing it, or making sure others have access to it. The goal of these workshops is to bring that collective knowledge together, and use it to guide where future efforts are best directed.

Following interest from the group on the evening, a second meeting will soon be held to identify which gaps and vulnerabilities are a priority to address. This will guide which initiatives the community will work together to achieve.

The next session is on Monday 5 October at 6pm at the Heathcote Bowls Club. This will be a guided conversation focused on working out together what the next steps should be across each part of the food system. All are welcome.

HEATHCOTE FOOD RESILIENCE GAPS & VULNERABILITIES REPORT

Pictured: A report was produced detailing the Gaps and Vulnerabilities brainstormed and identified on the evening.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

MEET OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL SERVICES!

Heathcote Health is delighted to welcome Nat Retallick to the executive team as Director of Clinical Services, bringing more than 20 years of experience across emergency nursing, acute care, clinical education, quality improvement, and regional health leadership.

Nat's career has been shaped by a focus on clinical leadership and workforce capability, working alongside teams across rural and regional health services to build skilled, confident workforces and implement safety and quality initiatives that genuinely improve outcomes for patients and communities.

Nat was drawn to Heathcote Health through a combination of the organisation's values, its people, and its connection to the community.

"I had come to know and work with several members of the team over the years through the Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network, and the culture, professionalism, and genuine commitment to the community really stood out," she says. "Seeing the positive culture that Jackie has helped foster at Heathcote Health reinforced that this was the kind of organisation I wanted to be part of. Knowing there was a strong, values-driven leadership team already in place made the decision to join an easy one."

In her new role, Nat hopes to bring a collaborative, people-first approach to clinical leadership, one grounded in continuous improvement and a belief that the best outcomes come from working alongside staff, consumers, and the community, not just for them.



Pictured: Natalie Retallick, Heathcote Health's new Director of Clinical Services

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

Natalie Retallick

“I look forward to working with the Heathcote Health team and community to continue building strong services that meet local needs today and into the future.”

"A big part of my experience has been helping build skilled, confident teams and creating systems that support safe, effective, and person-centred care," she says. "I've also worked alongside health services, clinicians and sector leaders to implement safety and quality initiatives that improve outcomes for patients and communities. Most importantly, I hope to bring a collaborative approach that values people, encourages innovation, and supports our staff to do what they do best."

Nat's passion for rural and regional healthcare is longstanding and personal. "Everyone deserves access to safe, high-quality healthcare regardless of where they live," Nat says. "Rural health services are often much more than healthcare providers, they are trusted community partners, employers and advocates who help people stay connected to care close to home. I'm passionate about ensuring regional communities have access to contemporary, high-quality services and a skilled workforce that can meet both current and future needs."

To the Heathcote community, Nat's message is simple: she's here to listen.

"I believe every community is unique, and the best health services are built by working together with the people they serve," she says. "My door is always open for a chat, and I welcome ideas, feedback and new perspectives."

Outside of work, Nat has a teenage daughter. She also shares her home with her loyal groodle and two rescue cats. While claiming to have no hidden talents to share, Nat is always willing to roll up her sleeves, give something new a go, and embrace a challenge.

Welcome Nat, we're very excited to have you.

KITCHEN UPDATES

Our Kitchen Garden is Growing!

Exciting things are happening in the Heathcote Health kitchen garden as we head into the warmer months! We're currently getting our Spring and Summer crop underway, with fresh produce that will be harvested and integrated into our kitchen recipes as often as possible. New this season, we've welcomed a lemon tree and a lime tree. We've also expanded our growing space with the addition of new garden beds, meaning more room for more produce and more homegrown goodness on your plate. Growing our own food is one small but meaningful way we're nourishing our community from the ground up.



Keeping Our Kitchen Safe: Updates to Our Food Safety Plan

Following a recent audit, Heathcote Health is making a number of positive changes to our Food Safety Plan. Audits are a valuable opportunity to take a fresh look at how we do things, and we're pleased to be implementing improvements that will strengthen our food safety practices and better protect the people we serve. These updates reflect our ongoing commitment to maintaining the highest standards in our kitchen because safe food is foundational to the care and service we provide. We'll continue to keep you updated as these changes are rolled out. Thank you to our dedicated kitchen team for their hard work and commitment to continuous improvement.

