



Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital

Combining health services

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Introduction

Over the past 18 months, Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital have explored how both health services can better share resources to ensure their long-term success and viability.

This process has identified an opportunity to create a sustainable health service along the Great Ocean Road and as a result, Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital Boards are planning to seek approval from the Minister for Health to combine operations under a single entity.

The joint proposal to combine the health services of Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital, will ensure the provision of improved service delivery and greater access to clinical care along the Great Ocean Road and into the Otways.

This amalgamation is an important step forward for both communities. We look forward to continuing our consultation with you to shape future services and to further cultivate our partnership.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital Boards proposing an amalgamation?

Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital are both faced with significant challenges primarily regarding the long term financial viability, recruitment and retention of staff, and service availability. In recent years these challenges have begun to impact our ability to deliver health services to the people in our community. This, combined with our geography and the seasonal population of both areas, creates a rather unique position.

As a result, we believe if both health services formally come together, we can work as one organisation, and collaboratively build and further improve on our existing safe, high quality services and secure the future sustainability of both health services.

What will be the benefits for consumers and staff?

- Greater access to a broader range of health services locally, and more choice as to where your health services are delivered;
- Better connectivity and delivery of services across both sites. When community members need access to health care, this can be better coordinated;
- Improved access to health services at both Lorne and Apollo Bay. Through the platform of shared senior management, we have already seen Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital provide a range of health services together such as; General Practitioner (GP) services, Social Work, Exercise Physiology and NDIS packages. We have also conducted shared staff education and training sessions across both sites in Advanced Life Support, Montessori Aged Care Methods, and Alcohol and Drug Recovery;



- Greater ability to meet patient needs at different stages of life and within their own community. For example midwives to deliver pre and post-natal health checks or palliative care being provided to the dying at home;
- Improved accessibility to, and coordination of, aged care services. For example more help for those in need at home with cleaning or shopping as well as assistance understanding the complexities of the new My Aged Care program;
- Improved access to health care professionals with more experts available to both sites;
- More opportunities for staff professional development and flexible job sharing in order to develop, upskill and retain staff;
- Enhanced sustainability and increased stability of GP services throughout the local region.
- Improved operational efficiency to allow diversion of resources towards enhancing direct patient care. For example by sharing a CEO, savings can be spent on additional physiotherapy resources;
- Shared resources will drive improved quality and patient safety for both communities.

When will this happen? How long will it take?

We have been undertaking due diligence and comparing operational and service delivery options over the past 18 months.

The Boards of Management of both services have now agreed on an operational and governance structure for the future. The next stage is to conduct a thorough process of community consultation to discuss the benefits and the risks associated with this proposal. The community engagement process will continue into early 2019.

Both services are established as independent legal entities under the Health Services Act 1988, therefore change requires specific actions from the Victorian Minister for Health and Governor-in-Council.

Who will manage the new single entity Health Service?

Board appointments are subject to Ministerial approval. A single Board of Directors with balanced representation from each of the two existing Boards will provide governance and will also appoint a CEO with operational responsibility across the entire organisation.

What will my local hospital be called?

The names for each local 'campus' will remain the same – Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital. An umbrella name for the combined entity will be included in the proposal.

I like my local hospital. Does this mean that we will no longer have a local hospital?

No. It will be business as usual for both hospitals, right where they are now.

Each hospital will continue to operate its respective Urgent Care, Acute Care and Residential Aged Care, Community Services and neighbourhood houses, exactly as they do now.



A team of doctors will continue to provide medical services to both hospitals and medical clinics.

Will there be loss of services, beds, or funding?

Ensuring consistent, high quality, safe and accessible care into the future is our priority. The ability of the combined, single Health Service to deliver improved outcomes for both communities requires adequate funding. Our submission to the Minister is based on the expectation that *existing funding will be maintained or increased*. This includes funding; Residential Aged Care, Community Services, Acute Care, Urgent Care and the Neighbourhood Houses. We are asking the Minister to continue the funding arrangements as they are now with the Multi-Purpose Service (MPS) in the Apollo Bay area and Small Rural Health Service funding for the Lorne area.

What will happen to existing donations and auxiliaries? Where will the money, items and equipment go?

We are continually grateful to our donors and volunteers. It will be business as usual for existing donations and auxiliaries. Donors and fundraisers will always be able to direct their financial or other forms of donations to a specific service, facility or project. Structures will be put in place to quarantine directed donations to ensure they are used only for the intended purpose.

Will there be job losses?

- No
- Our staff are highly valued by us and the community.
- There is no plan to decrease any direct care delivery roles i.e. nurses, doctors and allied health professionals. We will continue to grow our support services along the Great Ocean Road and into the Otways;
- Some roles may need to be re-designed to meet the changed operational structure. We expect, through collaborative discussions, opportunities may arise for staff to work across both sites; and
- By working together, it may also increase the likelihood of attracting additional, high calibre staff.

I currently work close to home. Will I have to travel to work in another town?

Staff will not be asked to drive further than they currently travel and the new entity will enable staff to work across locations. Increased services will mean more opportunity for staff along the Great Ocean Road, and some staff may choose to work at both sites as it meets their professional goals. For example a staff member with specialized skills may share their expertise between Apollo Bay and Lorne.

What would happen if we did nothing?

The greatest threat to the sustainability of local health services is for Boards of Directors to take no action to futureproof them.

Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital are both faced with significant challenges; the financial costs associated with providing services, recruitment and retention of staff, increased patient



demand, complexity of care, new legislative changes/requirements, securing new infrastructure, technology and equipment.

In recent years, these challenges have begun to impact our ability to deliver optimal health services to the people in our community. However, a merger between the health services at Lorne and Apollo Bay will allow better access to doctors and General Practitioner training to provide care in the medical centers, residential aged care and acute care settings.

By combining resources and skills, and working together, we will create a stronger health system to better meet the current and future health and well-being needs of our communities.

Are there examples of how the health services work together?

Through the platform of shared senior management, we have already seen Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital run an array of health services together such as Social Work and Exercise Physiology.

We have also conducted staff education and training sessions across both sites in Advanced Life Support, Montessori Aged Care Methods, and Alcohol and Drug Recovery.

The delivery of community services has been managed across the two services and as a result, we have seen a much broader range of service provision including NDIS packages.

Why become one entity when the current partnership is working so well?

The close partnership between Otway Health and Lorne Community hospital has enabled staff and resources to be shared. We have learned a great deal from each other, however a partnership relies on the 'goodwill' of both parties for it to continue. By formalising and strengthening the relationship between Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital, community members, patients and staff can have greater certainty about the future. Formalising the partnership also enables us to better access to funding opportunities to build financial sustainability.

Will consultation be undertaken with the staff and the community?

Yes, consultation with staff from both health facilities and each community will continue.

We have provided many opportunities over the past 18 months and will continue to do so. We want to know what is important to all members of our community and staff, and your responses will help to create the vision for our health services as we move forward.

You have further opportunities to participate in community engagement sessions ('Tea Talks'). Tea Talks are designed to facilitate a two-way discussion to help us better understand community and staff needs. Each session involves meeting with a Board member and the CEO, Kate Gillan, to discuss your views about the proposed partnership.

We will continue to keep people informed as we move through the process via local media, our websites, news sheets and social media platforms.



How can I find out more or have my say?

Regular information updates will be published through local newspapers and newsletters, Otway Health and Lorne Community Hospital websites, mail-outs, social media platforms and direct discussion at the Tea Talks.

To register your interest to attend a 45 minute Tea Talk session, please contact:

Otway Health

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Lorne Community Hospital

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