

## Message from the CEO

**We are delighted with the recent news that the Minister for Health approved the proposal for the voluntary amalgamation of Nathalia District Hospital, Cobram District Health and Numurkah District Health Service, to enhance access to local health care for communities.**

The new organisation 'NCN Health' now operates under a combined management and governance structure (effective 1 July 2019).

The Andrews Labor Government has provided \$175,000 in funding to support the transition.

The existing hospitals and facilities at Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah will remain in place, in their current locations, and services will be maintained and enhanced. Urgent Care Centres, clinical services, aged care, primary health, allied health and all other health services will remain in place. The local identity of each facility will be preserved.

There will be no loss of services, staffing or funding. Staff are valued and all staff will transfer across to the new organisation in their current roles and locations. Volunteers are also an integral part of the organisations and will remain with each campus.

The new entity will enable significant opportunities for the growth of health services and the provision of new services that meet the needs of the three communities.

The new Board was appointed by the Minister for Health last week. There are 12 members on the new Board including local representatives from the previous Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah Boards, plus one new member.

There is one Budget for the organisation and local funding will remain local. Reserves at each organisation will be kept for local priorities. Donations and items will remain with each facility/location.

The proposal for voluntary amalgamation was approved by the Minister for Health and the Department of Health and Human Services. It was also unanimously supported by the three Boards following extensive community and staff consultation, due diligence assessment, and careful consideration of the benefits and issues - with focus on improving access to care for local communities. The independent Due Diligence Report found no major issues of concern on the proposal to join services - this included a comprehensive assessment of clinical, financial, governance, regulatory and human resource matters.

We are continuing to meet with service groups, community members and staff to hear feedback and answer questions in relation to NCN Health. Community members can make an appointment to come and talk to the CEO or Board Chair; Email: [ncnhealthservices@humehealth.org.au](mailto:ncnhealthservices@humehealth.org.au); or Write to: NCN Proposal PO Box 252 Cobram 3644 VIC.

**Communication is ongoing through meetings, newsletters, media and the NCN website:**  
[www.ncnhealthservices.org.au](http://www.ncnhealthservices.org.au)

**Jacque Phillips OAM**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

# NEW BOARD APPOINTED



The new NCN Health Board, appointed by the Minister for Health, met on Thursday 4 July 2019.

The new Board brings together a strong and diverse team of highly skilled, experienced, local and community-oriented leaders who are passionate about the region and committed to high quality health care for local people.

There are 12 members sitting on the new Board including local representatives from the previous Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah Boards, plus one new member.

Newly Appointed Board Directors (pictured with the CEO) include Dale Brooks (Chair), Susan Logie (Vice Chair), Patricia West, Melissa Nicoll, Nathan Morris, Chris McCallum, Kade Beasley, Mewan Dissanayake, Kate Hodge, Jennifer Gould, Suni Campbell and Andrew Lelliott (missing from the photo).

We welcome the new Board and congratulate the Board Chair Dale Brooks who brings extensive experience and expertise as a lawyer for 29 years in Victoria and New South Wales and as the previous Board Chair for Cobram District Health.

Mr Brooks is the Director of Brooks Lawyers in Yarrawonga. His qualifications include a Bachelor of Laws / Bachelor of Arts (Melbourne University).

Mr Brooks was the Chair of Cobram District Health from 2015 to 2019, and from 2013 to 2015, and was a Board Director at Cobram District Health from 2012 to 2019, sitting on the following committees: Clinical Governance; Finance and Audit and Risk; Credentialing and Privileging and Consumer Advisory Committee.

NCN Health Board Chair Dale Brooks said: "I am excited about the opportunity to work in partnership with my fellow Board Members, the CEO, executive team and staff to enhance health care for the local communities through a joined organisation - with the combined strengths of Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah health services."

We would like to thank the outgoing Board members from Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah, who have contributed so much to the local community over many years.

The outgoing board members are:  
NUMURKAH: Michael Buha (Chair), Helen Nicholas and Michael Tymensen.  
COBRAM: Sarah Davies, Paul Ukich and Alex Monk.  
NATHALIA: Maxene Hughes, Diana Baxter, Kerry-Anne Rappell, Peter Poon, and Peter Limbrick

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## **What is NCN Health? What changes will take place in my local health service?**

A proposal for the voluntary amalgamation of Nathalia District Hospital, Cobram District Health and Numurkah District Health Service has been approved by the Minister for Health.

The new organisation 'NCN Health' operates under a combined management and governance structure (effective 1 July 2019). This is about improving access to care for local communities.

The existing hospitals and facilities at Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah will remain in place, in their current locations, and services will be maintained and enhanced.

It will be business as usual. There will be no loss of services, staffing or funding.

Staff are valued and all staff will transfer across to the new organisation in their current roles and locations. Volunteers are also an integral part of the organisations and will remain with each campus.

The Board has local representation from each community and three Community Advisory Groups will be established to ensure local health needs are heard. These are in addition to existing Consumer Liaison Committees.