MONTHLY RECIPE

Ingredients

- 2 ripe bananas
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp baking soda
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk, reduced fat
- 1 egg
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup canola oil
- 1 cup self-raising flour (white)
- 1 cup self-raising flour (wholemeal)
- 1 tbsp Cocoa
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- 1 cup frozen raspberries

Directions

Step 1. Pre-heat oven to 200°C.

Step 2. In a medium bowl, mash the bananas then mix in the vanilla essence. Add the baking soda and milk.

Step 3. In a separate bowl, lightly beat the egg and add the oil, then add the banana mixture, stirring well.

Step 4. In a large bowl, sift the flours and cocoa together, then add the sugar.

Step 5. Make a well in the centre of the flour mix. Slowly add the liquid ingredients, then fold in raspberries. Be careful not to over stir.

Step 6. Pour mixture directly into non-stick muffin trays, or line with paper cases, and bake for 15–20 minutes.

Step 7. Take muffins out of tray and allow to cool on a wire rack.

Cocoa & Raspberry Muffins

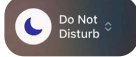
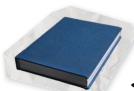
Whether it's a quick catch up over morning tea or a deeper conversation, taking the time to ask, listen and connect can make a real difference. This month's recipe offers a healthier sweet treat to enjoy during those important moments of connection.

October is Mental Health Month. Made with banana and raspberries, these muffins provide a nourishing alternative to many traditional baked treats. The wholemeal flour contributes fibre to help keep you feeling satisfied for longer. They're an easy way to enjoy a balanced morning tea and support healthy habits while connecting with others.



TOGETHER WE THRIVE

OCTOBER 2026

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	
YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MONTH STARTS  Mental Health Australia  righthere!				1 START SMALL TOGETHER  Create small moments of connection. Try chatting to your barista or say hi to a dog walker.	2 BE GRATEFUL TOGETHER  Reflect on something you're grateful for.	3 MOVE TOGETHER  Enjoy a walk or a workout.	4 BOOK IN TIME TOGETHER  Organise a regular catch up with a friend.
5 LEARN TOGETHER  Learn a new skill.	6 WORK BETTER TOGETHER  Grab a coffee and check in with a colleague.	7 TOGETHER WITH FAMILY Share a memory, express appreciation, or spend time together. 	8 TOGETHER IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD  Take time to smile or say hi to a neighbour.	9 GET CREATIVE TOGETHER Join a creative activity like art, music or dance. 	10  WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY! Support your wellbeing with Beyond Blue's Wellbeing Action Tool.	11 GIVEBACK TOGETHER  Connect with a cause you care about.	
12 TOGETHER WITH NATURE Visit a place you love or join a free group to care for the environment. 	13 DIGITAL TOGETHER  Join an online group with shared interests or experiences.	14 SHARE STORIES TOGETHER  Listen to someone from a different background or age group.	15 JOURNAL TOGETHER  Tips from Lifeline Journaling can help process emotions and reduce stress.	16 CREATE BELONGING TOGETHER  Organise a meal, games night or outing.	17 LISTEN TOGETHER Taking time to truly listen can strengthen connection. You don't need to have the answers.	18 BE KIND TOGETHER  Offer a smile, a helping hand, or a kind word to someone (even yourself).	
19 SHARE A TABLE TOGETHER  Have a cuppa, a picnic or meal with someone.	20 LAUGH TOGETHER Share something funny like a cat video or silly moment. 	21 BE PRESENT TOGETHER  Put your phone away and give someone your full attention.	22 CELEBRATE TOGETHER  Share a moment you're proud of with someone.	23 PLAY TOGETHER  Try a board game, puzzle, or fun activity.	24 EXPLORE CULTURE TOGETHER  Attend a local event or try a new cuisine with a friend.	25 SUPPORT TOGETHER  Support someone with tips from RUOK.	
26 READ TOGETHER  Visit your local library, join a book club, or share a book with someone.	27 JOIN IN TOGETHER  Sign up for a low-pressure local class, event, or activity.	28 CHECK IN TOGETHER  Check out this tip sheet from Black Dog Institute.	29 RECONNECT TOGETHER Reach out to someone you haven't spoken to in a while. 	30 FIND MEANING TOGETHER Share meaningful experiences through culture, spirituality, or community. 	31 THRIVE TOGETHER Reflect on what's helped you feel supported this month and keep nurturing those connections. 		



