

Save Healesville Hospital

Revive, Maintain & Expand Our Services

The Save Healesville Hospital Action Group was formed following the Eastern Health Community meeting held at the memorial hall. We are all passionate about reviving, maintaining and expanding the services at the Healesville Hospital and Yarra Valley Community Health.

The Healesville community needs to get active to save our hospital from further service cuts and restore community control of the hospital so we get what we need not what the bureaucrats and politicians think they can get away with.

The recent history of the hospital dispute is as follows.

In October 2012, Eastern Health (EH) released the Strategic Clinical Services Plan for 2012-22. To enable consultation with the community, Eastern Health organised a meeting on 29th October, advertised with less than a week's notice. EH expected a handful of people to turn up. The meeting room at the hospital was overflowing, 40+ people attended. They spoke up and challenged the plans contents and asked EH to agree to another meeting.

On 10th December 300 people filled the Memo Hall to voice their concerns. No Board members of EH were present. A motion was moved that direct dialogue with the EH Board was needed. EH CEO Alan Lilly agreed to this. A small community based working group was established to capture and explain the communities views to the EH Board.

Sadly, this plan describes the progressive reduction of services to our community. We need all services returned, existing services maintained and new services added to meet the needs of our growing and aging community.

We need your help in fighting to revive, maintain and expand our services at the Healesville Hospital and the services provided by Yarra Valley Community Health.

Submissions about the plan are open till 31 January 2013. Please send a letter or email to:

Eastern Health CEO Alan Lilly on:

allan.lilly@easternhealth.org

Please also send copies to us and the following politicians (cc into email to Allan):

State Member for Seymour, Cindy McLeish MP:

cindy.mcleish@parliament.vic.gov.au

Victorian Premier The Hon. Ted Baillieu MP:

ted.baillieu@parliament.vic.gov.au

Save Healesville Hospital Action Group:

savehealesvillehospital@gmail.com

Federal Member for Casey, The Hon. Tony Smith:

Tony.Smith.MP@aph.gov.au

Federal Member for McEwen, Robert Mitchell:

rob.mitchell.mp@aph.gov.au

It is time for **YOU** to speak up so we can represent the true voice of the Community. Please read and circulate this paper and participate in our campaign to Save Our Services. Tell us your opinion by making a submission to EH, sending a letter to EH and our politicians, fill in the Facebook survey, for more information visit our Facebook site Save Healesville Hospital which can be found at

<http://www.facebook.com/SaveHealesvilleHospital>.

Where can I get a copy of the EH review document?

The document is available for you to download in full or as fact sheets at: www.easternhealth.org.au
<http://www.easternhealth.org.au/eh2022/default.aspx>.

The average person will find the 107 page document nonsensical, unless you have a health planning background. We have summarised the document below for you. EH has published a one page fact sheet on Healesville and District Hospital and Yarra Valley Community Health containing 10 dot points. There is very little detail, only generalised directions, words like *"increase, continue, explore, improve and complete"*. There is a total lack of information on what is currently provided at the services, rendering it impossible to compare the suite of services before and after the clinical services plans is implemented.

EH key proposed changes:

1. ***"Increasing antenatal and post natal services in the local area"***. Now isn't this amusing. EH made changes without consultation in October 2012, with the closure of onsite maternity services, antenatal education and antenatal clinics, a service we have had since 1950. And they want us to believe this is progress!
2. ***"Increasing acute, inpatient and general medical services"***. Ask your local GP if they refer their patients to our hospital? Our local doctors can't get patients into our hospital!! Eastern Health uses it as a dumping ground, to park patients blocking beds in the other Eastern Health facilities. Patients from outside the Yarra Valley can stay 60 days blocking beds our local doctors and residents need.

Under the principles of their plan they want 70% self sufficiency (P52) we would like 70% of the Hospital time delivering services to our community please. Can we get a postcode analysis over the last 12-24 months as to who used our hospital Mr Lilly?

3. The plan promises to ***"explore options for renal dialysis"***. Give us Renal Dialysis too, if we need it. There needs to be a proper study to see what the needs of the community are, in total, not just for a few people. Seymour hospital has 3 chairs, we're not greedy. Don't try and split this community by setting one group against another. Don't use the hope of renal dialysis to justify the removal of surgical services
4. ***"Moving surgical services to nearby Yarra Ranges Health in Lilydale and other Eastern Health sites to align with service capability"***. It's 25 kilometres to Lilydale. Yarra Ranges Health has no beds for overnight stays, no direct public transport to the door, pathetic parking and longer waiting lists than Healesville. So the elderly patient needing a colonoscopy, have to sit on a bus, walk from the bus stop to Yarra Ranges Health, having taken purging medication and no food. What is EH's definition of accessible? We don't want our older residents dependent on public transport for surgical procedures Mr Lilly. *How can Eastern Health justify the loss of vital services – Healesville surgical Services delivered more throughput, better quality, with enviable low infection rates? This quality service is to be closed at Healesville to make Yarra Ranges Health more viable? We know why...to help the Eastern Health bottom line. EH would have more credibility if the EH deficit was acknowledged as a major factor in determining the change in the service mix.*
5. ***"Increasing ambulatory, palliative, acute specialist clinics, mental health services."***
EH then goes on to list some services under each heading but they also list services that are already available. There has been an endocrinologist Richard Simpson at the site for more than a decade, Murnong Mental Health Services attend 3 days a week between Yarra Junction and Healesville, Yarra Valley Community Health provides a wide range of ambulatory services – services that help people keep moving around - and innovative award winning models... what exactly is being added or is it a case of rebranding what already exists and giving it a new name.

