

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2022–2025





### Acknowledgement of Country

Bendigo Health acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land upon which our organisation delivers services, including Dja Dja Wurrung, Yorta Yorta, Baraba Baraba, Wemba Wemba, Latje Latje and Taungurung and pays respects to Elders both past and present. Bendigo Health also pays respects to All Aboriginal Nations of Victoria and their Stories, Traditions, waterways, plants, animals and Country.

*Artwork by Trina Dalton-Oogjes, Wadawurrung/Wathaurong.*

## RECONCILIATION AND CLOSING THE GAP

Bendigo Health services are located on Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Yorta Yorta, Baraba Baraba, Wemba Wemba and Latje Latje Countries.

Bendigo Health is working towards providing a culturally safe patient experience and workplace for First Nations people. We work in partnership with four main Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) in the region, relating to both service provision and collaboration. Bendigo Health actively participates in the Bendigo Reconciliation Committee, Aboriginal COVID Response Committee and the Loddon Mallee Aboriginal Reference Group.

Aware of our role not only as a health service but also a major employer and voice in the region, we will continue our Reconciliation journey towards Closing the Gap that exists between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and non-Indigenous Australians.

Our Bendigo hospital has an Aboriginal support space and Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers who are central in providing cultural support to patients and their families. Training is provided to enable staff to deliver culturally responsive care.

In 2022, Bendigo Health launched its first “Innovate” Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). A nationally registered, formalised RAP will provide a framework for Bendigo Health to mature organisational values and continue to take meaningful actions to develop and strengthen relationships with First Nations people and communities. The RAP will play a central role in ensuring that non-Indigenous staff have the opportunity to understand their role and responsibility towards Reconciliation as part of everyday business.

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## FOREWORD

As a Board we hope the strategic leadership we provide enables the organisation to thrive under any circumstances by building a culture that empowers staff to embrace change and respond quickly to meet any challenge.

When the Board defined its priorities for Bendigo Health in 2018, we identified an opportunity for increased regional leadership and collaboration amongst the Loddon Mallee health services. We had a bold vision of a combined region where we work together to deliver high quality health services and from this, the Loddon Mallee Health Network (LMHN) was formed in 2019.

The LMHN is responsible for delivering on the priorities for the region as a formalised Health Service Partnership (HSP) and is committed to finding local solutions to health challenges. As the leading member, we were able to develop and co-ordinate a consistent response to COVID-19 for our communities, including approaches to residential care visiting, access to rapid testing teams, vaccinations and assisting with distribution of PPE.

Together we kept our communities safe and demonstrated the many advantages of collaborating within health regions; a model the State Government is also embracing.

We are now able to align our strategic planning and associated business plans with the 15 public health services and help each other in our common goal of providing excellent care throughout the region.

The global pandemic impacted our ability to achieve some of our strategic objectives and accelerated the achievement of others. Our focus remains on the need to deliver sustainable high quality health care and residential care. To achieve this, we need a workforce of Caring, Passionate and Trustworthy people who believe in our vision.

We will continue to strive to provide a positive workplace where staff and volunteers feel safe, supported and valued; where they feel inspired to learn and grow their careers and are proud to say they work for Bendigo Health. Our goal is for Bendigo Health to be an inclusive environment, free from bias and discrimination.

Our Public Private Partnership model sees us partner with Exemplar Health and Spotless to deliver many of our services including cleaning, food services, portering, gardening and security to name a few. It is a partnership that we are proud of and we consider ourselves one big team. We look forward to continuing success with this model and thank them for their commitment to Bendigo Health.

The rapid and wide reaching response to the pandemic by Bendigo Health led to an increased focus on risk by the Board. Our first priority was to keep our staff and community safe and we acted rapidly and decisively. This meant we made tough decisions, often ahead of government advice and in a climate of economic uncertainty. The risk paid off and led us to a broader conversation about the role of our health service as a public health leader and to a discussion about our appetite for risk.

Our role as leaders in public health and the source of trusted health expertise will continue and we promise to keep advocating for better health outcomes for our community by working with them.

Bendigo Health will continue to deliver excellent care, improve access to services and invest in and empower our workforce to leverage the government's generous investment in our infrastructure.

