



2022-23 Annual Report

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Marathon Health pays respect to the traditional custodians of the land we stand upon.

This seal represents our commitment to working with our communities for a better future for all.



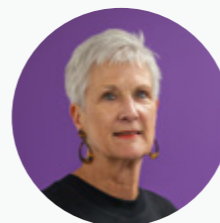
Marathon Health

We're a not-for-profit, registered charity with a vision of enabling country communities to thrive through improved health and wellbeing. We're passionate advocates for equal access to quality health services for people, wherever they choose to live.

Each year we support thousands of people living in country Australia to access the healthcare they need, closer to home. From our hubs in Albury, Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange, Queanbeyan and Wagga, we provide services that are person-centered, culturally safe and inclusive.

This means the people we work with have choice and control over the decisions that affect them – ensuring their voice is heard and respected.

Directors



Annette Crothers
ME&Wk, GAICD, Dip. App Sc (OT),
Grad Cert Mgt Practice,
Cert IV Workplace Assessment



Amanda Croft
B Bus (Ag Com), Grad Prosci,
GAICD, Adv Dip. Fin Services,
Dip. Community Services



Garry Burton
FIPA, AFPA, GAICD, JP



Amanda Galbraith
B.Pharm CDE, GAICD,
Grad Cert Pharm Mgt,
Grad Cert Diab Ed & Mgt



Troy Pietsch
Dip. National Indigenous Legal Advocacy, Dip.
Agriculture



Jeffery Whitton
FAICD, Dip. Corporations &
Company Law





Chair report

It is my pleasure to present the Marathon Health Annual Report for 2022-23. This report depicts our staff's commitment and outlines the strong organisational growth achieved, while sharing some of the successes of Marathon Health during the year.

This year the Board has continued to strengthen the organisational governance, providing guidance and oversight to the development of Marathon Health as a regional and rural health service provider.

Under the auspice of the **Nominations Committee** the revised Board Charter and the Board Nominations Policy, approved by the members in 2022, have been embedded into Board practice and procedures. These documents outline and define the Marathon Health Board governance; articulating Board and director expectations, roles and responsibilities, processes, and performance evaluations.

The Nominations Committee has taken particular interest in monitoring organisational culture and workforce through strategic initiatives, such as the Enterprise Agreement, the Cultural Safety Framework and the Workplace Gender Report, and regular HR performance, diversity and inclusive reporting in conjunction with the independent staff satisfaction results.

The CEO performance review process was refined in 2022, providing opportunity for an enhanced mechanism including stakeholder feedback and organisational performance in the Board's consideration.

The **Audit and Risk Committee** has focused on the oversight of strategic risk management activities including:

- Establishment of the Cyber Security and Digital Innovation Advisory Committee
- Development of Marathon Health's Cyber Security Strategy which aligns to the Australian Signals Directorate's Essential 8 and aims to improve the cyber security strength of the organisation, increase staff awareness through education.
- An internal audit on financial governance, budgeting, and forecasting to strengthen Marathon Health's financial controls, processes, and future planning needs.
- Examine and provide guidance on emerging risks to the business by assessing the effectiveness of internal processes which monitor risk, and enabling the appropriate strategies to be in place to mitigate the identified risks and achieve future viability.
- Review of the effectiveness of Marathon Health governance frameworks supporting the organisation's accreditation process against the QIC Health and Community Standards, National Mental Health Standards, and headspace Model of Integrity Framework.
- Process against the QIC Health and Community Standards, National Mental Health Standards, and headspace Model of Integrity Framework.

During 2022-23 the **Finance Committee** has continued to analyse and monitor Marathon Health's business growth and financial continuity by providing guidance regarding financial governance policies and processes to support our focus on solvency and the current strategic business objectives.

Under the guidance of the committee the Investment Steering Committee has overseen the organisational investment portfolio which directly aligns with Marathon Health's growth, sustainability, and ongoing service delivery to regional and rural communities.

The Board would like to thank National Audit Group for conducting this extensive audit and organisational acquittal process for 2022-2023.

I would like to acknowledge the continued passion, support, leadership, and commitment to the Marathon Health purpose and the ICARE values held by the Members and Board Directors; Amanda Croft, Amanda Galbraith, Garry Burton, Jeff Whitton, and Troy Pietsch.

I would also like to thank our CEO, Megan Callinan, for her ongoing commitment to Marathon Health; it is her continual focus on our staff wellbeing and the ICARE values which has guided the organisation to be a sustainable, recognised service provider in rural and regional areas.

During the year, the organisation has strengthened its risk culture, financial resilience, and broadened its horizon, knowledge, and sustainability. Megan has worked tirelessly to engage with our stakeholders and our funders, to develop new partners serving rural communities and to building a sustainable workforce to 'deliver quality health and wellbeing services with our communities'.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all our staff for their unwavering commitment to Marathon Health; their willingness to provide quality, innovative, caring, and respectful support for their clients and communities.

