

2023 Quality Account





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WELCOME

We are proud to present the Banyule Community Health Quality Account for 2023. The year has continued to present many health and social challenges post-COVID, and we present to our members and communities this report detailing our key achievements and highlights.

The COVID-19 response over the past three years showcased the capability of Banyule Community Health demonstrating the strength of engagement, breadth of service responses and our clinical capability. Whilst needs across our communities continue to evolve, our wide range of programs and services are committed to improving and adapting.

Our commitment to building healthy, inclusive and just communities is as

strong as ever. In December 2022, we launched our Reconciliation Action Plan embedding a commitment to First Nations people and actions over the next two years. Led by Karen Milward, a Steering Committee that includes First Nations community members and staff have mapped out a plan that we are delivering. Additionally, our work to strengthen our services to be safe and inclusive for the LGBTIQ+ community has deepened, with a range of initiatives being led by our Rainbow Shapers and Shakers Working Group.

We value the work that we deliver in partnership with community, with our partner organisations and our funders, having a positive impact on lives and empowering communities.

We would like to thank our Board of Directors, particularly our new members Shannon Gleeson, Jessica Walker and Anita Wilton, who provide great community experience and new skill sets. The Board are deeply engaged in the quality of services, authentic community engagement and the long-term sustainability of the service for our communities.

Finally, we thank and acknowledge our staff and volunteers. The level of engagement and professionalism is extraordinary, and we are extremely grateful for their commitment.

We look forward to working with our communities into the next year and build on our strengths and achievements.

Michael Smith
Board Chair

Mick Geary
Chief Executive Officer

We welcome everyone who walks in our door. Our communities are diverse in cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, sexualities, ages, migration status and genders.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the lands where we provide our services and pay our respects to Elders and leaders past, present and emerging.

Early Years - School Readiness

Banyule Community Health is taking healthcare to kindergartens so that three and four year old children have the best possible start to school.

The School Readiness program is a unique partnership between Banyule Community Health and the Department of Education involving kindergartens across Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik and Yarra local government areas. In 2023, the team of Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Child Psychologists worked with educators

and early childhood professionals in 70 kindergartens.

The school readiness program aims to strengthen preschool children's

- communication (language development)
- wellbeing (social and emotional)
- access and inclusion

The Child Health Team use a capability building approach with kindergarten educators to increase their knowledge,

skill and confidence to identify and support children who may need additional help to prepare for the transition to school. There are also opportunities to support parents and caregivers to better understand their child's development.

Feedback from educators and families alike has been very positive. Many educators have changed the way that they support children for school readiness and said that they have more confidence in their own skills.

"The best part was learning to identify behavioural concerns and raise them with parents in a way that supported us to work together and give them a great chance of being ready for school."

"Because I was given clear examples of the child's speech difficulties, I could explain it well to the parents who then went and saw a speech therapist."

"The online sessions for families and staff provide a great mix of topics."

Early Years

Making Space at the Legal Service for Clients' Children

Making Space is a human-centred design project aimed at transforming how our legal service (West Heidelberg Community Legal) responds to the needs of our clients' children. Using creative methods developed jointly with parents, early years educators, and child health colleagues, we want to place the needs of parents and children at the centre of our service approach.

West Heidelberg Community Legal have identified a range of measures to improve our physical space, processes and practice and have been implementing and refining these solutions in collaboration with other programs at

Banyule Community Health and the local community.

We identified a range of measures to improve our physical space, processes and practice and have been implementing and refining these solutions in collaboration with others within Banyule Community Health and the local community. For example, this year we expanded our neighbourhood "Lunch and Law" event to include a dedicated play space for children, with

help from local volunteers and the BCH early years initiative We Love Stories. We also facilitated a series of online workshops for community lawyers and child-focused workers to learn from each other and improve our practice when supporting clients who have care of children.

The project is primarily funded by the Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner.

**WEST
HEIDELBERG COMMUNITY
LEGAL**



Community Care, Gambler's Help

The Gambling Harm Podcast Challenge in Schools

Banyule Community Health's Gambler's Help Team, Making Media and ReSPIN, challenged a group of fifteen students from Our Lady of Mercy Heidelberg, to create an engaging and interesting podcast to educate their school and wider community about the impacts, risks and stigma that is often associated with gambling harm.

The students were introduced to what goes into creating an engaging podcast. They used icebreaker activities where they

were asked to think of questions off the top of their head and interview the person in front of them. This highlighted the impact of unscripted questions which turned out to be gold when they were recording the podcast.

The students were introduced to Fred, and listened to his story, before breaking into groups to create a list of questions they could ask their guests during the interviews. Fred is a volunteer lived experience educator from ReSPIN, a

Gambler's Help speakers bureau funded by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF). Fred was one of three guests the students were interviewing for the podcast. The students had to design questions that they considered to be important for their community to know the answers to.

The afternoon was spent recording the interviews with Fred, Gambler's Help Therapeutic Counsellor, Jane and Alisa, a Gambler's Help Community Engagement



Access the podcast here:- **Our Gambling Harm Podcast HERE**
or via the QR code.



Worker. The students asked insightful questions that allowed the interviewees to explore the differences between their experiences working in Gambler's Help and highlighted the amazing work of the different teams within the Gambler's Help program.

The podcast was an opportunity to educate the community about the services that Gambler's Help offers such as therapeutic counselling and peer support programs and how to access services.

