



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025





### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

### **DEI Statement**

Neerim Health celebrates, values and includes people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.

#### **Neerim Health**

ABN 77 228 450 675  
29-39 Main Neerim Road  
Neerim South VIC 3831

**P:** 03 5628 1226  
**F:** 03 5628 1468  
**E:** [info@neerimhealth.org.au](mailto:info@neerimhealth.org.au)

© Neerim Health 2025  
Photo Credits: Lauren Murphy,  
D & M Johnson and Neerim Health

# Contents

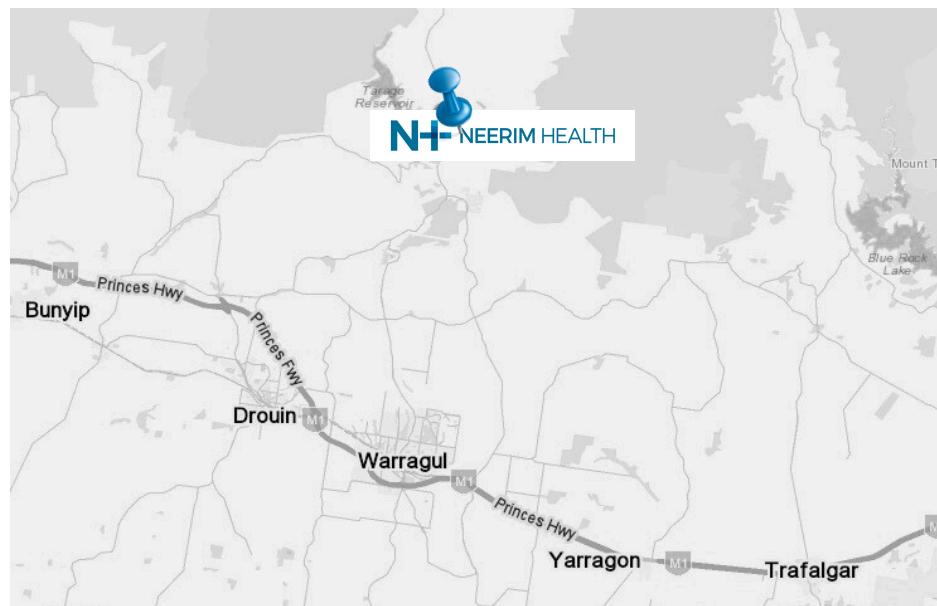


<b>01.</b> About Us	<b>12.</b> CEO Report
<b>02.</b> Vision	<b>13.</b> DCS Report
<b>03.</b> Values	<b>14.</b> Service Awards
<b>04.</b> Services	<b>15.</b> Wellbeing
<b>07.</b> Board Members	<b>16.</b> With Thanks
<b>09.</b> Board Chair Report	<b>20.</b> Ladies Guild
<b>10.</b> Treasurer Report	<b>21.</b> Quality Reports
<b>11.</b> Staff	

# About Us

Neerim Health is a fully accredited, private healthcare provider, focused on providing quality care to residents of the Baw Baw Shire and Greater Gippsland Community. Neerim Health provides a range of hospital, theatre and healthcare services.

Neerim Health has a rich history going back to 1927, when the community united to raise funds to establish a local bush nursing hospital, which was completed in 1928. The hospital relocated to its current site in 1967, and was officially opened as the Neerim District Soldiers' Memorial Hospital. In 2024, our Association name was changed to Neerim Health Incorporated.



As at 30 June 2025

- 110 Association Members**
- 6 Board Members**
- 41 Visiting Medical Officers**
- 45 Employees**
- 84% Live in the Baw Baw Shire**
- 27% Live in the Neerim District**

Source: OpenStreetMap

# Vision

---

**A healthy community with local access to the core services that will support sustainable health outcomes at all stages of life.**

Over the next three years (2025-2027), Neerim Health will need to respond and adapt to our community's changing needs, new technology and trends in healthcare. Our strategy for growth and transformation is built on four important pillars:



**A valued and trusted leader for health in our community**



**Accessible, high-quality care and services**



**An empowered and supported workforce**



**An adaptable organisation that changes with our community**

# Values

## C.A.R.E.



### Compassion

We are genuinely concerned about others and their needs. We will always demonstrate thoughtfulness, courtesy and care.



### Respect

We respect the dignity and worth of all people. We seek to understand others' perspectives, experiences and contributions. We treat all people fairly ensuring freedom from discrimination, harassment and bullying.



### Accountability

We are open, honest and transparent in our dealings with others. We are trustworthy and do what we say we will do. We will protect the privacy and maintain the confidentiality of others.



### Excellence

We will continuously strive to ensure all care we provide is professional and best practice. We value and support our people to excel through learning and development.

# Services

Theatre	Hospital*	Aged Care*
Dental Surgery Endoscopy Minor General Surgery Ophthalmology Oral Faciomaxillary	General Medicine Palliative Care Transitional Care Program	Home Care Respite Care Short Term Restorative Care

\* Services suspended in November 2024

In 2024-2025 Neerim Health underwent the triennial ACHS (Australian Council on Healthcare Standards) Hospital Accreditation Audit. Our final report, received in January 2025, resulted in full compliance to standards with only three 'Met with Recommendations' relating to Cultural Awareness; providing a Welcoming Environment; and Partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities to meet their healthcare needs. (Our service was previously exempt from these requirements. We are now working towards full compliance.)



