

4 RENEWED SPACES SUPPORT
PATIENT RECOVERY

7 MAPPING A PLAN FOR
THE FUTURE

10 PROFILE:
GEOFFREY NORMAN

NORTHERN

EXPOSURE





CARE FOR MY BODY AND MIND, YES PLEASE!

It's strange to think that in 2019 people continue to face stigma around mental ill-health. It's no problem to tell our friends, or even the whole internet, that we have a broken leg and are having physio to recover, we just accept it as a part of life, get treatment, and move on.

Hopefully, in the not too distant future, it will be no different for anyone with a mental illness, whether they require short or long term care. We'll be able to share and receive treatment, empathy and support the same as we do for other health issues.

We seem to be moving in the right direction, with Beyond Blue reporting that support-seeking appears to be growing at a rapid rate, with around half of all people with a mental health condition now getting treatment, up from 37% in 2006-07.

We see prominent sports people and celebrities talking about their own diagnoses, and there are many organisations and initiatives helping to raise awareness around mental health care as a part of life.

In Northern NSW, our mental health teams and facilities continue to grow and improve, always changing to keep pace with the latest developments in community needs and models of care.

This edition highlights just some of the passionate people and specialized programs within our Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Service which are supporting our community and helping people recover and thrive in body and mind.

NORTHERN

EXPOSURE

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THIS ISSUE

Executive Update	3
From the Board Chair	3
Renewed spaces support patient recovery	4
Better mental health care for patients; it's a team effort	5
Tweed Valley Hospital design on display	6
Construction on track at Evans Head HealthOne	6
Mapping a plan for the future	7
Behaviour therapy training to transform care	8
Mental Health Forum seeking new members	8
Youth grants support healthy lifestyles	9
Supporting parents to help kids thrive	9
PROFILE: Geoffrey Norman	11
Toolkit helps patients get physical	12
Koori Knockout kicking goals	12
A Glove Box Guide to Mental Health	12
Early intervention for healthy minds	13
Striving for change: Aboriginal Mental Health Coordinator Liz Lewis	13
Million-dollar milestone for rescue chopper	14
Creating the clinical leaders of tomorrow	14
Tweed staff take out state-wide awards	15
Casino says NO to sepsis	15
In safe hands	15
Five minutes with an Exec: David Hutton	16
HealthPathways: Do you see people at risk of suicide?	17
Mini profile - Vanessa Tyler	17
Circle of Security signals success	18
Let's talk women's health	18
Empowering patients who experience voice hearing	19
Farewell Amy and Sheryl	19
Survey results and site winners!	19

Cover image: from left, Dr Elizabeth Tovey, Clinical Director Kamala; Peter Lacey, NUM Kamala; Fiona Couch, A/ Network Manager Richmond Clarence Mental Health Service; Michael Carter, Board Member; Minister for Mental Health, Bronnie Taylor, MLC; Nerida Lawson, Peer Worker; Wayne Jones, Chief Executive; Dee Robinson, General Manager MHDA; Inkah Fischer, A/NUM Tallowood; Traiza Soliman, RN Kamala and Rosangela Cassiano, RN Kamala.
Back Cover: Angourie Beach.

Executive Update



Wayne Jones
Chief Executive

It was wonderful to be able to attend the NSW Health Awards in Sydney recently, where the team from the Tweed Knee and Hip Arthritis Service took out the Secretary's Award for Value Based Healthcare.

The service was designed using evidence based interventions to target modifiable health and lifestyle factors which contribute to joint pain and functional decline. Now, with regular referrals from specialists and GPs, the service is seeing improvements in pain and function in two out of three

patients. In many cases patients are avoiding surgery altogether, benefitting the patient but also the health service through reduced waiting lists and surgery costs.

Congratulations to Chris Hanna, Dr Jason Tsung, Dr Brett Lynam, Luke Schultz and Evan Bryant on a great program and a well-deserved win!

You will all be familiar with our annual staff flu vaccination campaign, an essential step in helping reduce the spread of flu within our facilities as well as in the wider community. This year 3,390 staff have been vaccinated through the program. I want to thank everyone for their participation, especially our vaccination and infection control staff, and hope to see this upwards trend continuing into the future.

We recently launched a new Community and Consumer Engagement Framework which will provide structure for the way we involve the community in decision-making and planning. I thank Ged May, Community Engagement Manager, for

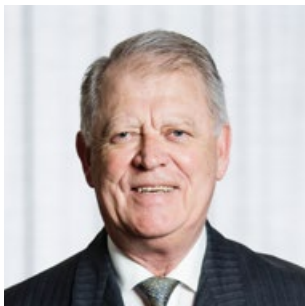
his hard work and leadership in this new phase of genuine engagement with the communities we serve.

At the September Board Meeting we launched the Northern NSW Local Health District Strategic Plan 2019-2024. This plan sets out our priorities for how we'll improve and sustain the excellent health care we provide to our region over the next five years, all built on the foundation of our vision for a healthy community through quality care.

Thank you to Moira Waters and the Planning Unit for their work in bringing this document together through many months of workshops, data analysis and consultations with staff and management.

I was saddened to see the devastation wrought by the recent bushfires, and I know many in our community are suffering, including some of our staff who have experienced major losses. Our hearts go out to all those affected, and we offer our support where we can.

From the Board Chair



Brian Pezzutti
Board Chair

During my 40 plus years working in the health system, I have seen some very significant changes in the area of mental health.

In this time, specialist public mental health services have been established, and we've steadily grown the number of professionals providing care. Our communities also benefit from significant mental health care and support delivered in community settings and through GPs.

In communities and workplaces, we're encouraging more open discussion about

mental health, and public campaigns such as R U OK? Day, World Mental Health Day and Mental Health Month help to remove the stigma around seeking treatment for mental health issues.

