

# 2025 - 2026 Annual Report

## Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc.

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*In the spirit of reconciliation, Heartbeat Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today. We issue this report acknowledging country.*

## Heartbeat Victoria

Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc. [Heartbeat Victoria] is an association incorporated under the Association Incorporation Act 1981 (Vic). It is a charitable institution and is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient. Heartbeat Victoria is the umbrella organisation for Heartbeat Victoria Affiliates and Branches that provide heart peer support across Victoria. Heartbeat Victoria is run exclusively by volunteers.

As a leader in community-based peer support for those living with heart related conditions, we seek to raise awareness of the importance of community-based peer support in improving the quality of life for those living with heart related conditions.

### Our Mission

To foster an active, compassionate and inclusive peer support network in Victoria for individuals and families affected by all forms of heart disease and heart-related issues.

Through our community driven groups, we provide emotional support, share information, advocate for better health outcomes and raise funds for cardiac equipment and improved cardiac care.

### Our Vision

Every individual and family affected by heart disease has access to a compassionate community, vital resources, and the highest quality of care, enabling them to live empowered heart-healthy lives.

### Our Values

| Respect                                                                                              | Empowerment                                                                                                      | Collaboration                                                                                                    | Hope                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| We recognise and value the dignity of every person and we value diversity of experience and thought. | We support our members to make informed decisions for themselves through connection, information and membership. | We work with others to acquire knowledge, to build connections and share information for the benefit of members. | We cultivate optimism and resilience, inspiring individuals and families to look forward with confidence. |

## President's report



To all our Branch officials and members, Board members and helpers who have worked hard throughout the year, thank you. Your work, energy and commitment have seen Heartbeat Victoria reach more people through the media and activities across regional areas. This brings important heart health education to the wider community and, hopefully, encourages more people to have a Heart Health Check, know where their local defibrillators are, or talk to their GP about heart issues. We may never know how many people our activities inspire, but they do make a difference and help keep heart disease in the public eye.

The 2025–2026 year has been full of happenings and changes, opportunities and, sadly, a good dose of sadness. For most people, heart disease is a lifelong issue where there is a management plan rather than a cure. Cardiac disease remains one of the two leading causes of death in Australia. Once again, many have experienced the loss of loved ones, and our thoughts are with those grieving. Please reach out to Heartbeat for support so you do not have to face that journey alone.

Board positions are held for two years, and several Board members are renominating this year. Vivien is stepping down from the Board after several years of service as Board Secretary and Secretary of the Bendigo Branch. On behalf of the Board, I would like to sincerely thank Vivien for her valuable contribution to governance, documentation, organisational structures and meeting procedures. Vivien has kindly offered to assist with the transition to the incoming Secretary, helping to ensure a smooth handover. We wish Vivien well and hope she enjoys more time for the things that bring her joy.

Heart Week was embraced by all Branches, with a range of very successful activities. I congratulate and thank all Branches for their efforts to help the public better understand heart disease and what Heartbeat Victoria has to offer. While we cannot count the people we connect with, Heartbeat Victoria is helping the community better understand heart health and the impact of a cardiac diagnosis.

I have been involved in speaking engagements at the Victorian Heart Hospital, ACvA, media and Branch events. One presentation of note was at the National Summit on Hypertension. Many people do not know they have high blood pressure, yet it is an important risk factor for stroke and heart disease. Education, good information and appropriate follow-up are vital. We should all have our blood pressure checked regularly. You can also ask your doctor about a Heart Health Check, your blood pressure or your family heart history. Being informed helps us to better maintain our health and advocate for ourselves. Early diagnosis and management, CPR training and lifestyle education remain more important than ever.

Heartbeat Victoria continues to work with other groups to improve community cardiac outcomes, including Heart Foundation Walking, Hands on Heart, the 100+ Hearts Project, the Baker Institute and others. These partnerships help us reach a wider audience, provide education for our members and give members opportunities to participate in research and have a consumer voice.

