



## CASE STUDY

# Kyabram Skin Cancer Screening

**Practice Name:** Kyabram Regional Clinic • **Location:** Kyabram, VIC • **MM:** 4

### Context

Based at Kyabram Regional Clinic in northern Victoria's Murray region, Registered Nurse and former midwife Leanne James brings many years of nursing and midwifery experience to her community. She's passionate about ensuring locals can access the healthcare they need, close to home.

While reviewing clinic data, Leanne noticed a rise in skin cancer cases being managed by GPs, including an increase in biopsies and excisions. Concerned by how significantly skin cancer was affecting the local farming community, she set out to help change that trend.

With support from APNA's Building Nurse Capacity Program, she established a nurse-led skin clinic designed to make early detection easier for those most at risk. The clinic now focuses on screening people who often miss regular skin checks- farmers, orchardists, tradespeople, and others who work outdoors.

### A clear plan

Kyabram Regional Clinic's GP tends to 40 – 50 skin biopsies and lesions each month, with this rate increasing over the last five years. Leanne's nurse clinic provides skin checks and screening, education, detection, diagnosis and referrals to health care providers. This approach eases the initial workload on GPs and has a greater impact on the delivery of care.

### Funding

Alongside funding from participation in the Building Nurse Capacity Program (co-sponsored by Murray Primary Health Network), Leanne utilises MBS items 707, 721, 732, 10997 (GP).

### Location and facilities

Dairy and sheep farming, cropping, and fruit picking are common jobs in Leanne's local community, and there is a large population who are in the high-risk category of developing melanoma. The availability and

locality of this clinic allow for more at-risk individuals to be screened for an earlier diagnosis, leading to earlier intervention and treatment if required.

### Staffing and HR

Leanne receives organisational support to run the clinic, including backing from the GPs to identify lesions of concern for referral. She also has support with data collection from the clinic's Practice Manager.

### Best-practice care

Before starting the clinic, Leanne undertook professional development, including with Cancer Victoria, to support her in undertaking skin checks. Skin checks are embedded into routine nursing practice within Health Assessments and other appointments, and GPs welcome the information added to patient history – allowing a streamlined follow up during consultations.



We acknowledge the Yorta Yorta people as the traditional owners of the lands featured in this story and pay our respects to Elders past and present.



## Patient engagement

Ensuring the clinic is accessible and approachable for her community is a key motivator for Leanne. Due to limited public transport, it is difficult for some community members to access health services outside of Kyabram, including specialists. For older patients, it can be hard to drive to the nearest town for a skin check, and having this option available locally gives them an equal footing to access this essential service without additional worry or cost. Even if patients can travel, the nearest major town has a 2-year wait for skin check appointments, whereas in Kyabram, GPs can see the patient for a skin check follow-up.

As Kyabram Regional Clinic covers a large area, the Skin Cancer Clinic is open for appointments to anyone of any age in the Kyabram district. This ensures more people in the community can access this vital service. Leanne hopes that patients will then share their experience with their family and friends, and that this will raise awareness amongst the community.

## Supporting systems and processes

Patient sees nurse for over 75 health assessment\*



Nurse checks any lesions - visually or using dermatoscope



Nurse makes notes/takes photos for GP (GP appointment following nurse appointment)



GP specialist conducts excision or biopsy at clinic, or patient is referred to skin specialist



Where appropriate - follow up with nurse for removal of stitches etc.

\* Best Practice Health Assessment Care Plan template has a section for skin assessment.

## Evaluation and improvement

Through funding, ongoing guidance, and clinical support, Leanne has launched and sustained a much-needed community health service. During the Building Nurse Capacity Program, Leanne identified 20 suspicious lesions, including basal cell carcinomas, squamous cell carcinoma, and keratosis. Two of these patients were referred to specialist services after seeing a GP, and the remaining patients were treated within Kyabram Regional Clinic.



Scan the QR code to watch the video about [Kyabram's Skin Cancer Nurse Clinic](#).

APNA's Building Nurse Capacity Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing under the Nursing in Primary Health Care Program.