



Ballarat **Health** Services  
Putting your health first

PRESIDENT AND  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER'S REPORT  
2006/07

SERVING THE BALLARAT AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY FOR 150 YEARS



## PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

### Overview

The year 2006/07 was a remarkable one for Ballarat Health Services with the 150th anniversary of the Base Hospital a highlight.

The foundation stone of the original Miners' Hospital was laid one year after Eureka Stockade on Christmas Day 1855.

In November 2007 the Queen Elizabeth Centre will celebrate its 150th anniversary and planning is underway to commemorate this significant milestone.

Patient activity continued to reach record levels during the year. A total of 30,309 inpatients were treated representing an increase of 5.52 per cent or an additional 1585 patients. Significant factors behind the increase can be attributed to same day elective surgery procedures, emergency cases and births.

Emphasis continued on enhancing quality systems at Ballarat Health Services with significant effort devoted to the organisational wide accreditation survey held in October, 2006.

The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACUS) survey team was particularly impressed with the quality and safety of care the service provides and acknowledged the hard work and commitment of the staff.

Ballarat Health Services received an outstanding 23 Extensive Achievements and four years ACHS accreditation and the

challenge will now be to uphold the standard and further improve the organisation so we continue as a leader across the state.

During June 2007 Eureka Village underwent accreditation conducted by the Aged Care Standards Authority. The facility successfully achieved full accreditation status meeting all

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outcome standards, recognising the commitment of staff to maximising the quality of care to residents.

The sixth operating theatre was commissioned during the year thanks to generous community support and State Government funding. Redevelopments of the Central Sterile Supply Department is expected to be completed in late 2007.

A successful fundraising appeal raised more than \$1 million for the necessary equipment to fit out the theatre and enable a 15 per cent increase in surgical cases to be performed.

As an on-going initiative to continually improve psychiatric services, a critical evaluation was conducted against National and State Mental Health Plans as well as quality aspects of the Victorian Strategy for Quality and Safety in Public Mental Health Services.

The findings mirrored public opinion that the existing structure did not deliver optimal client services.

A new integrated structure was implemented in April 2006 and has proven its sustainability through improved staff morale, professionalism and staff development opportunities.

The new structure has also ensured Ballarat Psychiatric Services is user-friendly for clients and their families and carers and puts Ballarat Health Services in strong position to continue to meet the needs of the community.

Increased patient demands created financial pressures throughout the year. However, stringent financial controls enabled Ballarat Health Services to record a surplus of \$276,000. These funds will be invested in new facilities, service development and equipment.

In September 2006 the Board of Management adopted the Strategic Services Plan and Model of Care final report outlining the key directions and strategic priorities over the next five years.

The next stage of the strategic service plan and model of care is a master planning process which will commence in September 2007.

Ballarat Health Services informed residents, carers and staff of Pleasant Homes in May 2007 of the decision to decommission the

facility.

The move to relocate residents from the low care facility is part of a program of reform for residential aged care services, identified in Ballarat Health Services' five-year Strategic Service Plan and Model of Care report.

During the year Ballarat Health Services implemented a number of water saving strategies that have significantly reduced water usage throughout the organisation.

The organisation is continuing to work closely with Central Highlands Water and consultants to identify further measures to conserve water.

Ballarat Health Services has commenced a strategic public awareness campaign advocating for the benefits of fluoridated water.

Fluoridation of the water supply is an effective way to deliver fluoride to all members of the community, regardless of age, socioeconomic status and the availability of dental care.

Ballarat Health Services will continue to inform the community of the benefits of fluoridated water and the positive impact it will have on the health of residents throughout the Ballarat district.

The Aboriginal Health Taskforce developed to oversee the implementation of initiatives of the partnership agreement between Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC) and Ballarat Health Services celebrated significant achievements in its first year.

The partnership agreement aims to reduce barriers to access health services for Aboriginal people living in Ballarat and surrounding districts.

A major success of the partnership has been the improved communication and dialogue between BADAC, Ballarat Health Service and the Indigenous community.

Ballarat Health Services has exciting and challenging times ahead and will continue to improve community engagement and constantly strive to enhance the quality of care provided.

The year 2006/07 was extremely positive and a detailed outline of the specific achievements and issues confronted follows.



## Fluoridation

Ballarat Health Services has commenced a strategic public awareness campaign advocating for the benefits of fluoridated water.

Fluoride plays a crucial role in the prevention of dental decay.

Fluoridated water supplies have long been recognised as an effective method of preventing dental disease with the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence supporting the safety and effectiveness of water fluoridation.

