

A Fair to remember



IN THIS ISSUE:

- A message from
- BCHS CEO Mandy
- Doris' ruby retirement
- December closures
- Nurse Practitioner Week: Louise Holland
- Our latest job listings
- headspace' huge year
- Our new-look website!
- Picture perfect: Happy snaps from the Fun Fair
- Our services, plus more.

Around 1000 people made our 50th anniversary Together We Grow Fun Fair an event to remember, and we couldn't be more grateful!

Premier Jacinta Allan was on hand to speak, and she called it - your community health service is one of the things that makes Bendigo such a great place to live, work and raise a family. She also noted the time she spent as a BCHS board member decades ago.

"I got to see up close the incredible work of the organisation. And it's on that point I want to thank CEO Mandy, and the staff, on the work they do... the current staff and the previous staff. Keeping our community healthy keeps our community strong, and it's such important work that will drive this organisation for another 50 years, so thank you."

Continued on page 2



Acknowledgement of Country

Bendigo Community Health Services acknowledge we live, work and enjoy Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country. We extend our appreciation to the Djaara and Taungurung peoples. We pay respect to Elders past and present for their continued holding of memories, traditions, culture and community aspirations. We recognise sovereignty has never been ceded and express our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of colonisation and their lasting impact. May we walk forward together in harmony and the spirit of healing. It was and always will be Aboriginal land.



We support people to develop and maintain their personal, gender, sexual, cultural religious and spiritual identity.

BCHS is proud of:



Quality Improvement Council
'Yes ... we are a QIC accredited organisation'



TOGETHER LET'S GROW IN 2025!



Wishing you all the very best as we celebrate the end of 2024.

For BCHS it has been a time of great change, and it feels like we are heading in the right direction. Our Fun Fair was a wonderful celebration of 50 years of community health, and I am so proud of all our team and volunteers for their efforts in highlighting our vast array of services. The talent we showcased was sensational, and the ice cream was delicious. Thank you for celebrating with us!

So, as we head towards 2025, we are proud of what we have achieved, and have big plans to strengthen the work we do, to listen deeply to our community, and to collaborate like never before.

Take good care.

Mandy

'BCHS... will walk with you on your journey'

From page 1

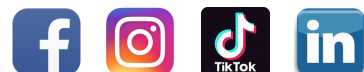
Board director Dr Andy Lovett also took to the lectern, saying: "In 1974, Bendigo was a much smaller and a much simpler community.

"Population growth, an ageing population, the cost of living, people are facing challenging times; our pledge to you is that BCHS will continue to do its absolute best to meet your needs and will walk with you on your journey, listening deeply, offering support and expertise, allowing you to make the choices you want to make for your lives," he said.

The weather was stunning as people enjoyed the activities playing out across the Garden for the Future, including children's games, good food, roving entertainers and an epic showcase of services.

See happy snaps from the event on pages 8 and 9.

Get social with us:



www.bchs.com.au

DORIS' RUBY RETIREMENT

by Emma Sartori

There's nothing quite like seeing the world through the eyes of a child, and for four decades the laughter, chatter and busyness of children has filled Doris Rechter's home.

In that time, she has forged lifelong friendships and seen many children come and go, but now that noise is quietening to a hum as Doris readies for retirement. For the Bendigo Family Day Care early childhood educator, it's a time of profound change, but also of proud reflection.

"Watching children and guiding them to learn and grow through play and creativity is what has motivated me through my 40 years," she says.

Doris first started with Bendigo Family Day Care in 1984. She found the flexibility of being an early childhood educator in her own home was a way to contribute not only to her family but to the community. It also allowed Doris to remain with her own children while they were still very young. When you're in a career for as long as Doris has been change is inevitable.

"Early on in my career, I remember we had weekly playgroups where I would meet up with fellow educators and the children in their care," she says. "It was such a fun, carefree time... these days... we have to be very mindful of dietary requirements, allergies etc."

When asked if there was one memorable or funny moment that stands out, it proved an impossible question to answer. "Kids have the innate ability to come out with the funniest sayings at the perfect time," she muses. "I can't think of any one story. I can say that all the children in my care have brought me so much laughter through their honesty, pure imagination and joy."

It's the memories of those moments that Doris will take with her into retirement as souvenirs from a career she has loved.