Looking ahead, the Board's primary focus will be the development of a new strategic plan. The Board and senior management are in active discussions on the future direction of Marathon Health. We look forward to an exciting future, holding our ICARE values central to the delivery of our services and to Marathon Health.

Annette Crothers
Chair, Marathon Health



CEO report

Our four key priorities this year were set around the themes of resilience, influence, impact and inclusion.

Resilience can be defined as the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties – a certain toughness that many country Australians have, and a theme that has been at the forefront of the 2022-23 financial year. With this in mind, we focused our efforts on building the organisation's ability to absorb stress, recover from critical functionality and thrive in altered circumstances.

We focused on developing a strong clinical workforce through strategic HR activities, developing career pathways and succession planning. This included the internal launch and embedding of our Workforce Capability Framework, designed to support staff on their career development journey within the organisation.

Building on our genuine commitment to collaboration and advocacy, we nurtured strong relationships with our peers and colleagues across the healthcare sector. Through stakeholder engagement activities we worked to ensure our voice was heard and recognised, building influence through partnerships with other not-for-profit organisations, local health districts, primary health networks and peak bodies.

Together, we advocated for better services in rural communities with a particular focus on innovative service models underpinned by an enabling healthcare workforce.

To better measure our impact, we shifted our thinking to data driven insights and the prioritisation of our digital health and the benefits it has on our service delivery. Our ongoing investment into technology saw us commence work on two key projects: the build of an organisational intranet and the redevelopment of our corporate website. Our Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement (MECI) Framework – launched last financial year – was further embedded into our practice along with ongoing Community of Practice meetings.

This year, we had a strong focus on shaping our cultural future. We held our first facilitated workshop for all First Nations staff in March 2023 – an opportunity to connect, share ideas and input to our Cultural Safety Framework to ensure it is appropriate and meaningful. Once launched, the Framework will provide the guiding principles that underpin the development of our Engagement Strategy, Reconciliation Plan and First Nations Workforce Plan, while ensuring we meet the required Cultural Safety Quality Assurance Standards – and our Cultural Safety Governance Committee will be integral to its implementation over the coming years.

As we look toward the next financial year – the final year of our current strategic plan – our focus will be on the development of our new five-year plan in consultation with staff, stakeholders and our Board. In considering our future direction, we will take the time to:

- Assess our environment and explore key elements that might impact health services, while ensuring we continue to remain viable and robust in a rural and remote setting.
- Adjust to regional workforce shortages and continue to build capability in, and with, community to support hybrid models of health service delivery – whether virtually, face-to-face or via outreach.
- Continue our investment into technologies, helping to enable our workforce to support people in regional communities.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Board for their support and ongoing commitment to our vision and values, and to me personally over the last year.

To our staff, thank you for your genuine passion in providing better quality health and wellbeing services for rural communities – your commitment to high quality, person-centred care is unwavering.

Megan Callinan
CEO, Marathon Health

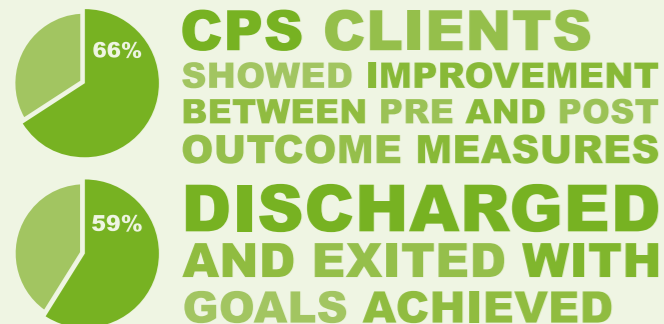


Mental health

The mental health of country Australians is significantly poorer than that of our metro counterparts.

Barriers to timely mental health support, such as distance, costs, time and stigma are well understood by our experienced team of mental health staff who provide tailored support to country Australians. With our knowledge of country life, we work with people to understand, detect and manage diagnosed and emerging mental health concerns.

The **Commonwealth Psychosocial Support (CPS)** program provided non-clinical coaching, supporting people living with severe mental illness to identify and reach their goals. With a community and strengths-based approach to support, our recovery coaches developed personalised recovery plans spanning areas such as social connection, resilience, education, housing, substance abuse and NDIS eligibility testing. The program ultimately empowers people to learn strategies and understand community and health support options, to live the life they choose.



Our **headspace** centres in Bathurst, Cowra, Dubbo, Lithgow, Orange and Queanbeyan continued to support young people, their families, friends and carers to get back on track, while strengthening their ability to manage their wellbeing into the future. From Youth Reference Group (YRG) podcasts, community events and high school outreach, to in-centre care – our team provided early intervention support with mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drug services, as well as work and study.

