



## MEDIA RELEASE

16 June 2022

Yarram and District Health Service has apologised to the community for the recent disruption to its Meals on Wheels service.

Unfortunately, five of the six kitchen staff succumbed to sickness, some with COVID, in what was “a perfect storm” and the service could not provide meals for the external service, placing the priority on its aged care residents and hospital patients.

To ensure Meals on Wheels recipients weren’t left without any meal, staff rang all recipients who could be contacted, offering a personal carer to take them to the supermarket or alternatively to collect a meal for them. The priority was to ensure that no-one went without their usual meal.

YDHS Chief Executive, Paul Head, said the situation was unprecedented and with such short notice, it was not possible to provide written communication to recipients. “We had to work quickly and provide the best option possible,” he said.

YDHS has been providing Meals on Wheels for many years with the current number around 200 meals a week to people in Yarram and surrounding areas.

Mr Head said it had been some years since the service had been reviewed. He said with COVID-19 here for some time and the positive changes in community care, it was timely to consider how to make Meals on Wheels more sustainable.

“Our focus is to enable people by supporting and encouraging them to be more independent. It might be that for some people, instead of dropping off meals, we take them out to shop.

“We understand that this is not possible for our most vulnerable but for others, it could be a choice they prefer. Our focus is always on keeping our community safe and happy in their own homes, and importantly maintaining their independence for as long as possible.

“All options will be on the table and we look forward to consultation with our community.”

ENDS

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