



Year in Review

2024-2025

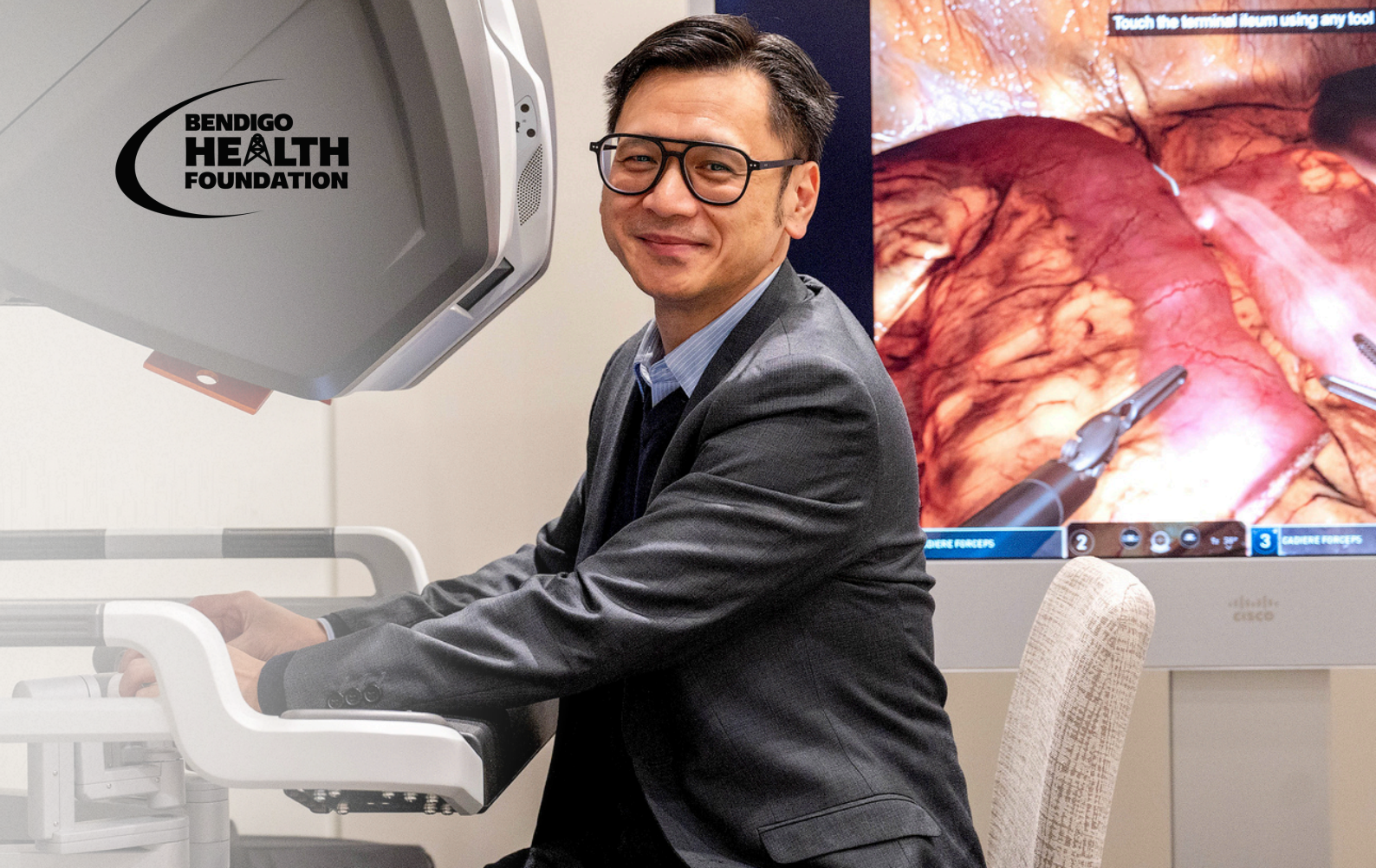
Message from the CEO

Bendigo Health has demonstrated unwavering pride and compassion across our organisation this year. This spirit was especially evident during moments of grief and reflection, as staff honoured the lives and legacies of valued colleagues. Innovations like the cuddle bed in palliative care, funded by community generosity, reflect our commitment to deeply personal care. From reducing hospital stays to launching vital services for early parenting, our people continue to lead with heart, purpose, and dedication to improve health outcomes for our region. Our Year in Review is a reflection of who we are, an organisation anchored in compassion and driven by purpose.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eileen Hannegan".