"The early stages in a child's life are so crucial to their development," she says. "Caring for them through all different stages of growth and development has been so lovely to be part of."











If you're an early childhood educator interested in being supported to run your own home-based business, email bfdc@bchs.com.au



A career in childcare has been a rewarding choice for Doris, who is retiring after 40 years.

Child safety commitment

Bendigo Community Health Services values children from all backgrounds. We are dedicated to making our community a safe, nurturing and welcoming place for children to grow and develop. We are committed to making sure ALL children reach their individual potential. We will do this by supporting families to keep children safe, healthy, happy; helping families support children to reach their full potential; and effectively advocating for children and being a champion for quality outcomes in child health and wellbeing. Visit bchs.com.au to read our child safety commitment in full.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 World Aids Day 	2	3 International Day of People with a Disability 	4	5 International Volunteer Day 	6	7
8 Eaglehawk Christmas Carols @ Canterbury Park 	9 Nurse Practitioner Week starts 	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 Last day of term 4 for Victorian schools 	21
22 Rotary Club of Bendigo Christmas Carols @ Rosalind Park 	23	24 Christmas Eve 	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day 	27	28
29	30 	31 New Year's Eve				

What's on in December...

BCHS Christmas closure

Our hardworking staff are taking a break to be with loved ones.

All sites and services will close from **12pm Tuesday, December 24, 2024.**

All sites and services will reopen on **Thursday, January 2, 2025.**

If you have an emergency call **000** immediately.

For non-emergency medical advice or care we recommend you try:

- Nurse On Call **1300 606 024**, or
- healthdirect GP Helpline **1800 022 222.**

Top tips to support your mental health from our counselling team

- 1. Diet, sleep and exercise:** These are the foundation of good mental health. To recharge your mental wellness battery, eat healthy, get a good night's sleep and get out for a walk.
- 2. Practice gratitude:** Deliberately focus on the good things in your life. Use this prompt to help: I'm grateful for _____ because _____.
Make a list of 5-10 things every day.
- 3. Notice your feelings, and check the facts:** Feelings are not facts. Practice noticing that you are having a feeling, and then practice communicating your needs clearly and with respect.
- 4. Give and receive hugs (consensual of course!):** Physical touch releases feel-good hormones. Cuddle the kids, grandparents, and your pets.
- 5. Sing and dance (with others):** When we move in time with others, we feel a sense of belonging and connection, which is important to all social beings.

NURSING A CRITICAL ROLE

They deliver essential services to the community. They address gaps in healthcare and increase flexibility in the workforce. They work autonomously and collaboratively to provide holistic, end-to-end care. They are there for you. They are nurse practitioners!

Meet just one of BCHS' nurse practitioners
Louise Holland.

How long have you been a nurse practitioner?

I completed my Masters in 2019 and have worked for last 5 years.

What's unique about your role at BCHS?

I have had the privilege of being the first NP in a state funded Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) hub. I have been able to have continuity of care with clients that I saw as an adolescent many years ago and now are supporting their children. I love that I can work autonomously and also with our amazing team at the SRH hub and headspace.

What's a typical day for you?

Not one day is predictable or the same! I work regular hours and I will see people across all spectrums, from puberty issues to providing comprehensive contraception information and management to pregnancy, where my role can include supporting to navigate the health systems and being able to order investigations such as blood tests and ultrasounds. I see many people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and help them connect to available networks. I also see many women as they transition through midlife and menopause – my greatest capacity is to listen and provide information for people to become knowledgeable and to be able to make informed choices.

What do you wish people knew about nurse practitioners and their role in patient care?

I think the main barrier is the lack of general knowledge in the community. Nurse practitioners, through our endorsement program, have to be senior nurses who have worked at an advanced



level of nursing for a long time and this experience is the framework for a nurse practitioner to become more experienced as an autonomous practitioner.

How are nurse practitioners leading the change for the future of health care?

Nurse practitioners are facilitating roles where the “nursing” component is critical. Roles where education and listening, as well as offering different options and looking after the whole family or the couple are areas where nurse practitioners excel. NPs are in rural and remote areas where they live and work and know their community. We are also in large teams in large hospitals and work side by side with specialists to enhance a person's health journey. We're everywhere!

