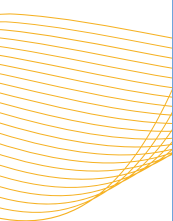
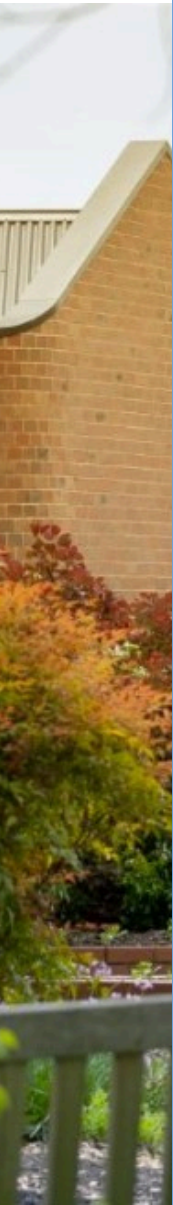
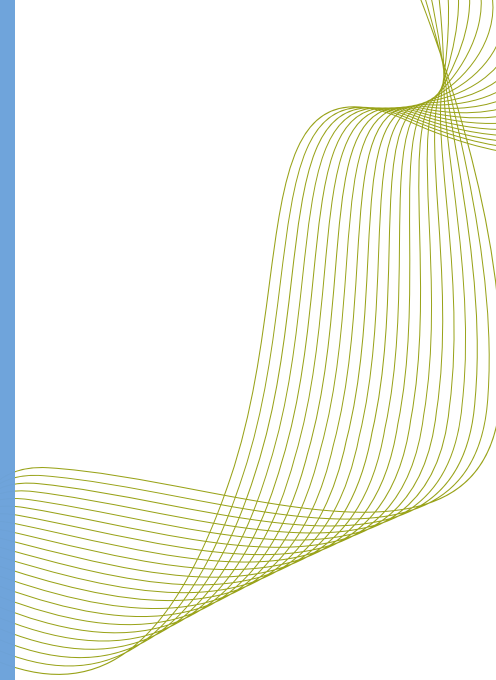


Mansfield
District Hospital

Strategic Plan

2026 - 2029

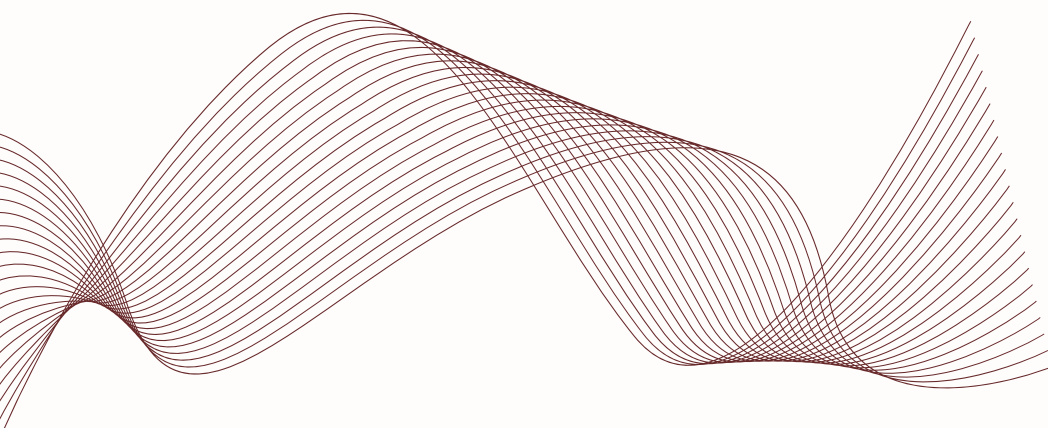
*Our plan for safe, local care that's
easier to reach and shaped with our
community*





Shaping Mansfield's Health, Together

In this plan you'll find: our five pillars, key actions for the next 12-18 months, a year-by-year roadmap, and how to get involved.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Mansfield District Hospital acknowledge the Taungurung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands of the Mansfield region.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and recognise the strength and continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to culture, community and Country. We are committed to culturally safe care and to improving health outcomes in partnership with First Nations communities.

