

4 Small sites deliver
top notch care

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Michelle Gray

16 Rural support reaching
people on the land

NORTHERN

EXPOSURE





SINGING THE PRAISES

It was amazing to see two of our small sites receive a great report card in the most recent independent survey of hospital patients.

I've visited both Kyogle and Nimbin sites at various times, and it's not hard to see why patients would feel they had received compassionate treatment from a courteous and attentive team.

I have always felt welcomed there, and each time I leave feeling like I wouldn't mind moving my office a few kilometres to the west!

While the big sites often get the attention when it comes to media reports, pilot programs or clinical advancements, it's wonderful to shine the spotlight on the smaller integral members of the NNSWLHD family.

These sites play an important role in their local communities and in the health service more broadly. As Multi-Purpose Services, their role in providing residential aged care can't be overlooked. It must be a winning combination for staff and patients, one that is clearly creating a positive experience for people coming through the doors.

Sometimes patients at one of our bigger hospitals might get offered a transfer to a smaller hospital to continue their treatment. If that were me, and I could spend a week out in the beautiful countryside with caring staff looking after me, I'd say 'sign me up'!

NORTHERN

EXPOSURE

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Cover photo - Nimbin Rocks, Jeremy Billett

Kyogle Hospital staff, from left, Jacob Rose, Maree Owen, Rachael Keys NUM, Julie Goodwin and Michelle Leach

Executive Update



Wayne Jones
Chief Executive

In the current COVID-19 climate, business as usual has taken on a new meaning.

As we return some services, we need to recognise that business as usual must now be considered within a COVID-Safe environment.

Activities such as meetings, staff training and education are now taking place

virtually in many cases as part of the new normal. Where we do meet face to face, we need to keep physical distancing and hand hygiene front of mind. You may notice signs on meeting rooms or staff areas to indicate how many people are allowed at once.

If you're unsure about what you need to do to comply, please speak with your manager or send a query to our dedicated staff COVID inbox: NNSWLHD-staffquestions-COVID19@health.nsw.gov.au.

At the time of printing, members of the public are strongly encouraged to wear masks in high-risk public settings, such as indoors where physical distancing is not possible, including on public transport, in supermarkets, customer-facing venues like cafés and pubs, and places of worship.

People who are in a high-risk category for health reasons are also encouraged to wear a mask.

Visitors, patients and carers should wear a mask if they visit a health facility.

For our own staff, we continue to follow the Clinical Excellence Commission guidelines which state we should wear a surgical mask within 1.5 metres of patients within a healthcare environment.

Thank you to everyone for taking on this additional safety measure, it is one more tool in reducing any transmission among our community.

It's now been six months since we first heard the word COVID, and unfortunately it will be with us for some time yet.

I ask that you please keep on looking after each other. We look after our patients and clients very well, but it's so important to look after yourself, too. Please take the time to relax, have time out, and stay safe. If you're out and about, or meeting with friends, don't forget to keep a safe distance.

From the Board Chair



Brian Pezzutti
Board Chair

Among the concerning developments in Victoria's escalating coronavirus crisis, is the large number of healthcare workers who are among the State's positive cases.

More than 700 Victorian healthcare workers – including staff at some of Melbourne's busiest hospitals – are reported to have tested positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic. Hundreds

more have been unable to work as they have been placed in quarantine due to potential exposure.

These staff impacts are occurring as Victorian hospitals increase capacity to treat those with COVID-19.

This serves as an important reminder to all staff across NNSWLHD that COVID-19 can affect anyone, and we must all do what we can to stay safe. If we have an outbreak in our staff, it makes it more difficult to care for our community and one another.

One of the key messages in responding to this pandemic is that "we are all in this together". Quite simply, that means everyone in the community shares a responsibility to take steps to prevent transmission. Practice good hygiene and physical distancing, and if you are unwell get tested and stay home.

While it is the actions of the entire community that will help us beat this

virus, I urge health staff to be particularly diligent and to set the example for others. Please encourage your family and friends to also follow the public health advice and directions.

If you attend a social gathering, please keep your distance and encourage others to do likewise. Don't be afraid to call out any behaviour that you see that is unsafe wherever you are.

In NSW, we are at a critical juncture in the battle against COVID-19.

I do not want our health service to be seen as the "ambulance at the bottom of the cliff!" In other words, prevention is better than cure!

Thank you all for your incredible work during this difficult time. By taking personal responsibility for keeping transmission low, we'll put our health service in the best position to continue responding as the situation evolves.



Nimbin MPS staff, from left, Peter Doyle RN, Stephen Sherlock EEN, Kath Reay EEN, Karen Green HealthShare Manager, Viola Asi Administration Officer. Top, Kyogle Memorial Hospital. Bottom, Nimbin MPS

Small sites deliver top notch care

Patients at Nimbin Multi-purpose Service and Kyogle Memorial Hospital have given staff a huge tick of approval in the latest independent survey.

The two small rural hospitals received outstanding results, with 84 percent of patients surveyed rating the care and treatment they received as ‘very good’ – the highest result in NSW.

The Rural Hospital Emergency Care Patient Survey 2019 surveyed patients who attended a small rural public hospital between January to April 2019. The previous equivalent survey was held in 2015-16.

Local patients reported very high rates of satisfaction with the emergency department staff, doctors and nurses who treated them at the two sites.

Eighty-eight per cent would speak highly of their experience in the ED to family and

friends, while 95 percent agreed the ED nurses were ‘always’ polite and courteous.

Communication and discharge planning were rated highly by patients, with almost all patients (98 per cent) saying that health professionals explained the purpose of medication in a way they could understand, and 91 percent agreeing they felt involved in decisions about their discharge from hospital, the highest result in NSW and an improvement of 8 percentage points on the previous survey in 2015-16.

NNSWLHD Chief Executive Wayne Jones said the results are a testament to the efficient, hardworking and caring teams who care for their local communities in Nimbin and Kyogle.