Ballarat Health Services has been an advocate for the fluoridation of Ballarat's water supply for some time and is concerned about the significant public dental waiting lists and poor oral health within the Grampians Region.

The Primary Care and Population Health Advisory Committee, a sub-committee of the Ballarat Health Services Board, includes representatives from the City of Ballarat, Ballarat Community Health Centre, Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership, the Ballarat and District Division of General Practice and the Department of Human Services.

This committee has identified the need to improve the oral health of the community as its first priority including advocating for fluoridation of Ballarat's water supply.

Melbourne's water supply has been fluoridated for 30 years and as a result the incidence of dental decay in 12 year old children living in Melbourne is about 40 per cent less than 12 year olds in the Grampians Region.

The public dental waiting list in Ballarat is increasing - a routine dental check-up is almost a five-year wait. There are currently 80 preschool aged children waiting for a general anaesthetic to treat dental decay,

due to the severity and complexity of their dental need. Many of these children will require the extraction of multiple teeth and may also require antibiotics to manage infection and pain whilst they wait.

Fluoridation of the water supply is an effective way to deliver fluoride to all members of the community, regardless of age, socioeconomic status and the availability of dental care.

Ballarat Health Services will continue to inform the community of the benefits of fluoridated water and the positive impact it will have on the health of residents throughout the Ballarat district.

## Australian Council of Healthcare Standards accreditation

The hard work and commitment of staff from across Ballarat Health Services has been acknowledged by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards with the service receiving four years accreditation.

This significant result follows the Organisational Wide Review held in October 2006.

The review survey team indicated that the systems we have developed are effective and that Ballarat Health Services continues to improve the quality and safety of services provided.

The surveyors commented on the strong collegial approach among managers and staff, reflecting the leadership which emanates from the Board and Executive Management team.

This achievement sends a clear message to the community that Ballarat Health Services is committed to excellence in health care with a strong and continuing focus on safety, quality and performance.

The challenge will now be to uphold the achievements and to further improve services so Ballarat Health Services continues as a leader across the state in line with our Vision - *Leadership and Excellence in Healthcare*.

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*Below: Mel Harris, Radiology Clerk and Claire Thompson, Clerical Assistant, are part of the BHS team which is committed to safety, quality and performance.*



## Base Hospital celebrates 150 years service

An historic event occurred for Ballarat Health Services in September 2006 with the Base Hospital celebrating its 150th anniversary.

The foundation stone of the original Miners' Hospital was laid one year after Eureka Stockade on Christmas Day 1855.

On that day 7000 people, being one quarter of the population of Ballarat, marched up the Sturt Street hill behind a Masonic band and witnessed the Warden of the Court of Mines and Chairman of the hospital committee, James Daly JP, lay the foundation stone.

The community worked for the next nine months to raise funds to build a hospital and for the next 150 years the people of Ballarat followed this lead and their support has been instrumental in establishing a health service that we can well be proud of.

The hospital started from humble beginnings. The original Miners' Hospital admitted 1033 patients in the first year, paid their surgeon 400 pounds and their matron 100 pounds per annum.

Professor Geoffrey Blainey, one of Australia's most significant and popular historians was guest of honour at a dinner to mark this auspicious occasion.

Professor Blainey spoke of the importance the Base Hospital had in Ballarat's history and the significance it has on the Grampians region today.

Ballarat Health Services has exciting and challenging times ahead and will continue to improve community engagement and constantly strive to enhance the quality of care provided.

In November 2007 the Queen Elizabeth Centre will celebrate its 150th anniversary and planning is underway to commemorate this significant milestone.

*At the Base Hospital's 150th Anniversary Dinner is Board member Dr Brian Hassett, Professor Geoffrey Blainey and Dr David Morton.*



*Board President Lynne McLennan and CEO Andrew Rowe cut the 150th Anniversary cake.*



## Patient Throughput

Ballarat Health Services treated a total of 30,309 patients in 2006/07 representing an increase of 5.52 per cent or an additional 1585 patients compared to the previous year.

Significant factors behind the increase can be attributed to same day elective procedures, emergency cases and births. Birth numbers continue to grow at Ballarat Health Services with the number increasing to 1199 representing an increase of 6.39 per cent or an additional 72 babies compared to the previous year.

Comparing the number of births this year with those recorded five years ago we have seen an increase of 37.5 per cent or an additional 327 births a year.

A total of 72,444 bed days was achieved during 2006/07 representing an increase of 0.34 per cent or 248 bed days compared to the previous year. The increase in patient numbers together with the minimal increase in bed days highlights an increase in same day separations and improvements in average length of stay.