ACHS accreditation to the National Safety and Quality Health Standards (NSQHS) recognises Neerim Health's commitment to excellence in health care with a strong and continuous focus on safety and quality. Our accreditation is valid until 14 March 2028.

In addition, in March 2025, we submitted our Department of Health (VIC) Renewal of Registration Self Assessment. Based on the Assessment, our hospital registration was renewed for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2027. Thanks to our staff, volunteers and board for the excellent audit and self assessment results.

# Tarago Views Aged Care

With the suspension of Permanent Residential Aged Care on 1 July 2024, our Tarago Views Aged Care services transitioned to focus on Residential Respite, Day Respite, Transition Care Program and Home Care Package (HCP) consumers. Residential Respite services were provided from our modern five ensuite room Banksia Wing and our only other ensuite room available in the Callistemon Wing. All other rooms, without ensuites, were closed, pending renovations for the Community Health Hub.

Based on the focused service offering, our projections for the financial year showed sufficient revenue to sustain our existing Aged Care workforce. From all data available, we believed our goals to be reasonable and achievable.

Occupancy rates started at 57% in July, increasing to 99% in August, before reducing to 68% and 29% in September and October respectively. We met a need in the market for emergency respite care, that our team could assist with at short notice. Unfortunately, despite advertising and a number of enquiries, due to delays in new HCP client funding, we were unable to provide even one consumer with a HCP service.

On the 18 September 2024, the Federal Department of Health & Aged Care announced the 24/7 RN Supplement Rate applicable from 1 October 2024 would reduce, and only further reduce as resident numbers increased, putting further financial stress on Neerim Health.

Despite every effort being made, these factors, combined with unexpected delays to new HCP client funding, our Aged Care function sustained a loss of \$265,000 in the 4 months ending 30 October 2024.

Whilst we had endeavoured to transition our services over the prior 10 months, these circumstances were unsustainable and in November 2024 we had no choice but to suspend Aged Care and overnight Hospital services.

The suspension directly impacted approximately 35 staff across Aged Care, Hotel Services and Corporate Services, the majority of whom were subsequently made redundant. A small number were redeployed. In consultation with employees and the Unions, affected employees were provided, as required, with paid leave, counselling and support services, assistance with resume and job applications, references, statements of service, training records, and were paid their full entitlements. We understand all those impacted who were seeking new employment were successful in obtaining new positions.

Tarago Views was known for its five star staffing, and for good reason. Our team were always professional, warm and caring. We wish our former employees continued success in their new roles.

# Theatre

Neerim Health is proud of our expertise in Ophthalmology, Endoscopy and Dental. We are one of the largest providers of cataract surgery services in the region, and are pleased to partner with Latrobe Regional Health in performing all their public cataract surgeries. In 2024-2025 we provided an extra eight percent of ophthalmology cases compared to the previous year.

Our total procedures by type for the year are outlined below.

Procedure Type	# Cases
Ophthalmology	2,075
Endoscopy	465
Dental	116
<b>Total 24/25</b>	<b>2,656</b>

# Hospital

Our Acute Hospital eight bed occupancy for the four months July to October 2024 was 7%. Slightly up compared to the previous 12 months (2023-2024) at 6% occupancy. Hospital beds are utilised for general medicine, palliative care, and Transitional Care Program clients. Given our distance to emergency services, and no onsite overnight medical doctor, we are only able to accept low acuity care needs patients, which limits our admission capabilities.

Acute Hospital care was provided by our Aged Care team.

Along with Aged Care services, overnight Acute Hospital services were suspended in November 2024.

# Board Members



**Sean Dignum**  
Chair



Board member since 2016

Sean Dignum has expertise in media, issues management, sector reform and restructuring and as an advisor and strategist to business and government through complex and challenging periods and operational change. Sean is a resident of Neerim South.



**Margaret Darton**  
Deputy Chair



Board member since 2018

Margaret Darton has extensive experience in governance and in the Victorian public sector, most recently in food policy and regulation. She was awarded the Public Service Medal in 2015 for services to state and national food policy. Margaret is a local resident of Neerim, having lived in the district for the last 30 years.



**David Wells**  
Treasurer



Board member since 2023

David Wells has extensive knowledge and experience as an Investment Advisor and Financial Planner. He has an interest in the aged care sector and has assisted a number of clients into assisted residential living. Until recently, David was a resident of Neerim East.



**Garry Wilkes**  
**Member**



Board member since 2023

Associate Professor Garry Wilkes is a specialist medical practitioner in emergency medicine with over 30 years experience in public and private Emergency Departments across Australia. Garry's interests include clinical redesign, communication skills, leadership development, conflict management and coaching.



**Lyndal Turner Guy**  
**Member**



Board member since 2023

Lyndal Turner Guy is an accredited specialist property lawyer with a particular interest in the negotiation and drafting of clear and durable structuring arrangements for complex strategic plans. Lyndal has previously volunteered on the board of an organisation providing in-home care support in the aged sector for the CALD community.



**Elisa Tumino**  
**Member**



Board member since 2024

Elisa Tumino is an allied health professional with over 30 years experience in the public health sector. She has worked in metropolitan and rural acute health services and specialises in quality improvement and project management. Elisa currently works for a Registered Training Organisation providing education for healthcare workers in leadership and management.