However, there is still much to be done. One in five Australians is affected by mental illness, but many still do not seek help because they fear the stigma and continue to needlessly suffer.

Most mental health problems can be effectively managed and many people recover completely, when given the right treatment.

I am proud of the fabulous mental health staff we have in our LHD, and the great job they do.

In recent years, our Mental Health Service has done an enormous amount of work to further improve the care we provide, including reducing the use of seclusion and restraint in our inpatient units. This, together with recent capital improvements to our mental health units, has created

safer, more welcoming spaces and we are now seeing patients reporting better experiences of care in our LHD.

We are also steadily increasing our local expertise in treating eating disorders, with an Eating Disorder Coordinator and specialist training for clinicians.

New dialectical behaviour therapy training is being rolled out to staff on a level never seen before anywhere in the world, and I commend our teams for enthusiastically embracing this new way of working. Read more about this on page 8.

If you or a loved one is suffering a mental health issue, please seek professional help. Your GP is a great first point of contact.

For immediate support, please call the Mental Health Line 1800 011 511, or Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636. For children under 12 years, call the Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800. In an emergency, please call 000 or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.



Top, Tallowwood courtyard. Bottom, from left, Kurrajong quiet courtyard, Kurrajong family room overlooking Tweed River, patient bedroom in Lismore.

Renewed spaces support patient recovery

Patients in mental health units in Tweed and Lismore will experience renewed common areas, rooms and courtyards thanks to a recent program of refurbishments.

On 20 September the Minister for Mental Health, Bronnie Taylor MLC, visited Lismore’s Kamala Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit and Tallowwood Adult Mental Health Unit, as well as Tweed Kurrajong Mental Health Unit to officially open the refurbished therapeutic environments in the three units and meet with staff.

The improvements were designed in consultation with staff, patients and carers, and include new landscaping and interior design work, and upgrades to internal areas.

“Well-designed and inviting physical spaces in acute mental health units help our consumers by meeting their needs for security and connection,” Mrs Taylor said.

Stunning murals of native plants and local beaches by artist Xana Denruyter now adorn the walls of the courtyards in Lismore.

The Tallowwood works include upgrades to the reception and waiting area, patient lounge, bedrooms, bathrooms, five courtyards and three kitchens.

Improvements in the Kamala Unit include the redevelopment of the sensory room, patient bedrooms, bathrooms, nurses

station, two courtyards, and the creation of a relaxation nook.

The improvements in Tweed include a new gym, sensory room, refurbished media room, quiet family room, improved activity areas, and two courtyards.

Northern NSW Local Health District General Manager, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol, Dee Robinson, said “It’s been a privilege to work with our staff and consumers in designing these renovations.”

“The renovations build on the work being done at the clinical and operational levels to improve the care we provide to patients in Northern NSW.”

Better mental health care for patients; it's a team effort

Our Mental Health staff have been working hard to improve patient care and system change thanks to a range of measures developed at the state and local level.

The positive changes are being reflected in a rise in the proportion of patients who report having positive experiences of mental health care in Northern NSW.

In January to March 2019, 80 per cent of respondents to the Your Experience Survey rated their care as very good or excellent, representing a 7.5 per cent increase on the previous three months.

"We're continually looking at how we can improve the care we provide to patients," Dee Robinson, General Manager Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol, said.

This includes system change, such as implementing the recommendations from the NSW Health Seclusion and Restraint Implementation Plan, but also workforce and culture change to ensure staff are supported and trained to provide the best care possible.

A much larger peer workforce is also helping provide a new level of support to patients, with positions now in place across the LHD.

"As people with a lived experience in recovery, peer workers are a valuable contribution to our mental health workforce, helping to reduce tension and anxiety among patients," Ms Robinson said.

"Nurses can now also access quarantined time to spend engaging therapeutically with mental health patients to support their recovery, and we've developed specific training to help staff form better relationships with their patients" Ms Robinson said.



Members of the LHD Seclusion and Restraint Committee, pictured from left, Suskia Travis, Nicole Cox, Inkah Fischer, Vanessa Tyler, Geoffrey Norman and Lisa Sambrooks. Not pictured, Fiona Couch, Ian McLeish, Mim Weber, Heidi Keevers, Rob Davies, Tony Lovi, Keith Fyfe, Erin Kincade, Lauren Maguire.

Data from the latest Bureau of Health Information report for April-June 2019 shows that both Lismore and Tweed Mental Health Units were performing well against seclusion rates and average seclusion time indicators, with significant improvements in the last 12-18 months.

"It is really heartening to see that the work our teams have been doing to reduce seclusion rates for patients in their care is leading to better experiences for our patients," Ms Robinson said.

Lismore halved the total number of seclusion events compared to the same quarter in 2018, down to 4 per 1,000 bed days, and the average seclusion time for patients also decreased by 28 minutes, down to an average of 2hr13m, well below the NSW Health target of less than four hours.

Tweed recorded a seclusion rate of 4.6 per 1,000 bed days, and reduced the average duration of seclusion events by 29 minutes, down to 2hr42m.

DESIGN COMPETITION

We're looking for people with lived mental health experience, carers, or workers to design a new visual identity to represent our Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Services.

The design will include or represent the new purpose statement:
"To support people as they find solutions towards living well."

More information contact
Mim Weber - 6620 2629
mim.weber@health.nsw.gov.au

Entries close 15 November.



Health
Northern NSW
Local Health District

Tweed Valley Hospital design on display

With early works underway on the Tweed Valley Hospital site, Health Infrastructure is progressing the planning application for the detailed design, construction and commissioning of the new hospital.

Health Infrastructure lodged the Stage 2 State Significant Development (SSD) planning application with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on Friday 27 September 2019, which is on public exhibition until 8 November 2019.

Lodgement of the Stage 2 SSD planning application represents over two and a half years of detailed planning and extensive consultation with clinicians, operational staff, community members and local and state government agencies.