This year I have visited all Branches except Goulburn Valley and hope to get there shortly. Visiting Branch events and activities gives the Board a better understanding of how best to support Branches. To improve communication, we will be holding Branch officials' meetings with Board members and are also considering inviting Branch representatives to attend Board meetings at a mutually suitable time. We are here to support our members and Branch activities.

Dr Jen has joined the Board, bringing a professional pharmacology background and valuable personal experience with heart disease. I warmly welcome her and look forward to the contribution she will make to Heartbeat Victoria and the consumer voice.

Lastly, the Kindness Project has been brought to my attention. Being kind costs little but can have an amazing impact on others. If you can listen, share, smile or make a positive comment, please do so. Together, we can make our community and our world a better place.

**Christine Rees - President**

## The Board

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>President</b>      | Christine Rees    |
| <b>Vice President</b> | Barry Nixon       |
| <b>Secretary</b>      | Vivien Williamson |
| <b>Treasurer</b>      | David Stella*     |
| <b>Board Member</b>   | John Allen        |
| <b>Board Member</b>   | Elaine Gregory    |
| <b>Board Member</b>   | Jen Irvine**      |
| <b>Board Member</b>   | Andrew Murphy     |
| <b>Board Member</b>   | Rebecca Ritchie   |

\*Newly elected Board member at the 2025 AGM

\*\* Appointed as a Board member in May 2026

## Board report

### Membership

At its Annual General Meeting in September 2025, David Stella was elected as Treasurer and at the same meeting the Board farewelled former Treasurer Karen Saccuzzo and Kevin Reid and thanked them for their dedicated service to the Board and Heartbeat Victoria during a critical period of rebuilding.

Since then, Board member Vanaja Thomas has left the Board for personal reasons, and in May 2026, Professor Jen Irvine was appointed to the Board for a two-year period. New Board members are actively being sought to expand its skills and experience.

### Highlights from the Heart

#### *Our key achievements in 2025–26*

Heartbeat Victoria's Strategic Plan 2024-2027 guides the Board's activities over those years.

During the 2025–2026 financial year, Heartbeat Victoria undertook a broad range of activities that supported branches, strengthened connections within the cardiac community and provided effective organisational leadership in accordance with the organisation's three strategic directions.

| <b>Supporting and strengthening</b>                                                                                                       | <b>Fostering connections</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>Dynamic leadership</b>                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| To strengthen our foundation and expand our impact by supporting our network, fostering growth and enhancing the quality of peer support. | To build and foster strong organisational and community connections and collaborative partnerships that will build cardiac related peer support. | To provide dynamic and responsible leadership which will build capacity, elevate our impact and guide our mission with clarity and purpose. |

## 1. Supporting and strengthening

The organisation and its affiliates and branches continued to be supported through the provision of practical support, improvement of systems and building organisational capability.

### Supporting Branches and Affiliates

Initiatives to improve communication and support between the Board and branches continued to be introduced or built on, including:

- Continued use of a “Board Buddy” system, where a Board member has been allocated to each affiliate and branch with more frequent direct involvement of Board buddies with their affiliate or branch.
- Provision of governance, financial and administrative support to affiliates and branches.
- Direct assistance to affiliates or branches experiencing leadership or succession challenges.
- Support for the continuation and development of peer support services in areas experiencing declining activity, including Bendigo.

### Financial Management and Accountability

Financial management across the organisation has been strengthened through:

- Appointment of a new Treasurer.
- Development of standard financial reporting templates.
- Direct assistance to some affiliates and branches with financial management and reporting.
- Improved consistency in quarterly financial reporting.

### Organisational Resources and Systems

The Board has also:

- Developed new promotional brochures and communication materials.
- Provided affiliates and branches with locally adaptable promotional resources.
- Improved administrative systems and reporting processes.
- Supported affiliates and branches through the provision of merchandise and recognition items.

Through these activities, the capacity, sustainability and effectiveness of Heartbeat Victoria and its branches have been enhanced.

## 2. Fostering Connections

Relationships between members, branches, researchers, health professionals and the wider community have continued to be strengthened.

