

**Note to editors: embargoed until 12.01am Friday, 21 January**

19 January 2022

## Boards agree to join up for better healthcare

Maldon Hospital and Castlemaine Health are working together to deliver better healthcare and well-being services for the communities of Mount Alexander.

A proposal for the health services to formally come together to create a new health service, supported by a comprehensive business case, has been endorsed by the two Boards. In accordance with the Health Services Act, the proposal has been sent to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Minister for Health for consideration and for approval.

At their most recent meetings, the Boards agreed that a new, unified health service would benefit the community through enhanced services, improved staff development opportunities, and more efficient use of resources that enable more effective delivery of frontline services.

Ms Vanessa Healy, Maldon Hospital Board Chair, said: "After extensive consultation with community, patients and residents, our GPs, staff and volunteers, the Boards are confident that unification will deliver the very best outcomes for local people. We've heard first-hand what's needed to ensure health care for the future and how important it is to maintain our local identity and the sense of community that people value."

In the proposed structure, both services will continue delivering health care to their communities but create significant opportunities for sharing resources and working together, creating career pathways for staff while providing more services locally and reducing the need for patients to travel.

Ms Peggy Ronnau, Castlemaine Health Board Chair, said: "The extensive consultation process has highlighted the individual strengths of our organisations and shown us how we can work as one to build on our legacy of cooperation. We have great relationships with each other, strong connections with our communities and long-standing and trusting relationships with those we care for. This is a move from strength to strength."

Staff and community engagement across both communities has helped define clear commitments should the proposal proceed:

- The strong continuum of urgent care, already established between Maldon Hospital and Castlemaine Health, will continue to effectively service the communities of Mount Alexander Shire
- It is proposed that Maldon Hospital and Castlemaine Health will remain as registered business and trading names, however there will be a new overarching entity name
- Mountview Home and Jessie Bowe House at Maldon Hospital will continue to provide the same excellent care they always have
- A new entity would ensure local fundraising for each health service will go directly to that local service
- Volunteers will continue to be recruited and work locally
- There will be no loss of services at either of the health services as a direct result of amalgamation
- There will be no reduction in staffing levels as a direct result of the amalgamation and people will be able to work when and where they work today, unless they wish to change

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Sue Race, Chief Executive Officer**



- Local representation on the Board for both communities would be strongly recommended to the Minister for Health, and local Community Consultative Committees in Maldon and Castlemaine would continue
- The local community will continue to have opportunities to participate in engagement about the future of the unified health service
- Clients and patients will continue to have choice as to where they access care.

If the proposal is approved by the Minister for Health the first key step would be to develop a new strategic plan in consultation with staff, volunteers and the communities of the Mount Alexander region that defines a shared vision and plan for the future.

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