The organisation will work with and advocate to government for appropriate investment in our services as we continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of our community. We will seek to predict trends and be proactive in adapting our care.

Our quality and safety culture is articulated in our goals and this time we have increased our focus on research. The Board expect staff to provide evidence based care and to adapt research findings into treatment. We want to see our staff participate in clinical trials for the benefit of our patients and to build on our reputation in this field.

The health service has a commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and reducing waste. We will continue with this transformation and actively play our role in caring for our climate.

We are proud of everything we achieved in the last strategic plan, the Board agreed it was working well and only required a refresh, so we have retained our strategic pillars, values and vision.

This plan will guide the organisation as it continues its evolution into a major tertiary health service for Victoria.

We are not a specialist health service but we will treat each service as if it is our specialty, providing excellent care for the people of the Loddon Mallee.

Chair, Board of Directors, Bendigo Health  
Chief Executive Officer, Bendigo Health



Peter Faulkner  
Chief Executive Officer



Dr Ewa Piejko  
Chair, Board of Directors

We will continue to strive to provide a positive work environment where staff and volunteers feel safe, supported and valued...

## OUR VISION



Excellent Care. Every Person. Every Time.

### What does excellence look like at Bendigo Health?

- Always doing our best
- Staff who feel valued and believe consumers are getting great care and services
- Everyone working together, committed to excellence

Every person deserves to feel they receive the very best care. We will put the patient at the centre of everything we do. That means listening, learning and partnering; accepting that 'at standard' is not enough.

**Every person deserves to have a great care story.  
Every Person. Every Time.**

## OUR VALUES



### CARING

We care for our community

We care for each other. We are respectful and value our differences. We are considerate and show one another that we care.

We are proud of each other, the role that we play in the community and the caring tradition that we are part of.

We know that we do our best when we work collaboratively with our community. We are patient because we know that change takes dedication and time.



### PASSIONATE

We are passionate about doing our best

We love what we do. That drives us to look for the best ways to support, inform and improve the things we do. We are focused and resourceful. We find innovative and efficient solutions to challenges and opportunities.

We inspire others with our enthusiasm. We are dedicated to helping others and giving our best to any situation. We connect the different parts of our community to the information and services that they need.



### TRUSTWORTHY

We are open, honest and respectful

We follow through on our promises with care and accuracy. We can be relied upon and trusted. We do the right thing.

We work as a team. We listen to our community. We explain clearly why we have made our decisions. We make sure that it is safe for everyone at work to speak openly and try things differently. If mistakes are made, we know that we will be supported to take responsibility and look for a solution.



## OUR STORY

The history of Bendigo Health is the history of three organisations with the common purpose of care and support for the community.

Bendigo Health was officially formed on 1 July 1995 when the Bendigo Base Hospital and the Anne Caudle Centre officially combined, with the Bendigo and Region Psychiatric Services also joining the new, united health service. The amalgamation would allow for more people to benefit from an improved range of linked services.

The Bendigo Hospital and Anne Caudle Centre have long and proud histories dating back to the gold rush. During the peak of the search for gold in the early 1850s, Bendigo grew to a bustling town of 40,000 people in just one year. It became clear there was a need for somewhere they could seek medical care. From this came the creation of both the first hospital and the Benevolent Asylum.

Built on a culture of philanthropy from a community who cared about the health of its members, Bendigo Health has evolved into a large health service that aims to provide Excellent Care, Every Person. Every Time.

The range of services provided and the number of people who can be treated each year continues to grow with a focus on caring for more people closer to home. We believe in equity of access for regional and rural communities and want people of all cultures, ages and backgrounds to feel safe when they are in our care.

As our region's largest employer, the organisation attracts exceptional people and volunteers.

Our values of Caring, Passionate and Trustworthy were decided upon by our staff and they are the basis of the promise we make to one another and to our communities. We believe that every person deserves a great care story.



## OUR SERVICES

More than a large hospital within a regional setting, Bendigo Health has a workforce of 5000 who serve the people of the Loddon Mallee.

While our main campus is in Bendigo, our services extend to Echuca, Swan Hill, Kyneton, Castlemaine and Mildura. The organisation provides services in emergency, maternity, women's health, medical imaging, pathology, rehabilitation, community services, residential aged care, mental health care, community dental, hospice, palliative care, cardiology, cancer services and renal dialysis.

