

ALL HEART FOR OTHERS



15 years of Settlement Services at BCHS

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It's safe to say BCHS wasn't fully prepared when the first refugee Karen family touched down 15 years ago, bound for Bendigo. But our hearts were in the right place.

BCHS' Marty Street was at Tullamarine airport, ready to take the family-of-six under her wing and steady the journey to peace and stability. She was joined by Buddhist monk Moonie and one other social worker, with then-manager Kaye Graves supporting.

"We had no idea what we were doing," Kaye recalls. "We didn't have a house for the family, who of course had no rental history. I went to my Rotary Club and begged for someone to rent them a house. Which they did, thankfully."

Kaye says it was clear they'd need bilingual staff, and so the Settlement Services team began to grow, and employ Karen and Dari-speaking people of lived refugee experience.

Since 2010, BCHS has delivered the federally-funded program in Bendigo, supporting people of refugee background to navigate life here, including education, employment, health and housing.



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'



Make a Star date to make a big difference

BCHS is off to the movies! Join us at the beautiful Star Cinema in the historic Eaglehawk Town Hall on July 3 for the opening screening of The Great Lillian Hall.

Your ticket will help us provide practical items for people living with or at risk of homelessness in our community.

We've chosen a great film that will take you to Broadway, starring Lily Rabe, Pierce Brosnan and Kathy Bates. Purchase your tickets now at www.starcinema.org.au

Support since 2010

FROM PAGE 1

Now Settlement Services Senior Leader Marty says there's little time to mark the 15th anniversary; her team is currently very busy, thanks to a recent large number of approved Humanitarian Visas for people in Thai refugee camps.

"There are many beautiful family reunions happening right now. These are the times that make our work so incredibly rewarding," Marty says.

Kaye now leads the Cultural Diversity team, which works to build health literacy for people of refugee background. The team co-design programs and resources in simple English and other languages. It's innovative, often ground-breaking work that's unique to BCHS and that responds to the needs, concerns and gaps in knowledge of this community.

The team engages people of refugee background in sports, in being prepared for emergencies such as fire and flood, in understanding chronic illnesses, and more.

Congratulations to the team on 15 years of care and growth - an anniversary that coincides with this month's Refugee Week.

Get social
with us:



www.bchs.com.au

EAGLEHAWK SITE HAS THE COMMUNITY IN MIND



When BCCHS first began planning for the refurbishment of our Seymoure Street site in Eaglehawk, we asked the community what they'd like for their health service. And firmly on the list was a space of their own.

These two photographs show the work-in-progress that is the Community Hub; a feature and showpiece of the new-look building.

The hub includes a kitchen, open space for groups to gather, lots of storage and natural light. Plus, access to an outside courtyard garden to extend the space and ensure a green view from within.

The hub will be available for community hire, for events, education, connections and celebrations, and will be a true asset and gift to Eaglehawk.

Help us rack up the winter coats for others










BCCHS staff Tegan, Oscar and Steph.

This year's revived winter coat drive is powering ahead and aiming to collect a total of 1000 warm pre-loved coats by June 16.

Midway through the six-week drive, our partners Pristine Drycleaners had voluntarily professionally cleaned approx 400 coats, donated by community.

The winter woollies are now finding their way to those who need them most, via our programs.

If you'd like to donate, drop your coats to Pristine Drycleaners in High Street. A huge thank you to all who have so far.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4  Navigating Puberty education evening - online	5  World Environment Day	6	7 Heathcote on Show starts 
8	9 Men's Health Week starts 	10	11	12	13	14
15 Coat Drive ends tomorrow	16  Refugee Week starts	17	18 	19 Healthy Choices Forum @ Bendigo Tennis Centre	20	21
22	23 White Hills Wanderers walking group 	24	25 Explore Eaglehawk walking group	26	27	28
29	30					

What's on in June...

Medical clinic opening hours

Bendigo Central

includes our Sexual and Reproductive Health Hub

Address: 165-171

Hargreaves Street

Phone: (03) 5406 1200

Email: bchs@bchs.com.au

Monday-Thursday:

8am-5pm

Friday: 8am-4.30pm

Saturday/Sunday: Closed

Kangaroo Flat

Address: 19 Helm Street

Phone: (03) 5406 1200

Email: bchs@bchs.com.au

Monday-Thursday:

8am-5pm

Friday: 8am-4.30pm

Saturday/Sunday: Closed

BCHS' Eaglehawk services have moved to various temporary locations while we refurbish.