“The staff in our smaller sites work extremely hard to provide compassionate, patient-centred care, and they should be proud of their efforts,” Mr Jones said.

Patients also reported high levels of satisfaction when it came to cleanliness, with 94 per cent of respondents saying the ED treatment area was ‘very clean’.

“Providing excellent hospital care is a team effort, and it’s great to see our fantastic cleaning staff being recognised for the

work they do in keeping the environment clean and hygienic for our community.”

Executive Officer/ Director of Nursing for the MPS Network, Nancy Martin, congratulated the staff on their great efforts.

“Well done everyone! A fantastic result and great feedback to our excellent clinicians,” Nancy said.

KYOGLE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

- 96%** doctors were polite and courteous
- 92%** ED treatment area was very clean
- 82%** care and treatment was very good
- 85%** would speak highly of their experience to family and friends
- 97%** received the right amount of information about their condition/treatment

NIMBIN MULTI-PURPOSE SERVICE

- 99%** ED staff on arrival and the ED nurses were polite and courteous
- 94%** health professionals explained things in a way they could understand
- 97%** received the right amount of information about their condition/treatment
- 98%** ED treatment area was very clean
- 94%** would speak highly of their experience to family and friends.

Intellectual Disability Health Services closer to home

Across NSW, teams are being expanded to support health services to better meet the care needs of people with intellectual disability.

In Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) we are now supported by a local specialist clinician based in NNSWLHD, and an outreach service from the Specialist Intellectual Disability Health Team located in Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD).

What is a Specialist Clinician?

This position sits within the local health district and has a collaborative role with local clinicians and the specialist outreach service to identify priority needs and put strategies in place to improve how we coordinate health services for people with intellectual disability.

What is the Specialist Team?

The North Sydney Intellectual Disability



Stock image

Health Service (NS SIDHS) will provide a specialist multi-disciplinary service offering assessment and care planning for people with complex health needs and intellectual disability. They also offer activities to build the skills, confidence, and experience of mainstream clinicians.

What services are provided?

Health Teams can receive support such as:

- Advice and information on the management of care for a person with an intellectual disability
- Skills training or other education sessions
- Information and advice on resources and specific areas of interest in relation to intellectual disability.

People with an Intellectual Disability can also receive support, including assessment and assistance with health care planning, or Information, resources and advice.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible, the child, adolescent or adult with intellectual disability will have:

- Complex health conditions, and
- A current unresolved health problem, and health care needs that cannot be met by usual care.

For more information, please contact Michelle Gray - Specialist Clinician Intellectual Disability, at Michelle.gray@health.nsw.gov.au.

WELCOME TO THE AGE OF INCLUSION

Our leadership team is dedicated to the Age of Inclusion, welcoming a new era where our difference, including our disabilities, are valued and respected.

Through The Age of Inclusion, we can celebrate the unique thinking and experiences of each other. Because not being all the same can make an amazing difference.

"I want the Northern NSW Local Health District to explore new ways of working together: rethink our approach to recruitment, make workplaces accessible, make good design - for everyone, and use new technologies to break down barriers," Chief Executive, Wayne Jones said.



"By working side by side in a diverse workplace we provide the highest quality patient-centred care to our diverse community."

Each of us can play a part and be a champion and advocate for people with disability in the public sector. Ours will

be a culture proud to ask: "what works for you?" Join us in making disability inclusion work for everyone, and join the conversation, **#theageofinclusion**. You can learn more at:



<https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/workplace-culture---diversity/disability-employment/the-age-of-inclusion>

Supporting young people to access mental health care

Reducing the number of young people who present to hospital requiring a mental health assessment is front of mind for a new project team.

Presenting to the Emergency Department (ED) can be a difficult time for anyone. But for young people who are experiencing mental illness, it can be even more trying.

That's why Liz Tovey, the Clinical Director, Kamala Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit in Lismore, is taking steps to reduce the amount of re-presentation among young people.

"The ED is not the right place for young people to present," Liz said.

"Our ultimate aim is that young people have access to mental health care without needing to visit the ED, so this project is part of building that scaffold and process behind the young person."

Youth-trained clinicians helping young people access care

To help young people get the targeted care they require after coming to Emergency, Liz's team introduced a Young Acute Care Service (YACS) clinician Monday to Friday. This is a youth-trained clinician who can follow up young people more intensively over the phone or face to face including at home.

When the project began in September 2019, re-presentation statistics among people aged 0-17 at Lismore Base Hospital ED were between 4-13 people each month.

The project team has brought together clinicians from every point along the pathway that a young person might see, including Youth and Family (YAF) clinicians, Consultation Liaison Nurses, Mental Health Emergency Clinicians, and Alcohol and Other Drug clinicians.



Dr Elizabeth Tovey, Clinical Director Kamala Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit

Gold Card Clinic now open

The second phase of the project is the Gold Card Clinic, an evidence-based brief intervention model for young people who suffer impulsive or self-destructive behaviours or struggle with emotional regulation, self-identity, suicidal ideation and self-harm.

The model provides three therapy sessions, as well as a parent or carer session if needed, for young people who have presented to the Emergency Department for the first time or who are not currently case managed.

The clinic commenced in late June at the Lismore Base Hospital, and is staffed by clinicians from across the acute care and youth and adolescent services.

It is an evidence based manualized therapy supported by Project Air Strategy for Personality Disorders, a partnership between the Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute at the University of Wollongong and the NSW Ministry of Health and Local Health Districts.

"The Gold Card Clinic is a great initiative that has been around for some time," Liz said.

"Many of our staff already had the training but just weren't using it, so it's been great to be able draw on their expertise as well as train interested staff."

The team will review the project each month, and would expect to see a reduction



in re-presentation rates once the Gold Card Clinic has become well-established.

"It's a first for this area, we're just looking at Lismore Base Hospital ED at this stage, but we hope to expand across the LHD in the future," Liz said.