Students had to step out of their comfort zone and were empowered to contribute to the wellbeing of their community. They were eager to learn in new, creative, and engaging ways while having a positive impact on their community. The podcast raised awareness among students and the community of the impacts of gambling harm, promoted help seeking behaviours and addressed the stigma of gambling harm.

"Thank you so much again for all your efforts on the day and to produce this amazing resource. It is such high quality and will make our students feel very special to be part of something so professional. Can't thank you enough."



Volunteers bring energy, ideas and community spirit

Our Banyule Community Health volunteers have experienced another busy year. Over 110 volunteers donate their time, energy, knowledge, and lived experience across many different groups and programs. With their support, we are able to offer client-focused services to people who experience vulnerability and disadvantage.

In May, we hosted a National Volunteers luncheon where participants were able to hear from fellow Banyule Community Health volunteers about the programs that they volunteer with, their experiences, and the many reasons why they give their time and energy to supporting others.

The Banyule Men's Shed operates four days per week through the support of volunteers. Participants work on creative community projects, always with time to chat and connect with fellow Shed members. The Shed offers a space where 'all are welcome'.

Peer Connection volunteers have either experienced gambling harm themselves or have been impacted by another person's gambling and offer one-to-one telephone peer support to others who are still struggling to stop or control their gambling.

Our 3081 Angels meet regularly, to collect and sort pre-loved children's goods from local community members to deliver to families in need.

ReSPIN volunteer community educators have either experienced gambling harm themselves or have been impacted by another person's gambling and share

their story of gambling harm and recovery with community and corporate groups, health care services and the media to educate, influence change and decrease stigma.

We thank our amazing army of volunteers, who quietly and humbly serve the community.

"I volunteered to be trained as a group leader because I wanted to connect with the community."

"Through volunteering I have made lifelong friendships."

"I enjoy volunteering in my local community. I feel like my contribution makes a difference to others and is time well spent."

"I am proud of how far I have come and I love to help others through my volunteer work."





Volunteers with Lived Experience

Peer Connection telephone support

Peer Connection is a unique state-wide volunteer telephone support service. It is the only gambling harm lived experience telephone support service delivered in a mainstream health service in Australia. Peer Connection works closely with Gambler's Help services, Venue Support Workers and ReSpin speakers bureau, also provided by Banyule Community Health. People who are at risk of gambling harm or who know someone at risk receive one-to-one telephone support. Callers are matched with a Peer Connection volunteer with similar experiences of gambling harm who range in age from 45 – 80 years.

Ali

Ali has been talking with a Peer Connection volunteer weekly, over the phone, for five years. For the first few years, he continued to gamble and though he wanted to stop, Ali felt that was impossible. He constantly struggled with bills and felt shame and anxiety. At the time, Ali did not want any other support from Gambler's Help services, although he was committed to his calls from the Peer Connection volunteer and tried every week to make small changes.

The pandemic lock-downs were the circuit breaker that Ali needed to stop him from going to the casino. He managed to build on his recovery during this time. Ali has not gambled in over 18 months and feels very strong in his recovery. He continues to welcome a check-in call from the Peer Connection volunteer to help keep him accountable.

Recently, Ali unexpectedly received some money. He has been talking with the Peer Connection volunteer about the risks of having a lump sum of money and his vulnerability to gambling harm. Ali has secured the money in a long-term deposit account and continues to feel strong and very happy about being gambling free. He regularly reflects on how much he has changed and was grateful to have someone to talk with about the risks of having a lump sum of money.

Responsive services: Diabetes

Ian's story with Banyule Community Health began in 1988 when he started attending the Banyule Diabetes Support Group soon after his diagnosis. The support provided by the group has assisted both Ian and his wife with managing their diabetes and given them the opportunity to help others.

Ian also accesses Banyule Community Health podiatry and dental services as part of his health care plan, which has improved and helped maintain his physical health.

A routine visit to Lisa, Ian's podiatrist, revealed swelling in his ankles that prompted an immediate visit to his doctor and eventually a cardiologist. The ankle swelling was linked to an unknown heart condition that required 6 stents in his heart. Ian continues to receive treatment for his condition, but believes the support from Lisa, his healthcare team and his wife gave him 'a second chance'.

For over 20 years, Ian and his wife have also acted as co-convenors for the Banyule Diabetes Support Group, and their combined volunteering has

allowed them to provide invaluable support to Banyule Community Health and the local community. Ian's role on the Community Participation Committee has also given him an outlet to nurture and grow community health services locally, which he considers 'a vital part of our society' and an 'opportunity for him to support the Olympic Village area'.

"Lisa, my podiatrist, saved my life! I wrote a letter to her CEO and told him that her observation saved my life."



Coordinated Mental Health Care

At Banyule Community Health, we are committed to responding to a person's changed mental health needs by ensuring continuity of care across a mix of services. LiFT Stepped Care Model for mental health ensures that every person seeking help with a mental health condition, receives the right care at the right time from the right person. Stepped care means that a client is supported in easily accessing any combination of services, that they need at different points in time.

Funded by the Commonwealth Government through Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network, Banyule Community Health delivers LiFT mental health services in the local government areas of Banyule, Whittlesea, Nillumbik and the townships of Wallan and Kinglake.

Tyler

At 40 years old, Tyler was working part time while studying to work in the construction industry. With Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental health issues, studying could be difficult. He said that he had started to feel worse, had trouble sleeping, was lethargic, had migraines and stayed in bed for most of the day. He was also feeling shame about a recent diagnosis of Personality Disorder, that explained the difficulties he had interacting with other people.