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Message From Our Leaders



Mansfield District Hospital is proud to share a strategic plan focused on excellent care close to home, supported by a strong workforce, smarter systems and powerful partnerships across our region.

This plan emerges at a pivotal time. Our community is growing and changing - tourism has increased by 43% since 2020, our population is aging with grace and wisdom, and we're welcoming new families drawn to our stunning region. Meanwhile, healthcare is evolving rapidly with digital innovations, new models of care, and stronger regional collaboration through the Hume Local Health Service Network.

The challenges we face together are real. Like rural health services across Australia, we're working to attract and retain skilled staff, manage seasonal surges in demand, and ensure financial sustainability while expanding services. We face these challenges not as limitations, but as opportunities to innovate and lead.

Our response is equally real and grounded in evidence. Over recent months, our staff, Board, and community co-designed this plan through workshops, surveys, and evidence-based analysis. You our community told us your priorities: improving urgent and after-hours access, expanding local options where safe and feasible, supporting our aging community, and maintaining the personal touch that defines rural healthcare.

We commit to transparent delivery. Each year, we will translate this plan into funded actions, measure progress against clear public indicators, and report openly so you can see what's changing and when.



Michelle Spence
Chief Executive Officer



Matthew Hoskins
Board Chair

Introducing Our Strategic Plan



About The Strategy

This Strategic Plan sets Mansfield District Hospital's direction to 2029. It was co-designed with our staff, Board and community, and grounded in evidence, service data and regional priorities. The plan translates what matters locally-safe, timely care closer to home-into clear objectives, measurable actions and transparent reporting.

A year with unique challenges

You'll see practical improvements that make care easier to access and navigate: stronger urgent and after-hours experiences, more procedures delivered locally where safe and feasible, better coordination with regional partners, and a better improved, more sustainable workplace for our people. We will modernise our systems and steward resources responsibly, reporting progress openly so the community can track what's changing and when.

Strategy Snapshot

6

months of research, engagement and co-design

100+

engagements with staff, partners and community stakeholders.

5

strategic pillars guiding delivery to 2029



Mission and Values



Mansfield District Hospital is committed to delivering exceptional healthcare services to our community, ensuring that every individual has access to the highest quality of care. Our vision is to enhance health outcomes through a patient-centered approach, continuous innovation, and dedicated partnerships.

We pledge to foster an inclusive, supportive, and engaging workplace culture that empowers our staff and encourages professional growth. By investing in our people, we aim to build a skilled and motivated workforce that is prepared to meet the future challenges of the healthcare industry.

Our Vision

“Healthy Communities, Trusted Healthcare”

Our Mission

To deliver trusted, inclusive and high-quality healthcare that improves lives and strengthens our communities.

Core values

Care

We lead with care, always

Respect

We create a respectful and inclusive environment

Collaborate

We collaborate to achieve better outcomes

Empower

We empower people to make a difference



Who We Are & What We Do



Mansfield District Hospital provides acute care services including urgent care, maternity, medical imaging and dialysis, residential aged care, and comprehensive community health services across three facilities: our main hospital, Buckland House, and Bindaree Residential Aged Care.

We are your neighbours, caring for neighbours. From the baby taking their first breath in our maternity unit, to the great-grandparent receiving compassionate end-of-life care - we're honored to be part of all life's journeys.

Our Services At A Glance

Hospital Care

- * 24/7 urgent care for when you need immediate attention
- * Acute medical and surgical care with skilled nursing
- * Same-day procedures and diagnostic imaging
- * Safe maternity care with midwifery services

Regional Connections

- * Partnership with Hume Local Health Service Network
- * Collaboration with large regional providers
- * Training site for medical students and rural doctors

Community Health

- * Community nursing services for Mansfield and surrounds
- * Visiting specialist services to meet the needs of community
- * Health promotion and prevention programs
- * Allied health including OT, Physiotherapy, and social work

