



MEDIA RELEASE 21/06/2024 – for immediate release

**Ballarat Community Health Celebrates Dr. Adam Straub's Outstanding Contribution to Rural Healthcare.**

Ballarat, VIC – May 22, 2024 – Ballarat Community Health (BCH) is proud to announce that Dr. Adam Straub B.Sc (CHem) Hon (WVU), MBBS(Melb), FRACP, FACHAM, has been awarded the Victorian Rural Health Award for Outstanding Contribution by a Rural Medical Specialist. This recognition highlights his exceptional dedication to improving the health and wellbeing of patients across the state, from Ballarat to Echuca, Swan Hill to Edenhope, Dr Straub has been able to support patients who may have otherwise not received treatment and care they needed.

Dr. Straub, who is the only addiction medicine physician in rural Victoria, has been instrumental in the growth and success of the clinic, which first opened its doors in July 2022. Initially operating for just four hours a week, the clinic quickly identified a gap in service provision. By March 2023, it expanded to seven hours every Friday. Responding to the increasing demand, the Department of Health supported further expansion in December 2023. As of January 2024, the clinic now operates for 15 hours weekly, including Monday afternoons, Thursday mornings, and all-day Friday. This spread allows for better continuity of care, with flexible workspaces and hours to accommodate patients' needs.

In May 2024, BCH began hosting the Opioid Management Clinic (OMC) in Bendigo every second month. The clinic has been fully booked, underscoring the critical need for these services.

Dr. Straub was nominated for the award, for his dedication and impact on rural healthcare. The Victorian Rural Health Awards virtual event, held on June 20th, saw hundreds of attendees online from across the state celebrating the achievements of rural health professionals. Dr. Straub's award recognises his exceptional contributions to regional Victoria's health, both in hospitals and community settings, whilst advocating for positive, stigma free outcomes for his patients.

Dr. Straub said online that he was thankful to receive the award. "Starting the Addiction Medicine service in Western Victoria has been exciting and challenging. I've had the pleasure of working with many fantastic GP's, nurses, nurse practitioners, practice managers and pharmacists across the Grampians and Loddon Mallee regions." "I hope to grow this service into the future".

BCH has utilised a hybrid model of care, with over 100 active patients from almost as many postcodes in Victoria. Approximately 75% of appointments are conducted via telehealth, significantly reducing the need for patients to travel long distances for care. Dr. Straub emphasised the importance of providing care from the comfort of a patient's home, free from stigma.

"If we didn't have this clinic, we would have dozens if not hundreds of people needing access to the services that they require. The ability to provide care from someone's home, is so important to me," said Dr. Straub. "I want my patients to feel listened to and heard without judgment."



Dr. Straub's work also focuses on addressing the social determinants of health for patients to live a high quality of life. "My goal is to empower GPs and pharmacists across the state to know they have a service like this in our community. Patients may be in pain, but we can support them to live a high quality of life through this clinic, while getting the medical care they need. My patients' needs are always heard."

The award celebrates not just Dr. Straub's individual achievements but also the collective efforts of the BCH team. CEO of Ballarat Community Health, Sean Duffy said, "this approach to critical healthcare, combining telehealth and in-person appointments, has set a new standard for rural health services, whilst reaching some of the most isolated or at-risk individuals across the region." "We're proud to have Dr. Straub provide this clinic across our region and congratulate him and the team for their ongoing advocacy."

**For more information about Ballarat Community Health OMC clinic, please visit:**

[Opioid Management Clinic - Ballarat Community Health \(bchc.org.au\)](#)

**For more information about the event, please visit:**

<https://www.rwav.com.au/victorian-rural-health-awards-2024/>

**For more comment or enquiries, please contact:**

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