The proposal for voluntary amalgamation was approved by the Minister for Health and the Department of Health and Human Services. It was also unanimously supported by the three Boards following extensive community and staff consultation, due diligence assessment, and careful consideration of the benefits and issues - with focus on improving access to care for local communities. The independent Due Diligence Report found no major issues of concern on the proposal to join services - this included a comprehensive assessment of clinical, financial, governance, regulatory and human resource matters.

Over time, the new entity will enable significant opportunities for the growth of health services and the provision of new services that meet the needs of the three communities.

## **Benefits:**

- A stronger health system for local communities that can respond to current challenges faced by rural health services.
- Patients will be able to access a broader range of health services locally by sharing the skills and expertise of medical, nursing, allied health staff and practitioners.
- Greater access to health care locally, reducing travel.
- Career advancement opportunities and increased role flexibility.
- Improving the consistency of care across the local community.
- Strengthened ability to attract funding for new services.
- Enhance recruitment of specialists in each location.

The development of the Strategic Plan for NCN Health will take place over the next 6-12 months and will include consultation with the community, staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

## **Why did the three Health Services amalgamate?**

To improve access to local health services and to ensure sustainability of the health services into the future.

## **Will I lose my local hospital?**

No. The existing hospitals and facilities at Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah will remain in place, in their current locations, and services will be maintained and enhanced. Urgent Care Centres, clinical services, aged care, primary health, allied health and all other health services will remain in place. The local identity of each facility will be preserved.

## **Will staff lose their jobs?**

There will be no loss of services, staffing or funding. Staff are valued and all staff will transfer across to the new organisation in their current roles and locations. Volunteers are also an integral part of the organisations and will remain with each campus.

## **What will happen to funds?**

There will be one Budget for the organisation from 1 July 2019 and local funding will remain local. Reserves from each organisation will be kept for local priorities. Donations and items will remain with each facility/location.

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## **What if capital works are needed at the facilities? How will this affect the budget?**

Capital works are considered outside of the Operational Budget process. There are a number of capital projects currently underway or in planning stage. These will continue and be overseen by NCN Health.

NCN Health will now be in a stronger position to apply for funding from the Government for capital works, where needed.

## **What will the merger cost?**

\$175,000 has been provided in transition funding from the State Government for the 19/20 financial year.

## **Who is the CEO? What will the management structure be?**

The CEO, Jacque Phillips, is continuing in the leadership role and has been managing the three entities over the past 12 months. A combined management structure is well advanced with a range of senior management positions in place across the campuses.

- Director Corporate Services
- Director People and Culture
- Director of Medical Services

The Directors of Clinical Services at Cobram and Numurkah and the Director of Nursing at Nathalia remain in place.

## **Will the Board include community representatives?**

The Board has local representation from each community and three Community Advisory Groups will be established to ensure local health needs are heard. These are in addition to existing Consumer Liaison Committees.

## **What is the difference between a Community Liaison Committee and Community Advisory Committee?**

- Three Community Liaison Committees currently exist and will continue to operate with a focus on Quality and Safety, and Community Engagement within each community.
- The Community Advisory Groups will be established by the incoming Board and the terms of reference are to be developed.

## **What are the benefits to the community?**

The new entity will enable significant opportunities for the growth of health services and the provision of new services that meet the needs of the three communities.

By combining our resources we can retain and attract health professionals, attract more funding for services, and ensure a sustainable and exciting future that will meet the current and future needs of our communities.

Benefits include:

- A stronger health system for local communities that can respond to current challenges faced by rural health services;
- Patients will be able to access a broader range of health services locally by sharing the skills and expertise of medical, nursing, allied health staff and practitioners across the region;
- Greater access to health care locally, reducing travel;
- Career advancement opportunities and increased role flexibility;
- Organisational sustainability;
- Improving the consistency of care across the local community;
- Strengthened ability to attract funding for new services;
- Enhance recruitment of specialists in each location;
- Streamlined processes across the three health services with time and resources reinvested into clinical care.

## **What will happen to residential aged care facilities?**

They will continue to provide the same high standard of care in each facility at their current location.

## **Will residents have to move to the other sites?** No. Residents will not be moved.

## **Will the services remain Small Rural Health Services (Group D)?** Yes.

## **Will provider numbers stay the same?** Yes.

## **What will happen with theatre services?** Theatre services will continue as usual.

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**What will happen to Home and Community Care / CHSP services?** These will continue and will be subject to Commonwealth Aged Care Policy changes.

**Where can I find out more or provide my feedback?**

More information is available at:  
[www.ncnhealthservices.org.au](http://www.ncnhealthservices.org.au)

Communication is ongoing through meetings, newsletters, media and the websites. We are continuing to meet with service groups, community members and staff to hear feedback and answer questions in relation to NCN Health. Community members can make an appointment to come and talk to the CEO or Board Chair.

Email: [ncnhealthservices@humehealth.org.au](mailto:ncnhealthservices@humehealth.org.au)

Write to: NCN Health PO Box 252 Cobram 3644 VIC

Phone:

- Nathalia District Hospital – 5866 9444
- Cobram District Health – 5871 0777
- Numurkah District Health Service – 5862 0555

Further consultation will also be undertaken through the development of the Strategic Plan for NCN Health over the next 6-12 months.