How can you help? We need 3 things

Your hospital needs YOU. We need you to fight to revive, maintain and expand services.

We urge you to register your anger and concern about the reduction in services without regard to what this community needs. Submissions do not need to be long, they can be a few paragraphs and the key points above will assist you in highlighting the issues but in short we want to:

Revive lost Services such as Gynaecological and Maternity Services which were by stealth
Maintain current services including surgery
Expand services to include dialysis and other needed services.

Have your Say NOW!

1. Make a Submission to Eastern Health

Feedback on Eastern Health 2022 can be provided until 31 January. There are three ways Eastern Health has asked you to submit feedback:

- Via a 5 question online survey - <http://easternhealth.poll daddy.com/s/eastern-health-2022-a-strategic-clinical-service-plan-2012-22>
- Email your submission to eh2022@easternhealth.org.au
- Post your submission to Karen Fox, Quality, Planning and Innovation, Eastern Health, 251 Mountain Hwy, Wantirna 3152.

2. Make Submissions or send emails to State & Federal Politicians

Your local members need to hear your voice too. Make your views known, they need to know that our community wants our hospital services to be revived, maintained and expanded and if it means we need to become a recognised rural hospital with its own board then that is what our community will support. Let them know the importance of surgery remaining in Healesville, that we demand our maternity services are returned and that we need want renal dialysis for the hospital and community. Keep it professional but show them your passion.

3. Contact the Save Healesville Hospital Facebook Page

The Save Healesville Hospital Facebook page will provide a link for a survey which we ask you to complete as the Eastern Health Survey has been designed to 'compliment' their draft whereas we need more information so they understand the importance of the hospital to our local community.

Information to assist your submissions

Eastern Health has not been open or transparent. It wanted to close Maternity Services and did so by stealth, slowing limiting the number of women allowed to birth at Healesville. At the community meeting, one reason quoted for closing maternity was transfer rates to other EH hospitals. What EH didn't tell you was the EH insisted women needing an induction were automatically transferred to other EH birthing facilities.

Hands up those mums who had an induction for their first baby? Now that was an easy way to get the transfer rate from Healesville up wasn't it. EH set up the scenario it wanted. It needed a pattern of declining births to justify stopping birthing services. Birth rates have not declined. Access to Healesville has been repeatedly tightened and women forced to go elsewhere.

It is not safe for women in labor, from our rural area, to be forced to travel from Healesville to Box Hill or Angliss to birth. Many women have both sudden onset and fast deliveries on the 3 or 4th child. We fear

these women will end up birthing on the side of the freeway, under the Eastern Health Clinical Services Plan. We want more post natal care services too, especially for women needing support with breast feeding, settling and for those suffering post natal depression.

Why not a mother and baby unit like Kooweerup Regional Health Service? This is a rural recognised hospital in a “metropolitan” area so surely a hospital in a rural location such as Healesville should receive the same recognition. Women have a right and need to birth locally. We demand this service is returned. We need gynaecological surgery returned to Healesville too. Alexandra hospital has a broad range of surgical services. We need the range of surgery Alexandra offers its rural community. Maybe we need to be a Small Rural Health Service like Alexandra Hospital.

EH Principles of Planning

Eastern Health outlines the principles of their plan. .To “ensure equity of access to the full range and standard of clinical services”.... to meet population health demands and self-sufficiency”, ensure adequate clinical mass to ensure quality, safety, teaching and research”.... This plan takes from us what we need and offers what we already have.

To be honest, Eastern Health is a huge \$750 million dollar corporation. Healesville Hospital and Yarra Valley Community Health are a combined budget of \$10-13 million dollar service, less than 2% of EH budget. We pay for the privilege of being part of EH. 15% of all income goes on corporate overheads = middle management. Maybe it's time to farewell EH as an owner and welcome them as a collaborative partner. Surely as a Small Rural Health Service like Kooweerup Regional Health Service we would have more control over who, what and how our hospital and community health service provides services to our community.

We would like to draw your attention to the footer on the document. “Eastern Health 2022-The Strategic Clinical Services Plan 2012-2022 (Draft 7 Not approved, for consultation and feedback). In 3 years, EH hasn't consulted our community or the local GP's, about this plan? In 7 versions we have been ignored.

EH has certainly been working towards the plan's proposed outcomes. It was not open for comment until maternity Services has been strangled and closed. This is not genuine consultation, holding a meeting is not meaningful engagement. It's just a way to tick the box. In this case, the actions of EH show a flagrant disregard to what our community needs and wants. Scepticism regarding their justifications is warranted. EH silences its critics and punishes those who speak out as staff are being gagged. We need to speak up for them. The culture is not open or supportive and the messenger is often shot sadly. To be a staff member of EH means you are forced to forfeit your rights as a concerned citizen to speak up.

Other Political Contacts

If you would like to email the Federal and State Health Ministers and their Opposition counterparts their details are below.

State

The Hon. David Davis, Minister for Health:

david.davis@parliament.vic.gov.au

The Hon. Gavin Jennings, Shadow Minister for Health:

gavin.jennings@parliament.vic.gov.au

Federal

The Hon. Tanya Plibersek – Federal Minister for Health:

Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au

The Hon. Peter Dutton – Shadow Minister for Health:

peter.dutton.mp@aph.gov.au

NOW IT'S UP TO YOU TO FIGHT TO SAVE HEALESVILLE HOSPITAL SERVICES