The second stage in the two-stage planning approval process, this application seeks approval for the design, construction and operation of the main hospital building including expansion areas, support buildings, internal roads and car parking,



Schematic design of Tweed Valley Hospital main building as seen from Cudgen Road

external road infrastructure upgrades and site landscaping.

If approved, the development will see up to 650 construction workers on site at the peak of construction activity in 2021/22 and a significant increase in operational jobs upon completion, subject to funding and detailed workforce planning.

Also on public exhibition by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment are

modifications to the approved Stage 1 Concept Proposal. These include the addition of new building envelopes for a multi-deck car park and temporary skills centre building, and an increase in the maximum permitted gross floor area.

The public exhibition period closes on 8 November 2019. Find out how you can have your say by visiting the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's major projects website at:



www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects

Construction on track at Evans Head HealthOne

The latest milestone for the new Evans Head HealthOne facility was celebrated on 6 September with a topping out ceremony marking the completion of the roof structure.

Member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis, joined community members on site, including Richmond Valley Mayor Robert Mustow, Evans Head Chamber of Commerce members, construction workers and health officials to celebrate the building tradition of placing a tree at the top of a structure once it reaches its highest point. In this case, a small native shrub was displayed and will be planted as part of the facility's landscape plan.

"This is a terrific modern, integrated health facility within easy reach in the centre of



Member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis (centre) joins council, health and community members at the Evans Head HealthOne

town and will enable the introduction of a number of additional health services in the popular coastal town," Mr Gulaptis said.

The new HealthOne will deliver:

- chronic diseases management and lifestyle groups;
- cardiac rehab and respiratory groups;
- child and family therapy groups including Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy, and Occupational Therapy; and
- dietetics and diabetes education services.

The pre-existing Community Health Centre was at capacity and not equipped to provide these modern health services. The new facility will enable tailored services to be provided on site, thanks to the clinical rooms, gymnasium, and treatment spaces.

The new Evans Head HealthOne, being built on the site of the old Community Health Centre in the centre of Evans Head, is expected to open in 2020, and will link with existing GP services already provided in the town centre.



Northern NSW Local Health District Board and Executive Team members launch the 2019-24 Strategic Plan

Mapping a plan for the future

The Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) Board and Executive Team launched the NNSWLHD Strategic Plan 2019 - 2024 at the September Board meeting.

Our LHD's vision of a healthy community through quality care underpins this plan, which provides a framework for how we'll work together with our community and service partners to deliver quality and safe health services to Northern NSW.

The Plan provides a robust framework to drive our six new Strategic Priorities over the next five years. They are:

- Value, Develop and Empower Our People
- Our Community Values Our Excellent Person-Centred Care
- Empowering Aboriginal Health
- Integration Through Partnerships
- Effective Clinical and Corporate Accountability
- Champions of Innovation and Research.

These Strategic Priorities will position the District to achieve our purpose to work together to deliver quality health outcomes across our communities.

The NNSWLHD Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024 has a strong emphasis on community and clinician engagement, and on ensuring our patients, and their carers and families, are at the centre of every decision we make.



Value, Develop and Empower Our People

Our staff are our lifeblood. We are committed to showing we value the work they do to deliver high quality, safe and respectful health care.



Empowering Aboriginal Health

Aboriginal Health will be central to everything we do. Our organisation will work alongside Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Medical Services and others.



Effective Clinical and Corporate Accountability

Our Executive Leadership Team and Local Health District Board will deliver effective leadership. We will strengthen accountability for our financial, clinical and corporate decisions and actions.



Our Community Values Our Excellent Person-Centred Care

Our health services will provide high quality, safe health services and excellent patient care.



Integration Through Partnerships

Our valued partnerships are essential to providing truly integrated care. Integrated care is seamless, effective and efficient care that reflects the whole of a person's health needs.



Champions of Innovation and Research

Our organisation will support a culture of innovation. We will establish a workforce that leads the way in research that translates into improving clinical practice.

2019 Annual Public Forum

The Board and Executive of Northern NSW Local Health District invite you to our 2019 Annual Public Forum.

Wednesday, 13 November, 2019
10am - 12pm AEDT
Kingscliff Beach Bowls Club
131 Marine Parade, Kingscliff, NSW, 2487

Register by phone
(02) 6620 2217

Register online
<https://nswlhdagmn.eventbrite.com>

Register by email
NNSWLHD-Engagement@health.nsw.gov.au

A light lunch will be provided following the meeting

RSVP by 5 Nov 2019

Attendance is free

Behaviour therapy training to transform care

Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol clinicians are taking part in a large-scale training program to transform care services and work culture.

During June and July 2019, 62 Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol (MHDA) clinicians began a 12-month training program in Dialectical Behaviour Training (DBT) to provide DBT skills-based groups and individual therapy to clients in their care.

DBT is a skills oriented approach focussing on mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, distress tolerance and emotion regulation, and is one of the most successful evidence based psychological therapies for people experiencing personality disorders (Bayer 2015, O'Connell et al 2014), who make up approximately one quarter of all mental health presentations to emergency departments and admission to mental health units (Greyner, 2017; Project Air 2018).



Whole Family Team members coordinating DBT training. From left, Drug and Alcohol Specialist Clinicians Diana Marshall and Molly Magahy, and Aboriginal Mental Health Clinician Barrie Jenkins

“According to Peter King, chief executive of the DBT Institute, this is the first known project of its kind internationally to have embarked on training this number of clinicians across clinical streams in one LHD,” Lisa Thorpy, Service Development Coordinator, Trauma Informed Care and Culture Change, said.

“The DBT group program is skills oriented, meaning we help participants to take a more active role in their recovery and greater control in their lives.”

There are now 10 separate DBT group programs being developed across the LHD, and the full roll out is expected to be complete by June 2020.

The programs will deliver skills based groups to people accessing mental health and/or drug and alcohol services, including through youth and family programs, inpatient units and community-based services.