For more resources visit
worldmentalhealthday.com.au

If you are experiencing distress or need mental health support, please contact:
Lifeline: 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au
Beyond Blue: 1300 22 46 36 or beyondblue.org.au



WHAT'S ON IN OCTOBER?

October 25th

CFA Fire Ready Day

Heathcote CFA are hosting a Fire Safety Information Session and BBQ on Sunday 25th October at 11am. Ahead of the coming summer and fire season, come down and meet your local Brigade and find out from CFA members about how to prepare for the upcoming fire season. You will learn:

- Property preparation tips
- Staying and defending
- Evacuation essentials
- Bushfire and pets

This session provides a great opportunity to think and plan ahead and to increase your confidence and knowledge should you face an emergency situation.

Taking place at the Heathcote Fire Station, the event is free to attend, with a BBQ provided. All are welcome.

Contact Evan Pritchard on 0417 178 658 or email evantp@gmail.com for more information.

October 10th and 11th

Heathcote Wine & Food Festival

Returning to the Heathcote Showgrounds again in 2026 is the Heathcote Wine & Food Festival. From 11am-5pm on both Saturday and Sunday, there will be wine tastings available from 35+ local wine producers, highlighting the diverse and wonderful selection of wines available around Heathcote. The day will also feature locally produced food and live music. Bus transport options will be available from Bendigo and Melbourne.

**Scan here
to book
tickets!**



October 18th

Aware & Prepare Costerfield Day

On Sunday October 18th, SES, CFA, Ambulance, Heathcote Community House, and RFDS services will gather at the Costerfield Hall to meet with locals and provide more information about how their services work. The event is open to all, not only Costerfield residents. Anyone seeking more information about being prepared for the upcoming fire season is welcome to join, with free entry for all. More information is to come; keep an eye on the Heathcote Community House Facebook page for further details.

BEST CARE IN ACTION:

Our New RNA Infrared Thermometers

We're delighted to share some wonderful news for our District Nursing Service. Thanks to the generosity of RNA Pharmaceuticals, Heathcote Health has received a donation of two RNA infrared thermometers to support our nurses in the field.

Our District Nursing team provides care to clients in their own homes across our rural community and having the right equipment on hand is essential to delivering safe, timely care. Now, with these new thermometers, our team can quickly and accurately assess a client's temperature during home visits, helping to identify concerns earlier and respond with confidence.

The RNA infrared thermometers are the same model used in our acute ward, meaning our nursing staff are already familiar and comfortable with the equipment.

We extend our sincere gratitude to RNA Pharmaceuticals for their kind support of rural health. Acts of generosity like this make a real difference to small health services like ours, and most importantly, to the people in our community who rely on our care.



Pictured: The RNA Infrared thermometer RNA006

BEST CARE IN ACTION:

Manual Handling Training



Pictured: Heathcote Health employees Tarina, Eileen and Jacinta completing their manual handling training.

At Heathcote Health, the safety of our patients and our staff is always front of mind. That's why our team participates in regular manual handling and safe patient handling training every month.

Manual handling refers to any activity that involves lifting, moving, pushing, pulling, or supporting a person or object. In a healthcare setting, this is part of everyday work. When done incorrectly, these tasks carry risk of injury, both for the staff member and for the patient in their care.

By training monthly, our team stays current, confident, and consistent in their technique. Skills can fade over time, and regular practice

means that safe habits become second nature, especially in busy or unexpected moments when it matters most.

Safe patient handling training goes one step further, focusing specifically on how we move and support patients with dignity, comfort, and minimal risk. This includes the correct use of equipment such as hoists, slide sheets, and transfer belts, all designed to make movement safer and more comfortable for you.

When you come through our doors, you can feel confident that the people caring for you have been trained to do so safely, thoughtfully, and with your wellbeing at the centre of everything they do.

Bug of the Month

Heathcote Health staff infection prevention information

Scabies

Scabies is caused by a very small mite (parasite); *Sarcoptes scabiei*. The mite is barely visible to the naked eye. The female mites burrow into the skin to lay eggs and the burrows often become inflamed, raised and itchy and may appear like acne papules. The mites cannot jump or fly and therefore the rash they cause is often in close formation.

Symptoms usually begin 4–6 weeks after infestation. Symptoms of scabies include:

- severe itch, often worse at night
- itchy lines (linear burrows) and bumps (papules) on the fingers, wrists, arms, legs and other areas of skin folds
- inflamed bumps on male genitalia and female breasts
- larger rash in infants and small children, including on the palms, soles of the feet, ankles and scalp

Scabies can lead to infected sores and serious complications like septicaemia, heart disease and kidney problems.