Aging Well

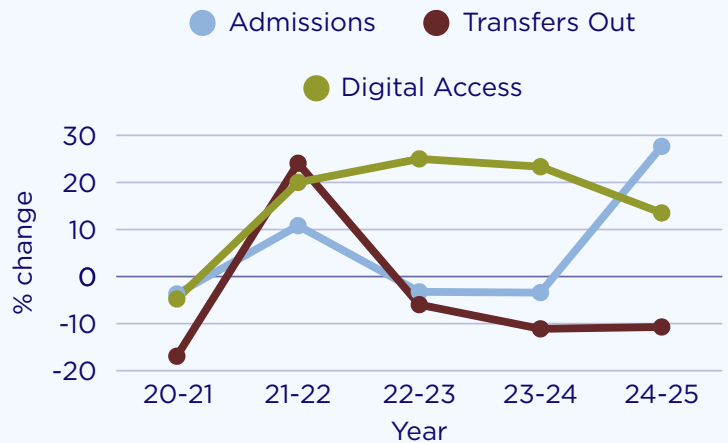
- * 72 - bed residential aged care including high and low care
- * Transitional care and rehabilitation services
- * Home and community care to support independence



Recent Achievements



Over the past five years, Mansfield District Hospital has delivered safer, more convenient care closer to home while strengthening our workforce and modernising our systems. We expanded local day-procedure capacity, kept urgent care responsive through busy seasons, invested in our people, and accelerated telehealth and digital access. These achievements give us a strong platform for the next stage of improvement.



**The increase in admissions is due to local population growth and MDH increasing service capabilities and capacity to serve our people closer to home.*

Focus Area

Details

Outcome

Care closer to home

Expanded day-procedure throughput; strengthened urgent/after-hours access and care coordination; maintained strong clinical governance.

- More procedures delivered locally
- Fewer avoidable transfers
- Safer, more timely experiences for patients and families.

Workforce & culture

“Grow-your-own” pipelines (students/graduates/return-to-practice), leadership and coaching programs, improved onboarding and wellbeing supports.

- Improved attraction and retention
- Faster time-to-hire
- Stronger learning participation
- A more inclusive and safer workplace.

Connected systems & infrastructure

Telehealth and digital front door uplift; cyber awareness and privacy improvements; business cases and planning for priority capital works.

- Easier access to care, protected information
- Greater service reliability
- A clear path for facility upgrades.

The Community We Serve



We serve a rural community with seasonal visitor surges and an ageing profile. Many residents value access to timely urgent care, local procedures where safe and feasible, and clear pathways to specialist services when needed. Community feedback and local data have directly informed the priorities in this plan.

Our Community At A Glance



Age

34% of population are aged 60+ which is projected to increase in the coming years



Seasonal Surges

Our local population can triple during ski season and holidays leading to increased demand in our services



Chronic Disease

Prevalence for arthritis and heart disease is higher than state average, while general health is comparatively better

What You Told Us You Value



96% are satisfied with the quality of care and trust our staff and the care we provide.



97% value having 24/7 urgent care available around-the-clock emergency access.



76% believe we meet community health needs.



79% feel we communicate and collaborate well.

What You Told Us You Need



42% identified primary care access as a priority.



22% requested clearer information about available services.



28% face difficulties accessing specialists locally.



20% would benefit from more care-at-home services.



Our Challenges



Healthcare is changing rapidly, and rural communities face unique pressures. We believe in addressing these challenges openly, as partners working toward solutions.



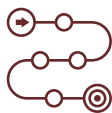
Workforce & Housing Pressures

Rural health services Australia-wide face recruitment challenges, particularly for specialist roles. In Mansfield, limited housing availability compounds this challenge



Seasonal Demand Surges

Our summer and ski season populations can double, placing significant pressure on emergency services. We're developing flexible workforce models and enhanced partnerships to manage these surges.



Aging Infrastructure & Technology

Some of our facilities and systems need modernization to support contemporary care models. We're pursuing targeted capital investments and technology upgrades to ensure MDH remains fit for the future.



Complex Care Coordination

Patients with multiple conditions often require services from various providers. We're investigating care coordination models to reduce the burden on patients and families while improving outcomes.



Climate & Emergency Preparedness

Bushfires, extreme weather, and other emergencies pose ongoing challenges. We're strengthening our emergency preparedness while building climate-resilient infrastructure.



