



Your Voice, Our Future Community survey - summary of key themes

Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate including the Djaara people.

We pay our respect to the leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, traditions, the culture and hopes of all Indigenous peoples.

We express our gratitude in sharing of this land and our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of the sharing.

We hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.



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1. Purpose

This report summarises findings from the Your Voice, Our Future community survey.

It aims to inform the community of the key themes raised, support transparency in decision making, guide future consultation and provide an evidence base for the Strategic Plan development.

The findings reflect community feedback and lived experience of MDHS services.

2. Participation and context

The recent survey attracted over 220 responses, more than double the 100 community members who participated in the previous Strategic Plan engagement, highlighting a significant increase in community interest in their healthcare journey.

Most respondents reported using MDHS services within the past two years.

The most commonly accessed services were urgent care, medical imaging, dental services, inpatient services and community health.

Many respondents also reported travelling to Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne for specialist, emergency or after-hours care.

This indicates that feedback has been provided by active service users with recent experience of care delivery.

3. Key themes

3.1 Access to care close to home

Access to local services was the most consistently raised concern.

Community feedback identified a need for:

- Doctors physically present on site, particularly in Urgent Care
- Increased availability of medical imaging, including evenings and weekends
- Reduced reliance on travel for specialist, diagnostic and emergency care
- More consistent service availability outside standard business hours.

Respondents linked access challenges to:

- Delays in diagnosis and treatment
- Reduced confidence in local services
- Increased travel to larger regional centres.



What this means for MDHS

Access to care close to home is a key community priority and will be a central consideration in future planning.

3.2 Workforce stability and sustainability

Workforce challenges were identified as underpinning many service concerns.

The community emphasised the importance of:

- Consistent staffing
- Clinicians who remain in the community long term
- Staff who are supported and able to deliver safe care.

There was also recognition that:

- Workforce shortages are a statewide and national concern
- Recruitment and retention are more complex in regional settings.

What this means for MDHS

Workforce stability is essential to service sustainability and will underpin future service planning.

3.3 Confidence, safety and trust

Many respondents reported positive experiences and described staff as professional, caring and committed.

Positive feedback particularly referenced:

- Nursing care
- Inpatient services
- Community-based programs

Concerns were raised regarding:

- Reliance on telehealth or virtual medical models in urgent care settings
- Variability in clinical decision-making
- Communication between services and with patients

What this means for MDHS

Maintaining and strengthening community trust will require consistent sustainable models of care, clear communication and visible workforce stability.



3.4 Mental health and wellbeing

Mental health was identified as a significant priority across age groups.

Feedback indicated the need for:

- Improved access to mental health services
- Increased resourcing of mental health workforce
- Trauma-informed and respectful care
- Prevention and early intervention approaches

Mental health was frequently linked to young people, families and emergency presentations.

What this means for MDHS

Mental health and wellbeing will be embedded as a core component of future service planning, with consideration given to both treatment and prevention.

3.5 Practical service improvements

Respondents also identified practical improvements that impact service experience, including:

- Clearer information about available services
- Improved coordination between providers
- Parking, transport and site navigation
- After-hours access to pharmacy and imaging
- Improved communication regarding results and follow-up care

What this means for MDHS

Some improvements may be achievable in the short term and could strengthen community confidence.

4. Community-identified priority areas

Strong and consistent feedback was received in the following areas:

Urgent Care Centre

- In-person medical workforce
- Access to imaging and pathology when clinically required
- Confidence in early identification of serious conditions

Medical Imaging

- After-hours and weekend access
- Reduced waiting times
- Local availability of currently outsourced services



Workforce presence

- Permanent, on-site medical staff
- Enhanced workforce sustainability by balancing local capacity with short-term and virtual workforce support.
- Support for long-term workforce retention

5. Overall findings

The survey highlighted the importance of understanding the broader environment in which local health services operate.

MDHS delivers care within a regional setting where workforce availability, funding arrangements, infrastructure capacity and formal service designations shape how services are provided. These factors influence both the type of services that can be delivered locally and the pace at which changes can occur.

For example, there are important distinctions between an Urgent Care Centre and a fully designated Emergency Department, including scope of service and staffing models.

Feedback shows that the community values open and transparent communication about these realities. There is strong support for working together to identify what can be strengthened locally, where partnerships are needed and how services can continue to grow in a sustainable way.

6. You said we heard

You said	We heard	Planning response
We travel outside the region for care	Local access for some services is limited	Access will be a strategic priority
We need more doctors and staff	Workforce stability is critical	Workforce planning underpins service sustainability
We feel safe and respected	Patient experience is a strength	Maintain and build on what is working well
Mental health support is important	Prevention and wellbeing matter	Embed mental health and wellbeing across strategy
Communication and parking need improvement	Practical barriers affect experience	Identify early, visible improvements

**MDHS thanks all
community members who
participated in the
survey.**

**Your feedback will
directly inform the
development of the
Strategic Plan and future
service design.**