### Building Community Connections

The organisation supported activities that encouraged participation and social connection, including:

- Supporting the establishment of new walking groups (Fawkner Park and Tatura) and peer support activities.
- Encouraging affiliate and branch participation in statewide initiatives.
- Promoting member involvement in speaking opportunities and community events.

- Supporting new peer support opportunities in metropolitan and regional communities.

#### Partnerships and Collaboration

Partnerships have continued to be built with:

- Health services.
- Medical researchers.
- Universities and research institutes.
- Consumer organisations.
- Community groups and health promotion agencies.

#### Consumer Participation and Advocacy

The voice of people living with heart disease has continued to be promoted by:

- Encouraging participation in research projects.
- Supporting consumer representation on research initiatives.
- Facilitating opportunities for members to share their experiences.
- Promoting the importance of patient perspectives in cardiac care and research.

#### External Representation

Board members represented Heartbeat Victoria at:

- Health conferences.
- Research meetings.
- Community events.
- Public awareness activities.
- Consumer engagement forums.

These activities strengthened Heartbeat Victoria's relationships with the broader health sector and increased awareness of the organisation's work.

### **3. Dynamic Leadership**

The Board demonstrated strong organisational leadership by focusing on governance, strategic capacity and the future sustainability of Heartbeat Victoria.

#### Governance and Board Development

Key governance activities included:

- Increasing membership of the Board to improve capacity and resilience.
- Recruiting new Board members with specialist skills.
- Conducting Board elections and appointments.
- Recognising the contributions of retiring Board members and long-serving volunteers.

### Recruitment and Succession Planning

The Board has been actively seeking to strengthen organisational leadership through:

- Advertising for new Board members.
- Recruiting members with expertise in governance, communications, marketing and finance.
- Encouraging volunteer participation and leadership development.
- Supporting future branch leadership and succession planning.

### Strategic Leadership

The Board provided strategic leadership by:

- Monitoring emerging issues affecting affiliates, branches and members.
- Responding to organisational challenges.
- Supporting the development of new peer support opportunities.
- Increasing the public profile of Heartbeat Victoria.
- Ensuring the organisation remained sustainable and responsive to community needs.

Through effective governance and leadership, the Board continued to guide Heartbeat Victoria in delivering its mission and supporting people living with heart disease across Victoria.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Board acknowledges the passion, commitment and magnificent work of affiliates and branches for their communities, as well as the challenges that they face. The Board thanks all members for all they have done during 2025-2026 to assist and support those with heart-related conditions.

## Our affiliates and branches

|                           | Branch or Affiliate | Membership at 30/06/2026 |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Heartbeat Ballarat        | Branch              | 95                       |
| Heartbeat Bendigo Inc     | Affiliate           | 0                        |
| Heartbeat Goulburn Valley | Branch              | 32                       |
| Heartbeat South Gippsland | Branch              | N/A                      |
| Heartbeat Sunraysia Inc   | Affiliate           | 20                       |

Our affiliates and branches have continued to build much needed peer support for members with heart-related health issues, through meetings, social, physical and fundraising activities.

Affiliate, Heartbeat Sunraysia Inc, is proposing to cancel its incorporation and will become a branch of Heartbeat Victoria.

Unfortunately, affiliate Heartbeat Bendigo Inc was unable to form a Committee at its Annual General Meeting in November 2025 and is currently applying for voluntary cancellation of incorporation. However, the Board of Heartbeat Victoria has also resolved to support the re-establishment of peer support services in Bendigo and has commenced work in that regard.

### Heartbeat activities

During the 2025–2026 financial year, Heartbeat Victoria affiliates and branches continued to deliver a diverse range of activities that supported people living with heart disease, promoted heart health, strengthened community connections and contributed to improved cardiac care in local communities. Activities included:

#### *Peer support meetings*

Affiliates and branches regularly conducted peer support meetings that enabled members to share experiences, discuss living with heart disease and provide mutual encouragement, including.

