

# Premier opens new Women's Care Unit

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Member for Lismore, the Hon Thomas George, officially opened the new Lismore Base Hospital Women's Care Unit on 25 July.

The Premier toured the unit and met with staff and patients, including some first-time mothers, during the visit.

"Patients and staff have praised the spacious, purpose-built layout and world-class facilities in the unit, which has been operational since 2 May 2017," Ms Berejiklian said.

"The ultra-modern facilities in the Women's Care Unit provide patients in Northern NSW with services as good as anywhere you'll find in Australia," Mr George said.

The new unit features predominantly single-bed rooms, an expanded Special Care Nursery and a new Birthing Unit. In keeping with modern standards, each birthing suite contains a birthing bath.

Lismore Base Hospital has nearly 1200 babies born each year, with the birth rate increasing by 2.6 per cent compared to the same time last year.



**Above, Wayne Jones, Chief Executive Northern NSW Local Health District; Lynne Weir, General Manager Richmond Clarence Health Services Group; The Hon Thomas George MP, Member for Lismore; NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian; and Brian Pezzutti, Northern NSW Local Health District Board Chair cut the cake at the official opening of the Lismore Base Hospital Women's Care Unit.**



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2017 Northern  
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Bonalbo MPS  
progress  
celebrated with  
Topping Out  
ceremony

**NNSWLHD is committed to safeguarding the privacy of patient and employee information, implementing measures to comply with Legislative obligations. Audits have commenced and will continue across the NNSWLHD throughout the calendar year.**

This month the results of the 2017 People Matter Survey were released. While our health district recorded some promising results and improvements on previous years, the report also revealed areas in our workplace where there is still much work to be done.

The majority of respondents in this LHD reported feeling positive about the expectations placed on them to do well in their role, and satisfied with the help and support they receive from other members of their workgroup.

I was pleased to see there was a positive feeling of personal accomplishment and workplace engagement for the majority of employees who responded to the survey, and they felt that other staff treated them with respect.

However, in areas such as change management, senior managers listening to employees and grievance resolution, our organisation as a whole has a lot of room for improvement. Less than a third of

those surveyed responded positively to these questions.

These results are concerning because they point to a gap between what employees desire from their managers and what managers are in fact delivering. Communication and leadership are at the core of these issues, and we are working to improve these going forward.

We are currently recruiting a Culture Officer, whose role will include developing strategies to lead culture change within our health district, and addressing the concerns of staff as highlighted in the survey.

With the creation of this new position, we are acknowledging the need to focus on improving our workplace culture among all levels of staff. We will be working hard to identify where improvements can be made, and to communicate those effectively.

As always, I welcome staff input into how we can work together to develop a strong, respectful workplace culture where employees feel that



their voices count and their opinions matter.

Don't hesitate to share your ideas with your colleagues, managers, or myself.

I look forward to welcoming in a new era of collaboration and communication, and I invite you to join with me in making it happen.

*Wayne Jones*  
Chief Executive

## From the Board Chair



At the most recent Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) Board Meeting the Board endorsed Principles of

Engagement for the NNSWLHD.

These Principles originated from a workshop held at last year's Northern NSW Community Engagement Conference and have been refined by the Northern NSW Community Engagement Advisory Council (CEAC) with considerable input from the Northern NSW Health Literacy Project.

I thank CEAC members for their work on the development of these principles which are provided below for your information and action.

These Principles will be added to the NNSWLHD Community and Stakeholder Engagement Framework and should inform all engagement with our community and stakeholders.

### PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

**1. Ensuring people have a voice.** Everyone on the committee has a chance to share their point of view. Everyone's point of view is valid and respected.

**2. Ensuring many voices are represented.** The perspectives of many people and groups are represented.

**3. Shared vision.** Everyone works together towards the same vision of the future.

**4. Transparency.** Open communication and sharing of information. Everyone has the same, accurate information.

**5. Planning based on the strengths of the community.** The strengths and resources already in the community are recognised. These are a strong basis for future plans.

**6. Authentic engagement.** All perspectives are valued and used to make change.

**7. Realistic aims and expectations.** Objectives and constraints are understood by everyone.



In relation to the Clinical Council refresh outlined in this edition of Northern Exposure, I would also like to thank outgoing Members of the NNSWLHD Clinical Council for their contributions over many years and their work in the last year reviewing the operation of the Clinical Council. I strongly encourage any Clinicians to put in an Expression of Interest for membership of this group.

More than ever, Community, Staff and Clinician Engagement is essential for developing a strong organisation and I am grateful for your existing contributions and encourage more people to get involved in this great adventure.