Liz's leadership of the project started as part of her participation in the Clinical Excellence Commission's Executive Clinical Leadership Program. As well as the anticipated benefits for residents and patients, the project has also been positive for the team.

"One of the best things has been the improved teamwork and communication across our own teams, and hopefully across the referral services as well. We all have greater awareness about the cohort who were re-presenting," Liz said.

Tweed Hospital tests new ways of working

Staff at The Tweed Hospital will be the first staff in the LHD to trial new ways of working.

Administrative and executive services staff from The Tweed Hospital (TTH) have relocated to a modular building on the hospital site, where they will trial activity-based working.

“This is a great opportunity for us to trial the new principles, which will be implemented at the new Tweed Valley Hospital when it opens to patients in 2023,” TTH General Manager, Joe McDonald said.

“For our team, it will change the way that we have traditionally gone about our roles. Activity-based working is about being flexible, adaptable, and portable.

“By thinking about the task first and the location second, our team will be able to work more efficiently. It’s not about where you are sitting, it’s about being where you need to be to get the job done.”



Interior spaces in the new POD

The open plan and flexible working arrangements ensure that the staff can continue to social distance while in the office environment.

The trial will take place in the POD, a modular building that was relocated to The Tweed Hospital earlier this year to create additional space for administrative and outpatients’ services.

“The new building, or POD as we call it, will house up to 50 administrative staff, in addition to the outpatients Opioid Treatment Program Clinic,” Mr McDonald said.

“This will free up a number of administration spaces in the main hospital building, to make way for clinical treatment spaces to provide outpatient services.”

Construction and commissioning works for the modular building were completed in June 2020, and are the final component in The Tweed Hospital interim upgrades.

This development forms part of the NSW Government’s \$673.2 million investment in health for the Tweed-Byron region to meet the health needs of the local community until the new Tweed Valley Hospital opens in 2023.

AMBULATORY CARE WELCOMES FIRST PATIENT

The smiles on the faces of the first Oncology patients using the new Grafton Base Hospital Ambulatory Care Centre (ACC) on Monday 27 July said it all: what a beautiful, new treatment space.

The new Oncology and Haematology Department features 12 state-of-the-art treatment bays, ensuring the future proofing of the facility for several years to come.

Oncology was the first unit to ‘go live’ to the public, with the remainder of the building opening to the public on Monday 3 August.

Construction of the new \$17.5 million ACC commenced in March 2019 and was completed mid-July.

The new two-storey building provides modern facilities for a range of existing departments located in several places across the hospital campus. These include:

- Oncology and Haematology services
- Renal Dialysis Unit
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Podiatry, and Speech Pathology departments
- Fracture Clinics and Osteo-Refracture Clinics
- Dietetics and Nutrition Outpatient Clinics
- Outpatient Clinics for Cardiac and Respiratory Rehabilitation services and
- Diabetes Education and Diabetes Foot Clinics.

The new facility also features a series of local Aboriginal artworks displayed throughout the main entrance and patient waiting areas thanks to a collaboration with the Grafton Regional Gallery. The



The new Grafton Base Hospital Ambulatory Care Centre

artworks will be changed annually, with the opening collection celebrating the Traditional Custodians of the Clarence Valley with works from Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl artists.

Dan Madden, General Manager, Clarence Health Service, said the partnership with the Grafton Regional Gallery would be a benefit to patients, visitors and staff.

“Having locally-made artworks adorning the walls will help people to feel connected to their community, as well as providing a point of reflection,” Dan said.

Northern NSW crew lend a hand to metro cousins

A team of colleagues from the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) have been working with other LHDs to provide aged care assessments during the pandemic.

Staff from our own Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) helped to provide phone assessments for teams across metro and regional Local Health Districts from April to July, with new telehealth practices reaching families far away.

NNSWLHD Social Worker and ACAT Assessor, Terry Johnston, said it was a pleasure to have contact with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

“There were people from Syria, Lebanon, Greece, Italy and I got a fresh perspective on how families can band together to support each other,” Terry said.

“It made me reflect on how our coastal communities often consist of older people who have moved here and are relatively removed from close family support.



Registered Nurse Sueanne Roland



Social Worker Terry Johnston

“The multicultural families we dealt with extended themselves way beyond what I am used to seeing.”

These assessments were particularly tricky as assessors found the clients had complex needs, no existing service provision, and often English was not their first language. Some assessors took on assessment over the phone with an interpreter, which can add another level of difficulty.

Our staff also completed Regional Assessment Service (RAS) assessments for other LHDs, both metro and regional, helping reduce their waiting lists.

NNSWLHD Registered Nurse Sueanne Roland, said not knowing the particulars of the other services was a challenge.

“It was also difficult since the majority of clients had not been seen previously by the Regional Assessment Service, and were very complex since they needed access to major equipment,” Sueanne said.

“Staff had to negotiate local processes for other Districts to get the job done, and that was not an easy task,” Lisa Diett, Manager Ballina Community Health, said. “They did an outstanding job!”

Are you getting the latest COVID-19 updates?

With advice and updates about COVID-19 changing daily, you can find the latest information in a few key places.

Weekly emails

Both NSW Health and NNSWLHD provide weekly staff updates to point you to the latest advice and resources about COVID-19.

If you're not receiving the NSW Health staff email, contact:

info@health.nsw.gov.au.

Websites

For NSW COVID-19 case locations visit:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/latest-news-and-updates>.

For Queensland COVID-19 case locations visit:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/contact-tracing>.

NNSWLHD Intranet

Find links, workforce updates and printable resources for staff at:

<https://intranet.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/covid-19-updates-for-staff/>



Health
Northern NSW
Local Health District

Respecting the difference

A refreshed face-to-face training course will help develop cultural competency to engage with Aboriginal patients, clients, visitors and staff.

Newly appointed Respecting the Difference Educator, Barry Boland, has just kicked off this year's revamped 'Respecting the Difference' training.

The face-to-face workshops are designed to improve cultural awareness and help staff build positive and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal communities in Northern NSW.