Our service profile has developed steadily since our last strategic plan. The expansion of our cardiac catheter laboratory to a 24/7 service and completion of a helipad means we are able to treat more acutely unwell people.

There has been significant upgrades to our residential aged care facilities to improve the lifestyle opportunities for the 200+ residents. Additional refurbishments will take place at our nursing homes at the Gibson Street Complex and the Golden Oaks renovation has received further funding to see it through to completion.

Our Bendigo Cancer Centre delivers multi-disciplinary integrated services to people across our region, so they can receive treatment closer to home. We are proud to offer cancer patients and their families a dedicated wellness centre where they can receive a range of complementary therapies.

As part of our commitment to offer more specialised care for families, we opened a paediatric cardiology clinic in 2021, run in partnership with Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital.

A local Public Health Unit was established in August 2020 to manage contact tracing, testing, vaccinations and home based care for people diagnosed with COVID-19. This team also provides support when major outbreaks occur in other regional towns of the Loddon Mallee.



# OUR OPPORTUNITIES

## Innovation born through a crisis

Consumers and staff benefited from the increase in flexibility offered during 2020 and 2021 with access to telehealth, virtual visits to residential care and working from home, to name a few. At Bendigo Health we want to use this as a catalyst for ongoing change in how we work, how we care and how we involve consumers and carers in the conversation about service delivery. The innovation born through a crisis has the potential to deliver improvements for generations to come.

## Expanding our outreach and hospital in the home services

Working with our regional partners and the government, Bendigo Health has developed new models of care that allow patients to be cared for in the comfort of their home. Evidence shows outcomes improve where patients can avoid the sleep disturbance, physical deterioration and loneliness associated with being in hospital.

Through the Better at Home initiative, a transformation of care is progressing with clinical retraining and use of new technology to deliver personalised, at-home care.

## Aged care reform

We are proud of our record of consistently providing high quality care in our aged care facilities and look forward to prioritising the recommended changes of the Royal Commission to further enhance the lifestyle and care outcomes for our valued residents.

Throughout the pandemic the quality of care delivered to our residents emphasised the benefits of the strong relationship between our public health services and residential care. Our plan is to build on and extend this relationship to the benefit of our community.

## Public health leadership

Bendigo Health will continue to drive conversations with our community about matters of public health including protecting and maintaining health and the role individuals can play in their own health outcomes. Our local public health team will not just track and contain outbreaks of disease, they will assist individuals to make personal choices that help them stay well.

We will work with other health care providers and sectors including local and State Government, general practitioners and community health to advance health promotion and prevention. Bendigo Health wants to see meaningful change in this space and we cannot achieve this by working in isolation from one another.

## Strengthen and build on partnerships

Our communities deserve to have excellent care closer to home and the Loddon Mallee has a number of public hospitals and health services which can cater for care across the spectrum of health conditions. Where we have capacity to improve is developing the models that will direct patients to the best facility for their needs within the region.

As the lead member of the Loddon Mallee Health Network we will collaborate with our partners to deliver on the agreed regional plan for the network.

We will continue to engage with other health care providers including primary and community care and the government to find ways to make sure there are no consumers falling through gaps in the system and to work together for the benefit of our communities. This work has begun and we are aiming to be the region others look to as the exemplar.

## Leveraging capital investment

A number of capital projects have drastically improved the health infrastructure for our consumers and staff. Great facilities help attract staff motivated to provide excellent care and create a positive experience for the people visiting them.

The new hospital allowed us to transform our acute care provision by embedding new models of care, installing the latest technology and equipment and providing space for multidisciplinary clinical collaboration. The Board are committed to seeing this replicated with the Day Rehabilitation Centre, a \$60 million project that will complete the redevelopment of the Bendigo hospital precinct.

In early 2024 a new Early Parenting Centre will open in Bendigo in partnership with Tweddle Child and Family Health Service. This is an important addition for families and young children and we need to harness the opportunity to influence better health outcomes for these children when they interact with us. We know that excellent paediatric care is being delivered by us for the region and we will continue to grow our service offering when government funding allows.