In closing, I commend each of the entrants in this year's Quality Awards. What a great night of celebration showcasing many fantastic improvement projects, which will no doubt enhance our health service and patient care now and into the future.

*Brian Pezzutti*  
Board Chair



# A mile in your shoes: art meets imaging

Medical imaging diagnostic radiographer, Caroline Ainsworth, was a recent winner of one of six arts funding grants provided across Northern NSW Local Health District through the 2017 NSW Health and the Arts Framework. Caroline holds a Visual Arts degree from Southern Cross University and has a passion for the arts, working mainly in ceramics, but also with paint and photography.

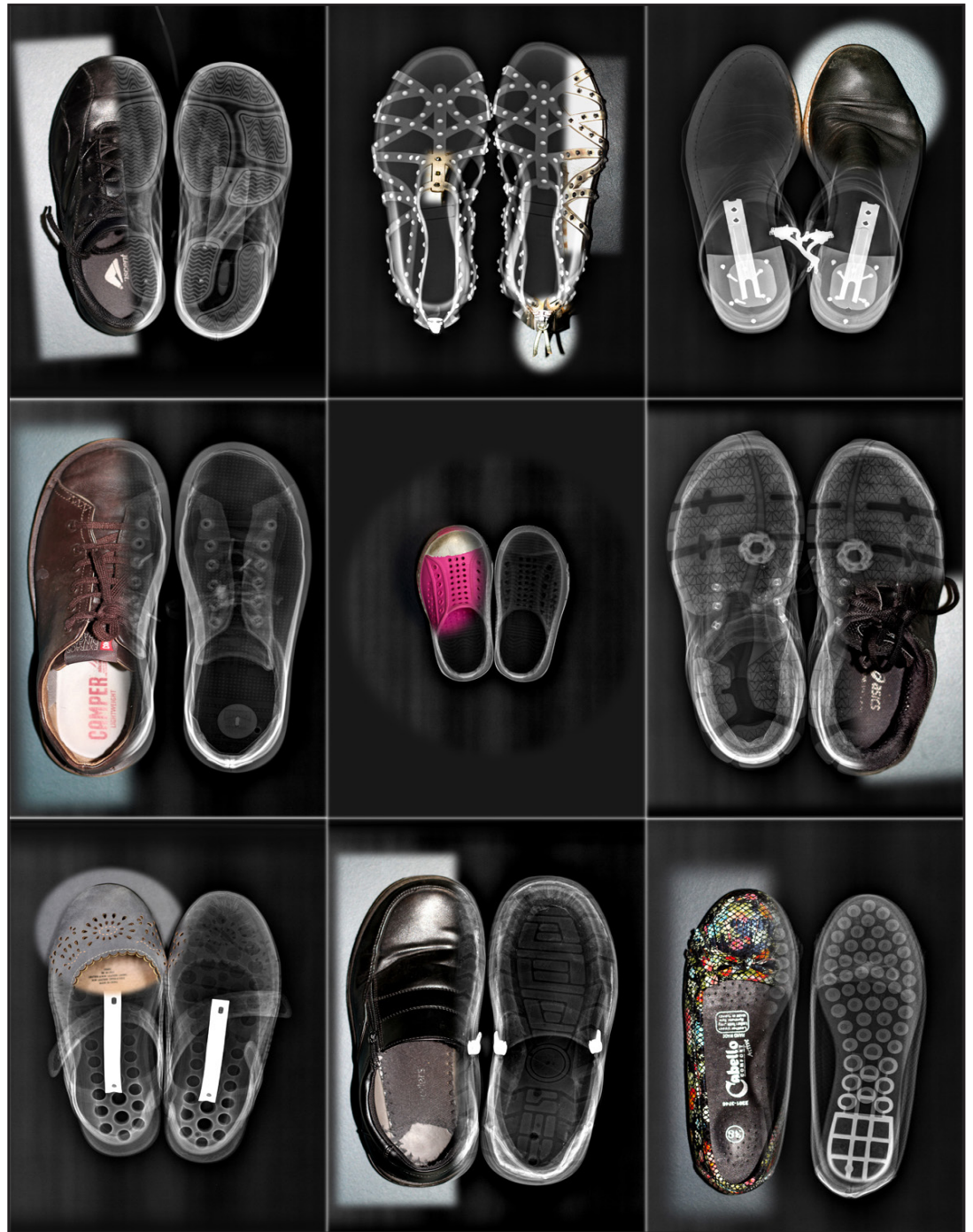
With the aim of encouraging the community to engage with the healthcare experience, Caroline created a body of work, 'A Mile in Your Shoes', which features shoes from 54 individuals, including staff, patients, volunteers and visitors across six sites within the health district.