Having worked in cultural education for many years, Barry understands the impact this training can have.

"Knowing the history of Aboriginal people and the impact this has on Aboriginal people today, is essential to engaging with our community," Barry said.



Barry Boland, Respecting the Difference facilitator

"We also want our staff to understand health from an Aboriginal perspective. This can be challenging, but is really what 'Respecting the Difference' is all about."

Training commenced in early July at the Lismore Base Hospital and The Tweed Hospital. Further workshops will be held throughout the district on a regular basis.

The 4-hour workshops are mandatory for all staff, together with an e-learning module

that needs to be completed before the face-to-face session.

"This training will provide the foundation for all of us to improve the way we deliver and develop services for Aboriginal patients and families," NNSWLHD Chief Executive, Wayne Jones, said.

Bookings are open now through My Health Learning, just search 'respecting the difference' to register.

GET ON YER BIKE!

During the Covid-19 lockdown, when exercise was one of the few reasons you were allowed out, people around the world suddenly discovered walking, running and cycling.

Well, here's a way to keep up those new fitness habits. Register for the Biketober Business Challenge, a Get Healthy at Work initiative. If you sign up for this free workplace challenge in October you can boost your fitness, do some team building with your workmates, and be in the draw for great prizes.

The aim of Biketober is to get more people on bikes and spread the joys and benefits of cycling. Not only is cycling a cheap way of getting from A to B, it can also help

- Prevent the decline in your immune system
- Boost your mental health
- Reduce stress and anxiety

We could all use these benefits this year!

BIKETOBER is simple and easy. You don't have to ride to work or ride your bike every day.

All you have to do is ride a bike for at least ten minutes during October, and you'll be in the running for great prizes including bicycles and restaurant vouchers. Of course, the more cycling you do, the greater the health benefits.

If you already ride a bike, here's your chance to help your workmates discover how easy and enjoyable it can be. You and your colleagues can compete against other workplace teams to see who can get the most staff to try cycling during October.

In the Health Promotion Unit, keen cyclist Adam Guise has already started encouraging his workmates to sign up.

"As a long term Lismorite I've spent most of my working life riding my bike to work. Most days I am grateful for the 10 minutes of leg pumping and heart pumping exercise it gives me - in an otherwise sedentary job," Adam said.



Health Promotion Officer Adam Guise

"With this amazing midwinter weather, it's a great time for being outdoors. Biketober isn't only for those who ride to work. It is a great opportunity for getting out with friends and family to explore your neighbourhood by bike."

Adam is laying down the challenge to other teams across the LHD to 'get on yer bike!' Register now at:



www.lovetoride.net/NSW

P



We caught up with Michelle Gray to talk about her new role supporting the LHD to provide health services for people with intellectual disabilities.

Michelle Gray

Michelle Gray recently joined Northern NSW Local Health District as a Specialist Clinician Intellectual Disability, and is passionate about the difference good quality care and support can make to people with intellectual disability.

Michelle started working as a disability support worker while studying Social Work at the University of Queensland.

“This direct support work was a really valuable experience and I learnt a lot about the strengths and capabilities of people I supported and some of the challenges that systems, values and attitudes present both for people with intellectual disability and those supporting and caring for them,” Michelle said.

“I also learnt how powerful the right support can be for people with an intellectual disability in determining their quality of life.”

After graduating, Michelle moved to London to take up work there, first in a pub (like every other Aussie) and then as a social worker.

It wasn't long before she found her way back to working with people with disability, first as a case manager and then

managing a respite service for children with disabilities.

“At this stage the UK was starting to discuss person-centred ways of working with people with disability and it was a great to be at the start of this movement and see the change this made for people when they were put at the centre of all decisions about their lives.”

Returning to Australia four and half years later, Michelle worked in Melbourne as a manager in the specialist case management team as part of the Kew Residential Services Project.

It was an important project for its time, part of an important change in how people with disability were supported in Victoria.

Over 400 people who had been living in a large institution for most of their lives moved back to the community.

“It was a complex project but very rewarding to see people who had never lived in the community, move to new purpose-built accommodation, often closer to family, and build lives in their local area.”

Michelle's husband grew up in the Northern Rivers and together they moved back to the area after having their first child, to be closer to family.

Since then, Michelle's work has been mainly in the disability sector, most recently for a large NGO providing therapy and behaviour support service for NDIS participants.

“As a behaviour support practitioner, I saw the importance of good quality and coordinated health care and supports for people with intellectual disability, and some of the challenges in accessing appropriate services, particularly in regional areas,” Michelle said.

Michelle made the move to Health to be part of the expanded Intellectual Disability Health Services network which is providing specialist health services to people with intellectual disability and support to local clinicians.

“I am excited by the opportunity to work with carers, health staff, the community and people with intellectual disability in Northern NSW to improve their health outcomes and look forward to meeting more staff and teams across the district in the future.”

Local cancer treatment in Australia-first evaluation

Breast cancer patients are experiencing excellent results and fewer treatment side effects thanks to modern radiation therapy techniques used at the North Coast and Mid North Coast Cancer Institutes.

So successful are the techniques, that a team led by local cancer experts has published an Australian-first evaluation of the curative approach.

Radiation Oncologist, Associate Professor Tom Shakespeare led the evaluation which examined the long-term outcomes of the techniques.