“This shift in practice has the potential to transform MHDA services as well as the culture, requiring clinicians to rethink the way in which they deliver services,” Lisa said.

Mental Health Forum seeking new members

The Mental Health Forum holds bi-monthly meetings with Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Managers focusing on how to improve mental health services. Its purpose is to provide a mechanism for community and user input into the planning, design, review and evaluation of mental health services.

The group, which has been running since 2013, has been responsible for working on multiple improvements to local services, including consulting on the recent refurbishment works to the Tweed and Lismore mental health facilities.

In addition, Forum members participate in other working parties around quality



Mental Health Program Manager Mim Weber and Mental Health Consumer Partnership Coordinator Heidi Keever

improvement, and also sit on interview panels for mental health staff recruitment.

There are currently vacancies for people who live in the Northern Rivers to join the Forum.

We are particularly interested in:

- Two people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander with a lived experience of mental health issues or

experience of caring for or supporting someone with mental health issues.

- Two people who care for or support someone with a lived experience of mental health issues.

Applications Close: 8am Monday 25 November 2019

For more information, contact Mim Weber at mim.weber@health.nsw.gov.au.

Youth grants support healthy lifestyles

Schools and community organisations across the Northern Rivers are invited to apply for grants of up to \$4000 to support health and wellbeing projects for young people.

The Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) is funding a \$40,000 grant program, designed to inspire projects that make it easier for young people aged 13-24 to be physically active and eat healthy food.

The grant program was recently launched at the Youth Health and Wellbeing Showcase in Ballina in September which highlighted the latest research about the links between physical activity and wellbeing for young people, and showcased innovative programs for young people.

Health Promotion Manager, Jillian Adams, said many of the behaviours that increase the risk of chronic disease - smoking, drinking alcohol, eating junk food and

low levels of physical activity- start in adolescence.

“Teenagers may not care much about the risk of chronic disease in the future, so we’re looking at how we can increase their wellbeing and help them feel good now,” Ms Adams said.

The Showcase included a range of presentations from university academics, youth workers and advocates on initiatives including strength training for teenagers’ physical and mental health, horticultural therapy programs, student-led peer education healthy lifestyle programs, theatre workshops for young people with and without disability, and cooking skills for young people at risk of homelessness.

The youth grants are part of the Healthy Communities Northern Rivers action plan for building communities that make it is easier for people to make healthy choices, such as being physically active and eating healthy food.

“One of the grant criteria is that young people are involved in planning the projects. The ideas need to come from young people, because they know what sort of activities will work best for them.”



Dr Kate Neale addresses the Youth Health and Wellbeing Showcase

Healthy Communities Northern Rivers was established by NNSWLHD in 2018 to bring government, non-government and community organisations together to address rising levels of chronic disease such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

Grant applications close on 15 November 2019. Visit the Health Communities Northern Rivers website to apply.



<https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/health-promotion/healthy-communities>

SUPPORTING PARENTS TO HELP KIDS THRIVE

Child Protection Week is held nationally in September every year, commencing on Father's Day. This year Northern NSW Local Health District had a full week of activities around the region to mark the occasion.

Promotional stalls were held at the Tweed Heads Teddy Bears Picnic community event, and at Byron Central and Lismore Base Hospitals, and a coffee cart promotion attracted lots of attention at Grafton Base Hospital.

“Our Child Protection team held discussions regarding local support services and assisted staff and community members to sign our ‘I will protect children’ pledge, which builds on this year’s theme,



Karen Jefferies at Lismore Base Hospital

which was ‘kids do well when parents are supported’,” Melissa Toms, Acting Child Wellbeing Coordinator NNSWLHD, said.

“It was great to see all our stalls being well attended by members of the public and our staff.”

“Thank you for your support and participation of our Child Protection Week activities and for your contribution to

keeping children and young people safe,” Melissa said.

Congratulations to the lucky winners of our promotional week activities: Survey Winner: Christian Tremblay - Lucky draw Winner: Andrea Johnson.

Child Protection Week is an initiative of the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN).

P



In this edition of Northern Exposure, we catch up with our new Director of Nursing for Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services, Geoffrey Norman, and hear about his passion for care, community, and positive change.

Geoffrey Norman

Growing up in Bacchus Marsh in regional Victoria with a mother who was a nurse, Geoffrey Norman got an early exposure to health and the importance of community connections.

"We knew a lot of people in town and from an early age we had a lot to do with footy and other activities in the community," Geoff recalls.

After finishing school, Geoff moved to Ballarat to study science, but ended up switching degrees into what he was probably always meant to do; nursing.

Geoff worked in trauma orthopedics at the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne after graduating, but with his previous clinical placements mostly focused on mental health, he knew he would eventually move on.

"With the Alfred being a large trauma hospital, we had a large component of the patients having co-morbid mental health or drug and alcohol history," says Geoff.

"So I was always interested in that interface between physical health and mental health."

In 1999 Geoff moved to inpatient mental health care while completing a post-

graduate mental health qualification at the University of Melbourne.

Not long after graduating, Geoff embarked on an Aussie rite of passage - heading to the UK for work. For two years he worked as a Mental Health Case Manager in foggy London, before heading back down under to the Alfred, taking a role in the community crisis team which led into a consultation psychiatry liaison position.

Five years ago, it was time for a sea change, and Geoff moved to Kingscliff with his wife and two kids, taking on the role of Director of Nursing (DON) at Currumbin Private Hospital, before becoming Assistant Director of Nursing in Community Mental Health for Gold Coast Health.

Now, he's just hit his six-month anniversary as the DON for Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Services in Northern NSW Local Health District.

"What I've found is even though we're regional here, it's still a busy, fast-paced environment," Geoff says.

"One thing I've really noticed is the level of passion in the care being provided, our staff are really committed."