Shoes can be seen as sartorial symbols of humanity and reflections of our own personalities and characteristics.

The project involved X-raying and photographing the shoes in the controlled environment of Medical Imaging. The six finished images are designed to promote the relationship between patients, carers, staff and visitors that walk through the doors of healthcare centres in the Northern Rivers area.

Walking a metaphorical mile in someone else's shoes may be a way for deeper learning about one another, and making us more tolerant of each other.

After being exhibited in Lismore for one night as a collection of works, each panel will then go home to its respective facility to be erected in public view.



**Above, an image from the series 'A Mile in Your Shoes' featuring shoes from Ballina District Hospital. From top left to bottom right, footwear belonging to Emergency Department NUM, on-call Radiographer, Emergency Department Consultant, Emergency Department VMO, patient, Emergency Department RN, Ward Clerk, X-ray wardsman, and Ballina Hospital Auxiliary member.**

## Support on-call for nurses and midwives



The 24/7 Nurse and Midwife Support service has now been in operation for several months. Nurses and midwives are encouraged to access the confidential telephone health support service, where each counsellor

is a registered nurse or midwife who understands the nature of the professions.

Whether you have experienced a challenging shift, are feeling anxious or depressed, struggling with issues in your personal life,

or just want to call to say hello, the counsellors are there to chat. NM Support is also available to nursing and midwifery managers, students and family members. Call 1800 667 877 or visit [www.nmsupport.org.au](http://www.nmsupport.org.au)

## Oh, to be well again

If there is one thing that being ill is good for, it's making you appreciate those times when you are feeling well.

This month I've been a victim of the influenza bug going around, and I can say it took me by surprise just how devastating its affects were on my body.

Days of sweats and fevers, weeks of coughing, and more over-the-counter pain medication than I would probably take in a year.

I can't imagine how difficult it must be for someone with a compromised immune system to catch illnesses like this, and much worse.

For me, the anticipation of returning to normal health has kept me going each day, but it has been a long and difficult process.

It's times like this that I am grateful for our well-developed health system, from the GP in town who I can make an emergency appointment with, to the pharmacies and after-hours chemists who carry all manner of medications to help me recover, to the network of hospitals ready to receive me should my condition deteriorate.

I'm grateful that these services are available to me no matter my income or age or place of work.

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In July I attended the 2017 Quality Awards gala night, held in Ballina. Not being from a clinical background, it was the first time I had seen these types of quality improvement projects being presented.

I was quite impressed with the ingenuity and simplicity of many of the initiatives, where a tiny idea could lead to a great change for the patients involved.

From speeding up the admission and discharge notifications process, to helping dialysis patients get more exercise into their day, to making residential aged care vacancies more easy to monitor, the evening was filled with inspiring ideas that show we can all be agents for change, no matter how big or small.



**Fiona Baker**  
Editor

## What's in your cup?

Improving nutrition and maintaining a healthy weight starts with making good choices. Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) is helping to make healthy choices easier as part of NSW Health's healthy eating initiative.

Over the coming months you will start to notice some changes to drinks being sold at facilities throughout the health district, with the introduction of more nutritional options, and the gradual removal of less healthy options.

As a health provider, we are setting a good example by increasing the availability of healthy food and drinks for our staff, patients and visitors to purchase on site.

As part of this initiative, NNSWLHD is working towards removing sugary drinks with no nutritional value from sale by December 2017.

With more than half of all adults and nearly one quarter of children overweight or obese, no single action will be able to tackle this issue.

Offering healthier options is part of



a range of initiatives designed to make healthy normal.

For more information on how you can make healthy choices, head to [www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au](http://www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au)

For questions about the introduction of this initiative within NNSWLHD, please email Anna Huddy at [anna.huddy@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:anna.huddy@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

## Support on hand for families

The Family Referral Service (FRS) brings together families, support services and community resources to ensure children and young people are safe and well.

Funded by NSW Health, the FRS was established following the Wood Inquiry into Child Protection to assist families to access the support they need.

Family Referral Workers will help families to identify their most important needs, and connect them with services.

The Family Referral Service accepts referrals from all families, including culturally

and linguistically diverse families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, and young people themselves.

Any service that works with children and families including government and non-government agencies can use the service, as well as doctors and health professionals.

