

MEDIA RELEASE
28 October 2021

A new health service for the Grampians

The boards of Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital, Stawell Regional Health, Wimmera Health Care Group and Ballarat Health Services today welcomed the Victorian Government's approval for the health services to come together as one.

The new health service called Grampians Health will officially commence on 1 November 2021, following years of strong collaboration and close partnerships between the four health services.

Dale Fraser, CEO of Ballarat Health Services, will now take on the role as interim CEO for Grampians Health for the first six months. He said staff and the community can expect steady, consistent leadership from day one, with local teams focusing on addressing the evolving needs of COVID-19.

"Having grown up in Horsham, I'm excited to lead this transition to Grampians Health, a health service with the scale and commitment to shape a better health system for all parts of the Grampians," he said.

"Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital, Stawell Regional Health, Wimmera Health Care Group and Ballarat Health Service embarked on this journey 18 months ago, and throughout, it's been clear that we share the same values and an intense desire to serve our communities.

"Through ongoing consultation, our staff and communities told us the important issues facing our region. The boards have now acted and coming together is the best way to address this and together, we can co-design better health outcomes for the Grampians community.

"With the support of a dedicated project team with experts from across the four health services, we will continue talking to staff, volunteers, patients and residents to understand local needs, while continuing high quality care.

"This means on day one there will be no significant changes to how each local service is run day-to-day, but over the coming months and into 2022 we will work together to develop a clinical services plan that will address the unique needs of each community.

"I am excited about what we will achieve together," he said.

Bill Brown was appointed by the Minister for Health as Chair of the new board of ten Directors, which is made up of at least nine representatives from Edenhope, Stawell, Horsham and Ballarat.

Mr Brown, a Warrnambool resident and Chair of South West Healthcare, said he was honoured to be appointed to a health service with the ambition and capacity to fundamentally shift rural health for Victoria.

“I’m a proud rural Victorian and it’s clear to me that we need change to deliver the safe, quality healthcare rural communities deserve. That’s why Grampians Health is so exciting, as it has the scale, breadth and focus to advance community health and wellbeing for the long term,” he said.

“The immediate focus will be to ensure high quality care in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and to support our dedicated staff. We will also follow through on the clear commitments that have been made to staff and residents in Edenhope, Stawell, Horsham and Dimboola, and Ballarat.

“We’ll commence the service planning process in the new year, defining a shared vision and setting out the long-term direction for the future. We’ll map out how to best configure services and identify key health priorities to best meet the needs for the communities covered by Grampians Health, as well as capital investment for infrastructure at Horsham and Dimboola, Edenhope, Stawell and Ballarat.

“I look forward to working with staff, patients, stakeholders and communities to strengthen services across the Grampians region,” he said.

While the overarching name Grampians Health reflects the geographic, social, and cultural connections across the four health services, all local place names will remain unchanged in Edenhope, Stawell, Horsham and Dimboola, and Ballarat. There are also other clear commitments:

- Patients from Edenhope, Stawell, Horsham and Dimboola, and Ballarat will continue to access high quality care from their local care provider, with no loss of services
- There will be no reductions in staffing levels and people will be able to work when and where they work today unless they wish to change. Past and future fundraising will also be tied to the community and the purposes it was raised for
- Local representation will be maintained and include:
 - Community Advisory Committees for the Ballarat, Horsham & Dimboola, Edenhope and Stawell communities
 - Primary Care and Population Health Advisory Committees for the Wimmera and Central Highlands areas. These committees will have representation from either Ballarat, Horsham, Edenhope and Stawell communities

Any person with a commitment to supporting strong, quality healthcare in their local community will be strongly encouraged to apply for these important committees. Further information on the transition to Grampians Health, and how the community can get involved in the Service Planning process will be housed at www.carefourregion.com.au.

Quotes attributable to local board chairs:

WHCG Board Chair, Marie Aitken

“This is an exciting day for healthcare in Horsham and Dimboola. I am delighted to work closely with the new Chair and board to deliver on the opportunity presented by coming together as Grampians Health. This will support better services closer to home by investing in our people, seeking to attract a more sustainable workforce and greater access to specialists in Horsham and Dimboola, while reducing our reliance on temporary

staff. It will also offer better support for staff in terms of collaboration, shared resources and broader experience.”

EDMH Board Chair, Phillip Sabien

“By coming together as Grampians Health, we can look at services currently delivered across the region and find ways to support health services available locally, reducing the need for Edenhope patients to travel long distances to access care. We’ll also look at how we can better utilise our aged care service.”

SRH Board Chair, Rhian Jones

“Together, the four health services will be one large employer, with the scale to attract and sustain larger workforce pools, to ensure our health service can meet the health needs of our community in Stawell. This could include inpatient, rehabilitation and acute care, greater options for surgical services and the potential for rotating doctors. It is exciting to think what can be achieved locally by being a part of the larger Grampians Health organisation.”

BHS Board Chair, Natalie Reiter

“This is a real opportunity for healthcare in Ballarat, and for the entire region. We will be able to seamlessly share skills and resources across the region, better servicing local communities and strengthening our teams. With joined up planning and stronger advocacy, there will be tangible benefits for healthcare across the Grampians.”

Grampians Health Board of Directors

- | • Bill Brown | Chair |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| • Nicholas Jones | Director - WHCG |
| • Avril Hogan | Director - EDMH |
| • Heather Pickard | Director - BHS |
| • David Anderson | Director - BHS |
| • Anthony Schache | Director - WHCG |
| • Rhian Jones | Director - SRH |
| • Meghraj Thakkar | Director - SRH |
| • Cora Trevarthen | Director - BHS |
| • Marie Aitken | Director - WHCG |

Ends

Media invitation

The board chairs of the four organisations will be available via a Zoom press conference tomorrow morning, details below.

Date	29 October 2021
Time	9am
Location	Zoom (link to be provided on RSVP)
RSVP	info@careforourregion.com.au