Welcome back to Dr Umesh Gupta  
who rejoined the NH Board  
in August 2025

## Board Committees



Finance



Audit & Risk



Clinical Governance



Medical Advisory



Nominations

# Board Chair Report

The Board had hoped to celebrate the commencement of renovations at Neerim Health during this year's Annual General Meeting. Unfortunately, this milestone has been delayed. An 18-month wait for various government approvals has been both frustrating and distressing. We are now awaiting one final compliance sign-off related to bushfire zone regulations. With this in place, we anticipate that demolition and construction will begin by February 2026.

These delays have significantly impacted our revenue, particularly as the renovations are essential to expanding our services. Since suspending residential aged care, we have gradually reduced our operating deficit. However, our current reliance solely on surgical services highlights the urgent need to diversify and grow our offerings to ensure consistent revenue and rebuild financial reserves.

For decades, Neerim Health's ageing infrastructure and limited commercial scale have required extraordinary effort from Boards and management just to maintain viability. As a community-owned health service, our funding is neither stable nor guaranteed by government. We continue to apply for state and federal support, competing with many other rural and suburban health organisations facing similar challenges.

We acknowledge the struggles of small rural services and are grateful that our recognised expertise in cataract surgery has helped sustain us. In addition to upgrading our existing facility, we had applied for \$34 million in federal funding to establish a new residential aged care service. Unfortunately, we were advised in September that our application was unsuccessful. We plan to reapply in 2026, as we cannot reintroduce residential aged care without a new facility. As we have stated in recent years, evolving and building on our core competencies is essential to overcoming decades of financial challenges and achieving long-term sustainability and success. Regional hospitals and aged care services have a long history of struggling to stay relevant, often with limited resources to maintain - let alone improve - facilities.

We are deeply thankful for the ongoing support of our community, including groups such as the Ladies Guild and the many individuals who have contributed over the years to making Neerim District Soldiers' Memorial Hospital a welcoming and pleasant environment.

This year, the Board is especially pleased to welcome three new honorary Life Members: Connie Lewis, who served on the Board for many years and was instrumental in fundraising and community engagement, and the Schelleken sisters, Helena and Maryanne, who have voluntarily maintained our gardens in beautiful condition. Since the people of Neerim District first came together in 1927 to establish a bush nursing hospital, our service has come a long way. It has not been easy, but the fact that we are the "last man standing" is a testament to the strength and dedication of our community.

The Board remains optimistic that we will celebrate a century of community service in 2027 with a reinvigorated and expanded health service that meets the growing needs of our region.



# Treasurer Report

Again, this has been a tough year. However, the financial performance has been somewhat better in the 2025 Financial Year when compared to the 2024 Financial Year.

Following suspension of the provision of aged care and overnight hospital services, and the sole reliance on surgery for our operating revenue, we have reduced the operating deficit from more than \$910,000 to less than \$550,000 for the year and the trend is improving. Most of the deficit belongs to the first half of the year when we were providing aged care and overnight hospital services. We are budgeting for a surplus for the 2026 Financial Year.

Significantly, since we exited aged care, we are regularly but not always, generating surpluses on a monthly basis although expanded services would help to make these both larger and more consistent, allowing us to rebuild reserves again.

The delay in approvals to proceed with our planned renovations, which are crucial in facilitating expansion of our services, has impacted significantly on the revenue of Neerim Health, hence the current level of deficit.

While on-going losses are not supportable, we have the ongoing financial support of our bank who recognise we are gradually turning cashflow around and we have a good buffer in equity to sustain this.

Federal and State Government development grants are understandably competitive, especially as recurrent funding has been slashed in real terms (regardless of what is said publicly). We continue to seek funding but, for a small rural hospital facility, this is a real challenge.

Our independent audit process was successfully concluded with a clean audit report being provided for the 2024-2025 financial year.

We are grateful for the tireless work of our people. From our CEO, right down the line, it has been crucial in achieving our gradual turnaround and I would like to thank them all for their commitment.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Weeks', is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

# Staff

---

## Executive



**Andrea Linden**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Lauren Mucic**  
Director of Clinical Services

## Senior Leadership

**Alexandra Blackwood**  
EA & Human Resources  
Manager

**Karlee Bennell**  
Surgery Access & Support  
Services Manager

**Diane Draper**  
Chief Health Information  
Manager

**Michelle Purvis**  
Senior Bookkeeper

**Susan Griggs**  
Associate Nurse Manager

**Corrina Masterson**  
Associate Nurse Manager

# CEO Report

“It’s better to have tried and failed than to live life wondering what would’ve happened if I had tried.” Alfred Lord Tennyson

In November 2024, Neerim Health made the decision to suspend all Aged Care and hospital overnight services. This decision was not made lightly. As outlined in the report on Tarago Views Aged Care (page 05), we tried, unsuccessfully, to transition our Aged Care services to a sustainable model offering a range of services. Unfortunately, we were up against industry funding shortfalls. We had caring and experienced staff looking after respite, STRC, TCP and hospital overnight clients, and were ready to provide home care services. Of those interested in our HCP services, most clients were waiting on HCP funding. With cuts to Aged Care financial support and with no HCP clients, we did not have the resources to wait for the federal government to release additional funding in 2025-2026.\*

Staff impacted were terminated with full benefits paid. Fortunately, with the opening of a new Aged Care provider in Warragul in early 2025, many of our staff found employment quickly. We wish all those impacted continued success in their new roles.