Tyler's mental health needs were complex, and the GP referred him to the LiFT team. The counsellor noted that he

was highly anxious about paying rent because of days missed at work and a housing inspection that was coming up.

The LiFT Care Coordinator supported Tyler to complete an application for the Disability Support Pension and he went to Centrelink appointments with him when he was being assessed. The LiFT Care Coordinator and Psychologist worked with his Psychiatrist and other mental health services to coordinate information for an application to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Tyler needed some immediate support while these applications were being processed. The LiFT Care Coordinator worked with local services so that he could get the house clean before the inspection and was provided affordable and nutritious meals while he recovered. In partnership with his Psychiatrist, the LiFT Psychologist worked with Tyler to understand how his mental health conditions affected his thoughts and behaviours and how to manage them. With supportive counselling, he talked about the difficulties that he had with employment and study and the changes that he experienced in daily functioning.

Tyler reports that his symptoms have improved. Although he is still getting used to his diagnosis, Tyler said that he felt less shame because he could cope better with stress and manage the changes to his every-day functioning.





The Five of Us

Malcolm

"I have an incredible team. I've got my confidence back. I'm a social butterfly again."

Malcolm reconnected with Paul, a GP at Banyule Community Health after moving back into the area. Malcolm was diagnosed with diabetes and needed urgent support. He was linked with Julia, a Diabetes Educator, who worked with Malcolm to build up his knowledge and capacity to manage his diabetes. Julia quickly wrapped a support team around Malcolm, which included a Social Worker, Tommy, and the Dental Team at Banyule Community Health. Malcolm says "I

wouldn't be here without Julia and Tommy – they have given me back control of my life".

People with diabetes have an increased risk of oral health problems. Malcolm connected with the Dental team at Banyule Community Health. "I remember an early appointment – I was so scared. I told the nurse my favourite music was ABBA. She put ABBA on the speaker and the music helped to soothe me. A few months later, when I got my new dentures it was the best day of my life. I was able to talk and smile again."

For the past two years, Malcolm has been a driving force behind the Banyule

Community Health focus to be safe and inclusive with the LGBTIQ+ community. Malcolm's experiences of growing up were not always safe. "Being unsafe was a part of my life, but it shouldn't have been. I know the value of being accepted and loved for who you are – I got this from the Centre and others need it too." Malcolm has worked with Tommy and the Rainbow Shapers and Shakers Group to strengthen Banyule Community Health's capability, ensuring the service is safe and inclusive for the LGBTIQ+ community. "We are making great progress. I'm so proud of what is being achieved and I'm bringing friends to Banyule Community Health."



Paul

GP: It was great to see Malcolm again after so many years. He told me how he had been and how his health was. I did a complete assessment because I hadn't seen him for so long and people with diabetes have an increased risk for many other health conditions. Malcolm was quite unwell, so I sent him to see Julia, the Diabetes Educator. I was part of a larger team that supported Malcolm to not only get healthy but to manage his condition in his day-to-day life.

Julia

Diabetes Educator: When I first met Malcolm his blood sugar levels were very elevated. He was very close to needing to be hospitalised. Malcolm didn't want to be linked into the hospital for his care and

requested to be cared for locally. We worked on getting the right treatment and also to address the things that he could manage, like diet and exercise. I could see that there were other challenges, so he was referred to Social Work, Podiatry and the Dentist, all at Banyule Community Health. Malcolm flourished with a team care environment and was motivated to improve his health. Malcolm now has the skills and knowledge to manage his diabetes and to meet his goals.

Tommy

Social work: When I met Malcolm he had lost a lot of confidence, control and power. We worked together on a number of things to give him a voice and to take back control in managing his own affairs.

Malcolm worked with his team and his health and wellbeing have really improved. Malcolm was so generous and open about his own journey, so he was keen to help Banyule Community Health shape its response to the LGBTIQ+ community. His contribution to this work will leave a long-lasting legacy to ensure the space is safe and inclusive for clients and staff for many years to come.

Dominic

Dental Team: "Malcolm was nervous, and our team made sure he was comfortable and informed. His denture work was a significant piece of work and Malcolm could see the long-term benefits of being comfortable to socialise and connect again. The impact of his care is so obvious – he has his self-esteem back."



Health Justice Partnership

A health justice partnership (HJP) embeds legal help in healthcare services and teams. While more and more services are adopting this approach, Banyule Community Health has worked this way for nearly 50 years. We know that unresolved legal problems will have a detrimental impact on an individual's health. By working together, lawyers and healthcare teams, are more likely to improve the health and wellbeing of those affected by social and health inequity.

Advocacy

Complaints Clinic – Victorian Ombudsman

As part of Law Week in May 2023, West Heidelberg Community Legal held a successful public housing complaints clinic in partnership with the Victorian Ombudsman in The Mall, West Heidelberg.

Nearly 30 local community members dropped in to receive advice from a Community Lawyer and lodge a complaint with the Victorian Ombudsman about their housing. The most common concerns were about repairs and maintenance by public housing tenants in West Heidelberg.

"Thank you for your assistance and support. It has helped more than you may realise." (Client)

"Extremely happy with the help the lawyer gave me. It removed all the stress that I have. I can only say thank you, thank you." (Client)



Improving access to justice for people experiencing mental health issues

Tom and I have supported have been experiencing acute mental health issues with multiple complex needs. Through consistent and responsive work, we have been able to build a relationship with these clients and address both their immediate legal problem as well as some of the underlying difficulties in their lives."