- Support group meetings
- Discussion groups on heart health and wellbeing
- Guest speakers
- Health education sessions
- Sharing of information resources and videos

#### *Walking groups and physical activity*

Promoting regular physical activity remained a major focus of affiliates and branches and included:

- Organised walking groups
- Indoor and outdoor walking programs
- Walking programs catering for different abilities
- Post-walk social gatherings

#### *Social and community activities*

Affiliates and branches organised regular social activities to reduce isolation and strengthen community connections, including coffee mornings and cuppa catch-ups; lunches and dinners; Christmas celebrations and social outings.

### *Health education and information sessions*

Affiliates and branches delivered a variety of educational opportunities to improve members' knowledge of heart health and healthy living, including:

- Guest speakers including medical specialists, researchers and other health professionals
- Educational webinars
- Heart health information sessions
- Healthy eating presentations
- Discussions on prevention and risk factors.

### *Partnerships with health services and researchers*

Affiliates and branches actively worked with health services, researchers and community organisations, which included:

- Collaboration with hospitals and health services
- Participation in research projects
- Consumer engagement activities
- Providing lived experience perspectives.

### *Community education and awareness*

Affiliates and branches also contributed to broader community awareness and heart health promotion:

Activities included:

- Participation in Heart Week
- World Heart Day activities
- Community presentations
- Public awareness events
- Promotion of heart health checks.

### *Fundraising activities*

Affiliates and branches have held fundraising activities to support their activities and improve cardiac services, such as high teas; community events; Bunnings barbecue fundraisers and community fundraising partnerships.

### *Donations and support for health services*

Affiliates and branches continued their tradition of supporting local health services through donations and funding of equipment for local cardiac health services.

### *Volunteer and leadership activities*

Affiliates and branches continue to rely heavily on volunteers for their operations and organisation of activities, including:

- Committee roles
- Organising events
- Walking group leadership
- Member support
- Community liaison
- Advocacy and representation.

Several members received recognition for long service and volunteer contributions during the year.

## Ballarat



Heartbeat Victoria Ballarat Branch is a caring community—100% volunteer, for cardiac patients, by cardiac patients. Ballarat membership averages around 100 members annually.

Members support and motivate one another while improving their own cardiac health. The Branch provides a safe, inclusive and non-judgmental environment where people share experiences, build resilience and form lasting friendships. Community is central, with members supporting one another through social activities, volunteering and walk leadership.

Mark Vorstenbosch's strong leadership as President continues to strengthen the Branch, empowering the eight-member committee. Deputy President, Helen Sara coordinates member care, while Anne Gow manages membership and branch finances assisted by Bernie Brisbane. Secretarial responsibilities are shared under the stewardship of Barry Nixon. Alan Bell and Leigh Miller contribute across many Branch activities, publish regular newsletters and bring great energy to the committee. Lyn Webb plans and coordinates the Branch's twice-monthly social activities.

Cardiac Nurse Practitioner Linda Macaulay continues to provide invaluable support through education sessions, guest speakers and assistance to individual members.

Heartbeat Ballarat operates five Heart Foundation registered walking groups every week throughout the year, offering both indoor and outdoor walks suitable for a wide range of abilities, including people using walking aids. Outdoor walks are also pram and dog friendly.

The Branch works closely with all three of Ballarat's cardiac rehabilitation programs. Members, including Bernie, Barry, Brian, Julie, Shirley and Bruce regularly share their lived experience with new cardiac patients. Information about Heartbeat Ballarat is distributed through Grampians Health, Ballarat Community Health and St John of God Hospital, with additional referrals coming from local mental health groups.

Community awareness is promoted through Aged and Disability Expos with Ballarat City Council's Ageing Well Department, Delacombe Town Centre and North Ballarat Sports Club. Around 300 people visited the Heartbeat Ballarat display at the expo, where committee members used innovative heart-themed giveaways to engage visitors and provided information and resources from Heartbeat Victoria, the Heart Foundation, the Baker Institute and the Heartbeat Ballarat Walking Groups.