The upgrade of Youth Prevention and Recovery Care (YPARC) will allow us to better meet the needs of the young people who need this level of care. It will be a more inclusive environment reflecting the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Mental Health services. We are looking at ways to deliver a similar outcome in our acute mental health wards in response to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health system.



## OUR PILLARS



Healthy individuals make healthier communities. This pillar articulates how we will work with patients and consumers to empower them to improve their own health and wellbeing.

We will continue to partner with local communities and services to address health inequities and ensure everyone who needs it is connected to care.

We will do all we can to be inclusive and to work with our diverse communities to drive equitable access and outcomes.



For regional and rural areas such as ours, access to care involves ensuring a balance is struck between providing treatment that is close to home and the right care, at the time of need.

While demand for our service will continue to increase, we will maintain access to health care through partnerships and proactive and innovative care models that are in line with the unique needs of our community.



Excellent care is safe, patient centred and leads to the best outcome possible while respecting and listening to patients, families and carers.

By measuring what matters and responding appropriately, we can work together to achieve the best health outcomes.



Our People includes our staff, volunteers and supporters. We strive to provide a positive culture built on safety, increasing engagement, inspiring learning, living our values and fostering collaboration.



## WHAT WE WILL DO

In alignment with the themes in the Victorian Government's Health 2040 policy document we are committed to:



### **Partnering with our consumers and learning from their lived experience**

Working in partnership with our consumers and community to ensure accessible information, education and resources, guided by an active Consumer Advisory Committee.

Engaging with the community through an annual survey and outreach activities to better understand their needs, using feedback to improve the quality of our care and service delivery.

Providing accessible and inclusive services that are sensitive to the cultural and divergent needs of the people who make up our community.

Supporting access to clinical trials for people across the Loddon Mallee region, emphasised by the appointment of a Director of Research.

Responding to the recommendations and legislative changes of the Aged Care, Mental Health and Disability Royal Commissions.

Provision and expansion of public health services in line with government priorities, including responding to the pandemic.

Strengthening local community input in advising the Board on local needs and responses.

### **What success looks like:**

100 per cent of our patient information has been developed with a health literacy lens and based on consumer feedback.

Improved cultural awareness and understanding of our contribution to reconciliation through our interactions with First Nations people, following the adoption of a formalised Bendigo Health Reconciliation Action Plan.

Established cultural safety program including education and training, diversity policy and embedded frameworks.

Successful integration of the Primary Care Partnerships across the Loddon Mallee into the Bendigo Health Public Health Unit, strengthened by the Primary Care and Population Health Advocacy Committee.

Continued expansion of our workforce to ensure staff and volunteers have lived experience of the community the care for.



### **Providing care and services when and where they are needed**

Predicting and preparing for increased growth and demand through a Clinical Services Plan in line with the state's capability frameworks and service priorities.

Emphasising connected care through development of a virtual care strategy that allows for personalisation and improved access across our services, anywhere, anytime.

Capitalisation of digital technologies to maximise efficiency, extend the reach of services and increase effectiveness of patient centred care.

Connecting with and targeting information and service delivery to community members less likely to experience equitable access to health care.

### **Enhance collaboration and leadership across the region which shapes the future of health service delivery to improve experiences for our communities**

Fulfil our responsibilities as the lead member of the Loddon Mallee Health Network by progressing the priorities outlined in the regional plan to help build a strong and connected health system.

Helping our consumers understand how to access the care they need within the health system by delivering simple and informative communications designed to reach diverse audiences.

### **What success looks like:**

Completion of Day Rehabilitation Centre to enable delivery of outpatient services in a new, purpose built space.

Reduce the number of people on waitlists for elective surgery, deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Early Parenting Centre operational and run in partnership with Tweddle Child and Family Health Service.

Develop and begin to implement a Clinical Services Plan informed by population health data.

Multilingual, bespoke, interactive and targeted information available on multiple platforms.

Better at Home program is enabled for our region through the provision of more health care within people's homes.

35 per cent of outpatient appointments will be by telehealth.



### **Delivering safe and effective care and services**

Advancing integration of clinical systems and utilising digital platforms to improve the handover of care from one clinician or setting to another for improved care outcomes.