Geri Gaffney, Banyule Community Health Social Worker

Navigating the legal system can be confronting and stressful. The difficulties are often compounded for people that experience mental illness. Barriers to accessing legal assistance services mean that despite an increased likelihood of having legal problems, people with mental health issues are less likely to get help.

Lawyer Tom Warne-Smith, West Heidelberg Community Legal lawyer works in a program that expands our

health-justice partnership by strengthening the connection between lawyers and mental health practitioners. The aim is to make it easier for people experiencing mental health issues to access our services and to achieve positive legal, social and health outcomes.

In the first 9 months of the program, we have assisted around 60 clients with almost 100 legal services ranging from legal advice to representation at VCAT and the Magistrates' Court. Nearly half of the program's clients have been referred to us from within Banyule Community Health.

"Thank you for your work and referring me to such valuable programs in Banyule Community Health where I have received targeted assistance and support from peer support workers, financial counselling and the LiFT program." (Client)

"The program has highlighted the extent of the difficulties people with a mental illness face in dealing with legal problems. It can take time to build trust with clients who may have had bad experiences in the past. Working together with other Banyule Community Health services we have been able to make a real difference for our clients and demonstrate the impact of timely legal assistance."

Tom Warne-Smith, Senior Lawyer



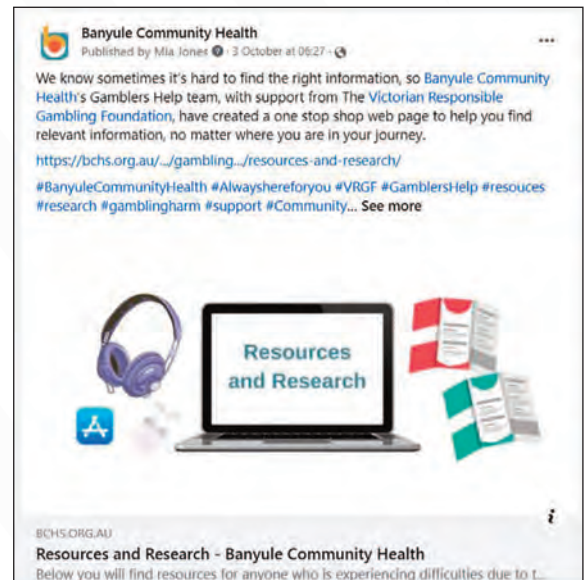
Digital Health and Inclusion

COVID Positive Pathways Program

Banyule Community Health participated in a consortium of Community Health Services formed to create and take part in the COVID Positive Pathways Program.

The program prioritised vulnerable populations who face system barriers to accessing healthcare. It included older persons, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, refugees and asylum seekers, and people living with a disability and their carers. By using telehealth and providing high quality virtual care for these groups who had tested positive for COVID and were isolating at home, we could extend Banyule Community Health's services further across our local communities.

From October 2022 to April 2023, the COVID Positive Pathways Program supported 8,268 cases and completed 26,213 telehealth calls. This program helped support the safe recovery of people at home. Through the efforts of Banyule Community Health and four other Community Health Service partners, we were able to reduce hospital visits and remove the stress on health services, whilst improving our ability to work with other health services across north-east Melbourne.



Digital Inclusion for the Community

Each year, the Board of Directors award the Francis Baum Fellowship to a staff member to pursue an opportunity that strengthens their professional capacity, whilst addressing issues of priority and significance in our community. In 2022-2023, Cathy a Financial Counsellor has been working to improve access to digital platforms for members of the community experiencing disadvantage.

The Francis Baum Fellowship has expanded the digital inclusion enabling access to vital phone services and digital education. Through this initiative, participants have gained connectivity to essential services like Centrelink, MyGov, and Telehealth. Recently, we introduced a Volunteer Digital Mentor who facilitates

learning and connections using mobiles, laptops, and other devices. Participants, referred through different Banyule Community Health services, contribute valuable information, aiding our advocacy efforts with Ombudsman and Regulators to address unfair charges and practices affecting our community. The Fellowship has enabled processes to be established and sustained, thus highlighting the profound impact of limited digital access on community members experiencing vulnerability.



From Volunteer to Lived Experience Worker



Royal is a former journalist and a widower. He lost direction after retirement and a period of drug misuse, but at 70 has found volunteering to be an avenue into a satisfying and life-affirming late career change.

Royal discovered Community Health when he moved to Melbourne for work as a reporter in the late 1980's.

The kindness he found left an indelible mark. When he moved to West Heidelberg 10 years ago, he visited Banyule Community Health largely to get to know his new neighbours.

Banyule Community Health was recruiting volunteers with a history of drug and alcohol misuse to be trained as support group facilitators. As someone whose life and family had been impacted by substance misuse he applied to volunteer.

He was welcomed into a team which felt more like family than a workplace. The training revived his love of learning and offered a fresh start. Whilst retirement is usually painted as a world of limitless freedom and leisure, for some a permanent holiday is absolute hell.

Royal felt worthless and washed up. His volunteering trained him for a new and unexpected path in life helping people. The role, co-facilitating the drug and alcohol peer group, restored his sense of self-worth and assisted in dealing with his and others' mental health struggles.

The new role has been a rewarding alternative to retirement and a chance to embark on a whole new professional path.

"My lived experience of substance misuse has given me the chance to feel included."