Referrals can be made by telephone, email, or in person at the Tweed, Lismore and Grafton offices. For more information go to [www.familyreferralservice.com.au](http://www.familyreferralservice.com.au) or call 1800 338 774.



## Check out NNSW LHD Facebook page

The Northern NSW Local Health District Facebook page is used for a range of promotional activities, including the Health Promotion newsletter, pictured right, and by the LHD Media Unit to promote local events and celebrate the achievements of staff and volunteers.

It is regularly updated with the happenings across the LHD. Check out our page today!





# 2017 Quality Awards Gala Night

The 2017 Northern NSW Local Health District Quality Awards were held on Friday 14 July at Ballina RSL Club.

Around 90 people attended the formal event, which brought together finalists from each of the nine categories to present their quality improvement projects and display posters of their entries.

The evening was officiated

by Ms Carrie Marr, Chief Executive of the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission, and Ms Jenny Preece, Rural Health Manager for the Agency for Clinical Innovation was a special guest.

The overall winner of the 2017 Quality Awards was Timothy Marsh, for his team's project titled Transforming patient care: connecting hospitals and GPs with

instant, automated Admission and Discharge Notifications.

Throughout the night, guests voted for the People's Choice Award for Best Poster, which went to the Totally Hip (and knee) team of Dr Jason Tsung, Josie Bates, Mark Frost, Kirsty Sked, Roz Wagner, Jacque Ellem, Allison Taylor and Lynn Hopkinson.

Guests also voted on the People's Choice Award for

Best Presentation, which was won by the Exercise on Dialysis team, including Tiphane Lloyd, Kylie Everman, Peter Alexander, Jane Ruane and the Lismore Base Hospital Renal Unit.

The event was proudly sponsored by Cerner, Allleasing, Smartsalary, North Coast Primary Health Network, COS and Trenches McKenzie Cox Solicitors.



**Above, Overall Winner 2017 Quality Awards and Agency for Clinical Innovation Category Winner, Timothy Marsh (right) with Dr Chris Mitchell and Dr Brian Pezzutti, NNSWLHD Board Chair.**



**Above, winner People's Choice Award for Best Poster and joint winner Clinical Practice Improvement Category, Lynn Hopkinson (left) and Josie Bates (right) receive their award on behalf of the Totally Hip (and Knee) team from Damon Buckle, COS National Account Director.**



**Above, winner People's Choice Award for Best Presentation and joint winner Clinical Practice Improvement Category, Tiphane Lloyd and Kylie Everman from the Exercise on Dialysis project team with COS National Account Director, Damon Buckle.**



**Above right, winners Collaborative Team Category, Christine Sullivan and Lyn Menchin of Making a Talking Tobacco Team of Champions with SmartSalary representatives Kate Grealy and Kirsty Fowler.**



# 2017 Quality Awards Gala Night



**Above, winner Corporate Practice Improvement Category, Karen Brown (at centre), from The Tweed Hospital Central Sterilising Supply Unit, receives her award from SmartSalary representatives Kate Grealy and Kirsty Fowler.**



**Above, winners Enhancing Patient Experience Through the Arts Category, Laurel Rogers and Ellie Saberi for Welcoming Aboriginal Women: Making Maternity Services Culturally Inclusive Places, receive their award from Paul Willma, NSW General Manager, CERNER.**



**Above, winner Local Solutions Category, Fran Hoftsee for the project Emergent Surgery: Why the Wait receives her award from Dr Vahid Saberi, Chief Executive, North Coast Primary Health Network.**



**Above, winner Patients as Partners Category, Taya Prescott, Northern NSW Health Literacy Project, receives her award from Alleasing representatives Shaun Sergay and Daniel Pellegrini.**



**Above, winner Preventive Health Category, Jillian Adams, receives the award for the Live Well Now website from Dr Vahid Saberi, Chief Executive, North Coast Primary Health Network.**



**Above, winner Translational Research Category, Leanne Schipanski and Melissa Ingram (centre) for their project, Developing a Transport Process for Residential Aged Care Vacancies, with Alleasing representatives Shaun Sergay and Daniel Pellegrini.**



# Topping Out at Bonalbo MPS

The progress of the new Bonalbo Multi-Purpose Service was celebrated on 14 August at a Topping Out ceremony to mark the completion of the facility's roof.

Member for Lismore, the Hon Thomas George, laid a ceremonial brick and paid tribute to the community members, auxiliary and health organisation staff who have worked together to deliver this great project.

"Today is a marvellous day for the Bonalbo and surrounding communities as the completion of the roof, structural framing, and internal framework marks a significant milestone for the project," Mr George said.

