

First-class facility

BALLARAT Community Health (BCH) has a new address.

The centre has undergone a multi-million-dollar upgrade, seeing it move from its historic site on Sturt Street, which it occupied for 17 years.

Ballarat regional builder Nicholson Construction helmed the project, which sits at the heart of the new Lucas estate in Ballarat's western growth zone.

Chief executive Robyn Reeves said the former centre had served its purpose well but was at capacity.

"The new building at Lucas has given BCH the ability to expand from current facilities and provide an environment that enables its teams to provide the best possible service to the community," she said.

The first-class facility maintains BCH's mission to provide quality and affordable health care and promote community health and well-being throughout the region.

"Our team is creating opportunities and providing supportive environments that empower people to develop healthy lifestyles and prevent or manage illness," Ms Reeves said.

The new facility can service about 10,000 people a year and encompasses a full suite of health services including general practice, sexual health and podiatry clinics.

There are also multi-functional

BONNIE ZIEGELER

consultation rooms accommodating health and well-being services such as nutrition, youth, counselling, chronic disease management and community health nursing.

"It has been warmly welcomed by residents from Lucas and Alfredton and further afield from areas like Cardigan and Miners Rest," Ms Reeves said.

International architecture firm DesignInc designed the new facility to have two storeys, one public floor and one office floor for administration, services and more than 100 staff.

The centre is the cutting edge in environmental and sustainable design.

Project manager Jim Rodgers said the building featured high-efficiency lighting, rainwater harvesting, renewable energy technologies and waste recycling.

"It is a community-focused building where people can gather in a light-filled central atrium to access the range of services BCH offers," he said.

"It is a comfortable environment filled with plants and featuring natural materials."

There is a public gym, conference and meeting rooms, a cafe, a commercial kitchen and public access computers.

The building is also home to the Lucas community art space, which can be used as a gallery or performance area to

support community groups and like-minded projects.

Lucas was chosen for the new site to coincide with plans for developing it as a suburban hub.

It will ultimately comprise a full host of business-district amenities including schools, sporting facilities and a retail and restaurant precinct.

"A first-class health service is timely and essential," Ms Reeves said.

The facility is part of Lucas' mixed-use town centre and is fully serviced with public transport links, footpaths and roads.

BCH and the federal government's Health and Hospitals Fund jointly financed the almost \$14-million project.

"The Regional Priority initiative aims to improve access to essential health services to as many Australians as possible living in rural, regional and remote areas through investment in health infrastructure," Ms Reeves said.

BCH is set to start work on a \$1.06-million redevelopment of its Sebastopol branch, following an announcement of funding from the state government's Rural Capital Support Fund.

Centres at Wendouree and Smythesdale also provide BCH services, along with outreach clinics at locations throughout the Central Highlands.



A GRADE: The opening of the Ballarat Community Health centre at Lucas.

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HEALTH**

BALLARAT COMMUNITY HEALTH

would like to thank all staff, volunteers and community members for your contribution to the Lucas project over the last two years and for your ongoing support.

We look forward to celebrating with you all on Sunday 3rd August between 10am and 3pm at our Community Fair.





Further information regarding the fair, our facilities and BCH is available online at www.bchc.org.au.

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DESIGN: DesignInc had a vision for the new BCH centre at Lucas.

Engaging with the community

DESIGNINC'S key vision for Ballarat Community Health's new Lucas facility was to contribute to the health and happiness of people through the environment created.

Ballarat Community Health's core operations to be delivered in the new building include clinical, alcohol and drug support, health promotion, mental health, counselling and youth services.

DesignInc's approach was to provide a healthy, stimulating environment based on a whole-of-life philosophy inspired by the benefits of contact with nature and community.

Both passive and active strategies have been utilised to engage on a mental and physical level with the underlying message of health promotion and sustainable design.

The fundamental organising idea for the site and building aimed to maximise the potential for the building to engage with the community.

A central double-height atrium spine runs through the centre

of the building, becoming a continuous experience of air, light and landscape.

This "landscaped spine" provides a clear way through the building and defines a series of spaces for passive and active use. A diverse and rich community program is supported by a dramatic performance stair that rises up at the end of the spine.

The ability to open up adjacent multi-purpose spaces allows the space to grow or contract as required.

Opportunities for interactive displays, visual connection into activity-based spaces and elements that encourage physical engagement have been employed to engage with both staff and clients.

A spectrum of users from different generational and cultural backgrounds access the facility's services so it was important the building be welcoming and engaging.