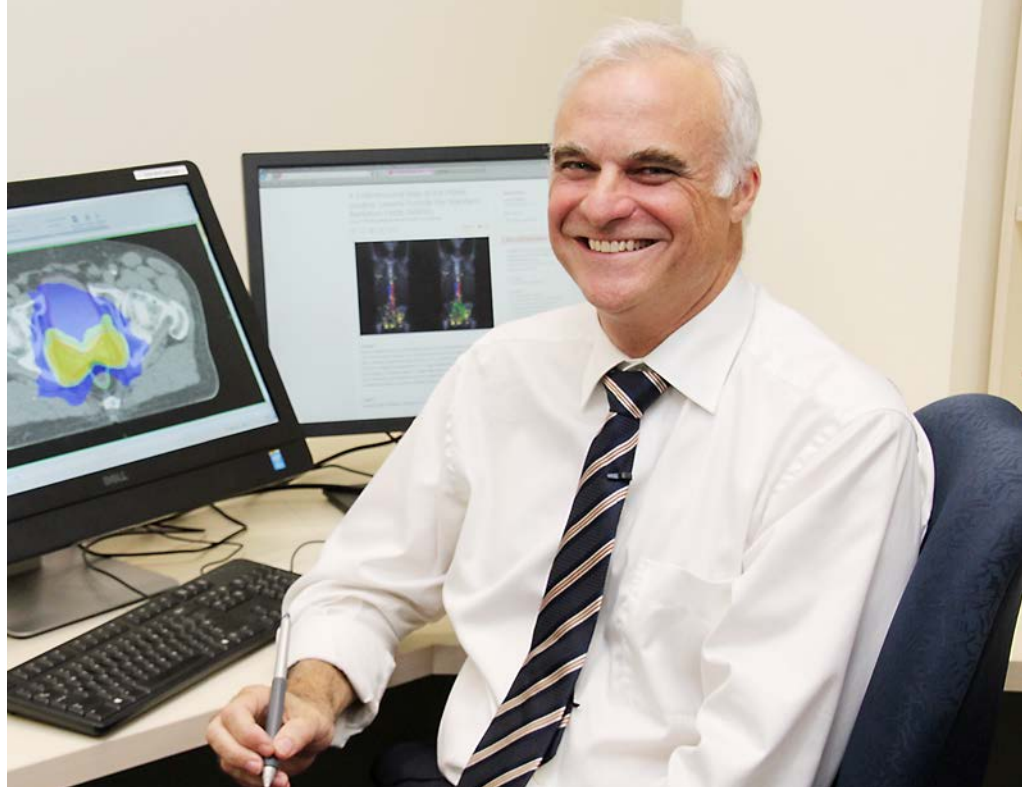
“Breast cancer can be cured with a combination of surgery and post-operative radiation therapy,” A/Professor Shakespeare said.

“We have treated more than 3,500 women with curative breast radiation in the Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie radiation oncology centres at the Mid North Coast Cancer Institute (MNCCI) and the North Coast Cancer Institute (NCCI) centre in Lismore.”

Each year, around 260 women are diagnosed with breast cancer in Northern NSW according to Cancer Institute NSW figures.

The techniques evaluated include hypofractionation (treating in fewer sessions), intensity-modulated radiation therapy (highly targeted) and treating women in the prone (face down) position.

“These new techniques are able to substantially reduce the side-effects of treatment, in particular, prone breast positioning is beneficial as radiation is distributed evenly and accurately, limiting exposure to the rest of the body.



Top, Associate Professor Tom Shakespeare, North Coast Cancer Institute Lismore

“The combination of these three techniques has been in use at the MNCCI and NCCI since 2012, and we were one of the first centres in Australia to adopt this method.”

The evaluation followed 155 patients from the Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Lismore areas who were treated using this technique, and the results were excellent.

“Our report is the first of its kind in Australia, and only the second publication of its kind

in the world,” A/Prof Shakespeare said.

“We report on outcomes five years after radiation therapy. In our evaluation no patient had a cancer recurrence in the treated breast. We also found that no patient had significant side effects, and all evaluated patients rated their cosmetic outcome as good or excellent.”

The outcomes after using this technique have been published in the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists’ Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Oncology.

Medical Workforce Plan sets a collaborative course

A new roadmap brings together partners from the acute and primary health and tertiary education spaces to plot the way forward in securing a sustainable regional and rural medical workforce in Northern NSW.

The Northern NSW Medical Workforce Plan 2020-2026 presents a holistic view of how primary health, regional training and the hospital system can work together to plan for the health needs of the region, and the medical workforce, which will be needed in years to come.

Professor Ross Bailie, Director, University Centre for Rural Health, said giving junior doctors a clear pathway for rural and regional training placements was key to

securing their interest in working regionally in the longer term.

“Increased training opportunities should enable early career doctors to stay and work in rural areas without the need to return to metropolitan-based teaching hospitals to further their training,” Prof Bailie said.

“It is vital that the training opportunities in rural and remote Australia are in the areas where there’s going to be a future need, and this plan helps us determine where those needs will be.”

The plan is a collaboration between the Northern NSW Regional Training Hub – Lismore (The University of Sydney), the Clarence Valley Training Hub (University of Wollongong), the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) and North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN).

“Rural training and career opportunities are an essential stepping stone to having a strong health workforce,” NNSWLHD Chief Executive, Wayne Jones said.



Stock image

The Northern NSW Regional Training Hubs in the Richmond and Clarence Valleys are part of a national strategy that aims to strengthen the rural health workforce by providing rural training and career opportunities for junior doctors.

The Northern NSW Medical Workforce Plan 2020-2026 is available on the Northern NSW Local Health District website.



<https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/about/northern-nsw-local-health-district/planning/northern-nsw-medical-workforce-plan-2020-2026/>

HEALTHY BONES BEGIN IN THE CLARENCE

A resource which was first developed in Grafton is now the gold standard across NSW, thanks to the efforts of a local Fracture Liaison Coordinator.

When Stacey Kroehnert, clinician with the Clarence Osteoporotic Refracture Prevention Clinic, needed something to help her patients keep their bones healthy, she decided to take matters into her own hands. Little did she know that her booklet would end up being adopted by the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI), and become standard issue for clinicians across the state.

“I wanted something for patients who had sustained a minimal trauma fracture, that was easy to read, had lots of pictures and gave them the information they needed to improve their bone health. And something that was not overwhelming,” Stacey said.

Fast forward to 2020, and COVID-19 arrived, and with it, the rapid expansion of telehealth.