Our focus in the first half of 2025 has been adjusting the organisation from 24/7 services to Monday to Friday operating hours, with less resources, whilst continuing to support the provision of day surgery in our perioperative suite. We successfully passed our Hospital ACHS accreditation to the National Safety and Quality Health Standards (NSQHS) in January 2025, and successfully passed our hospital Department of Health (VIC) Renewal of Registration Self Assessment in June 2025.

The renovation of our old Aged Care facility into the Community Health Hub, which was scheduled to commence in November 2024, has been delayed due to Bushfire Building Compliance. We are hoping that demolition and building can commence in early 2026. We all look to the introduction of a range of allied health and health support services in the newly renovated facility.

While these issues have been a major focus this year, our priority as always, is to ensure we provide a safe and caring service as demonstrated in this year's Quality Reports.

My sincere thanks to the NH Board, Lauren Mucic (DCS), the Senior Leadership team and the caring and supportive NH staff and volunteers. We look forward to continuing on our journey of providing quality care to residents of the Baw Baw Shire and the Greater Gippsland Community.



\* HCP to be known from 1 November 2025 as Support at Home. ABC News (abc.net.au) reported on 29 August 2025, over 120,000 older Australians were waiting to be assessed for supports to help them live at home. That is in addition to the 87,000 older people who have been assessed and approved for home care packages, but have not yet received one or are waiting on an increased level of support. The government promised to release 83,000 packages to help clear the lengthy waitlist in July 2025, but the extra packages were pushed back until November, along with the rest of Aged Care changes.

# DCS Report

The last 12 months have been a year of change, refining our systems and understanding our current workflow.

I have spent a lot of time in our Perioperative Department, working with our staff and VMO's, understanding our procedures, consumables and equipment in greater detail to see what is working well and what we can improve upon.

This combined with reviewing our systems, committees and workforce has given me a significantly greater appreciation for all our team at Neerim Health. Understanding how each staff member's role flows alongside another and how this influences the quality of care we provide our consumers is crucial when reviewing our service, capabilities and decision making.

Our team has undergone significant changes, personally and professionally, throughout the financial year. I am proud of the role Neerim Health plays in not only providing care to our patients and community, but in supporting one another.

We have continued to expand and diversify our workforce, welcoming new staff from varied clinical backgrounds as well as supporting existing staff to undertake training and study to diversify their roles.

Providing our clinical staff with access to training opportunities both in house and through external providers is crucial in ensuring our team feels confident and competent in their roles and to achieve workplace satisfaction.

Although biased about how incredible our staff are, I have observed on multiple occasions this year, our team being confronted with situations that have put our resources to the test. Their attitude, clinical expertise and response have demonstrated both their abilities and growth as a team.

I am proud that through refining our quality systems and demonstrating the improvements we have made together and our commitment to clinical expertise and safety, we have feedback to show these evolutions are enhancing the experience for our consumers. Feedback themes highlighted to us how grateful our consumers are to be able to have such high-level surgical care so close to home.

The atmosphere, cleanliness and positive staff attitude were key themes in our review of patient feedback and it is reassuring to see that despite the suspension of Aged Care services in late 2024, feedback from our theatre patients shows that our provision of quality sandwiches continues!



# Service Awards

---

Neerim Health is grateful to everyone involved in providing quality care to our consumers and patients. Each year we recognise staff who have reached a milestone of years of service to Neerim Health. This year we acknowledge the service of the following staff and thank them for their valued contribution.



**20 Years**  
Sharyn Norris

**15 Years**  
Teresa Buckley  
Maria Kelly

**5 Years**  
Glenda Chambers  
Janick Joachim

# Wellbeing

---

## Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

All Neerim Health employees have access to EAP for a range of support services including confidential counselling, wellness checks, self-care checks, dietary matters, diversity support, financial wellbeing, workplace legal matters and career coaching. Neerim Health managers can also access the service for manager support and leadership coaching.

## Recognition

At Neerim Health we encourage everyone to recognise team members who go above and beyond in quality, patient care, team support and leadership.

Our 'Shout out to a Superhero' is a simple way of saying: we see you, appreciate you and thank you! For example, nominations have been received for excellence in customer service, positive contributions to work environment, teamwork, role growth, and mentoring.

## Awareness Days

We celebrate key national and international days to support workplace wellbeing initiatives; recognise the great work of our team; and in remembrance, including:



International Women's Day - March  
ANZAC Day - April  
International Nurses Day - May  
NAIDOC Week - July  
RU OK Day - September  
National WorkSafe Month - October  
Perioperative Nurses Week - November  
Remembrance Day - November  
Christmas - December

# With Thanks

---

Neerim Health appreciates all the support and donations it has received over the years. We respect the long history of community giving, and where possible, we like to pay it forward.

Following the suspension of Aged Care and Overnight Hospital services, we had excess food, equipment and expired clinical stock needing a new home.

Prior to Christmas 2024, we donated excess meat, frozen goods and grocery items to Food Relief Neerim District.

