



Tallangatta Health Service
Environmental
Sustainability Strategy
2024 - 2027



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Message from the CEO

Sustainability consists of fulfilling the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations. Environmental Sustainability is the ability to maintain balance in our natural environment and conserve natural resources to support the wellbeing of current and future generations.

The World Health Organisation defines an environmentally sustainable health system as one that “improves, maintains or restores health, while minimizing negative impacts on the environment and leveraging opportunities to restore and improve it, to the benefit of the health and well-being of current and future generations”¹. Within the healthcare sector, environmental sustainability occurs when resources are used as efficiently as possible, without compromising the quality of care for patients.

Tallangatta Health Service supports the work being undertaken by State and Federal governments, and the Victorian Department of Health, in recognising the clear linkages between the health and wellbeing of Victorians and a healthy environment. Public health services contribute a quarter of the Victorian Government’s energy related carbon emissions.² All public health services have a role to play in reducing environmental impacts. We use significant amounts of energy and water and generate a large volume of waste. The challenge for public health services is improving environmental performance whilst continuing to deliver service excellence to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The Board and Executive have made a commitment to apply the principles of environmental sustainability to the functions of the health service and this commitment flows down to each member of staff.



integrity



caring



adaptable



respect



excellence

¹ World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe. Environmentally sustainable health systems: a strategic document 2017

² Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2018-19 to 2022-23. Victorian Department of Health



About Tallangatta and our region

Tallangatta Health Service (THS) is situated within the township of Tallangatta, which is located in the Towong Shire. Towong Shire is located in North East Victoria, about 300 kilometres north-east of Melbourne. The Shire covers a land area of over 6,600 km. Most of the population is spread across the Shire, mostly in rural townships. The largest township is Corryong, with 1,352 residents, followed by Tallangatta, with 1,175 residents.³

The Towong Shire has an estimated resident population of 6,223 comprising 3,166 males and 3,059 females as reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2021.

The median age of 52 is greater than the Australian median age of 38. 28.6% of the population are aged over 65. The largest cohort is aged between 55 and 64 years, at 17.9%. People aged under 34 make up 31.3%.

The median weekly household income is \$1,282 compared to the Australian median of \$1,746. The proportion of people who have completed year 12 is 55.6% compared to Australia wide figure of 66.7%.

THS offers the only primary care in this area, and our patient base extends more than 70kms from Tallangatta township. The closest health services are located in Wodonga, 40 kms away.

About Tallangatta Health Service

Tallangatta Health Service (THS) functions under the Health Services Act 1988 (VIC) and is delegated its functions by the Minister of Health. THS is a small rural health service funded by the Department of Health (State) to provide public health services, and it receives aged care funding from the Department of Health (Commonwealth). Our service operates within a Strategic Directions 2018-2027 framework with the vision of THS to *'Empowering People for Health'*.

Tallangatta Health Service employs 180 staff in a mix of full and part time roles (EFT 103). Of these, three staff members identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons.

Tallangatta Health Service is situated on one site and is located 30 minutes from the large regional centre of Albury-Wodonga and services a large section of the Towong Shire encompassing Tallangatta, Tallangatta Valley, Bullioh, Tallangatta South, Georges Creek, Dartmouth, Mitta Mitta, Granya, Eskdale, Old Tallangatta, Jarvis Creek and surrounds.

Core business includes Residential Aged Care (low and high care), Medical Clinic, Acute Ward, District nursing, Allied Health and other community programs.

The Department of Health is embedding sustainability principles in its activities and is committed to achieving sustainability within the broader Victorian public health system. These objectives are outlined in the current Department strategy: Sustainability in Healthcare – Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2018-19 to 2022-23.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/population-census/latest-release>





Our Pillars

Five pillars provide a strong foundation to the success of Tallangatta Health Service:

- 1. Person Centred Approach**
The person will be at the centre of all we do and we will empower them in health decisions.
- 2. Evidence Based Decision Making**
Our decisions will inquire, looking for best practice to inform our decisions.
- 3. Sustainability**
Our decisions ensure that success can be maintained.
- 4. Culture of Excellence, Innovation, Learning & Development**
We will be the best we can by embracing new ways.
- 5. Robust Clinical & Corporate Governance**
Our governance systems will provide assurance that we are providing the best care possible and that our strategic vision is being achieved.

Scope of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy

The intent of this strategy addresses all relevant aspects of the operation of Tallangatta Health Service including all sites, agency activities and the delivery of services, including but not limited to:

- Acute and Residential Aged Care services;
- corporate offices and facilities;
- support services (e.g. catering and cleaning);
- education;
- delivery of campaigns, programs and events;
- community based health services;
- facilities operations including maintenance; and
- new capital works.



Prior actions and achievements

THS has been committed to improving its Environmental Performance for many years.