"We've got a really skilled workforce with a lot of postgrad qualifications, so it's about

how we can support staff and harness that energy."

Geoff and his family quickly put down roots in the local community. Being a Victorian, Geoff was quickly nominated to coach the local Tweed Coast Tigers youth AFL team, that his son plays in, too. The whole family are also involved with the Kingscliff Wolves soccer club and the local Nippers branch.

"Working and contributing to the services where you live sets up a new dynamic that I really like, it's not like that working in the city, where you don't often live where you work," he says.

While Geoff says there is still a way to go in mental health and drug and alcohol care nationally, in recent years there have been some solid foundations formed to leap forward.

"Talking more broadly, we've seen a lot of high profile people come out to talk about mental health and drug and alcohol issues that we haven't seen in the past."

"There's a willingness to speak about it, and I still think there are many opportunities we can get from that, like how more awareness can be translated into the treatment and care we provide."

Toolkit helps patients get physical

Cue eighties dance music... the 'Let's Get Physical' project is in full swing!

People living with severe mental illness are at significantly increased risk of Metabolic Syndrome, a cluster of risk factors that include central obesity, elevated blood pressure, abnormal cholesterol and insulin resistance, which can combine to reduce their life expectancy by up to 20 years compared with the general population.

Among people with mental health problems, the major cause of morbidity and mortality is cardio vascular and respiratory diseases.

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Cas Porter, and her team of Metabolic Monitoring Champions have developed a practical toolkit, Let's Get Physical, to improve the physical health outcomes for patients

accessing mental health services in Northern NSW Local Health District.

The toolkit is expected to be complete and ready to roll out in December 2019 at the pilot site, Kurrajong Mental Health Inpatient Unit at The Tweed Hospital. By June 2020, the toolkit will be implemented in all Mental Health Services across the LHD.

The project is being shaped by mental health, drug and alcohol and allied health staff from around the District, including Julie Butler, Sandra O'Brien, Dominique Matus, Inkah Fischer, Jisnu Dowsett, Angie D'Elboux and Mathew James, and Mental Health Forum member, Amrita Dasvarma. Team member Julie Butler is providing the project team with coaching and quality improvement strategies she is learning as a participant in the Clinical Excellence Commission's NSW Mental Health Patient Safety Program.

"We are extremely grateful to the many stakeholders who have contributed their expertise, experience and time to this project so far," Cas Porter said.



From left, Cas Porter, Julie Butler and Angie D'Elboux

"Especially to our Chief Executive, the Board of NNSWLHD and Deidre Robinson, General Manager, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol, for supporting and sponsoring this Big Idea!

"Let's Get Physical" and all work together to help people living with mental illness to improve their physical health."

Koori Knockout kicking goals

The Lismore Aboriginal Rugby League Carnival, or Koori Knockout, combines football and fun with a healthy message.

Each September, teams from around the region descend on Lismore to compete in a football tournament, with healthy lifestyles messages front and centre.

The Knockout is a smoke free event, and staff from Northern NSW Local Health District's Aboriginal Health Unit attended as partners of the Putting Out the Fires initiative, which raises awareness of smoking cessation programs and healthy hearts. Other partner organisations include North Coast Primary Health Network, Bulgarr Ngaru Aboriginal Medical Service, Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service Solid Mob, Rekindling The Spirit, Jullums Aboriginal Medical Service and the Cancer Institute NSW.

The Putting out the Fires project sponsored eight local women's teams taking part in the nine-a-side competition. These Deadly



Deadly Dubays team members

Dubays teams had tobacco messages on their shirts, and so did the referees.

"It's such a great event, and we're thrilled to be involved, helping to keep smoke free messages in the minds of the players and spectators," Marilyn Tolman, Aboriginal Health Clinical Nurse Consultant, said.

A heart health screening marquee allowed participants to access different stations to check how their heart health was tracking and provided basic screening and education around chronic heart disease risk factors.

"It was so wonderful to be able to work with our partners to ensure we are getting these important health messages out into our Aboriginal community."


A Glove Box Guide to Mental Health

The 8th edition of the award-winning Glove Box Guide to Mental Health was launched in October, jam-packed with inspiring stories of how people cope and adapt to change.

The theme of this year's Guide, 'Journey Through Change', is relevant for many across our LHD, with communities feeling the pressure of a long drought and recent bushfires.

"We know change is a constant and it's how we adapt to it, or the journey through it, that makes us stronger," Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP) Coordinator with NNSWLHD, Samantha Osborne, said.

"Many readers will relate to the real and admirable stories from rural people and organisations who have overcome adversity or needed to navigate change in their life."

 Access a copy at <https://www.ramhp.com.au/downloadable-resources/>

Striving for change: Aboriginal Mental Health Coordinator Liz Lewis

As a Gumbaynggirr woman, Liz Lewis has always strived to bridge the gap between the Aboriginal community and the delivery of mental health services.

Similarly, in her new role as the NNSWLHD Aboriginal Mental Health Coordinator, Liz strives to create change in the Aboriginal mental health workforce.

This is an area where Liz believes there is an opportunity to embrace the importance of creating a culturally safe space where Aboriginal and non-aboriginal people can work together and acknowledge cultural issues and the need for respect.



Aboriginal Mental Health Coordinator, Liz Lewis

Liz's qualifications include cultural, social, and emotional teachings from her gran, mum, aunts, uncles and other significant Aboriginal professionals in her life.

Liz also has qualifications in Health Science (Aboriginal Community Development), Indigenous Health Promotion and Training and Assessment Education.

Liz's combination of qualifications and lived experiences have been invaluable within the field of Aboriginal mental health, and we welcome her to the team.

Early intervention for healthy minds

When it comes to good mental health habits and behaviours, kids in Northern NSW are getting a helping hand early in life, thanks to the Got It! program.