Eileen Hannegan
CEO



Fundraising and Foundation

Highlights of 2024-25

It has been a year of generosity, growth and community impact. Bendigo Health has been deeply moved by the unwavering generosity of our local community. More than \$2.2 million was donated to Bendigo Health and the Bendigo Health Foundation Charitable Trust, an extraordinary testament to the compassion and commitment of individuals, groups, and funding partners across our region.

These contributions have a profound and lasting impact. They allow us to invest in vital equipment, services, and programs that fall outside government funding, ensuring more patients can receive high-quality care close to home. We extend our heartfelt thanks to every supporter who has stood beside us, not just this year, but over many years.

This year, over \$300,000 was directed toward specialised medical equipment, including advanced

devices for skin grafting and neurological testing now available for the first time in Bendigo. These tools are enhancing diagnostic precision and improving treatment outcomes for patients across our region.

Thanks to community support, we upgraded our three patient accommodation properties, ensuring those who travel for treatment have access to affordable, comfortable lodging. These spaces offer not just shelter, but a sense of peace, dignity, and connection.

In partnership with St John of God Hospital Bendigo, we proudly funded a training console for the Da Vinci Robot, which is used in thoracic and urology surgeries. This console allows public patients access to cutting-edge surgical care while supporting the development of our surgeons through hands-on training, which improves safety, precision, and excellence.

The Gobbé Wellness Centre and Cancer Wellness Program continue to thrive solely through philanthropic support.

In the past year, we've delivered:

- Weekly yoga and mindfulness classes for over 700 participants
- 392 reflexology sessions
- 650 oncology massage appointments
- 1,200 counselling sessions

These services provide holistic support to patients and families, nurturing both body and spirit and helping people navigate their health with strength and resilience.

1,200

counselling sessions

392

reflexology sessions

700

in weekly yoga and mindfulness

650

oncology massage appointments

“More than \$2.2 million was donated, an extraordinary testament to the compassion and commitment of our community.”



Construction of the long-awaited Kids Rehab Play Space began this year. This exciting project will support children undergoing rehabilitation and offer a playful, therapeutic environment for young visitors to the hospital, bringing joy and healing to our youngest patients.

We express our deepest gratitude to the former Trustees of the Bendigo Health Foundation; Garry Quinn, Hamish Hope, and Robin Monro whose combined service of over 30 years has shaped the sustainability and integrity of our philanthropic efforts. Their leadership has left an enduring legacy for our region.

Together, we continue to build a health service reflecting the compassion, resilience, and generosity of our community.

Aboriginal Services

Highlights of 2024-25

In 2025, Bendigo Health continued to champion inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive healthcare through the dedicated efforts of our In-house Interpreter Team, Aboriginal Services Team, and Disability Liaison Officer. These teams have played a vital role in ensuring every individual, regardless of language, cultural background, or ability, can access care with confidence, dignity and understanding.

Our In-house Interpreter Team remained committed to fostering clear, compassionate, and culturally sensitive communication between health

professionals and patients who do not share a common language. Every interaction is guided by a commitment to accuracy, clarity, and empathy, recognising effective communication is essential to safe, high-quality healthcare. By ensuring patients are fully informed and empowered to engage in their care journey, the team has helped reduce barriers and improve outcomes across the organisation. As we look ahead to 2026, we remain focused on expanding our reach and refining our services to meet the evolving needs of Bendigo Health's diverse community.

“Every individual, regardless of language, cultural background, or ability, can access care with confidence, dignity, and understanding.”



The Aboriginal Services Team continued to work in close partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the region, supporting over 900 referrals in the past 12 months. Their work ensures patients and families experience culturally safe care from the moment they arrive. In 2025, the team led and supported several key initiatives that celebrated culture, strengthened community ties, and enhanced the physical environment of our care spaces:

- During Reconciliation Week Bendigo Health hosted a Lunch and Learn session for staff focused on Cultural Safety and Allyship. This event provided an opportunity for reflection, learning, and dialogue, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive practice across all levels of care.
- For NAIDOC Week we proudly supported the Welcome Baby to Country ceremony at Larnangurrak, celebrating the connection of 24 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies to the land on which they were born.
- In partnership with Exemplar Health and Downer, we installed Indigenous art in our Women's and Children's Wards, enhancing the physical environment to reflect cultural identity and belonging. Works such as Birds of a Feather by Wadi Wadi artist Robyn Davis and Connection to Country by Gunai-Kurnai artist Tammy Nancarrow and Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, and Gunditjmirra artist Ally Charles now grace key spaces, including birthing suites and children's rooms.

These artworks bring cultural expression and healing into the heart of our care environments to create welcoming, culturally affirming spaces for families.