"The new MPS in Bonalbo will replace the existing hospital and outdated community health building with a modern, integrated health facility that will service the needs of region long into the future."

Stage 1, comprising 15 residential aged care beds, a 24-hour emergency department, inpatient beds and consultations rooms, is due for completion by the end of the year.

Stage 2, comprising 'back of house' staff facilities, kitchen, and staff accommodation is due for completion in



**Above, left to right, John Tart, Bonalbo Project Control Group and Save Our Services (SOS) committee member; Cr John Burley, Kyogle Shire Council Deputy Mayor; Wayne Jones, Northern NSW LHD Chief Executive; Lynne Weir, General Manager Richmond Clarence Health Service Group; Nancy Martin, Executive Officer/ Director of Nursing MPS Network; and Narelle Gotting, Save Our Services (SOS) and Bonalbo United Hospital Auxiliary at the topping out service.**

mid-2018.

The MPS model tailors healthcare needs for the local community by integrating health, aged care services, and

emergency services, to provide flexible health service delivery – from primary health care to acute and residential aged care.

## Emma-Jane takes nursing know-how to desert festival

Lismore Base Hospital Emergency Department Nursing Unit Manager, Emma-Jane Davies, recently returned from volunteering her clinical skills at Australia's most remote music festival, the 'Big Red Bash' on the edge of the Simpson Desert.

30km from Birdsville, the event brings around 7000 people to the desert for the three-day festival.

"My role was the event RN clinic co-ordinator, which meant being responsible for the set-up of clinic/medical services (yes including setting up the actual tent!), co-ordination of those services with local retrieval teams including Queensland Ambulance Services and Royal Flying Doctor Service,

and the delivery of clinical care," Emma-Jane said.

Her team operated a 24-hour service throughout the event.

The most common presenting complaints were respiratory presentations, eye injuries and irritations (lots and lots of red dust), dehydration, trauma (alcohol and campfires don't mix well) and the general presentations found in any Emergency Department such as chest pain, abdominal pain etc.

"It was wonderful to work in a remote part of the country," Emma-Jane said.

Her family also went along for the journey, which equated to a round trip of approximately 3600 kms.



**Above, Lismore Base Hospital Emergency Department NUM, Emma-Jane Davies, co-ordinating medical care in the Simpson Desert for the Birdsville Big Red Bash.**

## Let's Talk Health Literacy

### Flu Mythbusters

With the number of people suffering from colds, coughs and flu rising rapidly at the moment, it is more important than ever that we help stop the spread of flu.

For people with chronic health conditions or weakened immune system, the flu can be serious, even deadly.

We know that people from populations that are most at risk for low health literacy are also those least likely to get the flu shot. We also know that one of the barriers to getting a flu shot is not having enough information or the right information. We can help increase people's health literacy about the flu by busting some of the myths we hear:

#### **"The flu shot gives me the flu"**

The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu. The flu vaccine only contains a 'dead' virus that is incapable of making you sick. If you get sick shortly after receiving the shot, it's likely that you've come down with a cold or were exposed to the flu virus before the vaccine took full effect (about two weeks).

#### **"I am fit and healthy so I don't need a flu shot"**

Anyone can catch the flu. Being fit and healthy does not protect you. By having the vaccination you can protect yourself and reduce the chance of passing on the flu to a baby, an older relative or someone with a medical condition who could become seriously ill from the flu.

#### **"You can still get the flu even if you have the flu shot."**

The vaccine is designed to protect against the flu, but doesn't protect against coughs and colds. Often people confuse these with the flu.

# Polite, kind, caring - that's our staff

Going to hospital can be worrying and stressful, but knowing the staff will always be kind, caring and respectful can make a huge difference.

A recent survey of patient experience in NSW public hospitals revealed that patients in the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) rate the staff and care they receive within local hospitals very highly.

The Bureau of Health Information released the third year of results from the Adult Admitted Patient Survey. The report shows that at a district level, the NNSWLHD recorded significantly more positive results than the NSW result across many areas.

Casino and District Memorial Hospital and Murwillumbah District Hospital stood out as receiving significantly more positive results than the NSW average. Both hospitals recorded results above the state average for more than 55 per cent of the survey.

The survey asks patients to rate

their recent experience with the public healthcare system and the results are treated confidentially.