2026-2029 Strategic Pillars



This plan was shaped with our community, our staff and our Board. We brought people together to talk about what matters most, looked closely at service activity and safety data, and tested ideas with partners across the region. The result is a clear set of priorities: to grow local jobs and a safe, respectful workplace, bring care closer to home, make it easier to access, and ensure quality and safety in everything we do.

What we did

Listened widely: conversations with community members, carers, staff and partners; online feedback and surveys.

Checked the facts: reviewed activity, safety and experience data to understand where care is working well and where it can improve.

Co-designed options: staff and partners helped shape practical solutions that fit a small rural service.

What Made a Difference

Local voices at the centre – lived experience guided the choices we made.

Care closer to home – a focus on services we can safely deliver in Mansfield.

Working together – joined-up pathways with GPs, aged care, allied health and regional hospitals.



Our Five Pillars

Our People, Our Future

We grow local jobs and a respectful, safe workplace so teams who know you can care for you.

Local, High-Quality Care

More of the care you need delivered safely in Mansfield, with clear information at every step.

Stronger Together

We will work with GPs, aged care, community services and nearby hospitals so your care is seamless.

Connected Systems, Smarter Care

Simple digital tools and modern facilities that make access easier and keep your information safe.

Working with Our Community

We will listen, co-design and report back so services reflect local needs-and you can see progress.

1. Our People, Our Future

This pillar is about caring for the people who care for you. A strong, respectful and safe workplace means you see familiar faces, have shorter waits, and receive care from teams who know the community. We're growing local jobs and training, welcoming new clinicians, and supporting staff wellbeing and learning. When our workforce is stable and supported, your care is safer, more consistent and closer to home.

Our People, Our Future Objectives

1 Attract, welcome and retain great people through equitable recruitment, seamless onboarding and flexible work.

- Bring more **doctors** and **staff** to Mansfield by **recruiting** locally and overseas, and **supporting** new **graduates**.
- **Support** and grow our team with strong induction, **training**, and **career pathways**.
- **Work** with **neighbouring health services** to **share staff** and **plan together**, especially for maternity and specialist care.
- Prioritise **staff wellbeing** with **equal workloads**, mental health supports, and a **safe workplace**.

2 Build a positive, speaking up for safety culture, prioritising staff wellbeing.

- **Recognise** and celebrate **staff** through awards, regular updates, and **open communication**.
- Keep staff **safe** and **supported** with **wellbeing programs**, training on workplace risks, and mentoring networks.
- Encourage **open communication** by providing forums, feedback channels, and **opportunities to speak up** about issues.
- Create a **fair** and **inclusive** workplace with diversity initiatives, ongoing training, and clear policies for **safety** and **quality**.

3 Create clear career paths, coaching and training so staff can learn and progress.

- Provide **clear career paths** for clinical, allied health, and support staff, so everyone has the **opportunity to progress**.
- Offer **ongoing training** and development with structured plans, mentoring, and **leadership programs**.
- Support **learning opportunities** including conferences, rural-specific education, and practical experience through acting-up or secondment roles.
- **Monitor** and share progress with regular **surveys** and updates to ensure **training** and **leadership** opportunities are effective and accessible.

4 Partner with schools, TAFEs and universities to build local training pipelines and opportunities for all.

- Work with **regional health services** and **schools** to promote **healthcare careers** and provide placements.
- **Expand** student and **graduate programs** across nursing, allied health, and medical pathways with quality supervision.
- **Encourage diversity** in the workforce by targeting underrepresented groups, including Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and CALD communities.
- Coordinate **regional workforce planning** with **partners** to align recruitment, training, and skill development.



What This Means For You

- More familiar faces and shorter waits because we attract and retain our amazing staff.
- A respectful, safe culture so your care feels personal and culturally safe.
- Skilled teams with up-to-date training caring for you and your family.
- Better continuity of care - fewer staff changes across your visits.
- Clear communication and supportive staff who have time to listen.

2. Local, High Quality Care

This pillar focuses on keeping more services available safely in Mansfield so people travel less and get help sooner. We will develop clear information, strong clinical standards and practical improvements in urgent, after-hours, day procedures and coordinated follow-up. For our communities, it means timely appointments, smoother visits and confidence that care meets your needs while maintaining the highest safety and quality expectations.