Through a call out via Day Hospitals Australia, we have donated some of our expired clinical stock to CSNU in Papua New Guinea. CSNU is a disability services organisation working to improve health and accessibility for vulnerable communities, particularly with eye and ear health. Learn more at [www.csnu.net](http://www.csnu.net)

Further expired clinical stock went off to the Orison Medical Health Centre in South Sudan (photo below). The newly built Health Centre will be providing community maternity services and healthcare in an area of need. The Orison Medical Centre project is the initiative of African Action South Sudan co-founded by Medina and George, South Sudanese born. Both are now Australian Citizens and with their six children reside in West Gippsland. Medina, a registered nurse, was a former employee of Neerim Health. Learn more at [www.healthserve.org.au](http://www.healthserve.org.au)





Photo: Monday 2 September 2024 Bloomfield Road. Tree removal in progress.

In early September 2024, Victoria was buffeted by extreme winds. NH lost power late Sunday evening on 1 September, resulting in cancelled theatre on Monday 2 September and Tuesday 3 September. The Neerim District, Warragul, Drouin and many other places in the Gippsland region were without power for days. Across the road from Neerim Health, Tarago Gardens residential estate was without power until Thursday-Friday of that week.

Neerim Health was running on generator power, which supports all our electrical needs. For situations where power is cut, Neerim Health is required to have generator power back-up. If the mains electricity is cut during a patient operation, the generator automatically starts, allowing for the surgical team to safely complete the procedure. We then halt any further operations until mains power is restored.

We posted on Neerim & Surrounds Noticeboard Facebook page offering showers, hot beverages and/or to charge phones. We had several locals accessing our showers and charging facilities. In an emergency situation, Neerim Health is pleased to offer assistance where we can, that meets the needs of the community, and complements the efforts of first responders and the Baw Baw Shire council.

# Donations

We are grateful to our community for their generosity in supporting the work of Neerim Health. Special thanks to David and Merryle Johnson for donating the proceeds from their beautiful Wensley Farm Open Garden day to Neerim Health. Photos from their garden are featured in this report. For the financial year 2024-2025 we would like to thank the following financial donors:

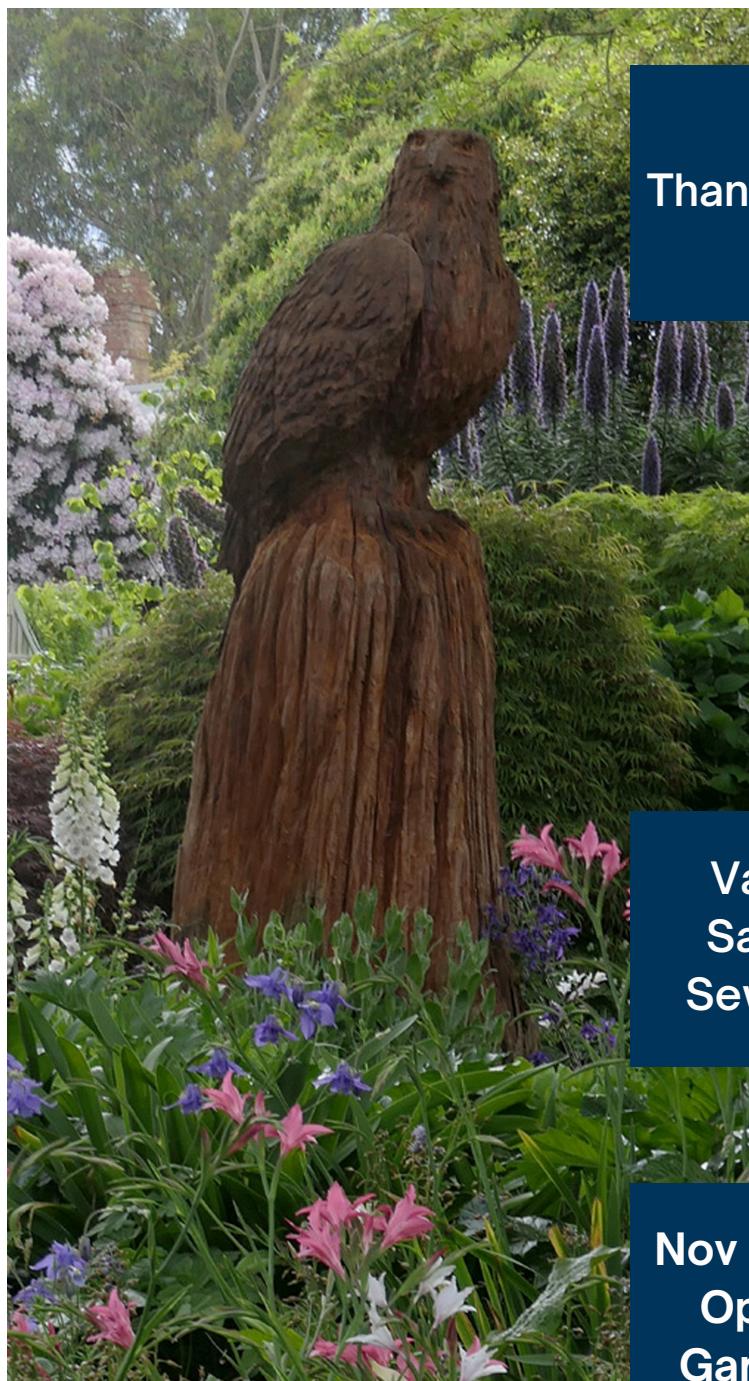


Photo: Wensley Farm © D & M Johnson

D & A Arnott  
J Crowden  
M Cryle & J Zube-Cryle  
P & M Darton  
S Dignum  
R Evans  
K Exner  
B Foster  
J Frowd  
M Rickhuss  
T Le Page  
A Linden  
J Mason  
J & E Miller  
R Oostergetel  
M & O Scharley  
J Tucker  
L Turner Guy

