

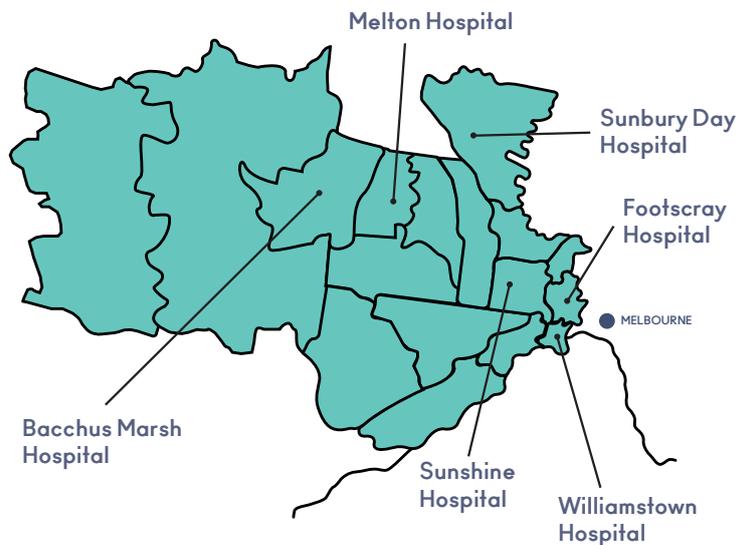
Fortnightly Update

Last updated: 13 March 2020

With the announcement in December last year that a new Melton hospital will be managed by Western Health, the board of Western Health and administrator of Djerriwarrh Health Services began a project to explore the community benefits of a potential amalgamation, as per the *Health Services Act 1988*.

Djerriwarrh Health Services and Western Health currently service the healthcare needs of nearly 985,000 Victorians and employ more than 7600 people from 13 sites and care campuses.

Any decision to amalgamate must be based on demonstrating community benefit, that ensures the best health services for our diverse, evolving and rapidly growing communities. This is the first fortnightly update for this project.



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Consultation began with service staff in January and continued into February with four staff forums and engagement sessions with senior leaders from both health services, hospital and health service support and advisory groups, as well as fundraising groups.

Community meetings and consultation will continue through March.

Discussions have examined how a potential amalgamation of services could deliver a net improvement for communities in Melbourne's Western growth corridor. All notes and feedback are captured and carefully considered by the group overseeing the project. Key information and frequently asked questions are published on the Better Health for the West website.

WHAT IS NEXT?

We will be continuing to talk with members of the community throughout March

This includes meetings and communication with staff, volunteers, community representatives and external partners across both health networks. Please check the website or internal staff forums for upcoming consultation dates.

If you would like to arrange a meeting or have your say please contact us via:

betterhealthforthewest.com.au

See back page for key questions being asked →

THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED SO FAR



Will health services in the West become more centralised toward Melbourne?

If the amalgamation were to go ahead, community infrastructure in Bacchus Marsh will be maintained to ensure we can effectively service the population area. Infrastructure is a key factor in this process.



Will Bacchus Marsh and Melton services be retained i.e. community and ambulatory services at Melton and Grant Lodge?

There is no intention to close Grant Lodge facility, whatever the outcome of this process. Grant Lodge continues to serve residents and will into the future. People have called for an increase in funding for Grant Lodge which both health services support. This will be a priority regardless of whether an amalgamation occurs.



Will patients have longer wait times for service?

With any amalgamation of health services, clinical service models would be adjusted to fit within the Western Health network. If amalgamation proceeds, there would be one central waiting list to capture patient information. Waiting times are dependent on individual patient care needs



How will integration work and will it be appropriately resourced – how will IT and system integration, Senior Leadership structure and cultural fit be addressed?

As part of any amalgamation, Djerriwarrh Health Services would draw on Western Health's resources and network infrastructure, while keeping in mind site specific requirements. The outcomes of this are yet to be determined.



What will amalgamation mean for staff both before amalgamation (i.e. maintaining BAU) and post amalgamation (i.e. will my role change)?

Under any option, there will be no reductions in overall staffing levels. Western Health will be transparent with staff and work closely with individuals and their unions to explore a variety of options, both during the engagement period and if amalgamation were to proceed. As is the case for any health service, frontline services will always be the priority.



An independent report is a key part of the process. How is it being put together?

An independent project manager has been commissioned to help the two health services prepare an amalgamation proposal, which contains an assessment of whether an amalgamation will provide better health services and is in the public interest. The report will examine the future healthcare needs in the expanding region, and what community benefits would be expected to flow from a voluntary amalgamation of the two organisations. If the report clearly demonstrates net community benefit and each health service board were to recommend a voluntary amalgamation to the State Government, this report would then be presented to the Health Minister for approval. All engagement, from staff to the wider community, will feed into this process.



When will a decision be made?

There will be no report before the end of April at the earliest. Once both Boards separately consider the report, and should they jointly agree to amalgamate, the report is then forwarded to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for consideration. The length of this process is yet to be determined, and the decision will be made on the best way forward for the community.



How is the community being engaged and how is feedback being documented and fed into this process?

All responses and issues raised during engagements sessions and through the website are noted and forwarded onto the group overseeing the project for consideration. All are being carefully considered. Key questions will be answered on the microsite and circulated as part of this fortnightly update.



What about local representation?

If an amalgamation were to proceed, effective community representation would be the key. Where there is duplication, Western Health would confirm a new structure to best support local service delivery. Western Health and Djerriwarrh are fortunate to have capable, dedicated executive teams. Whatever changes may happen, community members will continue to be able to volunteer, support and make donations to support health services in their communities.



If amalgamation proceeds, will community service still be operating?

It's business as usual for all community programs. Djerriwarrh community services are highly regarded and provide seamless care to the community. Western Health is keen to learn more about this service and how it could potentially integrate within its existing high-quality services.