Environmental achievements of THS since 2010 have included:

- conducting energy audits to identify key opportunities for energy saving;
- improving energy efficiency by installing electric hot water services in residential care and the acute service to improve the use of solar;
- reducing waste to landfill by increasing weekly recycling capacity;
- onsite laundry upgrades;
- collecting environmental data and reporting to the Department of Health on an annual basis since 2006;
- installing of LED lights throughout the facility;
- moving to smaller more energy efficient vehicles;
- reviewing of garden and landscaping to be more water efficient;
- recycling printer cartridges and raising organization wide awareness on becoming less paper dependent;
- upgrading air conditioning;
- upgrading chemical dispensing systems;
- conducting clinical waste audits;
- installing more efficient ovens and cooking processes during 2012-2013;
- considering environmental impacts in all aspect of procurement
- joining the Global Green Healthy Hospitals network

More recent achievements:

- Reduction in plastic water bottles with the installation of plumbed cooled water into each staffroom
- Gradual changeover to hybrid and electric fleet vehicles
- Additional solar installations in multiple locations

Planned initiatives:

- Continue roll out of plumbed cooled water into kitchens
- Removal of gas hot water systems to be replaced with electric
- Introduction of Follow Me printing which will reduce wastage
- Capital works program with new primary care build including charging stations for electric vehicles, efficient heating/cooling, improved insulation



Environmental Sustainability Policy

Tallangatta Health Service (THS) adheres to an Environmental Sustainability Policy that outlines the commitment to environmental sustainability and applies these principles to all staff, students, visitors and contractors within the organisation.

The THS Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Policy are influenced by these frameworks:

1. Environmental Protection Act 2017
2. Social Procurement Framework – Victorian State Government (2023)⁴
3. Asset Management Accountability Framework – Victorian State Government, Treasury & Finance (2021)⁵
4. Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2018-19 to 2022-23, Department of Health (2018)⁶
5. Sustainability Principles and Integrated Approach – Department of Health (2021)⁷
6. Health and Human Services Climate Change Adaption Action Plan 2022-2026⁸

Sustainable Healthcare

The **Department of Health’s Environmental Sustainability Strategy** seeks to:

1. Provide leadership and engage with the sector
2. Improve the environmental performance of the health system
3. Adapt to a changing climate

We work closely with the Department of Health to achieve common goals which contribute to the overall improvements in health system environmental performance. These include:

- Increased wellbeing through preventative health care
- Healthy buildings including more green spaces, more natural lighting, renewable energy, recycled resources, more resilient to climate change
- Evidenced-based sustainable practices, including procurement
- Better use of technology such as electronic medical records
- Reduction in carbon emissions including transport
- Reduction in food waste and waste to landfill

⁴ <https://www.buyingfor.vic.gov.au/social-procurement-framework>

⁵ <https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/infrastructure-investment/asset-management-accountability-framework>

