

Rural Health

Your Community Health Service



What's happening at your health service

REDHS IN RECOVERY STAGE

On Saturday 15 January 2011, the Rochester township experienced unprecedented flooding. REDHS' Emergency Management Plan (EMP) had been tested and updated following the floods in November 2010. The main aim of this plan is to ensure the safety and security of those in our care, our staff and our infrastructure.

Water levels rose rapidly on Saturday 15 January and an evacuation warning was received from the State Emergency Service (SES) around 9am. The evacuation of aged care residents and patients was successful due to the combined efforts of REDHS management, on duty and off duty staff, the Emergency Control Centre in Bendigo and the Loddon Emergency Operations Centre (Department of Health/Department of Human Services). Victorian Health Emergency Coordination was involved in organising transport and supported the plans that REDHS had in place.

Transportation was arranged through Newtons Bus Service, SES and Australian Army personnel assisted our residents and patients onto buses. Five helicopter flights were also utilised. In total, 65 residents/patients were evacuated to 12 locations. REDHS' care staff provided some or all of the care for the relocated residents and patients.

Seepage from flood waters occurred in four acute ward bedrooms. However in the following weeks further water damage has been discovered in many parts of the facility, where the water had lapped external walls.

Most of our utilities were reinstated within a few days, thanks largely to outstanding efforts by REDHS maintenance staff and contractors involved. We were also fortunate to have the services of a large number of volunteers who assisted with the clean up process.

A thank you lunch celebration was held on 3 February to recognise all who had assisted throughout the evacuation and recommissioning of the facility in readiness for the return of our patients and residents. We appreciate the support of the Lions Club members who cooked the barbeque in extreme temperatures.



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

Many requests have been received from local service providers for space in our primary care wing as their usual accommodation is not available due to the floods. We are endeavouring to accommodate such requests where possible, to ensure that these services are available for our community.

Counselling services are also available to members of our community who require such support due to effects of the floods. Information and bookings are available through Primary Care reception – phone 5484 4465.

The department of Human Services has established a central contact point for people who need any assistance recovering from the flood in particular housing needs. The phone number for the Flood Recovery Assistance Line is 1300 165 413.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A TEAM APPROACH

Off duty nursing, support services and maintenance staff arrived on Saturday morning to help provide care and then to assist in the evacuation. Staff rostering had been impacted as early as the evening prior, when the river height had closed many roads and the main bridge connecting the town. Nurses on duty volunteered to stay for a further shift to cover the night roster, and some then remained on duty for the morning shift and beyond to finalise the evacuation (equating to a 28 hour shift).

All of our staff worked together and achieved so much in a very short timeframe. Nurses at receiving sites commended our staff on the access to information that was provided to them in the prepared resident evacuation packs, and the identification system used for each resident.

Physically mobilising aged and infirm residents is strenuous work, especially when the rising water level meant increased difficulty for the residents to board buses and army vehicles used to transport people to helicopters. Nurses on duty accompanied their residents to the various destinations, caring for them en-route, helping disembark and providing ongoing care at the destination. Support Services staff were also busy preparing takeaway meals and drinks for residents and staff travelling, as well as cleaning up following the departure.

The Board of Management, Executive and management at REDHS are extremely proud of the team effort by our staff before, during and after the evacuation of our aged care residents and patients.

Thank you to all who contributed to the terrific team that enabled the safe evacuation and return of our residents and patients, as well as the repairs to our flood damaged facility, some of which is still continuing.



BROADBAND FOR SENIORS

Funded by the Australian Government

We now have all the components of the computer kiosk. The long-awaited desks were finally delivered mid-January and assembled last week, so that the computers can be set up. Unfortunately two of our volunteer tutors were affected by the flood but we continue to work on getting the program up and running as quickly as possible.

If you are over 50 years of age and able to volunteer as a tutor to assist our residents with this very worthwhile program, please contact us on 5484 4451. Information for tutors can also be found at www.necseniors.net.au

For appointments or information on these services, please contact Primary Care reception on 5484 4465. Referrals are essential.

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