The aim of the **Psychosocial Physical Health and Wellbeing** pilot is to improve health outcomes for people living in the Murrumbidgee region. We trained 28 staff in a codesigned, custom-made ‘Connecting physical health with mental health package’, with 11 of these trained as facilitators to embed the package into host organisations and provide ongoing capacity building.

Youth Plus is a brief intervention service available in the Lithgow area that offers young people aged 12-25, who are in crisis, a set of specific individual appointments. With a person-centred approach, clinicians work in a timely manner to help young people manage immediate risk and needs. Like adding extra tools in a tool belt, Youth Plus provides strategies to help prevent and better manage future crises.



NewAccess, developed by Beyond Blue, provides free mental health coaching through a six-session self-help program. Our coaches supported people across Western NSW to learn the skills needed to manage everyday life stresses, such as work, study, relationships, health or loneliness, through low-intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.



Strong Minds WNSW provides personalised care for people with a mild-moderate mental health concern, across a range of high priority groups. It is designed to support people through recovery to wellness, providing up to 12 free sessions with an experienced mental health clinician.

Based in Condobolin, the **Warrugarra – Peer Navigation** pilot supported 15 First Nations young women aged 16-35 to attend a weekly wellbeing group. Participant improvements were high, with 75% strongly agreeing that their ability to understand and better manage their mental health and wellbeing had improved since taking part in the program.

We commenced co-design of the **Youth Outreach Project (YOP)** – a culturally-safe outreach support service for young people who don’t have access to a headspace centre. YOP is expected to be in operation by 2024, in 10 communities across western NSW: Coonamble, Gulargambone, Warren, Collarenebri, Condobolin, Brewarrina, Bourke, Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Nyngan. This year, our focus was on engaging with service providers, Elders, health organisations, schools, and young people and their families, to introduce the project and find out who wants to be involved in the co-design process of a fit-for-purpose service.

NDIS and early childhood intervention

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) helps support a better life for hundreds of thousands of Australians who experience significant and permanent disability, and their families and carers. Our NDIS and early childhood intervention services are person-centred – our staff understand each person’s needs and strive to deliver a holistic and thoughtful approach to care.

We continued to support **NDIS** participants with a range of allied health services, including occupational therapy, speech pathology, social work, psychology and specialist support coordination. Our clinicians outreached across regional NSW, from as far north as Lightning Ridge to as far south as Albury and Benalla in Victoria – supporting adults and children across all disability types and complexities.


808 NDIS PARTICIPANTS  **18,402 HRS SUPPORT PROVIDED ACROSS 60 COUNTRY TOWNS**

We delivered support coordination services across Western NSW, helping participants make the best use of their NDIS supports and capacity building to support participants understand and use their NDIS plan to pursue their goals.

Across Western NSW, the Murrumbidgee and North-East Victoria, our **Positive Behaviour Support** (PBS) clinicians worked to improve the quality of life of participants and their families – helping to prevent challenging or negative behaviour by teaching new skills and making changes to their environments.

135 PBS CLIENTS SUPPORTED  **6,909 HRS SUPPORT PROVIDED**

Our early-intervention **Western Speech Pathology** program was delivered to 15 under-served rural communities across Western NSW. Travelling across the state by plane, car or via telehealth, our team of nine highly-skilled and dedicated speech pathologists visited 30 preschools and schools in regional communities, providing support to children who experience difficulties with swallowing food and drinks safely, speech, language or communication.

138 CHILDREN SUPPORTED BY WESTERN SPEECH PATHOLOGY 

Delivered by occupational therapists and speech pathologists, **Build ‘em up Lego Group** is a play-based, social communication therapy program using traditional LEGO®. Our clinicians spend time with children aged between five and 12 who need help with social, communication and thinking skills – while playing with LEGO and making friends!



414 PARTICIPANTS SUPPORTED THROUGH AFTER HOURS CRISIS REFERRAL SERVICE

Our national **NDIS After Hours Crisis Referral Service** (AHCERS) continued to support NDIS participants (aged 18 and over) with complex needs who are experiencing a crisis related to a breakdown of their usual disability-related supports.

65 STUDENTS AT WELLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL PARTICIPATED



650 BOOKS WERE DONATED

Designed for kindergarten-aged children, the **Mirror on Reading** literacy program promoted reading at home and provided students with access to quality picture books. Over 10 weeks, a speech pathologist visited classrooms in Wellington and Gilgandra, helping children to develop language skills important for reading.





Preventative health and chronic disease

Country Australians are not only more likely to have a diagnosed chronic disease than their metro counterparts, but they're also more likely to develop one. Our highly-skilled staff continued to focus on preventative health services, connecting people to the care they need, and providing early-intervention and education to country people of all ages.

Our team of diabetes educators and dietitians worked directly in six General Practices and in four Aboriginal Medical Services, extending from Oberon to Coonamble. They provided support to people living with chronic disease, or those who are at risk of developing a chronic disease, in Western NSW.