What's your proudest achievement as a nurse practitioner?

That's easy – it is where I am now – working in an agency that has supported me for over 20 years to continue my professional journey. It has meant that I am able to support and care for those in our community. I love the teamwork; I wholeheartedly advocate for nurses as the leading clinicians in sexual and reproductive health in our region, if the nurses did not want to do it – it would not get done!



NP²⁴
WEEK
9-15 DEC 2024

Voices
for Health



The Future of Healthcare:
NPs Leading Change!



Job vacancies

Executive Assistant to the Chief Operations Officer and Executive Leadership team

- Ongoing, 60.8 to 76 per fortnight, (0.8 to 1.0 FTE) as negotiated
- Applications close Sunday, December 15, 10pm

This role will support the Chief Operations Officer, Executive Leader Partnerships and Integration, and Executive Leader Organisational Support, providing professional and confidential services. Flexibility is key to the role, as is dynamic administrative and report preparation and exceptional initiative, communication and time management skills.

Homeless Persons Health Access Project - Community Connections Worker

- 6-month fixed term, 76 per fortnight, as negotiated
- Applications close Sunday, December 15, 10pm

This unique opportunity is for a social or community development worker to join our pilot Homeless Persons Health Access Project. The successful candidate will have patience, empathy and a deep understanding of trauma.

For more information visit the Careers page on bchs.com.au.

HEADSPACE' HUGE YEAR

What an amazing year it's been at headspace Bendigo. Thank you for all the support this year. While we couldn't possibly list every single thing we've done and achieved this year, below are some of the highlights.

headspace renovations complete

In August we were excited to announce the completion of our expansion works at our Pall Mall site. The works, done by the great BLR Provincial Construction, have allowed for more clinical spaces and a dedicated student placement hub. Again, we'd like to thank the Commonwealth Government and the Murray Primary Health Network for grant money, and also Agnico Eagle Australia Community Partnership Program for providing additional funds.



Happy 13th birthday to us!

In October we marked our coming of age with a 13th birthday celebration attended by staff, the community and our lead agency BCHS. We are proud to say that since opening our doors in 2011 we have delivered over 50,000 appointments to more than 6525 individual young people, their family and friends; we're so happy to have been able to help so many. Our birthday also coincided with National headspace Day, so it was a perfect chance to Pause. Reflect and Reconnect with so many of you by opening our doors to showcase the wonderful work our team does to support young people, their families and friends in central Victoria.

Youth ambassadors

We are so grateful to our youth ambassadors for their continued support by volunteering for our centre. They've accomplished so much, and a special shout out to headspace Bendigo youth ambassador Asher for receiving the "Contribution to the Community" Award at the recent City of Greater Bendigo Youth Awards. We hope you know that your contribution to making a difference exemplifies the spirit of community service.

We recognise the wonderful work you do in our youth ambassador group, supporting our diversity groups and your role working with Keep In Touch as a crew member.





A welcome donation

BCHS Settlement Services staff member Bwe Ku Say recently returned to the Ban Mae Surin Refugee Camp in Thailand where he grew up.

Bwe Ku sponsored a local sports tournament and made some much-appreciated donations while he was there. On behalf of BCBS, Bwe Ku distributed socks, scarves and even excess medical supplies from Bendigo.

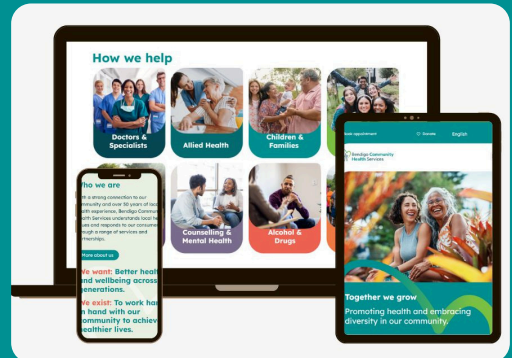
Pictured above are refugees in the camp's makeshift medical centre receiving the donations. There are many Karen refugees awaiting visas to re-settle in Bendigo and live free from persecution and violence.



BCBS life members inducted

Board members and staff gathered recently for the BCBS Annual General Meeting (AGM) where our newest life members Paula May and Vicki Pearce (above) were recognised for their outstanding contribution to community health. The special 50th anniversary AGM also featured stories shared from staff across the service, including their hopes for the next 50 years.