Health Promotion

Buna Reserve Community Garden

In 2021, Banyule Community Health began a consultation with the local community to explore Buna Reserve Community garden's future. As a result, Community envisioned the garden as a hub which will build food security, healthy and active living, social inclusion and connection alongside shared learning, and sustainable practices.

It was decided to grow crops that are high yield and fast-growing, such as leafy greens, which traditional food relief programs find hard to source. With the assistance of the Fresh Start Monday program (VicHealth funded), we have been able to provide education projects where community learns how to grow, prepare and eat nutritious food and donate produce to a local foodshare.

Public housing tenants access the garden to pick food as they need. One community member who lives alone with health complications is able to enrich instant pantry meals with vegetables without having to travel far.

A new migrant, who has no close family for support says:

"I really enjoy it here. My toddler loves watering and my 14-month-old snacks on whatever the garden offers. Lots of organic vegetables that we receive are cherished by us. I love my new friends here."

Recently, a First Nations Community Member reached out because she wanted to know how to best use some of the vegetables she was growing with us.

In response, we are now developing a 'Cook the Box' Program for First Nations Families.

As well as the Community Garden building local food security, and opportunities which build food literacy, the Garden has become a piece of paradise where local community can connect within the public housing estate. Current projects include the installation of irrigation and a polytunnel to further increase the production of food that can be distributed to the community. The aim for the future is to have the Garden open more often, enabling more of the local community to enjoy the space and gain access to fresh fruit and vegetables.



Inclusion and Diversity

Our journey to reconciliation and cultural safety

Our commitment to Inclusion and Diversity is embedded in our values, in our Strategic Plan and our Inclusion & Diversity Plan. Banyule Community Health is committed to everything possible to ensure that all community members and staff feel welcome, included, supported and celebrated for who they are.



Reconciliation

Our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was launched on a cold December day, in a moving celebration of culture. Wurundjeri Elder, Aunty Zeta Thomson, led a smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country that stressed the importance of connection to country, celebrating ceremony, and the deep and enduring impacts of colonisation.

Our RAP details meaningful and achievable actions we are taking as an organisation committed to a recognition of Aboriginal Sovereignty and the importance of First Nations people determining their own path. Our work is achieved in partnership with local community members, staff, Barrbunin Beek Gathering Place, Reconciliation Banyule, and the City of Banyule. We are listening deeply to the voices of local

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make our services more culturally safe and to play our part in Closing the Health Gap. Read our **Reconciliation Action Plan HERE** or via QR code.



"Having access to counselling sessions has saved my life and has improved my quality of life, especially being understood & seen as an LGBTQIA+ person. Thank you." (client)

The road to Rainbow Tick accreditation

Banyule Community Health is preparing for Rainbow Tick accreditation in 2024. Rainbow Tick - a quality framework that helps organisations to become safe, inclusive and affirming places for the LGBTQIA+ community. We are educating our people, influencing our culture, changing the language in our conversations, forms, and displays, to signpost our organisation as a safe, welcoming and inclusive service.

We are shaping our services through co-design, in partnership with our Rainbow Shapers & Shakers consumer & staff groups, and a local support group for gender diverse people - Alphabet Soup.

This year, we proudly marched at the Midsummer Pride festival and played a key role in the inaugural Whittlesea Pride Festival and celebrations for International Day Against Homophobia, Bi and Intersex and Trans Phobia in May (IDAHOBIT).



"Banyule Community Health values the richness and experience that comes with a diverse workforce. We are so proud to be recognised as an Inclusive Employer by the Diversity Council Australia."
Mick Geary CEO

Leadership

Partnership for Coordinated Services

We Love Stories is all about having children in West Heidelberg ready to learn, to read and succeed by the time they start school. The best way to do this, especially for children growing up in difficult life circumstances, is for services to work well together and follow the community's lead. Coordinating the services we provide means that we can reach more children in more places, and provide services for when they need them most. Evidence shows that this approach leads to positive outcomes for those involved and the community.

There are many passionate organisations working to support families with young children in West Heidelberg. We Love Stories is bringing these services together with local community champions to build a West Heidelberg early years partnership. We are co-creating a shared vision and priority areas, an agreement about how we will work together and a terms of reference document.

While the partnership is still a work in progress, we are already making a difference to the world our children are growing up in. Recently we ran a 'Tea and Tour' of Banyule Community Health.