Branch members have also travelled to Melbourne multiple times to support the establishment of the Fawkner Park Walking Group and the growth of Heartbeat opportunities in Bendigo alongside Heartbeat Victoria President, Christine Rees.

The Branch continues to welcome new volunteers. Mark and Debra first connected with Heartbeat at an expo and now volunteer several times each week as walk leaders. Eleanor and Brian, who also discovered Heartbeat through an expo, have become active participants in both walking groups and social activities.

While walking, education and social connection remain highly visible activities, peer support underpins everything the Branch does. Members provide hospital visits, transport to appointments, welfare checks, grief support, meals and companionship and helping people through difficult times, while reducing loneliness and isolation.

A major focus during 2025–26 was empowering members to lead:

- 8 members served on the Committee;
- 6 volunteered as lived experience educators; and
- 14 completed Heart Foundation walk leader training.

Heartbeat Ballarat also continued to contribute to research and advocacy through consumer participation in Nick Kashyap's Baker Institute research. Alan Bell represents Heartbeat Victoria on Heart Foundation research projects, while Barry Nixon shared his lived cardiac experience for cardiologist education.

Heartbeat Ballarat remains committed to providing regional peer support, encouraging healthy lifestyles, strengthening social connections and ensuring the voices of people with lived experience continue to make a difference across the Ballarat community.

## Bendigo



Celebrating almost 40 years of service, Heartbeat Bendigo concluded an extraordinary chapter in 2025. Established in the mid-1980s as one of Heartbeat Victoria's earliest regional branches, it provided almost four decades of peer support, friendship, education and advocacy for people living with heart disease, while contributing significant funding to improve cardiac services across the Bendigo region.

Throughout the year, members continued to enjoy a varied program of meetings, coffee catch-ups, seasonal lunches, Morning Music outings and community events, providing opportunities for friendship, mutual support and social connection. The popular Christmas in July celebration brought together Heartbeat members and other community groups, demonstrating the strong community spirit that had become a hallmark of the Branch. Members also volunteered in support of the Rotary Christmas Trailer Raffle, continuing a valued community partnership.

Fundraising remained an important focus. Two Kay's Fashion events raised approximately \$1,700, while the Bendigo Country Music fundraiser contributed more than \$500 to Heartbeat Victoria.

Reflecting its longstanding commitment to improving local cardiac care, members approved donations totalling \$47,000 to Bendigo Health, St John of God Bendigo Hospital, Dhelkaya Health Services at Castlemaine and Maldon, and Inglewood and Districts Health Service for equipment to enhance cardiac services. In addition, \$2,500 raised through the Rotary Christmas Trailer Raffle was donated to Riding for the Disabled. These contributions continued Heartbeat Bendigo's proud tradition of giving back to the local community, having donated over \$500,000 for equipment to support cardiac services in the Bendigo region since the group commenced.

The Branch also celebrated the remarkable contributions of long term members Laurie Smith and Eddie Williams. Laurie was a long term Committee member and Eddie retired after 20 years as a volunteer with the St John of God Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, having supported an estimated 2,000 cardiac patients during his service.

The year was also marked by significant loss. Members mourned the passing of President Frank Ward, who had been a Heartbeat Bendigo member since 2014 and President since 2016. Frank's leadership, generosity and unwavering commitment to supporting people living with heart disease were widely recognised, with Bendigo Health's Cardiac Rehabilitation Team acknowledging his many years of dedicated support for the program. Members also remembered long-serving committee member Ian Cross and long-time member John Hollis, whose contributions to the Branch over many years were greatly valued.

While 2025 was a year of celebrating the Branch's remarkable legacy, it also marked the end of an era. With no nominations received for committee positions at the Annual General Meeting in November, Heartbeat Bendigo concluded its long history as a formally constituted affiliate of Heartbeat Victoria. Former committee members have continued to coordinate a reduced program of social activities to help members remain connected, ensuring that the friendships, support and sense of community that have defined Heartbeat Bendigo for almost four decades continue into the future.

