

Health

Part of the community

At Castlemaine Health we know that everyone is unique. We pride ourselves on delivering personalised, tailored healthcare. Our hospital has been serving the Castlemaine community for over 165 years. Today we continue a long tradition of improving local people's lives.

Over the coming year on this page, we'll be sharing stories from people who've used our services. We'll profile some of the dedicated staff working in our programs. We'll also showcase the breadth of services available at Castlemaine Health.

Last year we welcomed 45 beautiful local babies born in our home-like maternity suite. Our two theatres hosted 3241 operations which helped many local people stay in their community near loved ones.

We welcomed 69 new residents into our close-knit residential aged care accommodation and 130 for respite. Did you know that we also train and educate students who share our passion for improving lives?

Last year we hosted almost 350 nursing, allied and medical students, as well as many trainees and work experience students.

This is just a snapshot of our work. Over 600 staff and 96 hard-working volunteers are proud to serve as part of Castlemaine Health. We hope you enjoy learning more about our work to improve the health and wellbeing of our community.

- Castlemaine Health

Life changing years on

Leanne Crisp was diagnosed with meta-static breast cancer 14 years ago.

Told she had just three years to live she underwent radiotherapy, had a bilateral mastectomy, then chemotherapy.

Leanne stopped seeing specialists 10 years ago, but last year her GP suggested she contact the Cancer Survivorship Service. She admits she hesitated.

"I thought to myself. Oh I don't know, I've survived this long, but even after 14 years the service has helped me enormously," she said.

"The specialists are really warm and friendly and I never feel rushed. We talk about what's going on for me and they've been able to suggest some great strategies to help with issues that have been bugging me for years."

"I have one person who is my main contact but all the specialists talk to each other, which makes things so easy. And the fact that it's all centralised is wonderful. If I had to travel, I don't think I'd do it, it would be just too difficult."

Leanne says feeling safe and supported has been really important to her.

"I'm not someone who feels comfortable talking about my illness in a group. It can make me feel pretty flat. But this has had the opposite effect. You walk away feeling positive about yourself."

"I wish I'd found the service 14 years ago, but that's okay, I've got it now."



Leanne Crisp

Support grows for cancer survivor service

The Cancer Survivorship Service at Castlemaine Health is entering its second year and the number of people using the service continues to grow.

The service has brought help for post-treatment cancer issues closer to home and improved accessibility to survivorship care which been a significant barrier for rural people.

Travelling as far as Melbourne for services is not only impractical, it's expensive and exhausting. In the past this meant local residents often opted to forgo valuable treatment.

The new service is helping residents from the Mount Alexander, Macedon Ranges and Central Goldfields shires achieve a better quality of life through services like physiotherapy, social work and speech pathology, and all right at their doorstep.

"In the past, when treatment for cancer was over people often felt like they were on their own," said Dr Emma McLaughlin, a Speech Pathologist on the Cancer Survivorship Team. It's just not like that anymore.

"One of the great things about the service is that we're able to cater to people who've just walked out of hospital right through to someone who has been cancer free for many years. The care and support we offer is completely tailored to the individual."

From the very first meeting staff work to understand each person's needs and goals, asking about everything, from how they're sleeping, how they're managing financially and emotionally, right through to any physical symptoms.

"We know from experience that even though a person's referral might be for shoulder pain related to breast cancer, more often than not, there's other stuff going on," said Dr McLaughlin.

"We develop a program to support them in their efforts to achieve their goals. We can adapt as needs and circumstances change and we put them in charge, which is often the opposite of how they've felt during treatment."

As a Speech Pathologist, Dr McLaughlin sees people with a wide variety of symptoms and goals.

"The perception is often that speech pathology is about changing the way people speak, but we're specialists in communication and swallowing," she said.

"I might see someone who's had surgery for head and neck cancer, which is much more common in men, and needs help with speaking or eating."

"I might also see someone who's had



Emma McLaughlin

radiotherapy on their chest for lung cancer that has affected the nerve that controls the voice box meaning they're having trouble speaking loudly and that is impacting on their ability to work."

"I meet people who just want to be able to use the phone, call out to the dog or have a beer at the footy with mates."

"Whatever they want. That's the goal we work towards and I feel really privileged to be in a position to help."

Dr McLaughlin says the team has been surprised by just how many people there are living with cancer, or its consequences, in the local community.

"We work closely with each other to offer a really thorough and integrated service. We have great contacts in the community so if we can't help we can recommend someone who can. We also run regular Wellness and Life After Cancer programs, which are developed by Cancer Council Victoria, so people can learn about options and meet others going through a similar experience."

Does this sound like you? Speak to your GP, oncologist or other health care professional about a referral or just refer yourself. Most services cost between \$5 and \$15. Some services do not have a fee.

The Castlemaine Health Cancer Survivorship Service is supported by the Victorian Government.

Useful links

www.cancervic.org.au

www.beyondfive.org.au

For information and referrals contact:

Intake Office Community Rehabilitation Centre (CRC)

Castlemaine Health

(P) 5471 1575

(F) 5471 1674

(E) intake@castlemainehealth.org.au

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