

>> *Kyabram District Health Service chief stresses extra measures are in place to ensure. . .*

Patients are in safe hands

By Patrick Phillips

While occupational violence may be on the rise, chief executive Peter Abraham says staff and patients at Kyabram District Health Service are completely safe.

A recent Auditor-General's report noted an increase in occupational violence in health care, but Mr Abraham said the situation did not apply to Kyabram, and that extra measures were already being put in place to ensure those who visited the hospital remained safe, particularly those in urgent care.

"We engage a local firm who

provide 24-hour security services for us," Mr Abraham said.

"We also have trained staff in managing difficult situations. We have a night porter who has particular training in that area who also monitors the environment. We also have a direct line, obviously, duress buttons and emergency buttons straight to the police. We also have CCTV out there so when anyone comes in the place they are on CCTV and we can go back and look at those tapes.

"Our nurses are experienced leaders, nurses who run the place after-hours are particularly aware of how to manage those situations

and do the training on how to manage aggression and violence in the workplace."

Mr Abraham said the security measures put in place at KDHS meant there had been no significant incidents at the hospital for quite some time.

"We don't have a huge number of incidents that occur," he said.

"We occasionally get incidents where someone comes in and might be affected by a substance and start to sort of jump around and yell abuse and that sort of thing. But we haven't had any sort of incidents of any staff being hit of late, any severe aggression or violence."

The recent recipient of a Victorian Government grant for rural capital support, Mr Abraham said KDHS was also set to become safer, with the money being put toward urgent care facilities and safety precautions.

"We are going to be using that to redesign our urgent care service and better protect our patients and community and staff in an environment that's open 24 hours a day and has to be available to the community," he said.

"I think the work we will do is going to vastly improve that environment in terms of better separation between patients and staff. Better security for patients

when they come in and sit in the waiting space and closer monitoring."

Mr Abraham said the upgrades to urgent care would be happening across the year.

"It's a planned approach, at the moment we are doing the radiology wing," he said.

"We have already commenced the planning on urgent care and we think we will enter into that straight away after we have completed the work in radiology.

"Then that'll be another eight-week program, so we are probably talking about August-September that we will be completed."

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