## **Goulburn Valley & Tatura**

Heartbeat Victoria – Goulburn Valley Branch and Tatura Group continues to support an active membership of 32 people across the Goulburn Valley. Throughout the year we provided monthly peer support dinners, health education sessions with guest speakers, social activities, coffee mornings, volunteering at Goulburn Valley Health (GVH) Cardiac Rehabilitation, the Heart Foundation-supported Tatura walking group, peer support meetings at Tatura Community House, fundraising and welfare support through phone calls, mail and home visits as required.

Following the 2025 AGM, members agreed to simplify some activities to reduce the workload of volunteers. Social lunches are now held every second month, newsletters have been replaced by email and postal updates, and SMS, local newspapers and the GVH Facebook page are used to keep members informed.

## HGV Community Events



The Tatura Walking Group continues to meet every Monday morning and has 18 registered walkers. Members value both the health and social benefits, with many increasing the distance they are able to walk.



During Heart Week in May, the walking and peer support groups jointly presented a Health and Wellbeing session at Tatura Community House with support from GV Health and the Tatura Community House. Thirty-one people attended to hear presentations on Heart Health Checks, the Heartbeat walking and peer support groups, GVH Health Coaching, Community Health Nursing, HARP and Disease Management, with a focus on heart failure. Feedback was very positive, with several attendees expressing interest in joining Heartbeat groups or accessing local health services. Thankyou to everyone who contributed to the success of the event.



## Fundraising



Fundraising continues to be challenging, and we are grateful for the ongoing support of members, the can collection program and volunteers who assist with Bunnings BBQs and other fundraising activities.

A highlight of the year was the High Tea and Open Garden hosted by Carol Williams at Katunga. Thanks to Carol, her family, our members and supporters, the event raised \$2,045 through ticket sales, raffles and donations. Special thanks to Vivien Williamson, Heartbeat Victoria Board Secretary, for attending the event.

We were also pleased to donate \$5,081.97 to the GVH Cardiac Rehabilitation Program to purchase a Vital Signs Machine. Our sincere thanks also go to Amy DePaola, Executive Manager of the GVH Foundation, for her ongoing support and guidance.

### Volunteering



Heartbeat volunteers continue to

support the GVH Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, with members assisting patients each week and helping introduce Heartbeat to people recovering from cardiac events. We also appreciate the support of Karen Saccuzzo, GVH Volunteer Coordinator and GVH, for recognising the contribution of volunteers.

We also acknowledge our three volunteer coordinators who lead the weekly Heartbeat Tatura Walking Group. Their commitment helps improve the health and wellbeing of our local community.

A huge congratulations to our long serving Secretary, Robyn Fennell, on receiving the Goulburn Valley Health Companion Award. This well-deserved honour recognises her many years of dedicated volunteer service, supporting cardiac rehabilitation patients, leading branch activities and fundraising for vital cardiac and emergency equipment, and, most recently, extending Heartbeat's support to the Tatura community.

Finally, thank you to all Heartbeat Victoria Board of Management members for their ongoing support and contribution to the organisation. We look forward to continued growth and new opportunities in 2026–27.



## South Gippsland

Heartbeat South Gippsland has continued to provide friendship, encouragement and peer support to people living with heart disease across our region during the year.

A highlight of the year was welcoming Heartbeat Victoria Board member and cardiovascular researcher, Professor Rebecca Ritchie, to speak to our members and guests. More than 30 people attended the meeting, including members of other community groups, making it one of our best-attended events. Professor Ritchie's presentation provided valuable insights into current cardiovascular research and generated plenty of discussion about the important role that people with lived experience can play in improving cardiac care.



We have also been exploring opportunities to establish an indoor walking group, recognising the benefits that regular physical activity and social connection can provide for people living with heart disease. We look forward to progressing this initiative in the coming year.

Despite some health challenges during the year, our committee and volunteers have remained committed to ensuring our members continue to feel welcome, supported and connected. In particular, we acknowledge the efforts of Janne Grenon, whose dedication in organising our guest speaker event and reaching out to other community groups helped make it such a success.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to providing opportunities for peer support, education and social connection, while continuing to grow our activities and welcome new members from across South Gippsland.