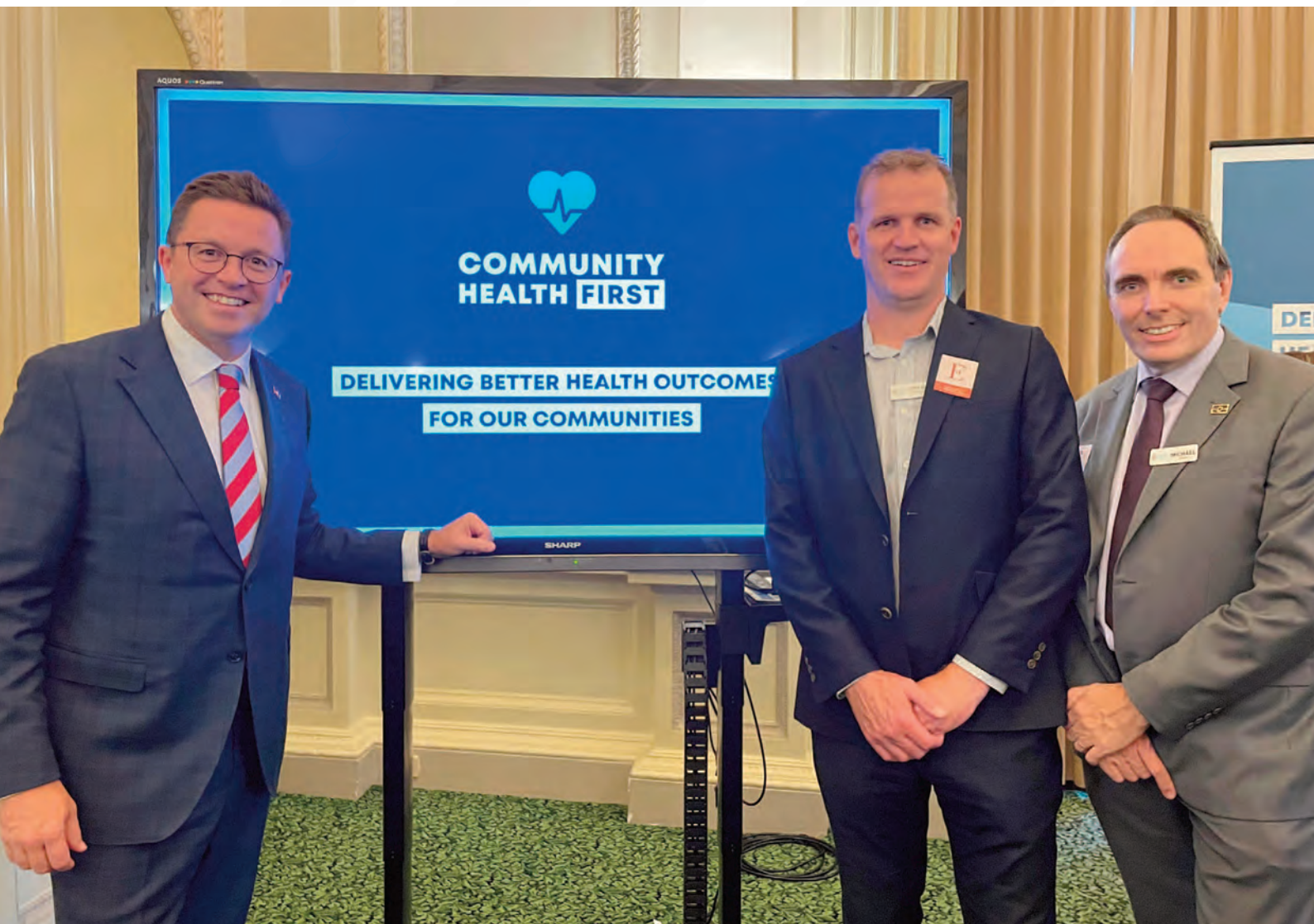
Tea and Tour events

The Tea & Tour events were developed in response to an Olympic Village Primary School request for support connecting with local early years services. We consulted with early years practitioners to develop the Tea & Tour events. Local agencies, that support families and children, toured Banyule Community Health and spent time meeting each other. Attendance has been overwhelming, leading to more Tea and Tour events.



"Since the Tea & Tour, I can call Banyule Community Health intake with referrals for families or parents who may have agreed to counselling, legal services and access health services. We have lots of new arrivals and now we can walk them down there to access services."

Student Welfare Officer at Olympic Village Primary School



Community Health First

Community Health First is an initiative being led by all 24 independent community health services in Victoria. Banyule Community Health, alongside our Community Health colleagues have started a dialogue with Government through Community Health First to promote the central role of community health services in the wider Victorian health system, and to increase the capacity of services to alleviate system-wide demand.

Royal Abbott, Lived Experience Worker at Banyule Community Health, was one of

the speakers at the launch at Parliament House in February 2023, speaking passionately about the role Banyule Community Health plays in providing a safe, welcoming, and clinically sound environment for community members.

We are hopeful that the campaign and its ideas will become a reality to keep Victorians healthy and well for years to come.

www.communityhealthfirst.org.au for more info



Youth Foundations

5678 Hip Hop Dance Program



Youth Foundation, with support from Gambler's Help Northern, partnered with L2R to deliver a hip hop dance program at three local schools. We delivered 40 sessions, reaching a total of 64 students from Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. We also conducted an in-depth evaluation to explore whether access to a hip-hop dance program was associated with improved well-being and school engagement amongst the participants from West Heidelberg.

There is overwhelming evidence that providing young people with skills and resources can support their development, especially in neighbourhoods with fewer resources and opportunities. By building confidence and resilience as they move into adolescence, young people are better equipped to deal with the risks and challenges they face in their teens. As a result, they are more likely to transition positively into secondary school.

Participation in extracurricular activities is linked with better school engagement, which in turn leads to improved academic performance and social relationships. Higher levels of school connectedness predict lower levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms in secondary school students. As a result, we focused our program on the middle years, especially considering that half of all cases of mental-ill health emerge by the age of 14.

The program sought to provide positive experiences and relationships in a positive environment. Students broadened support networks, increased social connections, built school engagement, and linked in with other community services.



Students said ...

"I expressed my emotions much more and it helped me become confident."

"I used to be sad... I wasn't usually into dance stuff. I used to be very negative and used to think I couldn't do it. I usually just give up.... (things changed) when I joined dance and everyone was saying I was really good at it..."

"When I dance, I feel free, open, relaxed and happy.... I feel like I could be myself."

Dance staff said ...

"For a lot of students, we became trusted adults who the students could confide in, share and explore emotions and take comfort in."