Got It! (Getting On Track In Time!) is a specialised early intervention mental health service for children in Kindergarten to Year 2 and their parents or carers. Developed in collaboration with the Department of Education, it aims to reduce challenging behaviours and help circumvent adverse outcomes in adolescence and later life with early mental health intervention.

The program has now been running for three years in Northern NSW Local Health District, with a multi-disciplinary team that includes child Mental Health clinicians Tara Cooper, Kirsty McMillan, Louise Poles and Kate Currey, as well as Senior Clinician Camille Smith and Administrative Officers Lisa Mitchell and Nicole Wilson.



From left, Benjamin Dimmick (social work student), Louise Poles, Camille Smith, Nicole Wilson, Kate Currey, Kirsty McMillan and Tara Cooper. Absent: Lisa Mitchell.

"Working together with schools and families to better understand children's behaviours, teach problem solving, social skills and parenting strategies, and help kids understand how to manage strong feelings can help create positive and sustained changes for children," Got It! clinician Kate Currey, said.

Based across two sites, Byron Community Health and Yamba Community Health, Got It! delivers programs to six primary schools each year, training teachers to deliver an evidence-based social and emotional learning program to K-2 children.

The team also helps parents, carers and teachers identify children's social and emotional difficulties and facilitates group interventions and referrals to other health and specialised services.

Million-dollar milestone for rescue chopper

Over the last 30 years, staff from across the Northern NSW Local Health District have raised over \$1 million for the local rescue helicopter service, simply by donating small amounts each fortnight from their pay.

Staff and patients at Lismore Base Hospital celebrated the milestone with a thank you cake from the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter (WLSRH) team.

"We are very fortunate to receive support from all levels of staff throughout the region's hospital network with the words 'thank you' not nearly enough to show our appreciation for such a significant contribution," WLSRH Regional Marketing Manager, Zeke Huish, said.



From left, Board Members Michael Carter and Mark Humphries, LBH Director of Nursing Narelle Gleeson, General Manager Ian Hatton, NNSWLHD Chief Executive Wayne Jones

The figure also includes contributions from Coffs Harbour Base Hospital when it was previously part of our health area. To find out how to contribute regular donations from your pay, phone WLSRH in Lismore

on 1800 155 155 or visit:



www.helirecue.com.au

Creating the clinical leaders of tomorrow

Two staff from Northern NSW have been fine tuning their skills to help drive change and improvement in the health setting.

Lismore Base Hospital (LBH) Renal Nursing Unit Manager Jane Ruane and Director Anaesthesia and Perioperative Medicine, Dr Melissa Goldberg, recently graduated from the Clinical Excellence Commission's Executive Clinical Leadership Program (ECLP).

Jane's project aimed to reduce the rate of peritonitis, an infection which afflicts patients undergoing home-based peritoneal dialysis for kidney failure.

"Our renal team were concerned about an increase in the number of cases of peritonitis, so I applied the tools and learning from this program to explore the reasons why this was occurring," Jane said.

Patients valued the home-based treatment, which provides freedom to travel and be in control of their own health management, but work was needed to help patients

recognise and prevent infections.

Through pathology and case reviews, key competency training and a patient survey, the team developed a fridge magnet to remind patients of the signs and symptoms of peritonitis, and additional outpatient support is being provided to review patients' technique.

"We're now seeing a downwards trend in the number of episodes of peritonitis, which is a great outcome for patients, as well as creating potential cost savings for our health system."

Dr Melissa Goldberg's project looked at factors affecting the start time of theatre lists, and the ECLP helped hone the skills to successfully build a case for change.

"We looked at the joint replacement surgery list, and how we could change the way patients came to surgery," Dr Goldberg said.

"I found the program to be an outstanding course that improved my knowledge and skills of improvement science methodology."

Improvements are now in place at LBH,



Jane Ruane and Dr Melissa Goldberg

with patients now being prepared in day surgery, and brought to theatre in a wheelchair, instead of on a bed.

Wardsperson shifts and anaesthetic nursing shifts have been brought forward by half an hour, and doing clinical handover by phone means that patients are ready more quickly in the morning.

"Since the changes were first put in place in November 2018, we've certainly seen an overall improvement in starting times," Dr Goldberg said.

Prior to the project, around 40 per cent of surgery lists started within 30 minutes of the 8am target, now it's up to 70 per cent. Overall, there has been a 10 per cent rise in the number of lists starting on time at 8am.

Tweed staff take out state wide awards

A Tweed-based osteoarthritis service has won a NSW Health Award, while Registered Nurse Sally Smith took home the Nursing Graduate Award at the Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards last month.

The 'My Aching Joints' project, led by Chris Hanna, Dr Jason Tsung, Dr Brett Lynam, Luke Schultz and Evan Bryant provides seamless access to care for patients with osteoarthritis. The project won the inaugural Secretary's Award for Value Based Healthcare at the 2019 NSW Health Awards from a record field of 193 entrants and 37 finalists across 12 categories.

The project improves a patient's joint pain and function in two out of three patients, avoiding the need for surgery and reducing public health costs and surgery waiting lists at the same time.



Top, from left, NSW Health Secretary Elizabeth Koff, Dr Brett Lynam, Evan Bryant, Chris Hanna and Minister for Health Brad Hazzard

Inset, from left, NSW Health Secretary Elizabeth Koff, Sally Smith and Minister for Health Brad Hazzard



At the pinnacle event on the state wide Nursing and Midwifery calendar, Registered Nurse Sally Smith from The Tweed Hospital won the Excellence in Nursing Graduate Award, being recognised for her outstanding contribution to the profession.

Sally was nominated by her colleagues for her strong team and work ethic, her excellent ability to build positive rapport with patients, and for being a role model on the wards.

Congratulations to both Sally and the Tweed Hip and Knee Arthritis team!