Diagnosis of scabies is based on either clinical suspicion; or via skin microscopy where a healthcare clinician takes skin scrapings of the rash, which are then examined under a microscope to look for mites or eggs. However, on average people with scabies only carry between 10 and 15 mites, so a negative test is not conclusive.

Scabies mites are spread via prolonged skin-to-skin contact with an infected person or prolonged contact with bed linen, towels or underwear from an infected person. As the mites cannot jump or fly, a handshake or casual hug is not going to lead to infestation.

Treatment for scabies is topical permethrin cream (an antiparasitic). This must be applied to the whole body and left for at least 12 hours before washing off.

The mites are killed rapidly with the cream and once the initial treatment is completed, people are no longer considered infectious. However, it is crucial to follow up the first treatment with a second treatment 7 days later to kill any eggs which were not killed in the first treatment. These eggs, if left untreated, may go on to hatch and cause a reinfection.

Any sexual partners or household family members of the person diagnosed with scabies should be treated with permethrin cream also.

Scabies mites are only able to survive off human skin for up to 48 hours, therefore part of the treatment and control measures for scabies, is the requirement for all household linen, furniture, and floor coverings should be washed.

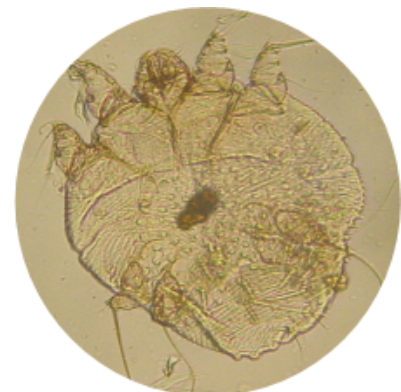
Crusted (Norwegian) Scabies

This type of infestation is particularly virulent. It often occurs in the debilitated or elderly, and people who are immunosuppressed.

People with crusted scabies are highly infectious and are difficult to treat. It is characterised by large areas of the body appearing ‘scaly’ which is actually thousands of mites, burrows and eggs.

Treatment may require more frequent topical cream application, in combination with oral ivermectin tablets.

There have been cases where crusted scabies have been misdiagnosed as psoriasis or eczema. It is imperative these people are referred to an infectious disease specialist or a dermatologist for optimal management.



References:

1. Department of Health Blue Book– Scabies. Available at: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/disease-information-and-advice>
2. Page image credit: Sarcoptes scabiei mite under a microscope (Courtesy of Wikimedia) https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sarcoptes_scabiei_2.jpg
3. World Health Organization– Scabies (2023). Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/scabies>
4. Heathcote Health Transmission-based Precautions policy and procedure (access via Prompt)

What to do if you suspect a patient/resident/client has scabies

1. Ask a doctor to inspect any rashes or sores on the person; they may consider skin scrapings for microscopy. If this is ordered, the scrapings must be taken before administering topical treatment. Skin scrapings are not required in every case as the test is only 30-50% effective at diagnosing infection
2. Administer topical treatment; cream must be on person's entire body for at least 12 hours before washing it off. Avoid any mucous membranes and the eyes when applying the cream.
3. All linen, carpet and person's clothing must be laundered; on hot wash to kill mites. Any furniture or items unable to withstand hot water or steam should be wrapped in waterproof plastic bag for a week. Carpet must be steam cleaned.
4. Check up on close family and sexual partners; these people are at risk of having contracted scabies from the person and should be treated as well. If the affected person has been at home in the week before symptoms arising, home linen, carpet and clothing should also be cleaned.
5. A second topical treatment is required; the person must have another treatment with the topical cream 7 days after the first treatment. This kills any newly hatched larvae from the eggs laid by the initial infestation.

Scabies transmission requires **prolonged, close contact** with a person with scabies. Routine care and contact will not be sufficient to contract scabies. Washing your hands with warm soap and water after leaving the person's room will reduce the risk of transmission effectively. Alcohol-based hand rub is sufficient for all other care activities taking place in the patient's room.

Note: Once the first treatment is complete (at least 24hrs has passed since treatment was initiated), the person is no longer considered infectious; they can be removed from isolation.