## Sunraysia



Heartbeat Sunraysia has once again had a very rewarding year, with some new members joining our group.

The monthly meetings and cuppa catch ups are providing our members with a lot of friendship, support and encouragement.

Our main event during the year was celebrating our 40th anniversary, marking four decades of support for people and carers living with heart



disease in our region. We had the local newspaper and radio station also helping raise awareness of what Heartbeat is all about.



We welcomed Graeme Tulloch from Hands on Heart Australia to our group as a guest speaker and now a member. Graeme shared his personal lived experience following a cardiac arrest. Now he is doing outstanding work providing free CPR education throughout our Sunraysia area, with the support of the Mildura Lions Club.

The yearly Murray to Moyne cycling relay went ahead as usual, with the Australian Almond Board putting a team in. This is a great fundraiser for Heartbeat Sunraysia and the Almond Board's ongoing support is greatly appreciated. Some of our members went along on the morning to wave them off and then enjoyed a nice cuppa at Irymple Bakery.



Heart Week in May was also a great success, with a range of events during the week. We enjoyed our May cuppa catch up at the Mildura Hospital where the CEO came along and spoke to our group and thanked us for our support. The cardio staff were doing Heart Health checks for the hospital staff all that week, and we were all given a lovely 'heart' cookie. On the final day we attended the hospital for a healthy lunch in the courtyard.

Katrina Umback from The Heart Health Check Community Project attended one of our monthly meetings to inform us about that project which is an Australian first. The project is a federally funded research initiative led by La Trobe University, designed to make cardiovascular screening more accessible. The Sunraysia district has been chosen to participate in the project as one of the areas experiencing high rates of cardiovascular disease. Individuals aged 45 to 79 who haven't had a Heart Health Check in the past 12 months and have no prior diagnosis of heart disease, chronic kidney disease, or inherited high cholesterol can register for a free health check. Once accepted, participants receive a kit to do the test at home as one of the options being considered as part of the project to make the process simpler and more accessible.

Our Secretary, Elaine, also attended a local football/netball game in Ouyen to promote the health checks and to talk about Heartbeat.

We look forward to the next 12 months with a positive outlook in helping support people and carers with heart disease in the Sunraysia area.

## Fawkner Park Walking Group



In August 2025, a new walking group based in Fawkner Park, across from The Alfred Hospital in Melbourne, was launched by the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute and Heartbeat Victoria Council, Inc., in collaboration with Heart Foundation Walking.

The first walk was held on August 19 on a beautiful, sunny winter morning in Melbourne. The walk was the first step towards creating a new cardiac peer support group in Melbourne, to help improve heart health in the community.

Just over 30 walkers took part, including organisers from the Baker Heart & Diabetes Institute, Heartbeat Victoria Council, Inc. and Heart Foundation Walking. They were joined by several Board members from Heartbeat Victoria, as well as five walkers from Heartbeat Ballarat, who made the trip to Melbourne by train to participate.

The Director of the Baker Institute attended the kick-off and was joined by many Baker staff who completed the 30-minute walk around Fawner Park. After the walk, the group shared a cuppa and a snack at the Baker Institute while listening to an excellent presentation on healthy eating.

Since that first walk, the group has met and walked approximately once a month, and are now meeting on a fixed basis, walking on the second Thursday of every month. Walks are still followed by a cuppa and a talk at the Baker Institute.

The walks are open to anyone interested and have been wonderfully supported by members of Heartbeat Ballarat, who made the trip to Melbourne to attend the first year's walks.



## Our financial report 2025 – 2026

These are the final consolidated accounts for the 12 months ending 30 June 2026 for Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc (HBVCI) and its branches (except South Gippsland, due to internet and phone access issues), but do not include Bendigo and Sunraysia which were affiliates in this financial year. As this is the first consolidated report for some time, there are no comparable figures for 2025.

