

## What's happening at your health service

### COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK PROJECT

Gardens are a very important part of our lives and contribute to our health and wellbeing. They can provide therapeutic benefits for all. Rochester and Elmore District Health Service (REDHS) has extensive grounds for residents, patients and visitors and landscaping is taking place as part of the building project. However, REDHS also wanted to provide a specialised garden area where residents of the Hostel and Nursing Home could be involved in gardening and other horticultural therapy activities with friends, family and volunteers as well as providing a place to share a common interest, relax and have a chat.

### THE "COUNT US IN!" INITIATIVE

REDHS was very pleased to be awarded a state government grant from the Department of Health (DoH) through the Count Us In! social inclusion initiative in



After



Before

early 2009 to develop a Community Garden Network Project. In addition, REDHS was successful in obtaining a Community Grant from the Shire of Campaspe.

The aim of the Community Garden project is to promote and facilitate community inclusion, good health and quality of life for people living at residential aged care services across DoH metropolitan and rural regions.

In line with the strategies of the Community Garden Project, funding requirements and REDHS' person-centred care approach, it is anticipated that the project will:

- Break down barriers to inclusion by encouraging and engaging the Rochester and Elmore district community to be involved in gardening activities with REDHS' aged care residents.
- Provide positive, worthwhile and rewarding activities to improve social inclusion as well as health and wellbeing for our residents.

A great deal of "behind the scenes" work has been going on to ensure that the Community Garden will be attractive, functional and as safe as possible for residents and visitors. Plans were drawn up by a landscape designer and advice around safety and access was provided by the Shire of Campaspe's Rural Access Project Officer, Design Technical Officer as well as REDHS' Hostel Supervisor.

REDHS Maintenance Officer has overseen the site preparation, installation of water pipes and taps and connection to the underground tank, brick edging and raised garden beds. A large amount of topsoil has been barrowed into the garden beds and modifications have been made to the existing garage to allow for the installation of a roller door for easier access to tools and other items for the Community Garden.

Some tomatoes planted prior to Christmas have been yielding well under the watchful eye of a resident of the Hostel who has been keeping the water up to them.

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?

There are a number of ways that you can assist in making the Community Garden a rewarding experience for all:

- Become a volunteer
- Donate plants (from the provided plant list)
- Donate garden tools

### IF I VOLUNTEER, WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME?

There are a number of activities that volunteers can undertake, depending on personal interest, physical capability and resident needs and wants. Activities can include the more physical tasks such as digging and weeding. However, there are many other less physical activities. You could accompany a resident to the garden, sit and chat with them, assist in taking cuttings, trim shrubs, conduct information sessions or give a presentation.

As REDHS is required to operate in accordance with the Aged Care Act 1997, all volunteers must have a current, satisfactory police check. Volunteer education sessions will be conducted to familiarise volunteers with health service requirements, our aged care facilities and horticultural therapy activities.

For further information about helping as a volunteer and obtaining police checks, please contact Di or Tania on (03) 5484 4451.

### WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

We are now at an exciting point in the Community Garden project when we are ready to plant out shrubs and vegetables. Residents will be assisted with planting by students from St Joseph's Primary School.

Come and join in the fun with residents, family members, school children, volunteers, garden committee members and staff. Hear all about the project so far and what the future holds.

**When:** Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 10.30am-12noon (Official address at 11am)

**Where:** Community Garden, Village Drive (behind the Campaspe Medical Centre)

**Parking:** Village Drive or near the Main Entrance.

**Entry:** Enter on foot via the hostel driveway in Village Drive.

**Enquiries:** Please ring 5484 4461 if you require further details.

### DRIP WATERING SYSTEM INSTALLED BY VOLUNTEERS

Late last year, a local group of men approached REDHS, looking for opportunities to assist in a volunteer role with the redevelopment project. The Health Service identified that work could be done to install a dripper system for garden beds and purchased the materials. Over a period of two months, work was undertaken around the new buildings under health service direction. The water is piped from taps connected to our current rainwater harvesting system i.e. the underground tank.

REDHS would like to extend their thanks to all involved for giving of their time and expertise to provide the plants with a good chance of thriving and providing an attractive feature for our community's enjoyment.



**Horticultural Therapy Awareness Week**  
**14-21 March 2010**  
**For further details: [www.htav.org.au](http://www.htav.org.au)**