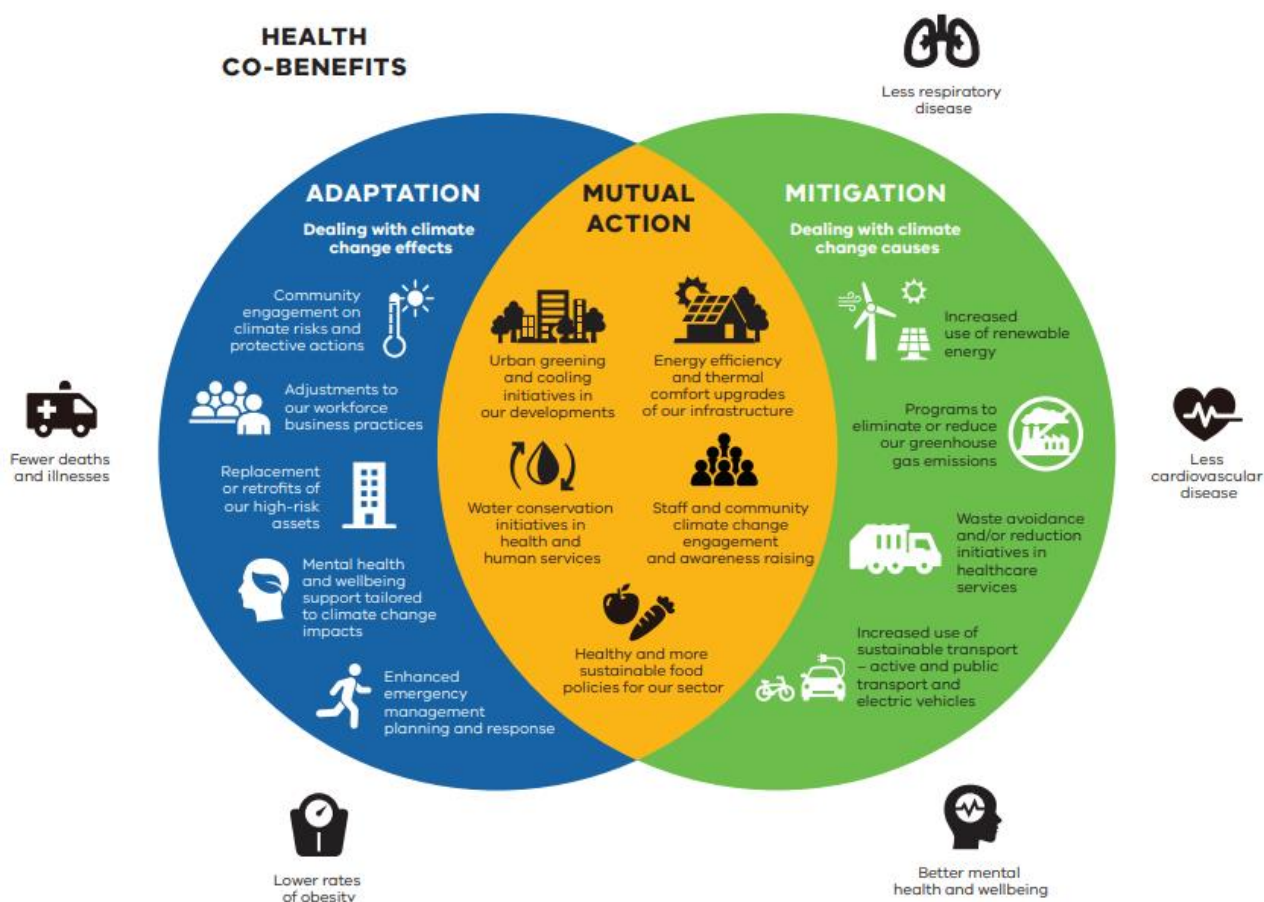
⁶ <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/environmental-sustainability-strategy-2018-19-to-2022-23>

⁷ <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/integrated-approach-diagram>

⁸ https://www.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-02/health-human-services-climate-change-adaptation-action-plan-2022-2026_0.pdf



The interconnectedness of climate adaptation and mitigation, and associated health benefits are illustrated below, and underpin our approach.



Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement

The progress of the strategy will be through an action plan reviewed by the Leadership Team quarterly and by the Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Committee as scheduled.

Progress in implementing the strategy through activities in the action plan will be reported to the Board annually. Regular reporting to the Department of Health against key performance indicators ensures our continued alignment to State government objectives.

Performance progress and key achievements will be reported publicly through the Annual Report.

The strategy is a living document and as such will be updated as indicated by activities or changes in legislation.



Monitoring schedule

What	How	How often	Records	Who
Carbon	Energy bills	Monthly	Energy data / carbon conversion factors	DCS
Energy use	BMS / energy bills	Monthly	Energy data	DCS
Water use	BMS / water bills	Quarterly	Water data	DCS
General waste	Contractor data	Monthly	Spreadsheet	DCS
Clinical waste	Contractor data	Monthly	Invoice/ report from contractor	DCS
Paper use	Purchase records	Monthly	Reports from invoice system	DCS
Green purchasing	Recorded through purchase order forms	Quarterly	Spreadsheet showing % of total purchase	DCS
Fuel use	Monthly bills and vehicle fleet log records	Monthly	Spreadsheet	DCS
Staff Culture	Engagement with vision	Annually	Survey	CEO

Communications Plan

The objectives of the Communications Plan are to:

- Communicate to staff the environmental achievements to date
- Generate involvement, participation and ownership for key initiatives and goals
- Promote to our consumers the role our Health Service plays in environmental sustainability
- Foster an environmental ethos for staff and consumers to identify sustainable practices

Communication activities and channels

- Local publications including Tallangatta Herald and Berringa News
- Weekly staff newsletter, the Snapshot
- Memo and email to all staff
- Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Committee
- THS Intranet
- THS Website and social media sites



Action Plan Focus Areas

Policy	Review policy for Board endorsement
Strategy	Review Strategy for Board endorsement
Measuring Success	Analyse internal data Monitor against Department strategy Celebrate success
Global Green Healthy Hospitals	Review goals each year Installation of renewable energy
Energy Reduction	Review energy strategy Turn off lights and computers Achieve state requirements Generator use
Waste	Monitor seasonal changes and adjust watering Encourage water usage reduction by staff
Non-Clinical and clinical waste audits	Conduct 6 monthly audits Analyse results and seek efficiencies
Food	Review food waste
Recycling	Advocate for home and office recycling Promote waste management procedures Recycle batteries and toners
Printing	Reduce printing Double sided / Black & White Increase use of intranet

