

FAQs – Maldon Hospital and Castlemaine Health Integration

1. What is the status of the proposal for amalgamation?

After a comprehensive community consultation and business case submission to Government, the Minister for Health has approved the two boards' proposal for amalgamation. The decision follows 42 years of cooperation between Maldon Hospital and Castlemaine Health.

2. When does the amalgamation come into effect?

The newly amalgamated organisation will commence operation on 1 March 2022.

On day one, patients, residents and families will not experience any changes to the services they receive or the staff delivering their care. There will be no significant changes to how each local health service is run day to day.

3. Why is this happening?

Castlemaine Health and Maldon Hospital have worked together for 42 years in Mount Alexander. Over the last few months, we have started making changes to the way we deliver healthcare in this region.

These have been motivated by demand from patients and residents, changes in the Mount Alexander demographic, dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, the implications of two health Royal Commissions and reassessing how we allocate resources.

Now is the time to build on this collaboration to deliver better health services for the communities of Mount Alexander, and secure Maldon Hospital in its current form for generations to come.

4. What is a voluntary amalgamation?

The Health Services Act (1988) requires any amalgamation of health services in Victoria to be voluntary and agreed between boards. It is a requirement of the Health Services Act 1988 for any voluntary amalgamation to result in the provision of better health services in Victoria or is otherwise in the public interest. The Minister for Health only approves a voluntary amalgamation, on the recommendation of the Secretary of the Department of Health, if these requirements are met.

5. Will Maldon Hospital and Castlemaine Health names remain the same?

Maldon Hospital and Castlemaine Health will remain as registered trading names.

Following through on the two boards' commitment to develop a new overarching entity name, the Dja Dja Wurrung Corp Language Group's translation service was engaged to help define a new entity name in the Dja Dja Wurrung language.

The new overarching entity name will be 'Dhelkaya Health'. Dhelkaya's English translation means 'Good/Being Healthy'. The choice of an Indigenous name acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung's traditional ownership of the lands on which we live and work and expresses our gratitude to the Dja Dja Wurrung for sharing them with us.

6. Will there be loss of services in my area?

No, there will be no loss of services at either of the healthcare services. The case for integration was based on an integrated organisation's ability to improve the breadth, accessibility, quality and sustainability of local healthcare in the region.

7. Will staff lose jobs because of this?

No. This is about recruiting and investing in our staff. There will be no reductions in staffing levels and people will be able to work when and where they work today, unless they wish to change.

8. What about governance – will it be diluted in a bigger health service?

No. The newly integrated service will be underpinned by clear governance structures. This will significantly reduce the time taken to fulfil two separate compliance structures, ensuring more focus on frontline delivery.

Sue Race, Chief Executive Officer of both Maldon Hospital and Castlemaine Health, will remain in her role as Chief Executive Officer of the integrated organisation.

9. What will happen to the two boards?

The Minister for Health has appointed a new board of directors, which is made up of a balanced mix of directors from both Maldon Hospital and Castlemaine Health boards. The board chair will be nominated by the new board members. Local representation has been maintained for the newly formed board.

12. What will happen to local fundraising and consumer committees?

Local fundraising for each health service will go directly to that local health service. Volunteers will be recruited and work locally, just like they are now.

10. What is the process from here?

Now that the Minister for Health has approved integration, the organisation will work with staff, patients, residents and families, stakeholders and communities to begin planning for better regional health and wellbeing in the communities of Mount Alexander.

The first key step in this work as an integrated organisation will be development of a new strategic plan. Staff, patients, residents and families, stakeholders and communities will be consulted to help define a shared vision and plan for the future.

11. Can I get involved in helping to shape the future of health and wellbeing in my shire?

Yes. If you'd like to be involved in this important work, please get in touch via our websites at www.castlemainehealth.org.au and www.maldonhospital.vic.gov.au