



BRIMBANK EARLY YEARS BUS

OUTREACH DURING COVID-19

Brimbank Enhanced MCH Team

11th November, 2022

Historic MCH Mobile Bus

The use of a Mobile Bus was to provide MCH Services in Victoria dating back to 24th September, 1937.

The Age Newspaper reported that the Bus was used in the Mallee Region and had a large medallion on the side bus door with a picture of a rosy-cheeked baby.



Brimbank Early Years BEAR Bus

Brimbank Council was lucky enough to have a van donated to the Early Years Community Wellbeing Team.

It has been redesigned and fitted-out to allow engagement with the Maternal and Child Health Service.

The van is now known as The Brimbank Early Years (BEAR) Bus. It is used as a mobile outreach service to visit children and families in our local community at pop-up locations, or at the homes of families linked to the Maternal and Child Health Service.



Enhanced MCH nurses working on the BEAR Bus



During the 2020 – 2022 COVID-19 pandemic and the multiple lockdowns in Victoria, the BEAR Bus conducted over 450 outreach home visits.

Our Experiences on the BEAR Bus



- Zoom meetings were scheduled weekly to allocate which nurse would work on the Bus.
- Families with infants 0-4 months old were prioritised, a spreadsheet was developed with client details and what assessments were needed (e.g. weight check, full physical assessment, mental health review).
- Phone consults were often completed in the week prior to the Bus visiting – this allowed us to keep our visits within the recommended 15 minutes F2F contact.
- COVID-19 screens were completed with each client the day before our visit.
- One nurse would drive the Bus and attend to documentation, whilst the second nurse would complete the assessments at the back of the Bus.

Our Experiences on the BEAR Bus

- The infant scales and measuring tape/mat was set up, ready to complete physical assessments.
- Only one parent/care-giver allowed on the Bus with the infant, and they were encouraged to wear a mask and use QR code to check in.
- Other family members/siblings was asked to remain outside the Bus.
- We visited 6-7 families a day, sent SMS prior to our arrival, parked the Bus on the street or in the drive way if safe, completed the assessments and informed the family if any follow up was required.



Enhanced MCH nurses working in PPE



Face-to-face PPE training was attended by Enhanced MCH nurses and Team Leader.

Feedback from families

Feedback from the families was that this outreach BEAR Bus was the only face-to-face service they received during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

These vital outreach visits also facilitated referrals to GPs, dietitians, psychologists and other mental health professionals.



BEAR Bus post COVID-19

The BEAR Bus is now being utilised by our Outreach MCH Team to visit families at their homes and attend community events to promote the Maternal and Child Health service.

Most recently, the BEAR Bus has been used at the grand opening of our new Brimbank Aquatic and Wellness Centre, Park Playgroup and the Teddy Bear picnic for Children's Week.