Local, High Quality Care Objectives

1 Keep care safe through strong clinical governance and regular reviews.

- Clear governance with regular review of roles, responsibilities, and committee terms of reference.
- Communicate decisions clearly from the Board and leadership to all staff.
- Provide governance training and guidance to managers and senior staff.
- Monitor and review processes regularly to ensure accountability, effective reporting, and continuous improvement.

2 Improve quality and patient experience using evidence and consumer feedback.

- Monitor and improve care through regular audits, quality projects, and risk management.
- Learn from feedback by acting on patient surveys, complaints, and staff input.
- Share knowledge and best practice across all teams to promote transparency and continuous improvement.
- Focus on safety priorities like medication, infection prevention, and falls prevention to protect patients and residents.

3 Expand services we can deliver locally to reduce avoidable travel.

- Understand community needs by analysing service trends, survey data, and consulting with priority groups.
- Improve access to care through outreach, home-based services, and telehealth for high-need populations.
- Improved connect services by strengthening clinical referral pathways and collaboration across the Hume Local Health Service Network.
- Keep the community informed with an easy-to-use service directory and regular updates on service improvements.

4 Improve access to aged care and subacute care close to home.

- Keep the community informed about upcoming and planned changes.
- Expand home and community care to support older people to stay at home longer and reduce hospital admissions.
- Support smooth transitions for residents moving between independent living, aged care, and subacute services.
- Strengthen the aged care workforce through training, skill development, and partnerships with local organisations.

5 Make sure clinical services remain reliable and sustainable by planning ahead for staff changes

- Plan for future specialists by mapping current workforce, anticipating retirements, and preparing succession strategies.
- Attract and retain doctors through flexible work arrangements, professional support, and career development opportunities.
- Build the future workforce with medical student and registrar placements, training, and mentoring by local VMOs.
- Work with regional partners to recruit specialists and ensure consistent service coverage across the Hume Local Health Service Network.



What This Means For You

- More services in Mansfield, so less travel out of town.
- Faster urgent and after-hours help, especially in busy seasons.
- Safer care with strong clinical checks and clear information at every step.
- Smoother discharge and follow-up so you know what happens next.
- Options for day procedures and support closer to home.

3. Stronger Together: Regional Partnerships & Leadership



No one service can do everything—that’s why we link closely with GPs, aged care, community services and nearby hospitals. This pillar makes those connections simple and reliable, with shared pathways, clear handovers and agreed contact points. The benefit for you is seamless care: fewer repeats, faster referrals and the right help at the right time, in the right place.

Stronger Together Objectives

1 Hold regular forums with partners, Council and community groups, including Aboriginal organisations.

- Work closely with regional partners through regular forums, agreements, and shared planning to address workforce and service challenges.
- Improve care coordination by standardising referral pathways and ward handovers for priority patient groups.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration with local GPs, VMOs, and Aboriginal communities to deliver culturally safe, integrated care.
- Support workforce and infrastructure needs by monitoring funding, accommodation, and partner issues to ensure smooth service delivery.

2 Share models, training and data to maintain required service level in urgent care.

- Work with regional partners to explore shared services like transport, procurement, and specialist care.
- Provide joint training for high-need roles and share workforce expertise across the region.
- Use data and technology to identify service gaps, expand telehealth, and improve care for the community.
- Plan and review services together to ensure sustainability, fund new initiatives, and continuously improve regional healthcare.

3 Formalise shared-care pathways and agreements across the Hume region.

- Work with partners on advocacy to improve services like maternity, workforce, transport, and digital health.
- Pilot innovative projects together to test new ways of delivering care, such as telehealth or aged care transitions.
- Seek joint funding and grants to support service improvements and workforce development.
- Share learnings and results with staff, Board, and the community, and engage in statewide forums to stay informed on opportunities.

4 Develop partnership agreements so that everyone is accountable and working towards the same strategic goals.

- Update and standardise agreements with all key partners to ensure clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Monitor partnerships regularly through shared reporting cycles and inclusion in Board and leadership discussions.
- Provide training and guidance to staff on managing partnerships and meeting compliance requirements.
- Review and plan for the future by assessing outcomes, opportunities, and sector changes to strengthen collaborations.