At an ACI meeting to discuss the COVID-19 response among Fracture Liaison Coordinators from around NSW, Stacey’s information booklet was endorsed as a tool which could be used to support telehealth consultations.

To develop the resource further, Stacey collaborated with Jayne Hyde at Sydney Local Health District, for review and Health Literacy checks. Fracture Liaison Coordinators around NSW also provided their feedback.

The ACI applied professional design to the booklet, which is now the recommended educational tool for all Fracture Coordinators in NSW Health, being used in each of the 31 Osteoporotic Refracture Prevention services and available online. The booklet has also been added into HealthPathways collection meaning it is available to all regions using HealthPathways across Australia and New



Stacey Kroehnert

Zealand for GPs to provide to their patients.

For Stacey, it’s all part of a day’s work taking care of her patients.

“I enjoy working with the patients I see, and they are very appreciative of the service we provide,” Stacey said.



https://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/592697/GRP-Booklet-Healthy-Bones.pdf

It's time to talk about organ donation

Register as organ and tissue donor and talk to your loved ones about your decision to become a donor. That's the message of DonateLife week!

Roughly half the population of Northern NSW are currently registered organ donors. While this is higher than the national average of 1 in 3 Aussies, we can do better!

With around 1,700 Australians currently on the waitlist for a life-saving transplant, and a further 12,000 people on dialysis, you can make a real difference in the lives of others by registering as a donor.

Mother of one, Jane Clare from Tweed Heads received a life-saving double lung transplant in 2006 after battling with Cystic Fibrosis since she was a baby.



From left, Donation Specialist Nurse Mary Campbell, Jane Clare, Donation Specialist Medical Dr Mike Lindley-Jones and DonateLife volunteer Lee-Anne Rice

"I am ever so grateful that it has given me a second chance at enjoying a life that I would never have had," Jane said.

"Before my transplant, getting out of bed was a struggle and walking upstairs was impossible. At the time I probably only had 6-12 months to live."

If you are already registered, you can do more. Talk to your friends and family. Tell them you want to be a donor, and

encourage them to register too. Families play a crucial role in the donation process because they are asked to confirm whether their loved one wanted to be a donor. We know that in 9 out of 10 cases, families agree to donation when their family member is registered.

You can no longer register via your NSW driver's licence. It only takes a minute to register with your Medicare card at:



donatelife.gov.au/northernnsw

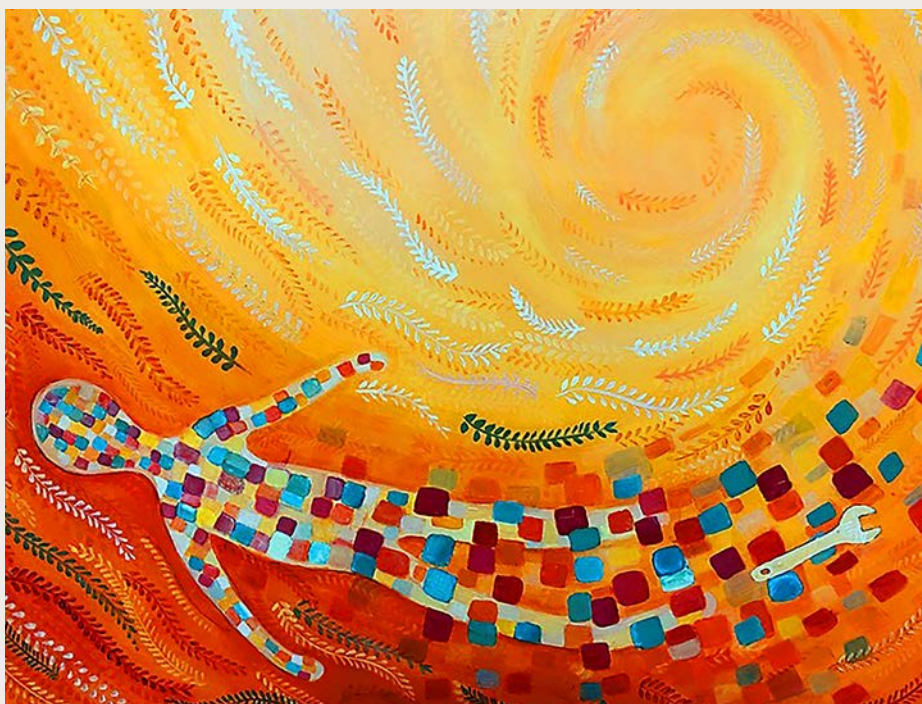
A picture tells a thousand words

Ballina District Hospital and TAFE NSW have joined forces to produce a visual exploration of the impact of illness and injury on the individual.

'Unconditional Stories' is a collection of 10 unique patient and carer stories of illness, injury and recovery transformed into a visual art form by students who are studying a Diploma and an Advanced Diploma of Visual Arts at TAFE NSW Lismore.

'Unconditional Stories' investigates the connection between art and storytelling as a viable means of improving the way patient stories are seen and told.

"By being provided a unique opportunity to share their story, patients and carers have offered a rich and powerful insight into their individual health, tribulations and recovery," Tracey Beck, Ballina District Hospital Diversional Therapist, said.



'Spanner in the works' by Penelope Sienna

As part of the project, art students interviewed recent Ballina District Hospital patients and carers via telephone in the presence of a facilitator.

The end result is a collection of works on exhibition at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery from August to October.

"Join us and explore the empathetic relationship of health between patients, carers and students reflected in art."

Unconditional Stories
12 August – 18 October
Northern Rivers Community Gallery
Cnr Cherry and Crane Streets, Ballina

Digital Dose:

OFFICIAL VISITORS PROGRAM EMBRACES TELEHEALTH

A virtual meeting place is helping mental health patients receive advocacy and support in challenging times.

In pre COVID days, the Official Visitors Program would see independent mental health advocates visit patients in Mental Health Units to discuss their management, with both the patient and the clinical staff.

The Official Visitors were also able to view the patient's clinical record in eMR.