The report reveals high numbers of patients in NNSWLHD reported positive experiences in categories including:

- The staff who met them on arrival to hospital were always polite and courteous (97% of respondents)
- Their cultural or religious beliefs were always respected by the hospital staff (94%)
- The nurses were always kind and caring towards them (89%)
- They were always treated with respect and dignity while they were in hospital (89%)

"There are some fantastic results here," Wayne Jones, Chief Executive, NNSWLHD said.

"It is pleasing to see this report reflecting the great attitudes and commitment of our staff who are passionate about providing great care to our patients."

## North Coast residents benefit from 2017 Winter Strategy

26 practices are now participating in the 'Winter Strategy', and have enrolled over 700 patients at high risk of poor health and hospitalisation. These patients are on their practice's 'winter watch list' and will receive additional care from their General Practice to support improved self-management.

In addition, continuity of care is supported via provision of admission and discharge notifications to the General Practice if a patient on their 'winter watch list' goes to hospital.

The past month has been a busy time for practices as they identify, enrol and provide additional care for their winter watch list patients.

Practices have tailored participation in the Winter Strategy to suit their needs, with some practices taking a boutique approach and enrolling less than ten patients, and other practices providing additional care for up to 60 patients.

The benefits of this work are already being seen, with patients reporting a



greater sense of confidence in managing their own care.

Regardless of whether your practice is participating in the Winter Strategy, or you are a Local Health District clinician, you can take advantage of great patient self-management tools and resources, such as 'Sick Day Action Plans', by visiting [www.ncphn.org.au/winter-2017](http://www.ncphn.org.au/winter-2017)



# Clinical Council gets a refresh

Over the past year, the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) Clinical Council has reviewed the structure and processes of the Council and has developed a revised Terms of Reference which includes expanded membership. Some of this expanded Membership was appointed earlier this year.

The NNSWLHD is now seeking expressions of interest from a range of Clinicians to join the District Clinical Council which is in the process of undergoing a refresh.

NNSWLHD acknowledges and thanks a number of original and long term members of the District Clinical Council who are standing down or nearing the end of their appointments and thanks them for their valued contributions over the years, including their review of Clinical Council processes.

These members are: Dr Jackie Andrews (outgoing Chair), Dr Steve Diamond, Dr Carolyn May, Di Goldie, Deb Carney, Simon Fenn, Rebecca Davey, Janelle Jacobsen and Fiona Couch. Any clinicians interested in joining the Clinical Council are encouraged to talk with these clinicians.

The current Expression of Interest, which will include a peer selection process, relates to the following positions:

- Senior Nursing Richmond Clarence



**Above, participants at a Clinical Council workshop held in September 2016 to begin the process of reviewing the Council's structure and operations.**

- Senior Nursing Tweed Byron
- Senior Medical Richmond Clarence
- Senior Medical Tweed Byron
- Senior Allied Health Richmond Clarence
- Senior Allied Health Tweed Byron
- Allied Health Clinician – anywhere in the District
- Junior Medical Officer (two-year appointment) – anywhere in the District
- Midwifery Clinician – anywhere in

the District

- Mental Health Clinician – anywhere in the District.

A draft of the Terms of Reference, which are currently being finalised, is available at <http://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/about/northern-nsw-local-health-district/community-and-clinical-engagement/>

Expressions of Interest can be lodged before 23 August 2017 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nswlhdc201>

## Nimbin UHA celebrates 70 years

On 9 August the Nimbin United Hospital Auxiliary (UHA) held their Annual General Meeting (AGM), and also celebrated their 70th Anniversary.

The celebrations included a performance by the Nimbin Central School choir and a presentation by Nimbin Community Health Nurse, Helen

Simpson, following her recent trip to Nepal building earth bag houses as part of the earthquake rebuilding effort.

With only around 15 active members, the small UHA produces a remarkable amount of fundraising for the Nimbin Multi-Purpose Service.

In the past year the Nimbin UHA has purchased \$33,616 worth of furniture and equipment for the patients and aged care residents at the MPS.

Through street raffles, pub raffles, fashion parades, donation boxes and preserve sales, the UHA raised more than \$20,000 in the 2016/17 financial year, only the second time they have ever achieved such a result in a single financial year.

The AGM saw the outgoing President, Maureen Lombard, hand over to incoming President Robyn Roos.

Long-term UHA member, Jean Stephens, 102, was also a special guest at the meeting.



**Above, from left, Auxiliary member Faye Scherf, previous Auxiliary member Jean Stephens and Auxiliary member Phyllis Williams cut the cake at the Nimbin UHA's 70th Anniversary celebrations.**



# Radiation Therapist dons dance shoes

North Coast Cancer Institute Radiation Therapist, Vanessa Knibbs recently exchanged sensible footwear for dancing shoes as part of the Cancer Council's Stars of Lismore - Dance for Cancer event held on 5 August.