The success of our **chronic disease and prevention service** relies on a collaborative approach, with the client at the centre of each care plan.

1,297 OCCASIONS OF SERVICE



Our best outcomes were achieved by bringing together allied and specialist health providers to support the role of the GP in addressing the client's overall health and wellbeing.

The **Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program** spans from Bathurst to Lightning Ridge, supporting medical specialists and allied health providers to deliver services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in regional areas. Supports included Aboriginal health workers, mental health clinicians, diabetes educators, dietitians, endocrinologists, podiatrists, exercise physiologists and case workers.



833 NEW CLIENTS SUPPORTED

In Bathurst, our **Indigenous Chronic Disease** services range from diabetes education to dietetics, podiatry and endocrinology. This free service is designed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with one or more chronic illnesses.

Our eye care coordinator supports clients at all optometry and ophthalmology appointments, and on surgery days. Available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the **Bathurst Indigenous Eye Care Pathway** strives for a holistic and inclusive approach to care, with the aim to help support clients to access eye health services and reduce preventable eye conditions.

For the Aboriginal community in Wellington, our **Winya Marang** (to live well) program supported the management and prevention of type 2 diabetes. The program was delivered outside of the traditional clinical setting, with our clinicians providing flexibility in program location, time, frequency, number of attendees and education delivered.



The evidence-based **Community Chronic Pain Management Program** is for people with persisting (or chronic) pain. This self-help program offers support and education to improve participant's ability to manage pain independently and improve their daily function.



The **Integrated Team Care** (ITC) program in the Murrumbidgee aims to remove barriers to healthcare for First Nations people. The team supported people living with complex healthcare needs to effectively navigate the health system, and access support, information and linkages to other services.

Working in partnership with the client's GP, our team of **care coordinators** strive to improve health outcomes for people living with chronic disease and complex healthcare needs – improving wellbeing and access to supports.

Designed to provide additional support to care coordination clients, staff in our **Health Care Navigator** program linked clients to appropriate services and helped them navigate their way through the healthcare system.



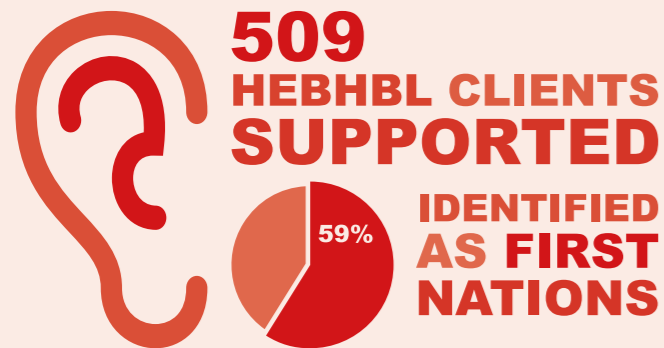
This financial year we began delivery of the **care finder** program. This program is a crucial service designed to support vulnerable older people who wouldn't be able to arrange services without intensive support and don't have a family member, friend, or person they trust, to help.



The **Wellness and Resilience Achieved Through Allied Health (WARATAH)** program aims to increase access to allied health services and improve the overall health and wellbeing of those at risk or vulnerable within the Murrumbidgee region. The program is designed to support people with a low socio-economic status, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, mothers, babies and children, young people and older people and refugees.

WARATAH for Kids (pilot program) focused on children aged 0-7 years, who have a developmental concern or delay. Through this program we coordinated a multidisciplinary clinic with a speech pathologist and occupational therapist, and the pilot program supported 20 children to the end of financial year.

The **Healthy Ears, Better Hearing, Better Listening (HEBHBL)** program aims to improve access to the diagnosis, treatment and management of ear and hearing conditions. Delivered through preschools and schools, staff supported 509 First Nations children and young people.

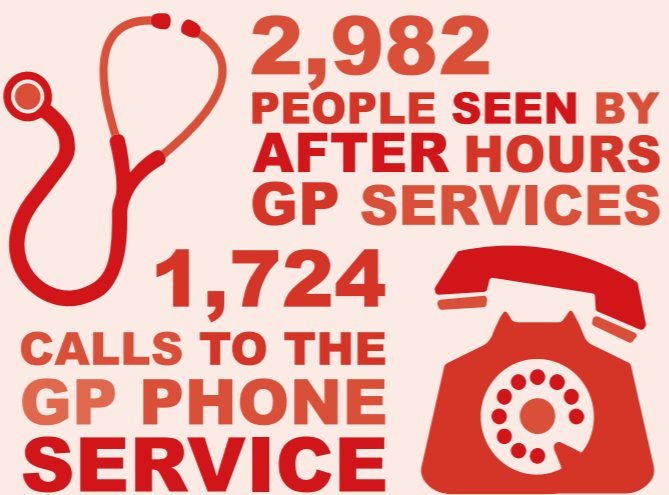


We strive to provide greater access to care and our staff in the **Rural Health Outreach Funds** program work hard to connect country Australians to timely health services. This program supports specialists and allied health professionals to deliver outreach services to people living in regional, rural or remote communities.