The average length of stay for hospital inpatients continued to decline in 2006/07. The trend over the past five years can be demonstrated as follows:

YEAR	DAYS
2002/03	2.86
2003/04	2.72
2004/05	2.59
2005/06	2.51
2006/07	2.39

The continued decline in average length of stay was mainly due to the increase in patients undergoing same day surgery with preparatory tests and anaesthetic assessment being undertaken in the pre-admission clinic.

Demands on the Emergency Department saw a slight decline in the number of patients treated; however, there have been an increase in the complexity of cases seen. The total number of attendances achieved 40,027 representing a 0.09 per cent or 35 patients less than the previous year.

A majority of the shortfall occurred in category four and five patients, however, category two and three patient numbers increased, highlighting an increase in urgency and complexity of patients seen.

Ballarat Health Services Residential Aged Care remained at 100 per cent capacity for the 2006/07 Financial Year. Ballarat Health Services is the largest provider of residential aged care in the Southern Hemisphere with 535 beds.

A total of 722 patients were admitted to the Acute Psychiatric Unit representing a 0.42 per cent or three more patients than the previous year.

## Financial results

Ballarat Health Services reported an operating surplus for the 2006/07 year of \$276,000 compared to an expected break even operating result.

The operating surplus achieved was another strong result particularly in context of increasing demands across the service.

The ability for Ballarat Health Services to continue to achieve an operating surplus helps underpin our financial viability and allows for the continued investment in new technology and facilities.

Ballarat Health Services plays a major role as an employer and purchaser of goods and services in the Grampians Region with \$149 million paid to employees during the year and \$81 million of goods and services purchased.

*South African born Orthopedic Surgeon Hans Lombard moved to Ballarat with his family in June 2007 to work at Ballarat Health Services.*

Specific financial and operational initiatives have positively enabled Ballarat Health Services to continue to achieve our expected budgetary results.

These initiatives include the ongoing monitoring of activity to maximise throughput revenue and performance bonus funding, effective leave management, private consulting and diagnostic revenue, administrative cost reviews and rostering and reviews of staffing costs.

These initiatives and their status are regularly monitored to maintain the focus on achieving desired budgetary outcomes.



## Capital improvements

A number of capital projects commenced during the year. Topping the list was \$3 million of electrical infrastructure upgrades at the Base Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Centre.

The upgrades are vital for Ballarat Health Services as the current power supply is at full capacity during peak periods, leaving limited room for service improvements or future growth.

New high voltage cabling and main electrical switchboard have been installed and a second main electrical feeder line will provide power to the Base Hospital, while at the Queen Elizabeth Centre a larger emergency generator has been installed and a range of other works have taken place.

In May 2007 the then Minister for Health, Bronwyn Pike, announced \$4.5m funding to reduce emergency department waiting times and elective surgery waiting lists.

The significant capital funding injection ensured that the sixth operating theatre was commissioned and redevelopment of the Central Sterile Supply Department (CSSD) will be completed. The sixth theatre and additional works in CSSD will provide an additional 15 per cent surgical capacity. The CSSD is expected to be completed by late 2007.

A medi-hotel will be fitted out within the hospital to provide for patients travelling long distances for surgery and will have the benefit of freeing up hospital beds. The planning process for establishment of a short stay unit adjacent to the Emergency Department has commenced and it is expected to be built within the 2008/09 Financial Year.

During the year \$156,000 was allocated to redevelop the Emergency Department. The project has seen significant renovations undertaken on the physical layout of the waiting room, the entrance foyer on Mair Street, improved communication systems, signage and information available to patients. The Emergency Department waiting room received necessary refurbishments to ensure patient comfort and safety while waiting for treatment was assured.

Ballarat Health Services has installed new signage throughout the Base Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Rehabilitation Centre sites to improve ease of access for all clients.

In addition, a further \$68,000 has been allocated via the Improving Care Initiative for Patients and Older Visitors initiative to install hand rails along corridors and additional seating at the Base Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Centre sites.

Other significant projects that have commenced this year include:

- Upgrades to negative pressure rooms in the Emergency Department and on each floor of the Base Hospital. Cost \$594,000.
- Upgrades to the Base Hospital Cafeteria. Cost \$34,000.
- Capital works at residential care facilities. Cost \$500,000.
- Upgrades to piped oxygen in the inpatient rehabilitation ward at the Queen Elizabeth Rehabilitation Centre. Cost \$94,000.