The event saw 11 local personalities being challenged to fundraise whilst learning a dance routine. In total the event has raised almost \$79,000.

"I decided to take part in the fundraising event because I do enjoy dancing, but I have never danced in front of that many people before," Vanessa said.

"When I found out I would be doing Belly dancing I was very nervous, however, the training sessions with Danielle and Jana at the Barefoot Gypsy Studio in Lismore were great fun and after months of practice I started to become less dizzy and a little more poised."

Vanessa once gave up dancing because her teacher told her she had no rhythm, but that didn't stop Vanessa from accepting the challenge of being a Star in the Dance For Cancer.

"The performance went really well and I didn't turn the wrong way or trip over my veil. I also really enjoyed



**Above, Vanessa Knibbs (in white skirt, far right) twirls her way through her routine at the Dance for Cancer fundraiser held recently in Lismore.**

meeting all of the other performers and getting together to raise money for the local Cancer Council.

"I would like to thank every one of my friends and work colleagues for their support, especially with the clothes swap, trivia night, cake stalls and raffle

ticket sales," Vanessa said.

Funds raised go towards cancer research, prevention, advocacy and information and support services.

For more information please contact Vanessa Knibbs on [Vanessa.Knibbs@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Vanessa.Knibbs@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

## Bonalbo Auxiliary elects new team

Bonalbo United Hospital Auxiliary (UHA) held its 47th Annual General Meeting on 8 August to present badges to their newly elected executive and hear from the Bonalbo MPS Project team.

Elected to office were: Paddy Kirkley, President, Jennifer Taylor and Margaret

Bowden, Vice Presidents, Merrill Carr, Secretary, and Dianne Carr, Treasurer.

This is Merrill's 19th year as Secretary of the Bonalbo UHA and her 20th year as a member. The meeting also took time to celebrate long-serving member Joan Coonan's 90th birthday.



**Above, from left, Bonalbo UHA members Jennifer Taylor, Vice President; Paddy Kirkley, President; Merrill Carr, Secretary; and Margaret Bowden, Vice President at the recent Annual General Meeting.**

## Immunisation facts now more accessible to all

The NSW State Government and the Federal Government are increasing efforts to support parents in decision making about childhood vaccinations.

Both levels of government are actively working to raise awareness around the facts and benefits of childhood immunisation so that parents and the wider community can easily access the information they need in order to make informed decisions.

At the NSW Health website [www.immunisation.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.immunisation.health.nsw.gov.au) people can find information on the myths and realities around immunisation and download an app, 'Save the Date to Vaccinate' to assist with scheduling their family's vaccinations.

The Australian Government's website [www.immunisationfacts.gov.au](http://www.immunisationfacts.gov.au) also contains useful tools and resources for the public to better understand vaccination.



# Mental Health in focus at Aged Care Symposium

An Aged Care Symposium held in Ballina on 20 and 21 July is being hailed as a great success, with 190 people attending from across a variety of sectors including health, community, primary care and residential care.

Participants travelled from the Central Coast, Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and the Gold Coast to listen and learn from an impressive lineup of presenters at the two-day symposium on the theme 'Ageing with Mental Health: What am I looking at?'

Topics covered included anxiety in the older person, how personality can impact on ageing, the NSW Older Person Policy Direction for Mental Health Services, strategies on how mental health clinicians manage complex presentations, suicide in the elderly, and a review of antipsychotic prescribing in aged care.

Presenters included Dr David Kitching, Psychogeriatrician at Concord Hospital, Clinical Psychologist and Associate Professor Viv



Wuthrich of the Centre for Emotional Health at Macquarie University, and Professor Daniel O'Connor, Professorial Fellow at the Institute for Health and Ageing at Australian Catholic University.

Particular mention must also be made of the great

audience interaction in a Q&A session moderated by the emcee, radio broadcaster Geoff Field.

The symposium was a collaboration between the Northern NSW Local Health District and North Coast Primary Health Network.

**Above, Dr Hugh Fairfull-Smith, Geriatrician, Lismore Base Hospital; Dr Lin Yang, Career Medical Officer Geriatrics, Lismore Base Hospital; and Dr Julia Lisle, Geriatrician, Lismore Base Hospital attend the Aged Care Symposium at Ballina RSL.**

**Left, participants listen during a session at the Symposium.**



## **"My life's not worth living..." What to do when you hear these words.**

Australia's suicide rate is of major concern. From 2011 – 2015 the number of people who ended their own lives was 10,407.