Providing a better worldwide experience



Have you visited bchs.com.au lately? Our website has a fresh face, all new content, a host of resources, news, views and more.

Discover our numerous health and wellbeing services at your fingertips. Leave us some feedback, book a GP appointment, meet our staff and so much more.

“Our updated website has been a collaboration of creativity,” BCBS CEO Mandy Hutchinson said.

“We’re proud to have an online presence that reflects our new branding and showcases our 50+ services in a way that they deserve while also being easier to navigate for our community.”

Check out the careers page for our latest job listings and learn about other ways to support and become involved in community health.

The new-look website launch coincides with the 50th anniversary of community health in Bendigo and reflects BCBS’ new branding and strategic direction.

It provides an easier way to connect with us and keep up to date with our programs and health messages.



In pics

BCHS' TOGETHER WE



**“Keeping
our community
healthy keeps our
community strong.”
Premier Jacinta Allan**



GROW FUN FAIR EVENT

5 YEARS OF
COMMUNITY
HEALTH



“I have not stopped smiling since the event. Here’s to the next 50 years!”
BCHS CEO
Mandy Hutchinson





Our services at a glance

Did you know we run more than 50 services supporting the community?
Find out more about how we can help you and your family at www.bchs.com.au

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS COUNSELLING (ADULT & YOUTH)

Brief and ongoing counselling support, assessment and referrals for individuals and families affected by alcohol and drug use. Youth alcohol and drug counselling provides supportive counselling for young people 16 to 25 years.

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS CARE AND RECOVERY COORDINATION

Provides support, advocacy and referral for individuals accessing treatment programs.

FAMILY DRUG SUPPORT

Our qualified alcohol & drug counsellor provides support and education to families experiencing challenges related to the use of drugs or alcohol.

MOBILE DRUG SAFETY WORKER

An experienced harm reduction worker is available to individuals anonymously to access NSP services and receive harm reduction education, information and support.

NEEDLE SYRINGE PROGRAM (NSP) OUTREACH TEAM

NSP provides clean injecting equipment, safe sex and health information, harm reduction education, support and referral to health and welfare services.

Phone: 1800 636 514

7.30pm-10.45pm Tuesday – Saturday.

NON-RESIDENTIAL WITHDRAWAL SERVICE (HOME BASED)

Provides non-residential withdrawal treatment and support services in conjunction with your medical practitioner.

RESIDENTIAL WITHDRAWAL SERVICE (NOVA HOUSE)

An adult residential program for people undertaking alcohol and or drug withdrawal for individuals 21 years and over who live in Victoria. An assessment process is required to ensure people are suited for Nova House.

SPECIALIST PHARMACOTHERAPY

Specialist Alcohol and Other Drug practitioners provide Opiate Replacement Therapy. This includes LAIB (Long acting Injectable Buprenorphine), Buprenorphine and Methadone.

PEER SUPPORT WORKER

Our qualified, lived experience worker is there to provide assistance and support to help you navigate your AOD journey.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Providing specialist children's health and allied health services for children, adolescents and their families.

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION

Provides group programs for children 2-5 years who have a self or managed NDIS plan.

FAMILY DAY CARE

Provides quality education and care for children up to 12 years of age in the homes of approved educators.

FAMILY SERVICES

Family Services offers an outreach service that assists children and parents to identify goals and respond to their unique needs and concerns.

Family Services takes the time to get to know what the family's strengths and challenges are for children and young people and then works together with parents and carers to make plans to address these needs.

PAEDIATRIC PHYSIOTHERAPY AND PODIATRY

Provides assessment, management and support for children and adolescents.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Provides assessment, management and support for adolescents and adults who have concerns with mobility and acute/chronic pain

SMALLTALK SUPPORTED PLAYGROUP AND IN HOME SUPPORT

With a qualified facilitator, Smalltalk uses a set of strategies that parents can use to enhance the home learning environment for children from birth to school age. The Smalltalk program is delivered through 5 supported playgroups and can be offered to individual families in their home.

COUNSELLING AND MENTAL HEALTH

CULTURALLY SENSITIVE COUNSELLING

Available to people of refugee background and in a relaxed private space, talk about your worries and start to find ways to cope with them. You will receive acceptance, support and respect in a safe and non-judgmental environment.