### Heartbeat Victoria Council Inc – Consolidated)

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 30 June 2026    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>INCOME</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                 |
| Contributions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                 |
| <i>Donations</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | \$4,304         |
| <i>Bequests</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | \$1,000         |
| Events                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                 |
| <i>Major event</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | \$1,096         |
| Fundraising                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                 |
| <i>Can &amp; bottle refunds</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | \$823           |
| <i>Bunnings BBQs</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$3,463         |
| <i>Raffles</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | \$350           |
| <i>Trading Table</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$1,545         |
| Investment & Other Income                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                 |
| <i>Interest on term deposits</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | \$4,954         |
| <i>Merchant Fees</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$538           |
| <i>Other income</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | \$4             |
| Membership                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                 |
| <i>Branch Memberships</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | \$2,705         |
| <i>Membership &amp; Insurance Levy (Affiliates)<sup>1</sup></i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | \$1,365         |
| Sale of Merchandise                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                 |
| <i>Pens and badges</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | \$24            |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>\$22,171</b> |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                 |
| Administration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                 |
| <i>Insurance</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | \$2,094         |
| <i>Mobile Phone</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | \$15            |
| <i>Office</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | \$440           |
| <i>Stationery</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | \$84            |
| <i>Subscriptions</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$246           |
| <i>Website &amp; Internet</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | \$923           |
| Advertising & Promotion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                 |
| <i>Promotion</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | \$693           |
| Donations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                 |
| <i>Donations</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | \$5,082         |
| Fundraising                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                 |
| <i>Bunnings BBQs</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$1,302         |
| Events                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                 |
| <i>Meals and entertainment</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | \$2,545         |
| Other                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                 |
| <i>Other</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | \$904           |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>\$15,280</b> |
| <b>Net surplus / (deficit)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>\$6,891</b>  |
| <sup>1</sup> <b>Branch membership and insurance levies</b> - Heartbeat Victoria Incorporated operates through some branches which are not separate legal entities. During the year, branches transferred \$1365 to Heartbeat Victoria Incorporated in accordance with the annual membership and insurance levy requirements. As the transfers from branches occur within the same legal entity, they are internal transfers, and are therefore not recognised in the net surplus in the financial statements. |                 |

Heartbeat Victoria Council Incorporated is reporting a net surplus of \$6891 during 2025/2026.

The term deposit of \$95,000.00 has been reinvested for a further 11 months, with a maturity date of 19 February 2027. A second term deposit of \$15,000.00 was reinvested for a further 11 months and 30 days, with a maturity date of 25 November 2026. The monthly interest from both term deposits is credited to the General Account.

### Balance Sheet

|                               | June 2026               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Current Assets                |                         |
| <i>General Account</i>        | \$57,500                |
| <i>Term Deposits</i>          | \$110,000               |
| <i>Merchandise</i>            | \$0                     |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b>   | <b><u>\$167,500</u></b> |
| Fixed Assets                  |                         |
| <i>Equipment</i>              | \$0                     |
| <b>Total Fixed Assets</b>     | <b><u>\$0</u></b>       |
| <b>Total Assets</b>           | <b><u>\$167,500</u></b> |
| Current Liabilities           |                         |
| <i>Creditors and accruals</i> | \$0                     |
| <i>Borrowings</i>             | \$0                     |
| <i>Provision</i>              |                         |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>      | <b><u>\$0</u></b>       |
| <b>Net Assets</b>             | <b><u>\$167,500</u></b> |

Total cash reserves are \$167,500.

HBVCI continues not to incur any debts or liabilities. The net asset position of \$167,500 continues to be strong.

### Certificate

We, David Stella and Vivien Williamson, being members of the Board of Management of Heartbeat Victoria Council Incorporated, certify that:

The statements above give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Heartbeat Victoria Council Incorporated during and at the end of the financial year of the Association ending on 30 June 2026.

Signed: *David Stella* (Treasurer) Dated: 14/8/26

Signed: *V. Williamson* (Secretary) Dated: 14/08/26