When urgent care is required, the **After Hours GP Clinics** in Bathurst and Dubbo continued to provide essential care to residents in the after hours periods – freeing up emergency departments.

The **After Hours Telephone Service** ensures clients, who may not be able to access a GP face-to-face, could speak to a GP from the comfort and safety of their home.





Place-based, person-centred

Keeping communities well through person-centred services, we create spaces to build social connection and ties to community. Spanning across rural NSW, these programs have the community and its people central to everything they do.

The **Condobolin Wiradjuri Wellness Project** (CWWP) is a culturally-safe service for First Nations people. Our staff offer wide-ranging supports covering mental and physical health, healing, housing, education, employment, finance, social life, welfare, domestic violence and drug and alcohol support. The project also includes social groups such as the Shine Ladies Group.

89
PEOPLE AND
THEIR FAMILIES
SUPPORTED
BY CWWP



This financial year the team also introduced a program for young men called **Crossways** and piloted the role of a Peer Worker in supporting local people to engage and build trust in health and wellbeing services.

“Since joining the Crossways program, I have a driver’s licence, a job and I’m enjoying it all – I feel a lot better in myself.”

Crossways participant

Delivered in partnership with Argyle Housing, **Together Home** helps with the social and emotional wellbeing of people experiencing homelessness in the Murrumbidgee region. The team support people who have experienced street or rough sleeping, help them into secure housing and work with them to achieve their goals.

Operating as part of headspace Dubbo, the **Individual Placement and Support** (IPS) program supported young people aged 12-25 to reach their educational and employment goals while respecting their mental health concerns.

“What makes my job so rewarding is seeing the clients take back their life from mental illness – finding strength to keep moving forward.”

Carole Bayley, Senior Vocational Specialist for IPS

Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN) is an evidence-based program designed to support families with children aged from six to 17. This intensive family preservation and restoration program works to keep families together. It focuses on empowering the family by using identified strengths to address their needs. It aims to prevent neglect and abuse, reduce mental health difficulties experienced by adults and children, and develop and build upon family and community support networks.

38
FAMILIES
TOOK PART
IN MST-CAN

100%
CAREGIVERS HAD
NO NEW ARRESTS
DURING TREATMENT

100%
YOUTH SHOWED
IMPROVEMENTS IN
MENTAL HEALTH



Sense Rugby is a rugby-based occupational therapy program in Dubbo. Facilitated by the western occupational therapy team, and with sponsorship from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, Sense Rugby uses modified rugby drills to help kids process sensory information, focus on activities and have fun with friends.

SENSE RUGBY 

27 PARTICIPANTS

14 HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN ORGANISED SPORTS BEFORE

10 HAD NEVER PARTICIPATED IN AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The **Winanggaay** Project is an early-intervention program integrated into early childhood with a focus on building the capability of Aboriginal families, schools, services and the community to improve the school readiness of Aboriginal children. The project ended this year, having seen significant success and creating better awareness of how to support the transition to school. Overall, Winanggaay provided key learnings, identified barriers, and provided insight into initiatives that could support community-led school readiness activities.

100%
PARENTS FELT
SUPPORTED TO GET
THEIR CHILD READY
TO START SCHOOL

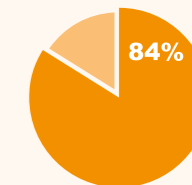




Staff spotlight

Staff survey 2023

In May 2023, our annual industry-standard staff satisfaction survey was sent to all staff across the organisation – with 229 staff (78%) responding. BPA Analytics benchmarked our performance against our own previous staff surveys and others in the sector.



**STAFF BELIEVE
MARATHON
HEALTH
IS A TRULY GREAT
PLACE TO WORK**

Staff identified our organisation’s key strengths as focussing on client needs and delivering high quality and effective services. The results show we have a culture of success and a strong sense of achievement, with a ‘can-do’ mentality. Other areas of strength highlighted were good communication, effective teamwork and staff culture, safety at work, respect, support and good opportunities.

ICARE Awards

To again recognise exceptional work across Marathon Health, our annual ICARE Awards embraced our culture and values. This year we had 54 nominations, our highest number yet.