This vital advocacy role was made difficult with the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, but Telehealth was able to offer a solution.

The Official Visitors can now join a web link from their home computer, which brings them into a Virtual Room.

They are joined in that virtual room by the patient, who connects using a NNSWLHD computer, from any of the five mental health facilities.



There is a different virtual room for each of the inpatient facilities functioning as a discreet meeting place.

Both the patient and their advocacy representative can have a video conversation, in a private space, to discuss any concerns the patient may have.

This locally-developed solution is one of many ways Telehealth is being tried and tested across NSW Health.

The Official Visitors Program is now back in full swing, despite the challenges of social distancing and restricted visiting.



WAITLIST OPTIMISATION PROJECT

The Waitlist Optimisation Project is now in progress in partnership with NSW Health and Cerner. Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts are the pilot LHDs for the state-wide project.

The project will streamline Waitlist management for elective surgery. It will have improved management tools and reports. The benefits include automatic calculations of some important dates such as waiting times and not ready for care days.

Change Managers have commenced working with wait list users and training is underway. The go live date is yet to be finalised.

For more information, contact the Project Manager Kylie Funnell at kylie.funnell@health.nsw.gov.au.

WHAT'S ROB DOING?

On Friday 28 August, you will see changes to the look and feel of the ROB Recruiting Centre.

Due to the decommissioning of Adobe Flash, used across many of our vendors' systems, the look of the Recruiting Centre will change. While there are changes to the look and feel, there are no changes to the overall recruitment process.

Who's impacted?

Managers who use the ROB system directly, for general, specialty and campaign recruitment, will notice the change.

There are no changes to the Career Portal (advertisements), Transition Centre (for check and onboarding), ATF (Approval to Fill), Recommendation Report and PD Library, or for candidates.

Different layout

The layout has been adjusted to maximise the use of the available screen size which increases the visibility and ease of use. Changes have been made to the following areas:

- Requisition List
- Candidate List
- Candidate File
- Requisition File and
- The Offer Grid.

WATCH this short video to find out what's changing and what the new system will look like.



<https://publish.viostream.com/play/bgrkko7nhx344g>



User training for Go Live

To assist users with the system upgrade, the eHealth NSW Training Team will provide training sessions prior to go-live.

For more information and to find out more about the available sessions visit the eHealth/HealthShare NSW customer intranet or email nswlhd-recruitment@health.nsw.gov.au. For more information, please contact the ROB Team on 1300 679 367.

Rural support reaching people on the land

Rural Community Counsellor, Fiona Couch, is on the front line helping rural people on the path to mental wellbeing.

As a Rural Community Counsellor, Fiona is passionate about engaging with communities affected by drought, fire and other adversities in Northern NSW, reaching out to people who would otherwise have remained disconnected from mental health services.

"I have received such lovely positive feedback and thanks from the people I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with," Fiona said.

"On many occasions they have spoken of what a blessing having this role has been as they would not have accessed mainstream generic mental health services."

The role involves working with existing trusted agri-agencies (such as the Department of Primary Industry) to establish referral pathways that reduce stigma and improve access.

"The people we're aiming to reach are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, mental health issues associated with stress, trauma, grief and loss."

Coming from a fourth-generation dairying family, Fiona uses her local knowledge and experience to form connections within communities.

"I can speak the language and have a deep understanding of the connection to the land, the joys and sorrows," Fiona said.

"I'm incredibly blessed to still live in the family homestead built by my great grandparents in 1917 and can only imagine the impact of losing that to the prolonged effects of drought or fire. My home was threatened by fire last November, however I am one of the lucky ones and it was spared."

Fiona says that one of the real advantages of the Rural Community Counsellors



program is that it allows busy rural people to access services at a time that suits them.

"A lot of people don't recognise the importance and extent of farming on the North Coast and the impact of drought and fire on this community," she said.

"This role creates an opportunity for a unique type of ambassadorship for our LHD with specific audiences otherwise largely unreachable."

Earlier this year, Minister for Mental Health, Bronnie Taylor, announced an additional \$4.38 million investment to extend the program to continue providing crucial specialised care to rural communities.

"The impact of the ongoing drought, compounded by devastating bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, is weighing heavily on our rural communities," said Mrs Taylor.

"Having an authentic conversation wherever it works for the person doing it tough can really help to get the ball rolling towards improved mental health and wellbeing.

You can reach Fiona in her role as Rural Community Counsellor on 0427 917 842. Leave a message and you'll get a return phone call during office hours.

If you need urgent mental health care, please call the Mental Health Line on **1800 011 511**, 24 hours a day, or present to your closest Emergency Department.

COVID-19 Assessment and Management in Residential Aged Care



This new HealthPathway is for general practitioners, clinicians and specialists assessing and managing patients in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs). There is also a handy link at the beginning of this pathway to the COVID-19 Information and COVID-19 Initial Assessment and Management HealthPathways.

The Background section provides a brief overview about COVID-19 in RACFs which includes information about the incubation, communicability, patient deterioration and how the virus is spread. Avoiding exposure is the single most important measure to preventing outbreaks of COVID-19 in RACFs.

The Assessment section provides comprehensive information about outbreak preparation planning, including what a GP can expect if an outbreak occurs and the GP role in responding to an

outbreak, measures to minimise infection risk, planning clinical management and specific guided steps to take in monitoring the current health status and management of all residents. There is also a detailed guide on assessment of suspected or proven COVID-19 cases.

The Management section provides information to assist with clinical management and decision making, communication with patients, family members and the outbreak team, palliative care resources and guidelines for managing a COVID-19 related death, if required.

At the beginning of the referral section there is a link to the COVID-19 Referrals HealthPathways with information on:

- How to seek COVID-19 clinical advice
- How to arrange COVID-19 testing
- The location of COVID-19 clinics and general practice respiratory clinics
- How to access masks from the national stockpile
- Accommodation and general support available to patients in home-isolation



Stock image

There are also links to the Public Health Unit, Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS), Palliative Care Advice and Specialist Palliative Care Services.