The medical practice has moved to 75 Mitchell Street, Bendigo.

Phone: (03) 5406 1200

Email: bchs@bchs.com.au

Monday-Thursday: 8am-5pm Friday: 8am-4.30pm

Saturday/Sunday: Closed

The allied health services have moved to:

- Active Living Program & Physiotherapy - 501A Napier Street, White Hills and 19 Helm Street, Kangaroo Flat
- Podiatry - 19 Helm Street, Kangaroo Flat and 165-171 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo
- Forensic mental health - 165-171 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo
- Chronic disease management - 165-171 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo and 75 Mitchell Street, Bendigo
- Sexual health nurse - 165-171 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo.

TWO PEAS IN A PODCAST

BCHS has launched a podcast series celebrating 50 years of Community Health in Bendigo. First up, two CEOs in Sue Clarke (right) and Mandy Hutchinson (inset).

“I think the story of community health has never been stronger. I think that we’re as relevant today as we were back in 1974,” says Bendigo Community Health Services CEO Mandy Hutchinson.

“Nothing’s too complex or too hard. Bring it to us and we will listen and do our very best to try and tackle it. And we’ll use our influence and our advocacy and our passion and our expertise to make a change.”

And so begins the first episode of BCHS’ 50th Anniversary Podcast series. Mandy sits down at the mic with former CEO Sue Clarke to talk about some of the big achievements and changes of the past.

The podcast is celebrating half a century of care by highlighting some of BCHS’ health heroes, plus sharing bits and pieces from days gone by.

Sue and Mandy speak about the differing and continuing health challenges of Bendigo over the past decades, from accessing GPs, to help after natural disasters, to minimising the harms of drugs and homelessness.

“The story of community health is that it really reflects the community which it serves, and that’s what we’re always fighting for,” Mandy says. “If something emerges, we’re agile enough to respond to that in a real way, in a way that makes a difference, that is connected to the people who live here and is informed by them.”

Sue agrees; “It seems to me that if we ever lost that, then we’ve lost the whole ethos of community health. Because community is the one that can really give you the true story about what’s needed.”

Sue was CEO from 1999. During her time the service offered five bulk billing GP clinics, Bendigo Early Intervention merged with BCHS and residential rehab centre Nova House was opened.



Scan the QR code below to listen to the podcast series.



In the podcast, Sue talks of the community campaign, the backlash and eventual acceptance of Nova House, which has since supported thousands of locals through drug and alcohol rehab. She also speaks of meeting Gough Whitlam during BCHS’ 30th anniversary.

“The amazing thing for me is all those years later, he could remember the date and the time and who he spoke with when he came into Eaglehawk and Long Gully and Kangaroo Flat,” Sue says.

“His whole philosophy about access to good quality healthcare being a fundamental right of anyone in this country was just music to my ears ... and he did sign an ‘It’s time’ poster for me. It says ‘To Sue with love Gough’.

Mandy too speaks of a slice of memorabilia from the past... a flyer promoting women’s health that reads ‘Come for a pap test, leave with a lettuce’.

“I love that,” Mandy laughs. “Lettuces were really expensive last year, so that could have been a thing for us to do again.” She’s only half joking, as it’s the perfect grassroots example of community health at work.



Job vacancies

Early Years Speech Pathologist

- Fixed Term Position, 76 hours per fortnight (1.0 FTE)
- Role is split between Treehouse Paediatrics and the Loddon Children's Health and Wellbeing Local

Treehouse Paediatrics and the Loddon Children's Health and Wellbeing Local are excited to offer a new unique early career program that will provide an early career speech pathologist with an opportunity to work across the two organisations. BCHS is the lead agency for the Loddon Children's Health and Wellbeing Local.

The program has been designed to provide recent speech pathology graduates with a supportive and nurturing environment to develop specialised knowledge, skills, and experience in the paediatric field.