Time Out: Transmission-based Precautions



Transmission based precautions (TBPs) are used in addition to Standard Precautions. This is because Standard Precautions are unable to contain or prevent transmission of scabies on their own.

Just as the name indicates, the route of transmission dictates what type of precautions are used. This also guides what type of PPE healthcare workers should be using to protect themselves.

Scabies are transmitted via touch, or shared equipment and surfaces that have not been cleaned properly. At Heathcote Health, this translates into using Contact Precautions.

Contact Precautions ask staff to:

- Place the patient/resident/client in a single room with their own bathroom
- Put the Contact Precautions sign on the door
- When entering the room, put on a plastic apron (or long-sleeved gown if staff are worried about skin-to-skin contact with faeces). This should be worn the whole time staff are in the room
- Use frequent hand hygiene (at a minimum, as per the 5 Moments), and wash your hands thoroughly on leaving the room
- Tell the patient/resident/client why they have been put into isolation
- Request the patient/resident/client to remain in their room at all times, until their treatment is complete. As it only takes around 24hrs once treatment is initiated, it is a reasonable expectation for them to remain isolated.
- Encourage the patient/resident/client to participate in daily personal hygiene activities such as showering, wearing new, freshly laundered clothes, having their bed changed, along with having any personal items changed or cleaned.



Partnering with Consumers: Standard 2

It's important that staff help patients/residents/clients with scabies understand their condition. To help this process, the Victorian Department of Health have made an excellent handout staff can provide to patients/residents/clients.

You can download and print a copy from the internet:

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/scabies>

LIGHTS ON IN HEATHCOTE

The Lights On Program in Heathcote has just finished up, running from the start of August to Mid-September!

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for Lights On Heathcote! Over six weeks, locals gathered at Barrack Reserve for free, guided outdoor fitness sessions — and it was a joy to see so many familiar faces getting active together.

A special thank you to the City of Greater Bendigo for funding the program and bringing the idea to Heathcote. The concept was simple but powerful: with the nights getting darker, it can be hard to feel safe exercising after work. By lighting up Barrack Reserve and removing the cost barrier, we wanted to make movement accessible to everyone. Thank you also to Brooke and the team at the Exercise Physiology Clinic for leading such inclusive, welcoming sessions.



Pictured: Attendees at one of the lights on sessions before the workout started!



Pictured: On the first evening of Lights On, Brooke took the group through a training circuit.

If you would like to keep the momentum going, here are some other local exercise opportunities:



Mclvor Creek Trail parkrun: Free, timed 5km every Saturday at 8am. Walk, run, or volunteer, all are welcome!



Brooke's Exercise Physiology Clinic: Classes to suit every need and ability:

- Creaks 'n' Cracks — Mondays & Thursdays, 10:30am
- Floor-Based Pilates — Tuesdays, 2:00pm
- Chair Yoga — Thursdays, 1:15pm



Heathcote Walking Group: A social stroll around town every Tuesday morning, 9:00–9:30am.

THE SUNFLOWER TOOL

You may soon notice a bright yellow sunflower in patient rooms at Heathcote Health. It's part of our work to prevent and better manage delirium in older people, and it relies on the people who know our patients best: their family and friends.

What is Delirium?

Delirium is a sudden change in how a person thinks, behaves or pays attention. It is often triggered by illness, surgery, an injury or a reaction to medication. Someone with delirium might become restless and agitated, or quiet, drowsy and withdrawn. They might be confused about where they are, struggle to follow a conversation, or see and hear things that aren't there. It can come and go over hours or days.

Delirium is common in older people in hospital, and it is serious. It can lead to longer hospital stays, falls and other complications. It is also easy to miss, especially the quiet, "sleepy" kind, which can be mistaken for low mood or tiredness.

Where the sunflower comes in:

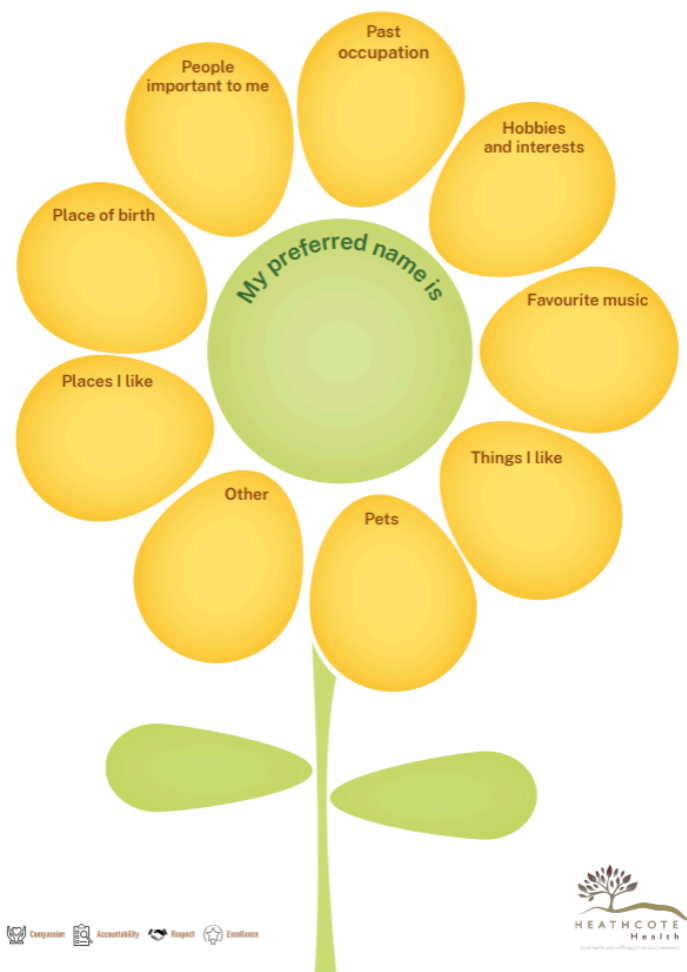
Coming into hospital means a new place, new faces and new routines, and that can be unsettling. Familiar things and people can help a person feel safe and grounded.

The Sunflower tool was developed by the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation. The centre of the flower shows the name a person likes to be called. Each petal holds something important about them: the people who matter to them, their past work, hobbies, favourite music, pets, where they were born, places they love, and things that comfort or upset them.

With this information, staff can have meaningful conversations, notice when something isn't right, and offer comfort in a way that's personal.

How families can help

You know your loved one best. When they come in, we may ask you to help fill in their sunflower. Please also tell us if they seem "not themselves." You are often the first to notice a change, and that can make a difference to how quickly delirium is picked up and treated.



The Sunflower tool is used with thanks to the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (CC BY-SA 4.0).

Learn more: Safer Care Victoria, Improving Care for Older People at Risk of Delirium,
safercare.vic.gov.au/improvement/projects/improving-delirium-care

NEW BOARD DIRECTOR:

ALEX COLE

Alex Cole joined the Heathcote Health Board of Directors in July 2026, bringing a multidisciplinary background spanning engineering, finance, property development, and project delivery across both the private sector and local government.

Alex currently works as National Development Manager within Store Development at JB Hi-Fi. Before joining JB Hi-Fi, he worked as an Engineering Project Manager at Hobsons Bay City Council, where he delivered infrastructure and capital works projects in a local government setting. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Finance) and a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Engineering, both from Monash University; a combination that gives him a practical understanding of both the numbers and the built environment.



That dual lens is something Alex sees as central to what he can offer Heathcote Health. "My background is a mix of engineering, finance, property development and project delivery, so I tend to look at problems from a few different angles," he says. "I've worked across both the private sector and local government, managing projects, budgets, assets and suppliers, and I hope some of that experience can be useful as Heathcote Health continues to plan for its future."

Alex is also candid about what he hopes to gain from the role. "It has been a fantastic opportunity to learn from an experienced Board and leadership team, while hopefully bringing some useful ideas and experience of my own," he says. "I was drawn to the opportunity to contribute to an organisation that plays such an important role in the local community. Joining the Heathcote Health Board felt like a great chance to use some of my professional experience in a way that contributes to something bigger than my day-to-day work."

NEW BOARD DIRECTOR:

ALEX COLE

Having grown up in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, Alex has a personal connection to the healthcare system through his family which has deepened his appreciation for what's at stake when communities have, or don't have, access to quality local care. "I think strong healthcare is really important to any regional community," he says.

"In smaller towns, services like Heathcote Health are a big part of the community, not only providing healthcare, but also employment, support and a sense of security for local families. It's important that people have access to great healthcare resources regardless of where they live."

As a Director, Alex is focused on strong governance, considered long-term investment, and ensuring Heathcote Health continues to deliver high-quality services for the region well into the future. He brings to the Board a commitment to thoughtful, evidence-informed decision-making.