Incorporating a safety culture through research, evidence, data and metrics to benchmark and monitor the quality and safety of our care.

### **Using the consumer and carer experience to improve our care and services**

Upholding values based care and engage in shared decision making so all patients feel informed, safe and respected.

Encouraging consumer participation and integrating feedback to inform our approach to both care and service delivery.

#### **What success looks like:**

Our patients feel confident to make choices about their care and health needs, evidenced by improved patient satisfaction scores across our services.

Consumers know how to provide feedback and feel confident it will be welcomed and acted upon.

Establish the position of Executive Director, Clinical Governance and Quality, to manage the functions of Risk and Quality and deliver improvements through our response to the recommendations of both the national and Victoria's General Quality and Safety reviews.

Full compliance in all accreditation standards.

Our digital platforms advance our ability to access real time data and latest information moves with the patient across health care settings for a smoother health experience.



### **We strive to provide a positive culture built on safety, increasing engagement and encouraging wellbeing**

Providing a positive work environment for staff, volunteers and supporters to feel valued, safe and supported to work together in delivering excellent care and services.

Best practice recruitment and retention strategies are embedded throughout the organisation.

Focusing on wellbeing and safety of our workforce through a safety culture.

We inspire learning, living our values and fostering collaboration at all levels.

Developing our leaders to guide and support our teams through access to training such as the Great Managers, Great Results program.

Actively pursuing and celebrating diversity and inclusion in the workplace by the promotion of the equality principles as outlined in Bendigo Health's Gender Equality Action Plan.

Providing clarity, set expectations and ensure accountability across the organisation through an annual organisational planning process.

Investing in training, learning and development plans for staff and volunteers that grows our workforce.

#### **What success looks like:**

Complete a review of recruitment and promotion processes to ensure elimination of gender related biases.

Celebration and acknowledgement of events of cultural significance.

People Matter survey results demonstrate improvement in key measures relating to staff engagement.

# OUR COMMUNITY

## Who makes up the Loddon Mallee?



Population: **324,124**  
(estimate)



People are continuing to move into regional centres and out of rural towns



Our population is ageing. Within two decades, the number of people aged **65 years+** in Greater Bendigo is expected to rise by **71%**



Families and individuals from disadvantaged areas have more chronic disease and a greater risk of dying prematurely



People in rural areas and in Greater Bendigo are much more likely to report poor access to mental health services (**Greater Bendigo 34%, Victoria 22%**)

## Compared to Victoria's averages:



There are more families on low incomes



Homelessness in Greater Bendigo has increased by **24%**, compared to **3%** statewide