5 Partner with universities and external partners to support research, innovation, and new rural care models

- Establish clear research governance with policies distinguishing quality improvement from formal research.
- Set up processes and training for staff to conduct low-risk research safely and efficiently.
- Partner with universities and PHNs to support supervision, evaluation, and ethical review.
- Integrate research oversight into governance and risk monitoring to ensure accountability and safe practice.

What This Means For You

- Seamless referrals - less repeating your story.
- Quicker access to the right specialist or service, in the right place first time.
- Clear care pathways between MDH, GPs, aged care and nearby hospitals.
- Culturally safe partnerships that respect community needs.
- A named contact point so you always know who to call.

4. Connected Systems & Smarter Care



This pillar modernises the tools and spaces that support your care. We're reducing paperwork, expanding telehealth and the digital "front door," protecting your information, and planning fit-for-purpose facilities. For the community, that means easier booking and follow-up, fewer forms, clearer updates and services that are safe, private and dependable.

Connected Systems & Smarter Care Objectives

1 Work with the Department of Health on fit-for-purpose facilities and equipment.

- Maintain a clear plan of priority capital projects, including aged care, urgent care, and digital upgrades.
- Actively seek funding through government grants, partnerships, and philanthropic opportunities.
- Engage the Board and community with updates and evidence to support advocacy and transparency.
- Learn and adapt by monitoring funding changes and applying lessons from past applications to improve future success.

2 Grow telehealth, patient portals and easy-to-use digital front doors.

- Strengthen data governance by appointing leads, setting clear frameworks, and keeping a register of key information assets.
- Improve data quality and use through a KPI catalogue, data dictionary, and regular scorecards to track accuracy and timeliness.
- Make systems easier and safer by standardising high-volume digital processes and protecting privacy and security.
- Build skills and transparency with staff training and regular performance reports to Board and community.

3 Use data well to improve care and reduce paperwork.

- Improve digital systems and reduce duplication by mapping current processes, fixing integration issues, and streamlining reporting.
- Expand access and usability with more telehealth options, regular staff training, consumer support hours, and simple user guides.
- Monitor and learn from digital use by tracking incidents, access barriers, and outcomes to guide improvements.
- Share progress and advocate regionally by highlighting successes and challenges with partners to support future investment.

4 Strengthen cybersecurity, privacy and good data governance.

- Protect privacy and security by training all staff, running regular cyber safety checks, and updating policies.
- Keep data accurate and reliable through regular audits and quick action to fix errors.
- Strengthen procurement and compliance by standardising processes, training staff, and tracking contracts.
- Stay up to date by working with regional and state partners to follow best practice and respond quickly to any major issues.



What This Means For You

- Simple booking and reminders by phone or online; telehealth when it suits.
- Less paperwork, faster results and clearer updates.
- Your information is kept private and secure.
- Modern, reliable spaces and equipment that support safe care.
- Fewer delays and cancellations thanks to better planning and data.

5. Working With Our Community

Services work best when they're designed with the people who use them. This pillar deepens two-way engagement, builds health literacy in plain English, and shares progress openly through "You Said, We Did" updates and a small public dashboard. It means more ways to have your say, clearer guidance on where to go, and visible results from community feedback.

Working With Our Community Objectives

1 Engage respectfully and often, in plain English and accessible formats.

- Keep the community informed through regular updates, surveys, and open forums where people can ask questions and give feedback.
- Make sure all voices are heard by recruiting a diverse Community Advisory Committee and involving them in key decisions and plans.
- Share clear and accessible information with a community services directory and local media partnerships so everyone knows what services are available.
- Work together with the community by inviting representatives to join planning, reviews, and celebrations.

2 Ensure that services reflect community needs, aspirations, and priorities

- Listen and learn by assessing community health needs each year and tracking service use, satisfaction, and changing demographics.
- Co-design services with working groups that include people with lived experience, especially for aged care, mental health, and telehealth.
- Work in partnership with Council and local organisations to fill service gaps and access funding for health and wellbeing projects.
- Close the loop by clearly communicating changes, sharing results, and showing how community feedback shapes decisions.