Integrity and trust

Joshua McPhee – Team Lead Murrumbidgee Positive Behaviour Support, Albury



Collaboration and innovation

Leanne McEwen – Aboriginal Case Worker, Dubbo



Achievement and excellence

Kylie Falciani – Portfolio Manager Murrumbidgee, Wagga
Melissa Keith – Manager Policy, Development and Evaluation, Goulburn



Respect and empowerment

Jason Eggins – Centre Manager, headspace Bathurst
Marielle Turner – Occupational Therapist, Albury



Empathy and understanding

Nathan Goodridge – NDIS Support Coordinator, Dubbo

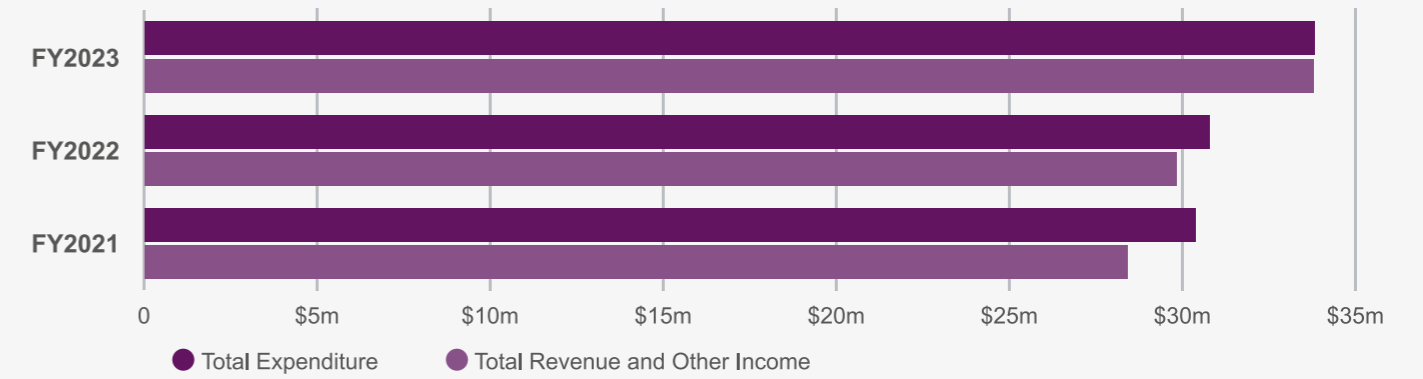




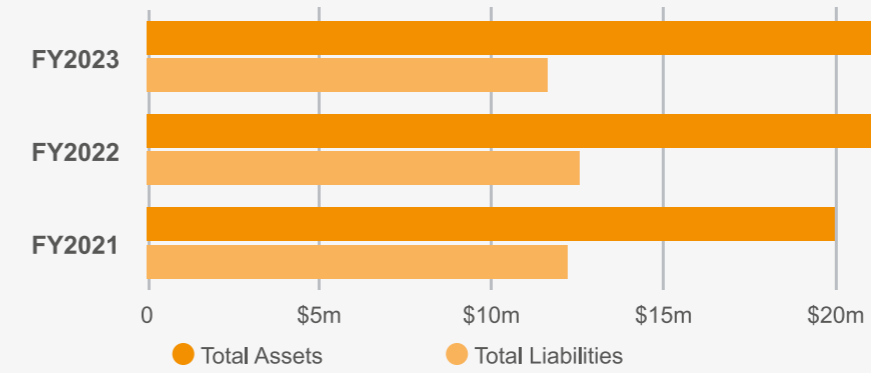
Financial

The organisation remains in a strong position, achieving a strong result for FY23 with a net surplus of \$0.3m. Through continued investment and financial prudence, Marathon Health increased its retained earnings to \$9.5m at the end of 2022-23. Additionally, we had a revenue position of \$34.09m and a strong cash position of \$6.3m.

Income and Expenditure



Assets and Liabilities



- 50% **Mental health**
- 22% **NDIS and early childhood intervention**
- 18% **Preventative health and chronic disease**
- 8% **Place-based person centred**
- 2% **Other**

Corporate highlights

Stakeholder engagement

We have continued our focus on stakeholder engagement to support both collaboration and advocacy outcomes. Along with four other similar organisations in NSW, we formed the Regional NSW Primary Health Collective – an informal working group with similar values and perspectives about rural health challenges and solutions. Throughout the year, we have established valuable connections and information sharing around key issues and potential statewide tendering opportunities.

In March 2023, our Chiefs travelled through Western NSW and further cemented important connections within those communities, particularly with First Nations community-led organisations in health and community development.

We continued to showcase our programs, outcomes and successes to external stakeholders via our quarterly e-newsletter, **Community Connect**.



Scan to subscribe

Clinical governance

In November 2022, we launched our Consumer and Carer Engagement Framework following a comprehensive consultation process which included key consumers.

We embedded our Peer Workforce Framework into practice, including the development of our Peer Workforce Practice Model, which guides implementation of peer work practice across organisation. In line with the national focus on elevating the lived experience voice in the delivery of mental health services, we recruited and supported six peer workers across our mental health programs, including headspace and the Condobolin Wiradjuri Wellness program.

Our Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Framework (MECI) continued to be integrated into operations with an ongoing Community of Practice. Significant work was undertaken to ensure our systems and processes remain client centred, and that welfare and human rights are protected under our Safeguarding Framework.