COUNSELLING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Short to medium term counselling, holistic assessments, referral adults working towards better health and well-being. Includes depression, anxiety, relationship issues, family difficulties, grief and loss.



**Bendigo
Community
Health
Services**

Bendigo
75 Mitchell St

Bendigo
165 Hargreaves St

Kangaroo Flat
19 Helm St

White Hills
501A Napier St

Elmore
46 Jeffrey St
Tel: 5432 6001
Fax: 5432 6101

EDUCATION & PARTNERSHIPS

HEALTH PROMOTION AND EDUCATION

A range of programs and initiatives that empower individuals to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence needed for better health and wellbeing. We also offer skilled speakers are available to address groups on health and wellbeing issues.

HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIPS

BCHS clients have access to free and confidential legal advice from a lawyer provided by Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre.

WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYMENT HEALTH

Supporting workplaces to assess and develop specific workplace health programs to suit their needs.

STAYING HEALTHY

DIABETES SERVICE

Nurse-led clinic providing information, education & clinical care to people living with diabetes. Referral required. Includes Type 1, Type 2 & other types of diabetes, CGM starts and reviews available.

COMMUNITY DIABETES CLINIC

Short-term doctor-led clinic for people living with Type 2 diabetes requiring medical intervention and management. GP or specialist referral required.

ELMORE SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP

Offers support to frail, aged or disabled men and women to assist to maintain independence in the Elmore Community.

EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGY

Offers exercise & lifestyle support to assist in the prevention & management of health conditions and injuries.

FALLS AND BALANCE EXERCISE PROGRAM

A group exercise program designed to reduce falls risks in adults, increase strength and improve balance.

MEDICAL PRACTICE

Doctors offering bulk billing general practice services at Mitchell Street.

QUIT SMOKING PROGRAM

Free program to help reduce or quit smoking.

PODIATRY

Provides assessment, management and support for children, adolescents and adults with mobility and function issues, foot care and monitoring of foot health.

STRENGTH TRAINING

Providing an opportunity for older adults to complete a personalised exercise program in a supervised group. We aim to support individuals to improve or maintain strength, balance, mobility and function.

TYPE 2 DIABETES EXERCISE PROGRAM

A group program offering exercise and lifestyle support for people with Type 2 diabetes.

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH HUB

Blood borne virus (BBV) and sexually transmissible infection (STI) prevention, testing and treatment, including PrEP and PEP. Contraception education and services. Pregnancy testing, care and termination. Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain clinic. Women's health including managing periods, menopause, and cervical screening tests. Trans and gender diverse sexual health.

MEN'S HEALTH CLINIC

Annual check-ups, health assessments and referral information for men and gender diverse people.

FORMER REFUGEES

HUMANITARIAN SETTLEMENT SERVICES PROGRAM (HSP)

Supports newly arrived humanitarian arrivals of refugee background in Australia with a range of services to address immediate needs and ongoing orientation to their new country.

REFUGEE HEALTH NURSE

Supporting service agencies to better understand and deliver health care to refugees where they live. Contact our central office.

SETTLEMENT ENGAGEMENT TRANSITION SUPPORT SERVICES (SETS)

use intake, assessment, goal plans, referrals and advocacy as cornerstones of practice. Utilising a range of engagement strategies including groups, individual and family settings the service aims to equip people with knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions and goals.

REFUGEE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY TEAM MIGRANT AND REFUGEE HEALTH

Co-designed culturally specific health information and education opportunities to build health and wellbeing, safe sustainable living and capacity to access services.

YOUTH

HEADSPACE BENDIGO

Supports young people between the ages of 12 and 25 years who are experiencing difficulties. Phone: 5406 1400.

YOUTH COUNSELLING SERVICE

For young people under 25 years, individual sessions and support available. Includes alcohol and drug counselling.

YOUTH HEALTH SERVICES

Provides a youth friendly health service including GP's, nurses and counsellors.

**For appointments or more information
call: 5406 1200**

Fax for all sites: 5441 4200

PO Box 1121, Bendigo Central, Vic 3552



To our wonderful community,

**Merry
Christmas**

**May your festive season and
new year be happy and safe.**