## Donations in Memorial of NH Team Member Sally Sewell

- B James
- S Griggs
- J Heeley
- Lake Wellington Yacht Club
- Nurse colleagues @ WGHG
- P Cervi

## Wensley Farm Open Garden

- D & M Johnson
- Neerim District CWA

# Volunteers

We appreciate the work of our volunteers who freely offer their time and effort to benefit Neerim Health. Our sincere thanks to:

## **Neerim Health Board**

A skills based board, each member contributes their expertise and experience. The Board provides strategic oversight and corporate governance for the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

## **Ladies Guild**

Fund raising and support.

## **Shirley Le Page**

Regular volunteer in our day ward.

## **Terry Bailey**

Consumer Representative on Quality & Safety Committee.

## **Helena and Maryanne Schellekens**

Green thumbs in NH's gardens.

Thank you

# Ladies Guild

## 2024-2025 Annual Report

At the AGM of the Ladies Guild on the 7 October 2024 the committee leadership was elected as follows:

President	Marilyn Lewis
Vice President	Jenny Neil
Secretary	Kathy Irvine
Assistant Secretary	Margery Price
Treasurer	Jacky Bailey

Other members of the Ladies Guild for this year were:  
Joan Gleeson, Cheryl McKay, Narelle Mann, Di Whitford and Laurelei Vincent.

At the Ladies Guild meeting on 2 December 2024, Andrea Linden, CEO, provided an update on proposed services for NH following the AGM of NH on 28 November 2024. Since our AGM in October 2024, the ongoing direction of the NH Ladies Guild has been under constant review by members of the Guild. This has been due to the uncertainties of the timeline of the proposed build of a new Community Health Hub at NH. While awaiting further clarity, members have remained committed to ensuring our efforts are purposeful and aligned with community needs.

A public meeting for Association Members was suggested at the NH AGM with a proposed date in April 2025. This initiative provided a helpful framework for the Guild to pause formal meetings until after that date, allowing time for more information to emerge. Following this, the Ladies Guild reconvened on 5 May 2025, where a motion was passed to take a 12-month recess from activities. This decision was made unanimously and reflects a proactive approach to ensuring our future contributions are both meaningful and well-informed. Our next scheduled meeting is set for the first Monday of May 2026, unless an urgent matter arises that requires earlier discussion. We look forward to reconnecting with renewed purpose and enthusiasm.

Kathy Irvine (Secretary)



Ladies Guild at the Winter Market 2023  
Members (L) to (R) L Vincent, N Mann  
& D Whitford

# Quality Reports

---

Neerim Health is dedicated to providing a safe, caring and compliant service for patients and consumers, and a safe and supportive work environment for staff and volunteers. We are committed to continuous improvement through analysis, planning, implementation, evaluation and refinement of systems and processes.

As a hospital provider, we comply with the National Safety and Quality Health Standards (NSQHS).

As an aged care provider, we comply with the Aged Care Quality Standards.

Practically, we use the following to monitor, measure and evaluate our services and workplace safety.

- Committees - Work Health and Safety; Quality and Safety; Clinical Governance and Quality Improvement, Medical Advisory; Audit and Risk; Finance and Nominations (as required).
- Systems - Prompt for document control, and RiskClear for incident, risk and feedback management; quality management and audits; schedules, registers and credentialling.
- Policies and procedures
- Training
- Communication - Neerim Health Newsletter, notice boards, weekly emails, team meetings, etc.
- Quality Improvement Data Clinical Indictors
- Quality Improvement Projects
- Audits
- Consumer Feedback
- Accreditation Updates
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Education and Workforce Planning
- Benchmarking - National and Peer Group Comparisons

The following provides a snapshot of how we are tracking in key areas.

# Infection Prevention and Control - Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is a fundamental part of patient care to prevent the spread of infections and contamination of the healthcare environment. Our hands may look clean but microorganisms are invisible to our eyes.

Hand hygiene involves individuals washing their hands with soap and water or rubbing them with sanitiser. The Five Moments for Hand Hygiene require staff, volunteers and medical practitioners to clean their hands:

1. Before Touching a Patient
2. Before a Procedure
3. After a Procedure or Body Fluid Exposure Risk
4. After Touching a Patient
5. After Touching a Patient's Surrounds

## Training

Every year, all staff are required to complete the Hand Hygiene for clinical/non-clinical healthcare workers, and The Basics of Infection Prevention and Control training via the National Hand Hygiene Initiative (NHHI) Learning Management System. Training is completed throughout the calendar year. Our goal is 100% completion.

## Surveillance & Benchmarking

Neerim Health's Hand Hygiene Auditor collects and submits data three times a year (four monthly) to the NHHI, benchmarking against national data. The auditor uses the NHHI audit tool and witnesses healthcare workers in action to collect the data. The national benchmark is currently 80%\*.

The results of our training compliance is provided below.