From left, Sam Cook, Jackie Baker, Deb Jeffery, Kerry Hogan, Deb Schneider and Katelyn McCall



From left, Midwives Joy Wade, Sue McKenna, Sally Sesnan and Nicole Bradley.

Casino says NO to sepsis

The team at Casino and District Memorial Hospital inpatient unit celebrated World Sepsis Day on 13 September, wearing red and highlighting awareness of sepsis.

Sepsis is a life-threatening condition and is one of the leading causes of death in hospital patients around the world.

**FREE COMMUNITY FORUM
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Lismore
6pm | Friday 6th Dec 2019

With **NINA FUNNELL** - Author, journalist, anti sexual assault advocate

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In safe hands

Training is helping Tweed Hospital midwives prepare for any emergency.

While maternal collapse during childbirth is extremely rare, practicing in simulated setting means staff at The Tweed Hospital Women's Care Unit can provide the best care in any situation.

Susan McKenna, Clinical Midwifery Specialist and Manual Handling Coordinator, takes midwives through simulated scenarios to safely remove a woman from the bath in the event of loss of consciousness.

Five minutes with an Exec: David Hutton

We caught up with David Hutton, Director Clinical Governance, to chat about what makes him tick

Q: How did you start your career in health?

A: I trained at Monash University in Melbourne as a medical practitioner and was headed towards general practice, but after spending some years in the hospital sector and a few more in the college of GPs program, I needed more adventure.

I decided to join the Army, and went on to be a medical officer with a parachute battalion based in Sydney. I later became the medical officer for the Special Air Service (SAS) regiment in Perth - a highly specialised unit that has a number of military and counter-terrorism roles.

As a Lieutenant Colonel, I went on to command the 1st Field Hospital based in Sydney, the largest deployable hospital in the Australian Defence Force.

After an exchange posting in the US, I came back to Sydney to be in charge of health support to Australian Defence Force military operations, which at the time included disaster response following a tsunami in Papua New Guinea, our peacekeeping role in East Timor, as well as military operations in Afghanistan after 9/11.

Q: Where were you based in the US?

A: San Antonio, Texas, where the US Army Medical Department Centre and School is based. I worked with the Concepts Branch of the Directorate of Combat and Doctrine Development. The role was developing Concepts of Operations to provide health support for future warfighting.

While I was there I was asked to lead a study into the requirements for physicians (medical practitioners) in the US Army's combat force structures. This came as a request from the US Department of Defense's Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation. They are like an "Auditor-General" of the US Military. Others could see it was a bit of a winner as I started



to report the outcomes of the study up through their large organizational structure. A few tried to take over, but I managed to see it all the way through to briefing the head of the Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation. From my three briefing visits to the Pentagon, I gained interesting insights about the higher-level workings of the US Department of Defense.

Q: What made you leave the Army for a job in health?

A: A headhunter contacted me and said there was a job here as the Area Director of Medical Services for the Northern Rivers Area Health Service in 2003. I knew that my military career would only be part of my overall career, and it just seemed good timing for me and a good location to come to. I have been here ever since. In the organisational restructure in 2005 I became the Director Clinical Governance.

Q: What was it about your military experience that made you a good fit for the new role?

A: The skills in getting things done at military headquarters are very similar to the skills in getting things done at a District level here. Obviously, my military background has had a lot of influence in the way I approach things in my role here. I'll leave it up to you to guess what I mean

if I ever say, "that was fired for effect" or "that's a pedestrian solution".

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?

A: I like playing online strategy games, such as Civilisation or Forge of Empires. The attraction is that you start with limited resources against overwhelming odds, and you can win out by using good strategy. You need to plan and sequence things out. My skills for that were very well honed in the military, and I'm quite successful in the games!

I also like reading, especially military histories and well-researched historical fiction.

Q: What are you reading at the moment?

A: I recently finished reading Peter Fitzsimons' book Monash's Masterpiece about a battle by the Australian Army Corps in WWI under the leadership of John Monash. It was particularly unusual in that they planned the battle to take 90 minutes and it took 93 minutes, and they achieved their goal. It illustrated what something that's well planned out can do, even though the odds of any offensive military action up until then on the Western Front weren't good.

Do you see people at risk of suicide?

Suicide is a prominent public health concern. On average, six men and two women end their own lives in Australia every day, equating to more than 3000 suicides each year.



Mid & North Coast of NSW

For every death by suicide, there are around six people experiencing intense grief, which may continue for many years. These deaths represent a tragic loss of life and potential, and are devastating for families, friends, colleagues and communities. Some populations, particularly LGBTI and Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander communities are at an increased risk of suicide.

The reasons people take their own life are complex and often there is no single reason why a person attempts or dies by suicide.

The Suicide Risk HealthPathways was reviewed in June 2019 and has recently undergone a partial update. The pathway provides clinicians with best practice guidelines on the assessment of a patient at risk of suicide. The referral section contains all the local referral information ensuring at risk patients can be quickly referred to the appropriate services in a timely manner.

When you open the pathway you will see Red Flags to look out for:

Red Flags

- In a mental health emergency, crisis support is available through the Mental Health Line 1800 011 511 (24 hours)
- A plan with or without clear preparations, or a recent suicide attempt
- High risk patient who hasn't been asked directly about suicide

Help to Keep Safe

For ongoing management you will find a suggestion to prepare a Keep Me Safe Plan or a Beyond Now Safety Plan for your patient and this can also be completed with the patient and carer or main support person.

The plan provides a space to list contact details, support people, strategies to help the patient feel better, a list of emergency numbers and websites and individualised self-care plan. Once the plan is completed,



it is suggested that a copy be kept with the patient and the carer to be available in a time of need.

The Information section provides dropdown sections 'for health professionals' and 'for patients' and contains useful links to website resources and printable pdfs. Definitely worth a look!