School Wellbeing staff said ...

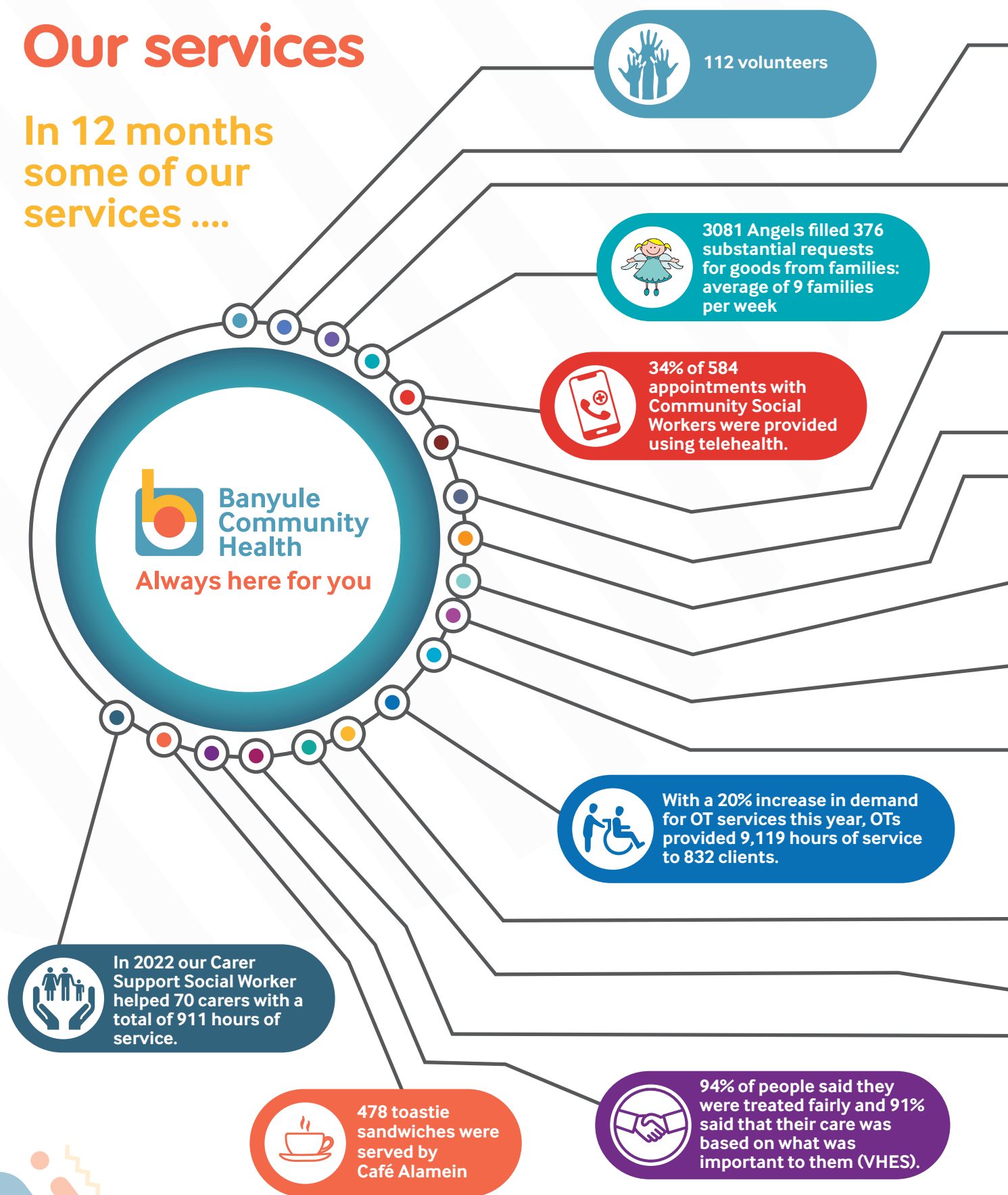
"In the time that I've observed the girls dance, the one thing that I think this space provided them with is just being themselves, knowing that no one is going to judge them, they can dance whatever way, just feeling free."

"I think they came here mainly just to get a safe space, a place to escape and get away...they needed somewhere to relax and just be themselves."



Our services

In 12 months
some of our
services





89 people completed the VHE survey and said they ...

- found care from our service was very good or good, 98%
- were treated with dignity and respect, 95%
- had trust and confidence in the staff, 95%
- felt cared for, 94% and,
- that our services definitely helped their health and wellbeing, 92%



All the children who did the VHES said that they could ask questions and that they were always listened to by staff.



Participants in 25 community education sessions run by Gamblers Help said that they

- increased their knowledge about gambling harm (91%), and
- learnt where people could seek help (81%).



3,333 Facebook followers



1,061 LinkedIn followers



489 X (Twitter) followers



Emergency Relief services assisted 580 people, 21% were born overseas and 18% were First Nations people (Jan-Oct 2023).



In the last 12 months we received,

- 63 compliments about good care and helpful staff,
- 38 complaints, mainly that there were not enough appointments, and
- 4 suggestions.



52% of clients for oral health services were eligible for priority access and received an immediate service.



88% of 172 staff said that the organisation was truly a great place to work (BPA Analytics).



1,616 clients were seen by our podiatrists and our physiotherapists provided 5,600 hours of service to 929 clients.



Gambler's Help supported 5 local councils to update their gambling harm minimisation policies, keeping up with current research, knowledge and strategies.