Our Disability Liaison Officer has focused on supporting neurodivergent individuals by creating alternative pathways to care. Working alongside clinical teams, the officer has helped tailor healthcare experiences to meet specific needs, empowering patients toward greater independence and confidence in navigating the health system. This work has been instrumental in ensuring care is accessible and respectful of individual differences.

Together, these initiatives reflect Bendigo Health's commitment to equity, inclusion, and culturally safe care.

“These artworks bring cultural expression and healing into the heart of our care environments to create welcoming, culturally affirming spaces for families.”



Quality

Highlights of 2024-25

At Bendigo Health, continuous improvement is more than a goal, it's a shared commitment driving everything we do. Throughout the 2024–25 financial year, our staff have demonstrated dedication to enhancing the quality, safety, and accessibility of care across our health service. With over 150 improvement initiatives completed, ranging from simple checklist updates to large-scale, state-funded programs, our teams have shown every action, big or small, can make a meaningful difference.

As proud participants in the Safer Care Victoria Safer Together Program, our teams have focused on reducing clinical risks and improving patient outcomes. Key areas of work included reducing the risk of sepsis, delirium, and intravenous line infections and enhancing stroke care and improving post-surgical discharge processes.

The impact of these efforts has been significant. Our stroke team achieved a major reduction in treatment initiation time - from 92 minutes to 60 minutes - for patients presenting with stroke symptoms in the Emergency Department, resulting in faster interventions and better recovery outcomes. Additionally, our surgical teams have streamlined discharge processes, allowing patients to return home sooner and more safely.

As part of the Timely Emergency Care 2 Collaborative, teams across the organisation came together to tackle one of healthcare's most persistent challenges, patient flow. A standout achievement was the launch of our new Command Centre. This innovative hub integrates real-time data to support rapid decision-making, ensuring patients are in the right place at the right time to receive the right care. It marks a bold step forward in operational excellence and patient-centred service delivery.



To honour the outstanding contributions of our staff, we proudly hosted the 2024–25 Excellent Care Awards, celebrating initiatives that exemplify innovation, collaboration, and impact:



Consumer-Led Winner – Bendigo Regional Cancer Centre

Co-designed by Tanya Smith (Consumer Representative) and Melissa Loorham (Development Manager), the virtual tour video helps orient new patients and families to Cancer Services. With 1,919 views in six months and overwhelmingly positive feedback, this initiative continues to evolve to meet patient needs and improve engagement.

1st Place – Community Dental Services

Led by Dr Amanda Leske, this initiative enhanced access to specialist paediatric dental care, treating 331 children across 575 appointments. It removed the need for travel to Melbourne (excluding orthodontic care), introduced sedation options, improved clinician satisfaction, and strengthened interdepartmental collaboration by delivering safer, more efficient care locally.

2nd Place – Cancer Services Redesign

Led by Melissa Loorham and Dr Robert Blum, this project introduced a new clinic and nurse-led intake model to improve access and coordination for new patients. The redesign has reduced wait times, enhanced early support, and improved system efficiency.

3rd Place – Medical Services: Timely Emergency Care Collaborative

Led by Melinda Bawden, the “Golden Ticket” discharge strategy increased early discharges by 80 per cent, saved 264 bed days, and reduced transition time to Residential Aged Care Facilities by 28 days transforming patient flow and care continuity.

We remain committed to sustaining and scaling these improvements. Bendigo Health is proud to support our staff in their pursuit of excellence and innovation, ensuring better outcomes and experiences for every person we care for.



Research and Innovation

Highlights of 2024-25

This past year has been one of exceptional progress and achievement for research at Bendigo Health. With 148 active research projects including a strong representation of clinical trials (36%) our commitment to improving health outcomes through evidence-based practice has never been more evident.

Our growing network of researchers and clinicians are leading the way in innovation, underpinned by a strong foundation of ethical and methodological rigor. Notably, 120 staff members and researchers now hold Good Clinical Practice (GCP) certification, highlighting our dedication to upholding the highest standards in clinical research.

We are also proud to report that more than 175 participants were recruited into clinical trials over the past 12 months. This incredible milestone reflects the trust our community places in us and the increasing accessibility of trials in regional Victoria. Our efforts have culminated in 60 publications authored or co-authored by Bendigo Health staff, solidifying our position as a research-active health service making meaningful contributions to global knowledge and local care.

Research Week 2024 was an undeniable highlight. Running from Monday 14 October, the week offered

a hybrid program of interactive sessions, poster displays, and networking opportunities. A particularly uplifting moment was our International Rural Women's Day morning tea, where over 30 women researchers gathered with the CEO and Board Chair to celebrate the vital contributions of women to research.

