

Expanding Health Services in the West

FAQs

Why have the two services been amalgamated?

In December 2019, the State Government announced that Western Health will lead the development of a new Melton Hospital and that when completed, it would become part of the Western Health service network.

The announcement opened the way for a wider examination of the future of healthcare needs of Melbourne's West. Given this major development in the two catchments, and following four years of close partnership between the services, the Western Health board and Djerriwarrh Health Service's Administrator agreed to explore the community benefits of a potential amalgamation.

Both services were amalgamated under a single Western Health banner on 1 July 2021 at which point a one-year transition commenced.

Will Grant Lodge or Bacchus Marsh Hospital close?

All Djerriwarrh Health Services, including Grant Lodge and Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital, have been retained and welcomed into the Western Health network. Both are crucial services for the Bacchus Marsh community, as shown by the significant funding support for Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital. With continuing rapid population growth, increased local service demand is expected.

Will there be job losses?

A key aspect of the amalgamation, and even more importantly after the last year with additional pressures on health services during the pandemic, is that there will be no net loss of employment as a result of the amalgamation.

Will community services close?

Community programs will continue. They are a vital service in and around Bacchus Marsh and are being integrated with Western Health network services.

Will I be able to choose a health service?

Patients always have the choice of where they are referred onto, provided it is clinically appropriate. If people want to go to hospitals or specialist medical services in, for example, Ballarat or Geelong instead of Sunshine or Footscray, they can do so.

Will Healthcare be centralised?

Local health infrastructure in communities like Bacchus Marsh and Melton is being maintained to ensure effective and accessible services for the catchment population. Continued population growth means there will be a focus on growing local services, not reducing or centralising.

Will Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities still be supported?

Aboriginal community health and support is a key and important consideration of the project. Both health services provide specific services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including the award-winning Babaneek Booboop early childhood project and Western Health's award-winning maternity programs, Galinjera.

Will waiting times be longer?

Following amalgamation there is one central waiting list to capture patient information, related to outpatient services and elective surgery, to provide greater visibility of numbers and waiting times. This gives patients a choice of where they would prefer to receive their care (where clinically appropriate). A guiding principle for this process is there are no plans to reduce local service provision.

Will local volunteering still be available?

Community members will continue to be able to volunteer, support and make donations to support health services in their communities.