VIDEO TRANSCRIPT: Critical care telehealth scaling project

Below is a transcript of the following video: [youtube.com/watch?v=a2Cl7Vsy9x0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2Cl7Vsy9x0)

**Douglas Travis – Chair, Better Care Victoria Board**

If you are critically ill in one of our regional areas, it's difficult to work out who should be sent to town and who can be safely looked after at home which is more convenient for the patient and their families. The Telehealth project connects the experienced people in the city to help work out those difficult decisions as to who can be treated safely at home and who needs to come into the city.

**Dr Alison Walker – Clinical Lead of Critical Care Telehealth Project and Director of Mildura Base Hospital ICU**

The first thing I noticed about Mildura was how far away it is from everywhere else. It's 545 kilometres from Melbourne. It takes about six hours to drive in a car, about an hour and a half in the plane. And we really are very isolated up here. We're isolated geographically but also professionally. We don't have our colleagues around us. We have about 600 admissions a year and of them about 120 were flying south to Melbourne. And what we noticed over time was, the patients that were going to Melbourne, they weren't necessarily getting anything different done in Melbourne. They were just getting good ICU care but in the city. And so I began to wonder could we provide that here with the support of our city colleagues in a collaborative model and keep our patients locally. And we noticed very often our sickest patients, we would fly them down to Melbourne but unfortunately they would pass away within 24 hours and to me that is a disaster for the family.

**Rianne’s Family – Consumers at Mildura Base Hospital**

This is Rianne, 22 years old, severely disabled, became critically ill 12 days ago. Was brought into Mildura Base Hospital. We had the absolutely wonderful staff here. What was even better was we had teleconferencing with the Alfred Hospital ICU unit in Melbourne. If we didn't have this service with the Alfred Rianne would be in Melbourne now, without her family. There was talk of flying her out and we were told that she is getting exactly the same service here as she would get in Melbourne but with the advice from the Alfred team Rianne can stay in Mildura. So that's just wonderful. The other thing is the implications of the cost to all parties to be [able to stay home], within this hospital, without travelling. It has been absolutely wonderful, absolutely wonderful that we could stay in Mildura.

**Andrea Bock – Critical Care Telehealth Project Lead, Mildura Base Hospital**

The benefits of the Telehealth project to patients and families is remarkable. Patients and families are able to stay closer to family, saving so much money in terms of loss of income, costs associated with travel and having the support of their loved ones near them is very important.

**Dr Alison Walker – Clinical Lead of Critical Care Telehealth Project and Director of Mildura Base Hospital ICU**

This is all about relationships. Relationships between the Alfred and us and making that communication better. Doctors have always phoned other doctors for advice. The difference with this is the doctor on the other end can see the patient, can see the results, can see the X-rays. And so they're then able to give us better advice because they've got better information.

**Andrea Bock – Critical Care Telehealth Project Lead, Mildura Base Hospital**

The benefits of Mildura Base Hospital and Alfred Health are the relationship building across the sites, the collaborative support, professional development, education, a reduction of bed demand at the Alfred and the obvious potential for project scalability. The key outcomes of the project are that in the 18 months we've averted 43 transfers. So this equates to a greater than $380,000 saving in ambulance transfer fees through Adult Retrieval Victoria. We've also attended greater than 170 formal Telehealth consultations. At times we average around one to three averted transfers per month. And some days we do up to 6 Telehealth consults a day. Our initial funding for the Critical Care Telehealth project was received from Better Care Victoria innovation fund. I'm so very proud of our Telehealth project. The confirmation often that we are doing the right things at the right time is so comforting to the patients, families and also to the staff.