To successfully apply you will need:

- Tertiary qualification with current relevant registration.
- Membership with Speech Pathology Australia.
- Knowledge and appreciation of working as part of a multidisciplinary team.
- Passion for advocating and working under a neurodiversity affirming framework.
- A current employee Working with Children Check and Driver's Licence.

Plus a number of other selection criteria.

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

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

Men's Health Clinic

As an organisation with more than 50+ services, we'd really like to highlight the wonderful and hardworking people who work at Bendigo Community Health Services and what we can do for you, so welcome to Service Spotlight. If you see anything featured in here that you'd like more information about, please email bchs@bchs.com.au.

We understand that men often put their health on the backburner, that's why we've created a safe space that specialises in the health and wellbeing of men across the lifespan.

Name of the program.
Men's Health Clinic.

What does the program aim to achieve?

The BCHS Men's Health Clinic is here to help you be at your best. The team is dedicated to breaking down the barriers that surround men seeking healthcare.



Who can access the program and how?

The clinic is available to all people who identify as a man, people within the LGBTIQ+ community, and people of all ages. Bookings are essential, and although a referral is not needed, we do accept referrals from community services such as hospitals, private psychology and counselling practices.

What would you like the community to know about the program?

At our clinic, you are in control of your health. Staffed by GP Dr Haris Noor and Nurse Practitioner Peter Strange, they listen to your needs and choices and offer tailored, discreet and comprehensive care. Patients can get annual check-ups, health assessments, information and support to achieve a healthier lifestyle.

Other things to know...

The Men's Health Clinic is located at our Central site in Hargreaves Street and is open Tuesdays 8.30am to 5pm. Fees may apply, please visit bchs.com.au for information or discuss this at your appointment.



Elmore Social Support Group volunteer Pam and coordinator Judy.

PAM'S LOVE FOR PITCHING IN

When Pam Rogers moved to Elmore from Mount Gambier in 2006 with her husband Ken it felt natural to continue her love for volunteering in her new community.

The Elmore Social Support Group volunteer was celebrated last month for 19 years of generous service to the program.

From a local footy club in Millicent, South Australia to crisis support centre Lifeline to an aged care unit in Mount Gambier to Bendigo Community Health Services, it appears volunteer variety is the spice of life for the 86-year-old.

The Elmore Social Support Group helps people over the age of 65, or those with a disability, to remain social, independent and well in Elmore. Pam joined the group way back when to “gain personal satisfaction and give back to the community.”

“I’m the fourth oldest now,” she muses with a smile.

There’s been birthdays, anniversaries, good times and bad, but she wouldn’t change a thing. Connecting with others and chatting is Pam’s cup of tea. Throw in some delicious food and a sink full of dishes and she’s in her element.

“Chatting and doing dishes are my main tasks,” she laughs before continuing in all seriousness, “but I love it. The Friday outings are my favourite.”

Love it she may, but Pam’s thinking of retiring soon. “It’ll be hard to replace Pam,” group coordinator Judy laments. “She does a lot and knows so many people.”

“And their secrets,” jokes Pam.

These are the champions!



Hats off to the 18 Community Champions who have undertaken our Emergency Preparedness training sessions this year.

These leaders of the Karen and Afghan community are now equipped with the knowledge to help Bendigo’s migrant and former refugee communities prepare for and respond to threats of fire, flood and heat waves.

Representatives from the City of Greater Bendigo, VICSES and CFA have delivered the training, with the support and translation assistance of our Cultural Diversity staff Shee Lee, Nido and Zahir.

BCHS was pleased to acknowledge the Champions last month, present them with certificates of achievement, an outline of what they’ve undertaken, and vouchers to reward their work. Nido said migrant and refugee communities are often more vulnerable to the impacts of emergencies and disasters.

“They’re also unfamiliar with the Australian environment and the physical dangers of fires, floods and heat waves,” he said. “This program aims to mitigate the risks and dangers that come from this.”

The Community Champions are a key component of BCHS’ Emergency Preparedness Program.

“We thank our 18 newest Champions for their efforts and care, and the ongoing work we know they will continue to do to help keep others safe,” Nido said.