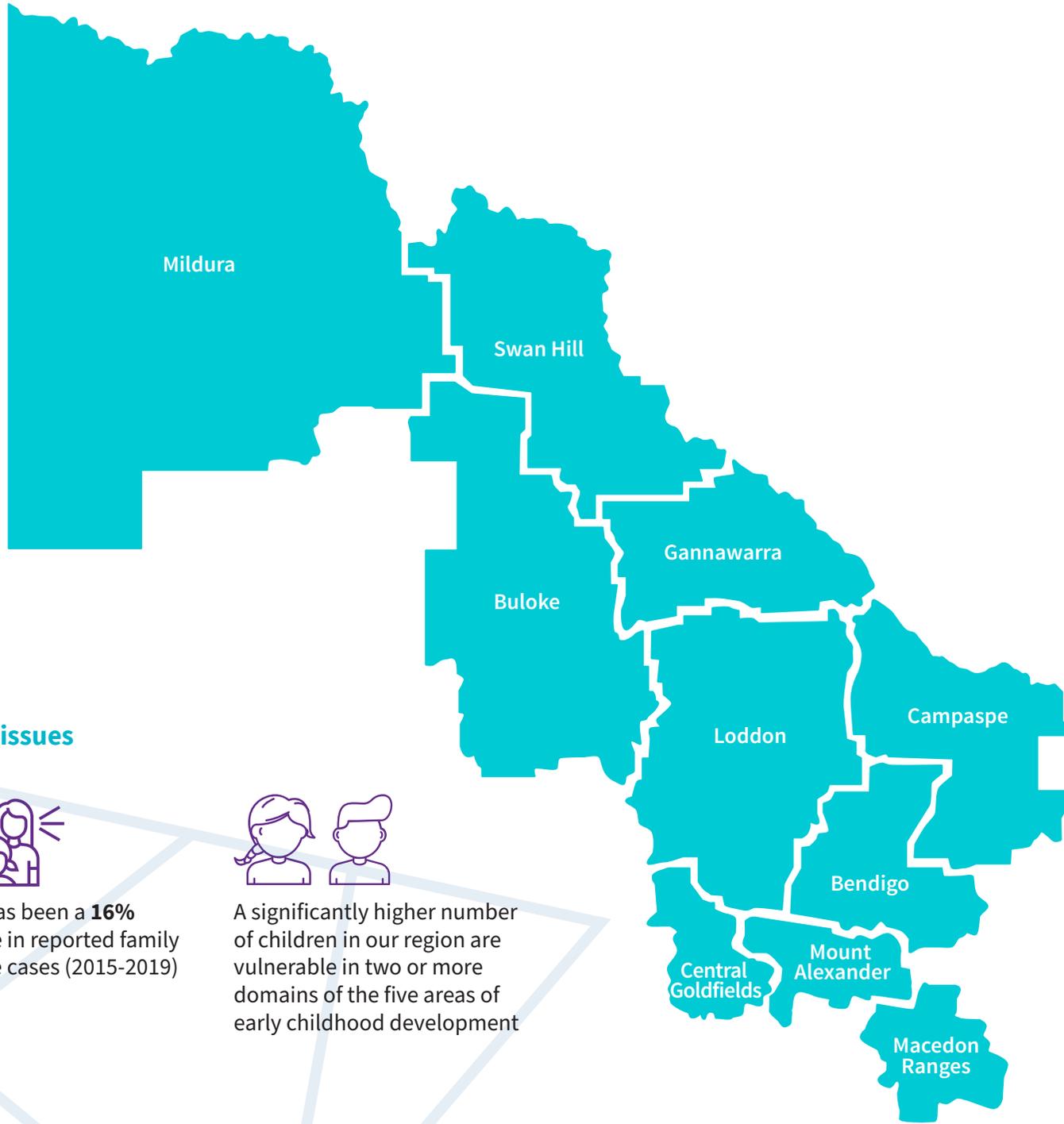
The rate of children hospitalised for assault related injuries was substantially higher in Greater Bendigo (2014-2015 and 2018-2019)



The proportion of Indigenous Australians is much higher



In 2015-2019, Greater Bendigo had a greater proportion of all migrants on a Humanitarian Visa (**32%**) than Victoria overall (**9%**)



### Social issues



There has been a **16%** increase in reported family violence cases (2015-2019)



A significantly higher number of children in our region are vulnerable in two or more domains of the five areas of early childhood development

## DESIGNING OUR PLAN

A strategic plan is not developed in isolation. It must be shaped by our community's experiences of their health service.

A broad range of community groups, organisations, individuals, staff and volunteers, were invited to contribute to the planning process. Feedback helped our Board determine renewed strategic priorities and new areas of focus.

### What we did

- Online survey (over 890 responses received)
- Bendigo Health Board 1:1 meetings with community leaders and organisations
- Workshops with Managers across areas of our workforce
- Consulted our Consumer Advisory Committee to ensure the survey was understandable and encouraged participation

### Areas to improve

Mental health services for youth

Promoting a positive research culture

Access to specialist services

Working together with other health agencies to focus on preventative health

Staff wellbeing and professional development

### What we heard



People in the community and from our workforce felt their health needs would continue to be met during COVID-19 (**57% community, 68% staff and volunteers agree**)