### Calendar Year 2024

Hand Hygiene Training  
Clinical Staff = 69%  
Non-Clinical Staff = 89%  
Overall = 77%

Basics of Infection Prevention & Control  
Overall = 43%

### 1st Half Year 2025

Hand Hygiene Training  
Clinical Staff = 67%  
Non-Clinical Staff = 61%  
Overall = 64%

Basics of Infection Prevention & Control  
Overall = 62%

\* As at time of publication. Source: Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

# Consumer Feedback

What better way to know if you are doing something right, wrong or could do better, than asking the consumers about their experience at Neerim Health.

We collect feedback from two main sources:

- General consumer feedback via 'Tell Us About It' forms available at reception or via our website; and
- Theatre Patient Satisfaction Surveys. The survey is given to patients, with a reply paid envelope, following their procedure. Results are collated in RiskClear for trend analysis and action. If the patient wishes, the answers may remain anonymous. However, the patient can elect for Neerim Health to contact them to discuss any issues or concerns regarding their care. A selection of results from over 400 surveys received in 2024-2025 includes:

<b>The length of time waiting to be admitted was appropriate</b>	<b>93% Good/Very Good</b>
Patient was well informed and supplied with all required information prior to their surgery	99% Good/Very Good
<b>Patient was involved as much as they wanted in making decisions about their treatment and care</b>	<b>100% Mostly/Always</b>
Patient felt cared for and believe staff listened to their concerns	100% Mostly/Always
<b>Patient experienced unexpected harm or distress as a result of their treatment or care</b>	<b>97% No Unexpected Harm or Distress Experienced</b>
Patient received pain relief that met their needs	100% Mostly/Always 43% required no pain relief
<b>Discharge information was provided and easy to understand (along with Medication information if required)</b>	<b>99% Good/Very Good</b>
Overall, the quality of the treatment and care the patient received was	100% Good/Very Good

We also receive written feedback from our consumers. Some writing comments on forms or surveys; returning to simply drop off flowers; or sending in a thank you card. The words, cards and flowers are encouraging and appreciated.

Following are examples of compliments received during 2024-2025 across Aged Care, Hospital and Theatre.



**During my stay here I have received nothing but wonderful care and encouragement from all.**

A big thank you to the wonderful staff here at Tarago Views, Neerim South. You helped me in many ways to get mobile again. I enjoyed your company, humour and generosity. Nothing seemed too much when I pressed the call button. Many thanks again.

**Thank you for looking after my mother during her respite at Neerim Health.**

Well looked after, food was good, staff excellent (from surgeon to cleaning ladies). Food's good!

**The care here is fantastic both to my friend and to me as a visitor.**

All staff encountered from pre-admission through until discharge given praise as well as anaesthetist.

**Thank you all for the kindness, care and professionalism during my visit for cataract surgery.**

I am so grateful to you all, God bless.

**My heartfelt thanks to Neerim Health. I have never experienced such proficient experienced and empathetic nursing care. Plus efficient and friendly office/reception staff. Thank you to all.**

Lovely staff, hard working and efficient practices. Made my stay a pleasure. Thank you all.

**I was impressed by how friendly the staff were with each other as well as the patients. The atmosphere was happy and relaxed. I am not nervous for my next procedure.**

From the ladies on the front reception desk, the intake and recovery nurses and the theatre nurses and the anaesthetist the care was, as always, exceptional. Many thanks.

**Absolutely excellent service at Neerim Health. Thank you to all the staff.**

# Metrik

Neerim Health measures our theatre performance and benchmarks against facilities in Australia and around the world using Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) Metrik advanced data measurement and analytics system.

The Metrik system provides a measure of clinical performance and comparison with 'peer' organisations. Neerim Health inputs data six-monthly to the Metrik system. ACHS then analyses this data and provides Neerim Health feedback in the form of general and peer comparative reports. We use this tool to track our performance with every patient in theatre.

A selection of these indicator results from the 2024-2025 financial year includes:

## **Anaesthesia and Perioperative Care Clinical Indicators**

- 100% of patients received a preanaesthesia consultation completed by anaesthetists.
- 3 patients had post-operative treatment for nausea and vomiting.
- No patients had severe pain not responding to pain protocol in the recovery period.
- No patients had unplanned stay in recovery room > 2 hours.
- 100% of patients had a documented patient handover - operating suite to recovery area.

## **Day Patient Clinical Indicators**

- 100% of booked patients were assessed before admission.
- No patients had an unplanned return to operating room on same day as initial procedure.
- No patients had an unplanned transfer or overnight admission related to procedure.
- 3 patients experienced an adverse event during care delivery.
- 3 patients had an unplanned stay in recovery room > 2 hours.

# Student Placement

In 2024-2025 we continued our partnership with Federation University providing second year nursing student placement. Across the period, ten nursing students attended for over three weeks of practical placement in our perioperative suite.

The students are offered the opportunity to rotate between different roles - assisting and observing various aspects of the patient surgical journey. Lauren Mucic (DCS), reflecting on what skills she appreciated learning during her own nursing training, works directly with our students to practice and refine skills away from the bedside including medication administration, intravenous therapy techniques and first aid equipment and techniques. This personalised approach was evidenced in a student's feedback.

"I truly appreciate the time and effort you put into supporting my learning and helping me meet the necessary academic requirements. It has been a valuable experience working with you during this placement, and I'm grateful for the guidance and feedback you've provided throughout. Your support has made a meaningful difference in my professional development."