## Decommissioning of Pleasant Homes

Ballarat Health Services informed residents, carers and staff of Pleasant Homes, in May this year, that the process of decommissioning the facility had commenced.

Although Pleasant Homes currently meets Commonwealth certification standards it is not considered reasonable as a long term residential aged care option for the Ballarat community.

The move to relocate residents from the low care facility is part of a program of reform for residential aged care services, identified in Ballarat Health Services' five-year Strategic Service Plan and Model of Care report.

BHS is commencing a master planning process, which will determine the optimal mix of aged care services and provide residents with modern and comfortable state-of-the-art facilities consistent with their individual care needs.

Pleasant Homes was built in the early 1900's and due to its ageing infrastructure, Ballarat Health Services made the decision to decommission the facility and relocate the residents.

Existing residents were offered relocation into alternate Ballarat Health Services residential facilities.

The future of the facility will be determined by the master planning process.



Left: Dr Nigel Beck, Emergency Department, Chris Lockett, Major Programs and Infrastructure Director and Jos Wynen, Engineer, check out the redevelopments of the Base Hospital's main entrance and Emergency Department.

## Smoke-free Workplace Policy

As part of Ballarat Health Services continued introduction of its smoke-free workplace strategy, all facilities, grounds and vehicles will be totally smoke-free as of 1 September 2007.

BHS has progressively moved towards this goal over recent years, and has worked with staff and the community to progressively introduce the smoke-free policy.

All patients, staff, and visitors have been advised of the changes through a comprehensive communications program and the health service will continue to work with patients and staff during the initial stages.

Nicotine-dependent patients will be offered nicotine replacement therapy prescriptions, monitored for nicotine withdrawal symptoms and offered Quit packs whilst at BHS.

The Smoke-Free Workplace Policy will be introduced across Ballarat Health Service facilities with the aim to:

- reduce the health risks associated with tobacco use by staff, patients, visitors and the community, especially through passive smoking;
- provide a clear and consistent message about the health risks of smoking;
- provide leadership to reduce the harm associated with smoking; and
- comply with Occupational Health and Safety Act regulations.

## Psychiatric Services - Community Based Integrated Teams

Ballarat Health Services - Psychiatric Services critically evaluated itself against National and State Mental Health Plans and quality aspects of The Victorian Strategy for Quality and Safety in Public Mental Health Services 2004-2008 as an on-going initiative to continually improve standards.

The findings mirrored public opinion that the existing structure did not deliver optimal client services.

The previous team functions of triage; crisis assessment and treatment; continuing care; and mobile intensive support and treatment were shown to inhibit capacity to consistently deliver optimal client services.

As a result of the review, the organisation identified that clients were receiving care from a multitude of clinicians, creating concern that changes in their health could be missed, and progress inhibited with individual needs overlooked.

The re-organisation of the clinical workforce and processes to support their endeavours ensures clients and their families/carers receive a comprehensive, seamless treatment program from the same clinicians regardless of fluctuations in health status.

This initiative, implemented in April 2006, has proven its sustainability through improved staff morale, enhanced professionalism and staff development. Reduced acute bed occupancy and re-establishment rates indicate that the health status of clients has improved overall, and that clients are more effectively managing fluctuations in their health status.

The new integrated structure ensures that the service is user-friendly for clients, their families and carers and puts Ballarat Health Services in strong position to continue to meet the needs of the community.

## Catering Award

A commitment towards producing a quality product each and every time has seen Ballarat Health Services' Catering Department awarded internationally recognised accreditation.

Increased food safety standards, introduced by the State Government, motivated the Ballarat team of 120 staff to work towards achieving the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Accreditation.

It is believed that Ballarat Health Services Catering is the only Victorian public hospital kitchen to have gained the accreditation, which is a recognised world standard of food safety management.

Ten tonnes of food is prepared in the kitchen each week and this award is recognition of the fantastic efforts of the catering staff who work hard to ensure that all food and meals are of a consistently high standard.

*Below: Russell Hardy, Ballarat Health Services Catering Manager, proudly displays the International Catering Certificate.*



### Base Hospital

Drummond Street North  
Ballarat 3350  
Phone: (03) 5320 4000  
Fax: (03) 5320 4828

### Queen Elizabeth Centre

102 Ascot Street South  
PO Box 199 Ballarat 3353  
Phone: (03) 5320 3700  
Fax: (03) 5320 3860

### Psychiatric Services

Sturt Street  
PO Box 577 Ballarat 3353  
Phone: (03) 5320 4100  
Fax: (03) 5320 4028



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For all enquiries please contact the Ballarat Health Services switchboard on 5320 4000  
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