18
NEW VEHICLES
SINCE MARCH



888,000
KILOMETRES
TRAVELLED

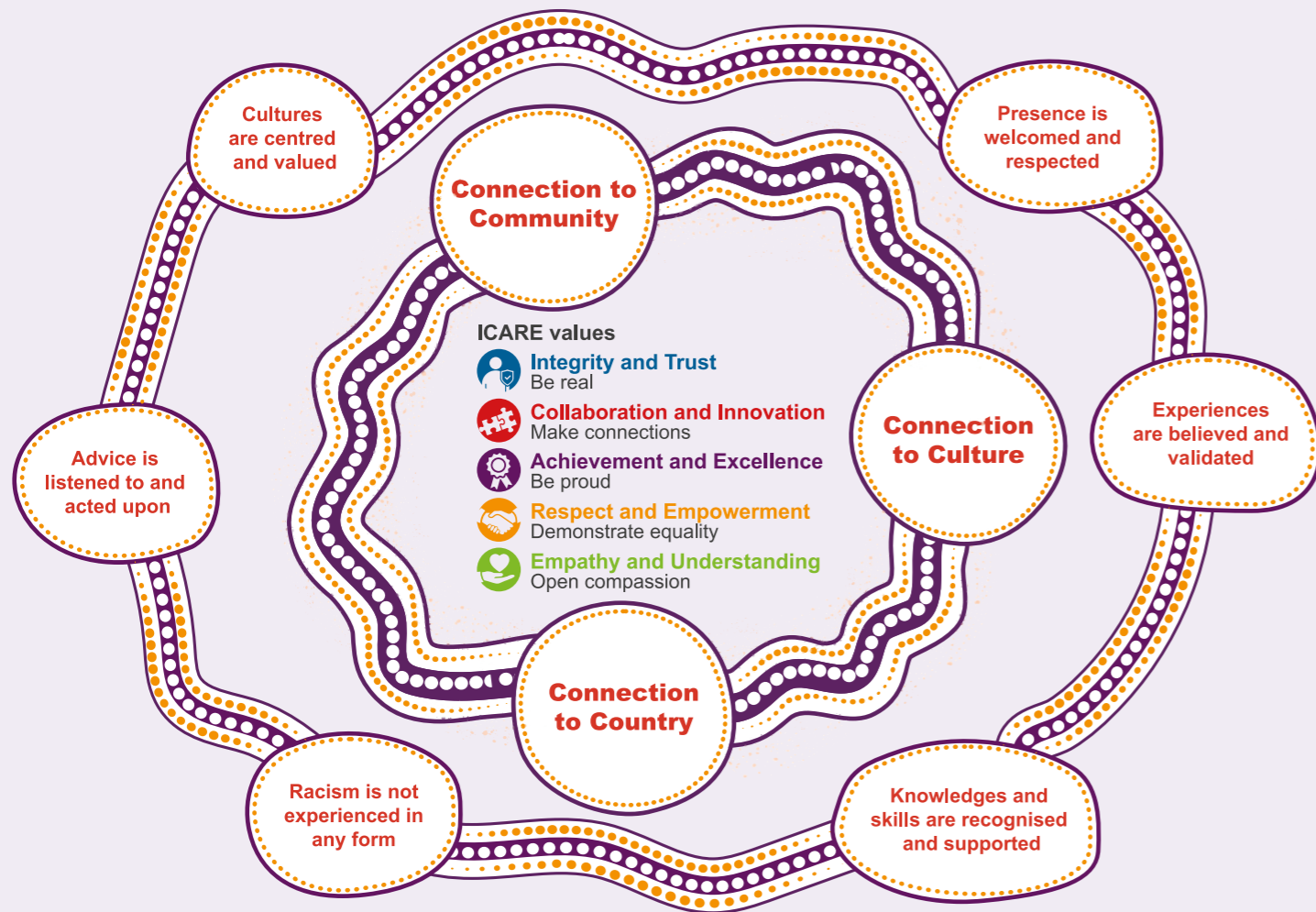


Digital health capability project

This year we prioritised our digital health capability as key to improving service delivery and health outcomes. Work commenced on the following strategic projects as a focus for the next financial year:

- Corporate website – redeveloping our existing website onto a new platform with a focus on improved user experience
- Intranet – to support knowledge sharing and management, communication and culture across the organisation
- Cloud migration – moving digital assets, services, databases, IT resources, and applications currently located onsite into the cloud
- Phone system migration – transitioning away from desk phones and moving all telephony services to our existing Teams platform
- Cyber security strategy – continuing to strengthen our privacy and cyber security posture, in line with nationally-recognised frameworks such as the Essential 8, and working to educate staff in keeping safe online
- Data strategy – developing a Data Strategy and Governance Framework that will focus on improved data quality and story-telling
- Clinical systems review – reviewing our current clinical systems, modernising our health service delivery so that it is more effective, efficient and outcomes focussed.