# Learning and Development

All staff must complete once off and annual mandatory training relevant to their role.

The majority of training is delivered online via the Regional Health Services eLearning Network (ReHSeN), National Hand Hygiene Initiative (NHHI) and/or Australian Institute of Food Safety (AIFS).

Practical training is also provided for all staff covering:

- Fire Extinguisher and Emergency Evacuation Training
- Code Grey (Aggression/Threatening Behaviour)
- DON/DOFF
- Manual Handling
- Basic Life Support
- Advanced Life Support

We provide dedicated practical training days for all staff - providing time away from normal duties for group learning. At our training day in April 2025, 77% of staff completed Fire Extinguisher and Emergency Evacuation Training, and 70% of staff completed Clinical Manual Handling.

Given our regional location; times where there are no doctors on site; and the distance to emergency care and ambulance support (at least 20 minutes away), it is important that our nurses are trained for medical emergencies. Advanced Life Support training by Parasol Medical Training is critical to empowering Neerim Health nurses and providing the skills/knowledge in the event of a medical emergency. In 2024, twelve Registered Nurses completed ALS training. A further two registered nurses completed ALS training in the first half of 2025.

Other learning and development courses are specific to roles. Two of our Health & Safety Representatives (HSR) started and/or completed their HSR Initial Occupational Health and Safety Training Courses. Eight of our CSSD technicians and nurses also completed their GENCA Endoscopic Reprocessing training.

Training requirements are reviewed annually for alignment to standards, legislation and as part of risk management.



Photos of Extinguisher and CPR Training

# Cross Skilling

We are pleased to support the cross skilling of two of our dedicated team members.

Rob Hibbs joined the team in August 2022 as our part time maintenance officer. Rob looks after the grounds and facilities, and does a fabulous job.

Janick Joachim joined Neerim Health in September 2019 as a part time Environmental Services Assistant (ESA). As an ESA, Janick's role was mainly in Aged Care, providing laundry, cleaning and kitchen services. Janick was very reliable and diligent in her role.



The opportunity arose in September 2023 for Rob to commence a Certificate IV in Operating Theatre Technical Support, and Janick a Certificate III in Sterilisation Services. Neerim Health supported them in their studies with practical experience in the Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD) and in theatre. Rob graduated from his course in January 2025 and is now completing his Certificate IV in Sterilisation Services. Janick completed her qualification in August 2024, and is now working towards her Certificate IV in Sterilisation Services. Both have added to their skills by completing GENCA Endoscopic Reprocessing training.

Rob enjoys the role variety between maintenance and CSSD/Theatre Tech work. In his maintenance role, he is often involved in coordinating third party plant and equipment servicing, and in his CSSD/Theatre Technician role, actually seeing or using the plant and equipment in the perioperative suite. Rob often puts a smile on patient faces when he is wheeling them into theatre, and later in the day ward. The doctors, nurses and other CSSD team often comment on the positivity that Rob brings to the day.

The majority of Janick's time is now in CSSD. Janick really enjoys her new role as it is challenging and completely different to her ESA role, requiring focus and technical skills. Janick has been complimented by her colleagues on the quality of her work.

Photo Above: Rob Hibbs  
Photo to Right: (R) Rob Hibbs & (L) Janick Joachim



# Compliance



As an accredited healthcare provider, employees, and in some cases volunteers, need to provide evidence to support their employment/role, and compliance with government and NH requirements. Examples are provided below.

## **Seasonal Influenza Vaccination**

Healthcare workers are at increased risk of exposure to, and transmission of, vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccination requirements and recommendations for healthcare workers are determined by their risk of exposure to vaccine-preventable diseases at work.

The Department of Health (Victoria) requires that all specified healthcare workers employed or engaged by prescribed healthcare settings to be vaccinated against seasonal influenza by 15 August each year, unless they are subject to an exemption.

At NH our employees are 100% compliant with this requirement.

## **Victoria's Child Safe Standards**

As part of Neerim Health compliance with Child Safe Standards, all employees and volunteers who may come into contact with children through our services, must provide a current Working With Children check.

NH is 100% compliant with this requirement.

## **Modern Slavery**

Modern slavery can happen to anyone, anywhere, and is often hidden. Modern slavery is when a person forces someone to work, marry or do other things through coercion (like manipulation, control or violence), threats or lies. Whilst NH is not mandated to have a Modern Slavery policy and procedure, as a provider of services to large private health insurers, we are contractually required to do so, and ethically, it is the right thing to do. NH upholds the Australian Government's position on modern slavery. There is no place for modern slavery in the Australian community or in the global supply chains of Australian goods and services.

Practically, we have taken a risk management approach to this issue, including but not limited to auditing all suppliers for their compliance to Modern Slavery Law and include the commitment to eliminating modern slavery in major contracts with suppliers. NH complies with the National Employment Standards, and the NH Enterprise Agreement.

We ensure that all employees have the right to work in Australia.



Photo: Wensley Farm © D & M Johnson

# NEERIM HEALTH

ABN 77 228 450 675  
29-39 Main Neerim Road  
Neerim South VIC 3831

**P:** 03 5628 1226  
**F:** 03 5628 1468  
**E:** [info@neerimhealth.org.au](mailto:info@neerimhealth.org.au)