The For Health Professionals section provides links to education and further information resources. There are also informative links that can be provided to patients and links to sources that were used for pathways content.

Mid and North Coast Localised Pathways

- Username: manchealth
- Password: conn3ct3d

For further information about HealthPathways email kkeyte@ncphn.org.au



<https://manc.healthpathways.org.au>

Celebrating 30 years of putting children first

"Putting Children First" is the theme for National Child Protection Week this year, from 6 - 12 September 2020.

During Child Protection week, take part in our quiz which puts you in the draw to win a \$50 Coles/Myer voucher. Check your emails during Child Protection Week for the link.

This year we have had to think outside the box due to restrictions on gatherings, so we

are asking services to celebrate and promote Child Protection Week within your team.

You could do this by hosting a morning or afternoon tea. You can dress up, design a display, or even design a poster. We are offering a great prize for the winning team!

Could you host an event with your team?

For more information about hosting an event please contact the Child Protection Service by on NNSWLHD-Childprotection1@health.nsw.gov.au. Details will also be available at:



<https://intranet.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/child-protection/child-protection-week/>

Together we can help every child thrive by doing these four things:

...speak up if we see something that is not safe for children

...talk respectfully with children and value and act on their ideas

...help children thrive by supporting families

...create places where children feel safe to live, play and learn

BIG IDEAS is back!

The submission period for the next Big Ideas Challenge will start on Tuesday, 1 September 2020.

If you or your team has an idea on how to improve our workplace, our services or patient care within Northern NSW Local Health District, then BIG IDEAS is your chance to share it!

No matter how big or small your idea is – this is your chance to pitch, receive funding and support to turn your idea into reality.

We are looking for ideas from any staff member, department, role or location within the LHD. We are looking for ideas that will improve:

- the way we do things
- the health of our consumers, community and/or staff
- the experience of our patients and/or staff.

Visit the Big Ideas intranet site to find out more about the:



Big Ideas first round winners, 2019

- Big Ideas criteria
- Application form
- Mentoring and management support
- Review and judging panel process
- Previous Big Idea finalists/ winners' initiatives

The BIG IDEAS winner(s) will have the opportunity to share in \$50,000 funding per round.

Applications for the next round open on 1 September and close on Friday 23 October 2020.

The Big Ideas finalists will be asked to present their idea to the judging panel, comprising Chief Executive, Board Member and staff representative, in December 2020.

Grafton Container Returns the goods

A big thanks to Grafton Container Return and the local community who dropped their change in the donation box for nurses at Grafton Base Hospital.

In July, Abel Burchell from Grafton Container Return dropped off more than \$2,300 to the Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Sharon Wright, as a show of appreciation to the team from them and the community.

Thank you!



Grafton Base Hospital Director of Nursing and Midwifery Sharon Wright with Abel Burchell

Nominations for the 2020 NSW Health Awards closing soon!

Nominations are now open for the 2020 NSW Health Awards, closing on 19 August. This year we will celebrate NSW Health staff and volunteers against the backdrop of the bushfire response, relief and recovery, drought, floods and, of course, the ongoing response to COVID-19.

The NSW Health Awards look different this year, with a simplified and streamlined approach. Award categories have been consolidated and finalists and winners will be celebrated on digital and social channels.

There are 10 award categories in total, split between team awards and individual awards. Full details are available on the NSW Health website.



Please submit entries (endorsed by your manager) to Pamela.Mitchell@health.nsw.gov.au by 5pm, 19 August 2020.

The award categories are:

1. Collaborative Staff Member of the Year
2. Secretary's Award – Integrated Value Based Care
3. People and Culture
4. Excellence in Aboriginal Healthcare
5. Volunteer of the Year

6. Transforming Patient Experience
7. Patient Safety First
8. Keeping People Healthy
9. Health Research and Innovation
10. Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Services Award

For information on eligibility and nomination criteria, visit the intranet:



<https://intranet.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/2020-nsw-health-awards-now-open/>

REMEMBERING COLLEAGUES AND VOLUNTEERS

A special ceremony was held at Byron Central Hospital in June to remember staff and volunteers who are no longer with us.

Staff planted a tree donated by a staff member to commemorate the dedication of those who had passed away.

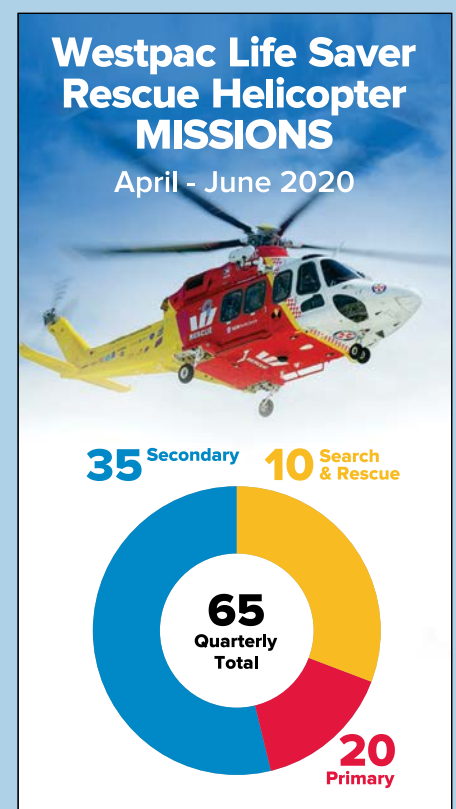
Now known as the 'Byron Central Hospital Memorial Tree', it will provide shade and help the space be a place of beauty, peace and reflection for many years to come.

Family, friends, and staff placed memorial ribbons on the tree to honour:

- Catherine Job
- Pam McRae
- Heather Pumphrey
- Patty Milgate



These staff and volunteers hold a special place in the hearts of everyone who worked alongside them.





NORTHERN

EXPOSURE