INVESTING IN THE BEST

Forensic Mental Health Clinician Joy and Health Promotion Senior Leader Nat, pictured here with CEO Mandy, have completed a Diploma of Business through Federation University in Ballarat.

The 12-month course was delivered to 25 staff from across the 11 Alliance of Rural and Regional Community Health (ARRCH) member organisations to support both emerging and experienced leaders.

These rising stars within BCHS explored strategic management, policy development, financial literacy, organisational behaviour, project management, and effective communication.

The course was designed to strengthen leadership capability and support staff in navigating the evolving challenges and opportunities within community health.

This initiative also provided an excellent opportunity for cross-organisational connection and collaboration.

By bringing staff together from different regions and services, the program created space for sharing experiences and learning from each other.

Each of the ARRCH organisations will benefit from this investment, with graduates now bringing valuable skills, insights and leadership capacity back to their teams and communities.

Congratulations Joy and Nat!



Joy, CEO Mandy and Natalia.

ARRCH was formed by a group of 11 community health chief executive officers, committed to improving the health and wellbeing of their communities.

The alliance aims to reduce health inequity in rural and regional Victoria by addressing the social determinants of health.

BCHS is a proud founding member.

We're part of Australia's reconciliation journey



CEO Mandy Hutchinson put pen to paper during Reconciliation Week in May/June in honour of BCHS' commitment to Bridging Now to Next for First Nations community members.

Now we:

- Listen deeply
- Celebrate culture
- Educate ourselves
- Partake in truth telling
- Connect with partners.

Next we:

- Invite co-design and genuine collaboration
- Partner with Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-Operative
- Use knowledge & connections to inform how we work with local First Nations community members.

We provide culturally competent services which respect a person's cultural identity.

We maintain appropriate community linkages and collaborate to meet the cultural, spiritual and language needs of people.

We understand discrimination has a direct impact on health and wellbeing, and many people experience barriers accessing health and community services.

As such, we work to address health and social equity by providing services and supports that promote human rights, are trauma informed and culturally safe.

Discover our Reconciliation Action Plan at www.bchs.com.au

headspace Bendigo's show of strength



Did you hear? June is the time to flex those muscles for mental health.

headspace Bendigo is participating in the Push Up Challenge, which runs from June 4-26, and they're challenging you to join them!

It's a fun and free mental health and fitness event pushing for better mental health for all Australians.

headspace is incredibly grateful to be one of three official beneficiaries of the challenge too. You can create your own team and raise funds together for your chosen centre, or you can support your chosen centre by making an individual donation.

"Your task should you choose to accept it, is to do 3214 push ups (or another exercise like squats) in 23 days," declared headspace Bendigo manager Lindsay Rose.

"This is the number of lives lost to suicide in Australia in 2023 and we'd really appreciate all the support we can get."

Registrations are open now, so... challenge accepted?

ALLYSHIP

Staff at BCHS showed their true colours in May to celebrate International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT).

"While IDAHOBIT Day brings to the forefront acceptance and recognition of the LGBTQIA+ community, you can absolutely be an ally 365 days of the year," said Senior Leader Sexual and Reproductive Health Kathlyn Crisp.

"We're proud to have embedded within our Sexual and Reproductive Health Hub the new Trans and Gender Diverse Clinic. It runs fortnightly to anyone over the age of 16 in need of gender care. Referrals aren't needed but bookings are essential."

BCHS recognises and stands with the LGBTQIA+ community. We strive to contribute to a more inclusive society where everyone's rights are protected, and voices are heard. We are committed to continuous learning to deliver safe, trusted and respectful services to all in our community.

For more information on our Trans and Gender Diverse Clinic [click here](#).



BCHS staff donned rainbow colours and held a special morning tea on Friday, May 16 to mark IDAHOBIT Day (May 17).

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.



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





Refugee Week

Coordinated by
Refugee Council of Australia

15 - 21 June 2025

Finding Freedom:
Diversity in Community



refugeeweek.org.au | [#RefugeeWeekAU](https://twitter.com/RefugeeWeekAU)

Arifa (L) and Arozo (R) are former refugees from Afghanistan.
Read what finding freedom means to them at refugeeweek.org.au. Photography by Damon AMB.

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LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS



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