Outside of the boardroom, Alex is an electronics and motoring enthusiast with a love of cars and motorbikes, and enjoys keeping active. He's looking forward to getting to know Heathcote and the people who call it home.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF:

Upcoming Clinical Conversation from Loddon Mallee Local Health Service Network

Hosted by Alexandra District Health, East Metro & Murrindindi Local Health Service Network & Safer Care Victoria (SCV), this Clinical Conversation will explore how Alexandra District Health prepared for, responded to and supported recovery from this major bushfire emergency event.

Whether you work in a hospital, community health service, aged care, emergency management, quality and safety, or health service leadership role, this session will provide practical insights and considerations for emergency preparedness, service continuity and collaborative response planning.

 September 29th 2026
 1–2pm
 Online via Teams
Register here



Palliative Care
Victoria

 **DIGNIFIED
& RESPECTFUL
DECISIONS**



Palliative Care Victoria Collaboration: Dignified and Respectful Decisions

Palliative Care Victoria is beginning their new project, **Dignified and Respectful Decisions (DARD)**, to help families navigate difficult healthcare decisions. The project will provide free resources to family members making decisions about medical treatment and end-of-life care for a loved one living in residential aged care.

To support these activities and build staff's confidence in introducing the resources to families, **Heathcote Health will nominate a registered nurse to attend a one-day education workshop** and participate in three online Communities of Practice meetings with PCV.

If you would like to nominate yourself or another registered nurse, please contact your manager.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF:

Dementia Essentials: Providing support to people living with dementia

The nationally accredited course from Dementia Training Australia is designed to assist workers supporting people living with dementia. Strategies are explored to assist with good communication, planning, developing appropriate activities and understanding behaviour in people with dementia.

The program will run for two days, covering an array of topics including:

- Person-centred care
- The nature and progression of dementia
- Effective communication
- Impact of dementia on people living with dementia and their families
- Activities for engagement
- Effective use of assistive technologies
- Legal and ethical considerations
- Identifying elder abuse and restrictive practices
- Understanding changed behaviour and developing effective responses.

Face to Face Training
Venue: Heathcote Health

Dates: Day 1 - Wednesday
09/12/2026

Day 2 - Thursday 10/12/2026

Duration: 9.00am-4.00pm
each day

Cost: Fully Funded

Suitable for: All staff
working with or caring for
people living with dementia



C.A.R.E VALUES IN ACTION

Highlighting the wonderful work of our staff

August & September 2026

Staff Member Name and Department	C.A.R.E Value
Will Garnsey - Weekend Server Change	Accountability
Tylah Stephenson - Acting RACNUM	Accountability
Will Garnsey - Completion of Server Change	Excellence
Ella O'Bree - Local Drug Action Team (LDAT) weekly meetings are being held and funding has been sourced	Excellence
Men's Shed - Community Engagement	Excellence
Teagan (Social Worker) - For all her work across all HH departments	CARE
Sue Pola - Solo District Nurse on Shift	Excellence
Aged Care Team - Handling difficult resident on return from hospital	CARE
Bianca Humphrey - Assisting with Acute Staffing	Excellence
Jade Runnalls - For her calm, considered and respectful approach whilst stepping in to backfill DCC role	Excellence
Wendy McBean - Undertaking night shift at short notice and shift backfill	CARE
Jodie King - Cook on AM shift	Excellence
Ellen Eikert - Did an awesome job cooking	Excellence
Tylah Stephenson & Brit Cole - Great job in Aged Care	Excellence
Jen Stewart - Planning workload for students in 2027 & 42 BLS Assessments in June/July	Excellence
Gerry Canny - Excellence in leadership, calm manner and ability to navigate service/people complexities	Excellence
Bianca Humphrey - Excellence and hard work with doing our EOLC Policy and Framework that is Org wide	Excellence

STAFF WELCOMED & FAREWELLED

Welcome New Staff

Elizabeth Reynolds: Health Care Worker

Rhonda Bodilly: Management Accountant

Natalie Retallick: Director of Clinical Services

Marianne Jones: Health Care Worker

Briody McKenzie: Enrolled Nurse

Farewell Staff

Fiona Lukaitis: Interim Director of Clinical Services



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

Please email admin@heathcotehealth.org

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 Partnership Committee. 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.