509 clients with drug and alcohol problems had 979 episodes of care for intake, comprehensive assessment, care recovery & coordination, and/or counselling (Jan-Oct 2023).

Partnerships with Austin Health

Care and Recovery for Alcohol & Other Drugs in the Emergency Department

This year marks ten years since Banyule Community Health joined forces with Austin Health to provide a co-located, care-coordination service based in the Emergency Department.

The purpose of the program is to support the Emergency Department to improve responses to, and enhance the quality of care for people presenting with Alcohol and Other Drug related issues to the Austin Emergency Department.

Keith, our Banyule Community Health Care Coordinator, assists Austin Health Emergency Department staff to identify community members presenting with alcohol and other drug related issues, and links them into community-based alcohol and drug services.

Services can include:

- referrals for detoxification/rehabilitation and counselling
- referrals to services at Banyule Community Health, including the Drug and Alcohol Peer Support Group, financial counselling services and the West Heidelberg Community Legal Service
- Offering referrals for other support services and support groups.

Since its inception in 2013, the Alcohol and other drug Care Coordination Service has assisted over 3,100 people. During Covid times, support was provided using telehealth. The service is currently provided face to face in the Austin Health Emergency Department, five days per week. In the past year, community members receiving a service have ranged between the ages of 17 and 84 years old.

"Addiction doesn't discriminate" says Keith Leveridge Emergency Department Alcohol and Other Drug Care Recovery Coordinator. "This service provides an opportunity for change for people at a time when they need help."

This year the service has already assisted over 100 people, with positive feedback on the high level of dignity and respect they experience.





Evidence Based Care

GLA:D® program

GLA:D® stands for Good Life with osteoArthritis from Denmark.

The GLA:D® program aims to improve the care of people with knee or hip osteoarthritis through education and exercise therapy. Twelve sessions of supervised group exercise therapy are delivered by Physiotherapists, twice weekly for 6 weeks.



Client Outcomes

Four key outcomes were evaluated 12 months after participation in the program: improved physical function, higher quality of life, reduction in pain suffered and in turn a decrease in pain killers taken.

Data is from Australian health services, including Banyule Community Health, that provide the GLA:D® program.

| RESULTS | Results at 12 months |
|--|--|
| Improved physical function | One year after commencing the GLA:D® program, the number of knee participants undertaking regular physical activity of at least moderate intensity increased 10% and the number of hip participants increased 9%. |
| Higher quality of life After the GLA:D® program | One year after starting the GLA:D® program, participants reported a further improvement in average joint-related quality of life. Knee participants reported a 35% improvement and hip participants a 21% improvement compared with before GLA:D® program. |
| Reduced Pain | The knee participants experienced an average pain reduction of 29% and the hip participants an average pain reduction of 23% compared with before GLA:D® program. |
| Reduced intake of painkillers | One year after starting the GLA:D® program, 49% of the knee participants and 46% of the hip participants reported that they were using less or much less medication, such as paracetamol, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or opioids. |

Clients said ...

LaTrobe University (2022) *GLA:D Australia 2022 Annual Report*, Edited by M.F. Pazzinato: Sport and Medicine Exercise Research Centre: Bundoora, Victoria.

"The pain in my left knee has gone and I don't experience sudden pain when I walk."

"I can walk up the stairs at home now."

"My knee is no longer aching at night and my hips are less tight. I'm able to move better."

"It feels much easier to move, especially getting in and out of the car."

"It would be good to have an ongoing program, because exercising with other people helps with the motivation".

Primary Care

Breathe Easy

Eastern Melbourne Primary Care Network and Banyule Community Health are delivering the Breathe Easy project to improve the care of people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorders (COPD) – otherwise known as being really short of breath most of the time!

The Breathe Easy team consists of a general practice nurse, a nurse and health liaison worker from the First Nations Health Team, and a project manager and sponsor.

The aim of the project is to support people to manage their COPD in the community thus reducing presentations to hospital. The approach is to help clients to focus on their lifestyle goals as encouragement to engage in managing their health.

We used one question – ‘What matters most?’ Clients discuss what they wanted to do rather than focus on breathlessness. This helped us to:

- systematically support clients to manage their own care, by incorporating self-care checklists that meet the needs of standard chronic disease management, and where success is measured on their ability to do ‘what matters most’
- embed culturally welcoming versions of the templates for our First Nations clients.

Statements such as ‘I want to go shopping on my own’ or ‘I want to visit friends’ become powerful springboards to identify ways they can manage their health and live the life they want to live.

Through the project we reached clients in the community whose COPD was either undiagnosed or clients who did not

attend for regular monitoring. The team also partnered with Melbourne Respiratory and Sleep Services and we hosted a no-cost spirometry clinic, as a

trial for our clients experiencing breathlessness. One client had not accessed services for breathlessness for two years.





**Banyule
Community
Health**

Always here for you

You can also find us online
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Twitter: @banyulechs

Facebook: [banyulecommunityhealthservice](https://www.facebook.com/banyulecommunityhealthservice)

LinkedIn: [banyule community health](https://www.linkedin.com/company/banyule-community-health)

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ACCREDITATION:

Banyule Community Health currently meets all the accreditation standards of and complies with:



- Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited (AGPAL)
- Diagnostic Imaging Accreditation Scheme (DIAS)
- Community Legal Centres Australia (CLCA)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS)
- Quality Improvement Council (QIC)
- Aged Care Quality Standards (ACQS)
- Child Safe Standards



**Banyule
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