In NSW, a high proportion of suicide deaths recorded were people between the ages of 20-29 years.

The [Suicide Risk HealthPathway](#) has been created by a workgroup of local clinicians with expertise in mental health.

The pathway provides some useful tools that can assist in the clinical evaluation of people at imminent risk of suicide.

The pathway includes an assessment and management section based on best practice guidelines, a referral section and culturally appropriate advice and red flags.

The assessment section:

- explains the limits of confidentiality

between you and your client

- provides a guide to those specific population groups who may be at higher risk
- provides examples of screening questions that may flag a need to enquire further about suicide risk

- provides a guide to assess the levels of risk and safety needs

The management section:

- includes suicide crisis intervention techniques
- provides clear steps for management based on the person's safety needs
- provides a 'Keep me safe' plan which can be prepared for the client with a list of emergency contacts and an individualised self-care plan.

The referral section provides information to local referral services and links to:

- [Acute Mental Assessment](#)
- [Acute Paediatric Referral](#)

## **- [Scheduling a Patient](#)**

The Patient Information section provides Lifeline and other useful counselling numbers and a printable pdf from the Black Dog Institute on 'Facts about Suicide'.

HealthPathways relating to articles in this edition can be accessed at the following links:

- [Pregnancy](#)
- [Antenatal Care - Routine NSW](#)
- [Nutrition](#)
- [Influenza immunisation](#)
- [Cognitive Impairment and Dementia](#)

For a list of all localised pathways see: <https://manc.healthpathways.org.au/>

Username: manchealth

Password: conn3ct3d

For further information contact [kkeyte@ncphn.org.au](mailto:kkeyte@ncphn.org.au)



# The last word...

## Dr Wagner receives rural medicine award

At a lunch on 29 July, General Physician, Dr Frank Wagner was honoured for his clinical services to rural and remote areas over his long career.

Dr Wagner received the 2017 Medal for Clinical Service in Rural and Remote Areas from the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

Dr Wagner graduated from Sydney University in 1962, followed by two years Residency at Brisbane Mater Hospital and one year General Practice in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

Dr Wagner then completed Physician training at Concord Hospital, Sydney, returning to Papua New Guinea as a Staff Physician for eight years. During this time he was also involved in the training of local medical graduates.

From 1976 until now, Dr

Wagner has worked as a General Physician in Lismore, NSW.

Dr Wagner is a Visiting Medical Officer at Lismore Base Hospital and over the past 12 years has been a part-time Specialist as Medical Director of the Lismore Base Hospital Multidisciplinary Pain Clinic.

The Clinic covers from Grafton to Tweed Heads and has a role in the education of General Practitioners and other health professionals. It is co-ordinated through the University of Wollongong with all the other Multidisciplinary Pain Management Clinics in NSW.

Dr Wagner is involved with the teaching of Basic Physician Trainees from Royal North Shore Hospital and Interns from Prince of Wales Hospital rotating through Lismore Base



Hospital, as well as the Rural Preferential Interns.

Dr Wagner also has involvement in Medical Student teaching through the

University College of Rural Health in Lismore, which places up to 700 students a year from 14 different Universities.

## Tony farewelled as Corporate Services Director

An informal morning tea was held on 11 August to acknowledge Northern NSW Local Health District's Acting Director of Corporate Services, Tony Beashel's last day in the position.

Tony will remain with the Local Health District in the coming months as he oversees several projects and assists with handover of his portfolio

to the incoming Director of Corporate Services, Matt Long.

Tony was celebrated for his commitment to mentoring his team, and the humour and expertise that he brought to this role and others during his many years with the organisation.

Prior to taking up the role of Acting Director Corporate Services, Tony held

a number of senior positions within the Chief Executive and Corporate Services Units.

Since returning to the North Coast from Southern NSW Regional Health in 1993 as the Chief Executive Officer for Byron Shire and Ballina Hospitals, Tony has held a number of District and Area Health roles including management of procurement, contracts, leasing and tendering, capital works, assets, biomedical and compliance management.

Tony also spent time as the Executive Officer for the Tweed Heads District Hospital during their last major redevelopment in the late 1990s.

**Left, staff pictured at a morning tea are Tony Beashel, outgoing Acting Director Corporate Services; Flevy Crasto, Business Manager; Jenny Cleaver, Manager Chief Executive Unit; Murray Spriggs, Manager Community and Clinical Engagement; and Jennifer Parson, Executive Assistant to the Director Integrated Care.**