**57%** of consumers are satisfied with the level of customer service they receive



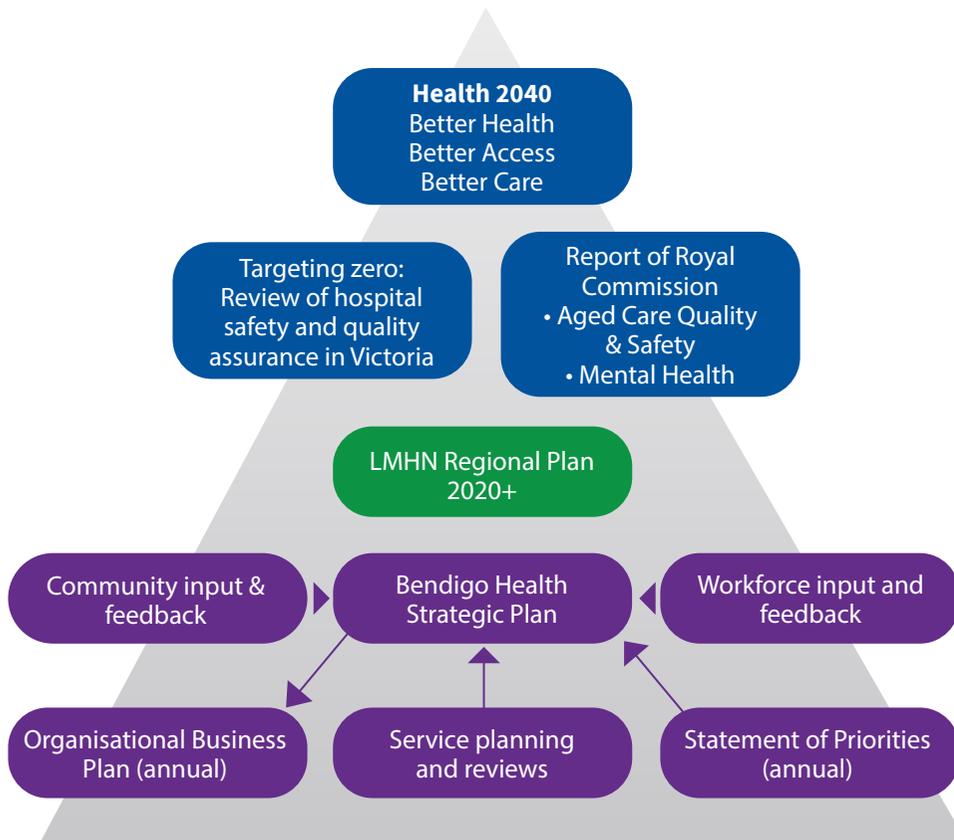
Bendigo Health has a strong voice in the region (**68% community, 66.5% of staff and volunteers agree**)



**58%** of staff agree Bendigo Health provides **Excellent Care. Every Person. Every Time.**

## PLANNING CONTEXT

Our plan aligns with the Victorian State Government priorities 2040 and leverages our position as the leading member within the Health Service Partnership to collaboratively serve health needs and advance equitable outcomes across our region.



The planning context and policy environment

## OPERATING SUSTAINABLY

For strategy to succeed there are strong foundations and all the required enabling functions are in place and thriving.

At Bendigo Health we see robust Information Communication Technology (ICT) systems, People and Culture practices, finance systems and processes, building infrastructure, compliance with government legislation and contracts and good governance as some of the key priorities to get right every time.

We need to operate to best practice with particular emphasis on:

- Maintenance of data integrity and safety by ensuring security of our systems
- Managing the life cycle of assets so renewal and replacement of equipment is enabled to mitigate risk to service delivery
- Reducing environmental impact

## References:

Australian Early Development Census (2019), Australian Early Development Census Community Profile for Greater Bendigo and Loddon 2018

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019), Specialist Homelessness Services Collection data cubes 2011–12 to 2018–19

Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership, Community Health and Wellbeing Profile (August 2020)

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Campaspe Primary Care Partnership, Community Health & Wellbeing Profile (August 2020)

Commonwealth of Australia, Royal Commission into Aged Care, Quality and Safety (February 2021)

Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Settlement Reporting (2020)

Department of Planning and Community Development, July 2019, Victoria in Future 2019

Health 2040: advancing health access and care, Victorian Government (2016)

Public Health Information Development Unit, Social Health Atlas of Australia, Victorian Local Government Areas, January 2020

Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership, Community Health and Wellbeing Profile (December 2020)

State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (February 2021)

University of Canberra (January 2020), Regional Wellbeing Survey (2018)

Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit (VISU), Monash University commissioned data (2020)

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Family violence is a health issue

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