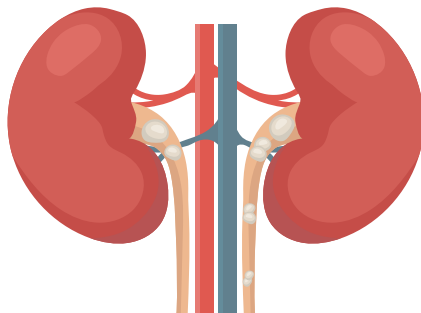
More than 90 staff attended sessions throughout the week, engaging with peers and building new collaborations. The week concluded with the Research Showcase on Friday 18 October where 18 passionate presenters shared their work in front of more than 70 attendees. These 15-minute presentations showcased the breadth and depth of our local research, reinforcing our mission to improve health outcomes across our regional communities.

This year's Health Climate Data Dive was our most ambitious datathon to date. With 58 participants across eight teams, the event brought together health and environmental data to explore the health impacts of climate change. Teams used powerful analytical tools to begin answering pressing research questions laying the groundwork for what we hope will be an ongoing stream of climate-conscious health research. The energy and innovation from this weekend promise great things ahead.

This year marked several significant clinical trial milestones:



A Bendigo Health participant was the first in Australia to receive a new prostate cancer drug, an exciting step in advancing cancer care.



Commercial trials are now underway in two new specialty areas, including venous leg ulcers and IgA Nephropathy.



Our anaesthetics department launched its first trial, the SnaPP study, signalling broader trial activity across the organisation.

“With 148 projects underway, 36% clinical trials, 120 staff GCP certified, and more than 175 participants engaged, Bendigo Health is driving innovation and delivering research that matters for regional communities.”



We also celebrated International Clinical Trials Day with the launch of a multilingual video and a new First Nations-focused brochure, helping to break down barriers and ensure clinical trials are for everyone.

Bendigo Health is committed to growing our clinical trial footprint, expanding teletrial capabilities, and strengthening research partnerships.

With continued collaboration, curiosity, and community engagement, the future of research at Bendigo Health is bright.

Volunteer Services

Highlights of 2024-25

This year we have celebrated the incredible momentum, growth, and impact our volunteers have made across the health service.

We reported a near 20 per cent increase in volunteer participation over the past 12 months, which is testament to the strength of our community and the growing desire to give back.

Our re-introduced quarterly information sessions have become a vibrant space for volunteers to learn more about Bendigo Health's activities, share stories, and build meaningful relationships. These gatherings have fostered a deeper sense of belonging and engagement, reinforcing the vital role volunteers play in our health service.

This year saw the launch of monthly walking groups, an initiative designed to promote health, wellbeing, and camaraderie among our volunteers. These walks have become a cherished ritual, blending movement with connection in the most uplifting way. In March, we conducted a volunteer engagement survey and the results were encouraging:

96% of volunteers reported feeling satisfied, safe, and comfortable in their roles

99% felt their efforts directly supported Bendigo Health's goals

99% And most heart-warmingly, 99% said they were proud to be part of Bendigo Health

“Nearly 13,000 volunteer hours supporting 39,000+ patients, residents, and visitors, the heart of Bendigo Health in action.”



During National Volunteers Week in May, we invited volunteers to bring along friends and family for a shift, an initiative that demystified volunteering in healthcare and led to new volunteers joining our ranks.

Over the past financial year, our volunteers have generously contributed nearly 13,000 hours of their time, supporting more than 39,000 patients, residents, and visitors. These numbers reflect the profound and far-reaching impact of their dedication.

Our school holiday volunteer program has flourished, drawing enthusiastic student participation and sparking newfound confidence, knowledge, and friendships. This year, we proudly launched a partnership with La Trobe University to further reward and inspire these young change makers. Year 12 students who volunteer with Bendigo Health now receive an early conditional offer through La Trobe's Aspire Early Offer Program, opening doors to future careers in health and higher education.

This financial year has seen Bendigo Health's volunteer program thrive, with new and revived initiatives enhancing patient care and community engagement. Volunteers supported cancer services, conducted 985 experience surveys, and contributed to programs like "Another Version of You," dementia support, Trees of Remembrance, biographies, and return-to-work roles for injured staff.

Their involvement extended beyond the hospital, raising awareness and funds at events like Bendigo's Biggest Ever Blokes Lunch and Bendigo Fun Run. These efforts reflect the compassion, creativity, and dedication of our volunteers, whose contributions continue to shape a more connected and caring health service.

As we reflect on a year filled with growth connection and impact, we extend our deepest gratitude to every volunteer who has walked through our doors.





03 5454 6000
www.bendigohealth.org.au
ABN: 26 875 445 91

100 Barnard Street Bendigo VIC 3550
(access via Mercy Street)
PO Box 126, Bendigo VIC 3552