Some of these projects will help to create a connected workspace, others will concentrate on developing and implementing tools and systems to ensure an efficient working environment across the organisation. Each project will enable us to continue to provide sustainable, improved services.



Shaping our Cultural Future

This year, our focus was on supporting First Nations staff to have their say and shape our cultural future with the establishment of our Cultural Safety Governance Committee. This committee has strong representation from First Nations staff across our regions, and all members are integral in developing and implementing our Cultural Safety Framework and actioning of individual strategies.

In March 2023, we held our first 'Shaping our Cultural Future' workshop for all First Nations staff to have their voice heard, to share ideas and to shape our culturally safe future. The workshop was facilitated by Ruth Davys, the vision keeper of Giilangyaldhaanygalang, a 100% Aboriginal owned Wiradjuri language education business. To support connection of First Nations staff across our footprint, we created an internal Teams yarning channel where information can be shared in a culturally-safe forum.

We celebrated a number of key cultural achievements that included:

- Design and rollout of culturally-branded shirts to all staff, as part of our uniform options
- Rebranding of office spaces, such as including office decals in our Albury office and renaming our Dubbo meeting rooms using Wiradjuri language – working with local community and organisations such as the Aboriginal Lands Council to support our staff in understanding local meanings and pronunciations
- Welcoming 30 First Nations peoples into a 12-month traineeship as part of our Youth Outreach Program (YOP).

With the launch of our Framework later this year, work in this area will continue to be a priority for us over the coming years.



Workforce development

Over the past financial year, our strategic workforce initiatives focussed on sustainability – and this year we achieved a workforce growth of 6.6% on 2021-22.

We launched our Capability Framework across the organisation, developed to assist employees on their career development journey. Our internal “grow your own” strategy continued to be embedded across the organisation with structured development, higher duties acting and secondment opportunities in place for staff. Following the success of our Authentic Leadership Training, we continued our investment into workforce skills and knowledge with 35 leaders across Marathon Health becoming our third cohort to undertake the program.

As part of our First Nations Workforce Development Strategy, we employed our first cohort of 11 learners under our Aboriginal Workforce Development Initiative – a 12-month health and wellbeing traineeship pathway to increase the number of community-based First Nations health and wellbeing workers in 10 communities across Western NSW. All trainees are being hosted by local employers to gain relevant work experience and support, while they complete either the Certificate IV in Mental Health or the Certificate III in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care. On completion of their training, learners will be supported into further education or ongoing employment within their community – either by Marathon Health or with other local service providers.

Graduate and student workforce

Our Graduate Program continued to go from strength to strength across our allied health and mental health domains. This year, seven new graduates joined the formalised allied health graduate program. We employed and supported 17 provisional psychology interns across our organisation, 13 of whom participated in our Psychology Intern graduate program.

We saw our student placement numbers grow to a new high of 77 across our footprint, with nine continuing onto employment with us. We further strengthened our MoU relationship with Charles Sturt University, with 58% of these students currently studying at Charles Sturt. Other students came to us from an additional 11 institutions – all of which we have a student placement agreement with.



Marathon Health Employee Savings

In December last year, we launched MesH – an employee savings program to help support staff with the rising costs of living. Through the MesH app, staff (and their families) receive tangible benefits and savings on everyday purchases. In the six months since launch, MesH had over 350 active users and a 72% user rate.



PitchFest

Innovation in service delivery is essential in providing comprehensive services. We encouraged staff to use their understanding of local communities and need to pitch projects for corporate funding in our annual PitchFest. This year there were five PitchFest finalists – with all projects underpinned by our ICARE values.

After an organisation-wide pitch and staff vote, our Board carefully selected the following projects to be implemented across the organisation:

- **Youth Indigenous Cultural Awareness Program** – headspace Orange will deliver a peer support group for young Indigenous people in the Orange area.
- **Complex Collaboration** – The After Hours Crisis Referral Service team will deliver a nationwide consultation and peer support service that aims to build practice capability in supporting participants with complex support needs.
- **Positive Behaviour Support Training Package** – The Albury Positive Behaviour Support team will develop a formal online training package for new Positive Behaviour Support Practitioners by producing learning modules based on the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission’s registration standards.

Funder thanks

- Argyle Housing
- Australian Government Department of Health
- Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation Ltd
- Mental Health Commission of New South Wales
- Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network (Wentworth Healthcare)
- Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- NSW Rural Doctors Network
- Regional NSW
- South Eastern NSW Primary Health Network (COORDINARE)
- Western NSW Primary Health Network (Western Health Alliance Network)

We also thank the communities we operate in, where both organisations and individuals provided small grants, donations and in-kind support to help us develop and deliver quality health and wellbeing services.



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Marathon Health is a not-for-profit, registered charity delivering high quality health and wellbeing services to people wherever they choose to live.

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