Nature was recognised as the common link between these diverse groups. Internal gardens, an enfolding timber pergola, paving and streetlights have been integrated throughout.

ESD initiatives

Energy-efficient, environmentally-beneficial design elements that have been incorporated into the design include:

- Operable windows for natural ventilation
- Highly landscaped interior
- High efficiency double-glazing
- Rainwater harvesting
- Solar hot water system
- Photovoltaic solar energy system
- Sustainable materials

Recycled timber and brick has been incorporated for its warmth and texture, to contrast with the clinical feel that is normally associated with health care.

Externally, a silhouette of a roof meeting the landscape was designed to integrate place and community, echoing both contextual and regional forms and providing a unique identity for BCH. Local material including brick, recycled timber, metal deck cladding and polycarbonate are employed in a contemporary way.

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DesignInc is proud to be the architect on Ballarat Community Health's new Primary Care Facility, and congratulates them on the opening of their new home.

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Ballarat Community HEALTH

On the opening of your wonderful new centre at Lucas

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Challenge conquered

NICHOLSON Construction was delighted to be appointed head contractor on the Ballarat Community Health centre project at Lucas.

As a federally funded project, there were a number of factors to consider, including the comparatively short time-frame for completion – a challenge met with Nicholson's usual on-time/on-budget standard.

Federal funding comes with the requirement for the strictest of occupational health and safety standards, with which Nicholson's Federal Safety Commission and Australian Standards safety accreditations are fully compliant.

Long-term Nicholson employee Geoff Pickering as project manager and Sebastian Steenhuis as site foreman ensured a strong local connection to the project.

Ballarat Community Health created employment for more

than 300 tradespeople, who were inducted onsite during the course of the construction of the centre.

Mr Pickering, who has more than 25 years' experience at Nicholson's, was pleased to be involved in constructing a facility for the newly founded suburb of Ballarat.

"It was a pleasure to be involved with the construction of the Lucas Primary Health Facility, particularly at the creation of a whole new community," he said.

The building design specified a number of unique quality finishes, which included exposed, laminated spotted gum beams weighing 380 kilograms each, along with two internal barn-style doors with bespoke fabricated hinges to support and operate them.

Bored piers were socketed into the basalt stone of the site.

Recycled messmate timber, internal greenery in special planter boxes and Danpalon cladding



ASSIGNMENT: Nicholson Construction was appointed as head contractor on the Ballarat Community Health centre at Lucas.

were used to create a natural light-filled open reception area, fundamental in creating a healing environment

for patients. Nicholson Construction started operations in the 1890s when two brothers pooled their skills to

start building joinery in Ballarat.

It is now a major commercial builder in regional Victoria.

Tour new 'hub'

BALLARAT Community Health at Lucas invites the community to a free fair on Sunday to celebrate the opening of its new healthcare facility.

Myriad free-of-charge activities have been planned so the public can explore the new centre in a fun and relaxed setting.

Ballarat Community Health staff members encourage everyone to join the excitement and bring their families.

Chief executive Robyn Reeves said the fair would be an opportunity to see what the updated Ballarat Community Health had to offer.

"Ballarat Community Health at Lucas is delivering much more than health and clinical services – it is a new

community hub for Ballarat's growth zone," she said.

People can take a tour of the centre to see how energy-saving and innovative technologies have been incorporated into the building and hear about the products and suppliers used.

Inspections of the consulting rooms for general practitioners, podiatry and pathology are invited and people are welcome to browse the new art exhibition space or visit the new public gym and trial the free activities.

There will be healthy food and free health or blood pressure checks.

There will be a jumping castle, face painting, a kids gym and free balloons.

The fair will run from 10am to 3pm.

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Together with Ballarat Community Health, CAFS delivers the following programs to the Ballarat community:

- School Focused Youth Services: aims to build links between schools and community organisations to support vulnerable young people.
- Settlement Grants Program: provides assistance to refugees and immigrants who have been living in Australia for more than 6 months and less than 5 years.

For more information on these programs, please contact CAFS on 5337 3333 or Ballarat Community Health on 5338 4500.

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CAFS wishes Ballarat Community Health all the best for the opening of their Lucas office.

Craig, Cameron & the Team from Ballarat Toyota would like to congratulate Ballarat Community Health on the opening of their new premise at Lucas. We believe you do a wonderful job within the community and are proud of the long relationship we have had over the years. We look forward to continuing this from your new premises!

Oh what a feeling!

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