3 Involve consumers and carers in decisions that affect them.

- Set the standard by creating a co-design policy and toolkit that make engagement inclusive and consistent.
- Grow participation through targeted volunteer recruitment, training, and recognition, ensuring diverse community voices are represented.
- Engage meaningfully using a variety of co-design methods and supporting consumer/carer champions with recognition and reimbursement.
- Show impact by sharing outcomes openly and evaluating each year how co-design is shaping decisions and improving services.

4 Build health literacy with clear information on where to go and how to get help.

- Plan and promote through a calendar of health promotion campaigns, seasonal messaging, and clear, accessible materials in plain language and translated formats.
- Engage locally with schools, council, Aboriginal organisations, GPs, and priority groups through events, open days, and info sessions.
- Communicate widely via local media, online platforms, and inclusive distribution to maximise reach across the Mansfield community.
- Measure impact using feedback tools at events and service points to refine future communications.



What This Means For You

- Easy-to-understand information on where to go and how to get help.
- More ways to have your say - forums, pop-ups, online surveys.
- Regular "You Said, We Did" updates and a small public dashboard to track progress.
- Materials in plain and Easy English, with translations where needed.
- Faster responses when you contact us and clear follow-up.

Roadmap and Timeline



OUR
COMMITMENT TO
THE COMMUNITY
OVER 2026-2029



➤ *Together with our community and partners, we're bringing more care closer to home, making it easier to get help when you need it-and we'll bring you along the journey*

2026-
2026

Quick Wins

- Set up the teams who track progress and keep us accountable.
- Launch staff wellbeing supports (to ease current workforce pressures).
- Kick off partnership work with the Hume Local Health Service Network
- Start our community engagement calendar.

2026-
2027

Build Momentum

- Explore graduate and national recruiting to boost local staffing.
- Improve urgent and after-hours care models so help is easier to get.
- Start upgrades to our digital tools (booking, telehealth, reminders).
- Publishing and promote achievements, keeping our staff and community informed.

2027-
2029

A Year Of Growth

- Put regional clinical pathways into daily use.
- Expand day procedures available in Mansfield.
- Have telehealth fully operating across services.
- Embed all changes so they're part of everyday care.
- Run a full outcomes review to see what's working and what to improve.

Our Commitment To Sustainability



At Mansfield District Hospital, sustainability means caring for people, finances, the environment and our community so we can provide safe, reliable care today and for years to come. We're growing fulfilling rural careers and local leadership, using resources wisely, cutting emissions and waste, and supporting wellbeing beyond the hospital walls. We'll work with local partners and report our progress openly so the community can see what's changing and when.



People

- Creating fulfilling careers that keep talented people in rural areas
- Supporting work-life balance in demanding healthcare roles
- Developing local leadership and reducing recruitment dependence



Financial

- Diversifying revenue through expanded services and partnerships
- Pursuing capital grants and philanthropy for major infrastructure
- Implementing value-based care models improving outcomes while managing costs



Environmental

- Reducing carbon footprint through energy efficiency and renewable power
- Implementing waste reduction and recycling programs
- Supporting sustainable transport options for staff and patients



Community

- Strengthening local economic impact through employment and procurement
- Supporting community health and wellbeing beyond hospital walls
- Building social connections that enhance mental health and resilience



Next Steps

As we move from planning to implementing, our focus is simple: deliver more care in Mansfield, make access easier, and keep every experience safe, kind and connected. We'll keep listening, co-designing and reporting openly - sharing regular updates - so you can see what's changing and tell us what to adjust. Working with our staff, volunteers and partners across the Hume region, we'll join up services so your journey is smoother and outcomes stronger. Thank you for your trust and support; please stay involved, share your ideas and hold us to account as we bring this plan to life.

Acknowledgements

MDH would like to thank our patients, carers and communities, staff and volunteers, and to our Board for their leadership. We're grateful to our Consumer Advisory Committee and to local Aboriginal organisations and Elders for guidance on culturally safe care. We also thank our partners across the Hume region (GPs, allied health, residential aged care, community services, nearby hospitals and HRHA), Ambulance Victoria, local councils, schools/TAFEs/universities, donors and community groups. Your ideas, feedback and support make care safer, easier and closer to home.

Get Involved

Your voice matters-help shape care that's closer to home, easier to reach, and centred on you.



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