Helpful Numbers

If you or anyone you know needs help, contact:

- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline 1800 551 800
- Beyond Blue 1300 22 46 36
- Headspace 1800 650 890
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
- QLife (for people who identify as LGBTI) 3pm to midnight daily 1800 184 527

To view all other mental health clinical and referral pathways access this link:



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

Mini profile - Vanessa Tyler

Vanessa Tyler is the new Quality Manager with Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services.

For much of my career I've worked in perioperative nursing as a nurse educator, and have had the privilege of working with many talented people. Before coming to the area in 2005 I worked mostly in Sydney and the UK.

I recently finished up my role as Nurse Manager Safety Culture Coordinator for Northern NSW Local Health District to start my new role as Quality Manager with

the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services.

I'm really looking forward to the challenge of working in this field and working toward maintaining and improving the excellent level of care patients receive at our facilities.

Currently I am also studying a Master of Research at Southern Cross University, focusing on violence and aggression in health treatment. This is not only interesting, but I hope the research will have positive outcomes on my role and the field more broadly.

In my spare time I really enjoy travelling, camping and being outdoors.



Vanessa Tyler

Circle of Security signals success

An early years therapeutic group program for parents and children is being expanded following successful seasons in 2018 and 2019.

The Circle of Security aims to provide early intervention to improve the relationship and attachment between children and parents within vulnerable families.

The program focuses on increasing a parent's sensitivity and responsiveness to their child's needs, as well as increasing the ability to reflect on their own and their child's behaviour, thoughts, and feelings. It also encourages participants to reflect on experiences in their own histories that may affect their current parenting and attachment styles.

"We see this program as having great potential to reduce the risks of children experiencing mental health issues later in life," said Russell Brewer, Manager at Grafton Mental Health Services (GMHS).

"Since mid-last year we have increased our activities and are currently running three groups with around 30 children and their parents."



From left, Social Worker Zo Thorpy, Senior Psychologist Natasha Mann, Social Worker Stacia Cleland-Johnson, Manager Russell Brewer, Aboriginal Health Worker Paige Taylor. Absent - Paediatric Occupational Therapist, Kylie Wilson

The group is facilitated by a number of GMHS and Hospital staff, with North Coast Primary Health Network funding another series of groups this year.

Using open dialogue, referrals are received through Department of Community and Justice, the Safe Start Program on the Maternity Unit, Infant Welfare Nurses in the region, the Aboriginal Maternal Health Service, Intensive Family Based Service and the South Grafton Aboriginal Playgroup.

"Group facilitators say this is a very rewarding program to deliver and they have observed improvements in parent-child interactions."

"Overall, the participants report feeling more confident in their parenting ability and some show statistically enhanced reflective capacity after the program," Mr Brewer said.

This early intervention program has a strong evidence base and can contribute to improving the healthy emotional and psychological development of children through strengthened parent-child/primary carer attachment relationships.

The GMHS will continue to deliver the program in the Clarence Valley in the coming year and hopes to attract funding to continue the program into the future.

Let's talk women's health

Women of all ages had plenty to talk about while celebrating Women's Health Week during September.

A community forum on 3 September brought women of all ages together at Lismore City Hall to explore the key health issues affecting women across their life span.

The "Let's Talk – Women's Health" forum dealt with subjects as diverse as adverse childhood experiences, heart health and dementia. Discussions on lived experiences, preventative health strategies

and resilience highlighted the importance of self-care and social connection within our communities.

"It's time for women to put themselves first and care for their own health so they can better support those around them," Nerida Colley from Lismore Women's Health and Resource Centre, said.

"Women's Health Week is the perfect opportunity to see how we can best do that."

"Let's Talk – Women's Health" was organised by the Northern NSW Women's Health Network which is a partnership of services with an interest in improving the health and wellbeing of women living in Northern NSW Local Health District.



Counsellor Beth Cronin and General Manager Mary Willis from Northern Rivers Women and Children's Services Inc.

Special thanks to the Lismore Women's Health and Resource Centre who coordinated and hosted the forum.

Empowering patients who experience voice hearing

Training is now underway for Mental Health staff, family and carers to learn about the Hearing Voices approach, part of an initiative funded by the first BIG IDEAS challenge.

In a pilot program at Byron Central Hospital sub-acute mental health unit in 2018, around 150 people participated in Hearing Voices groups led by a peer worker and nurse.

Staff and patients reported positive feedback thanks to the constructive engagement of people within the groups, but when participants asked about continuing to attend groups in the community, there weren't any groups on offer.

But Peer Support Officer, Tess Biasion and her team are hoping to change that.

"Hearing Voices groups are a peer focussed approach for people who hear things, see things, feel things and believe in things that other people don't," Tess said.



Peer Workers Tess Biasion and Gary Kleeman

"In themselves, 'voice hearing' experiences are not necessarily problematic, but a person's relationship to having these experiences is an important issue that mental health clinicians can help with."

The Hearing Voices Approach was established in 1987 by psychiatrist Marius Romme and Sandra Escher, PhD researcher, and there are thousands of groups established worldwide.

In Northern NSW, a BIG IDEAS grant is helping kickstart the program to expand across the District, with training held during October for staff who will go on to facilitate groups within their own service.

Workshops were also held for staff and for family members and carers who are interested in learning about the Hearing Voices approach so they can support patients and loved ones who attend groups.

"Hearing Voices groups are based on an ethos of self-help, mutual respect and empathy."

"They are peer support groups, involving social support and belonging, not therapy, and offer an opportunity for people to accept and live with their experiences in a way that helps them regain some power over their lives."

For more information, contact Tess at: tess.biasion@health.nsw.gov.au.

FAREWELL AMY AND SHERYL

Grafton Base Hospital farewelled two long-serving staff members in October, with a combined service of more than 70 years.

Emergency Department NUM, Amy Lowe, trained at Grafton Base Hospital (GBH) in the early 1970s. She returned in 1985, becoming the Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) of the Emergency Department in 1989, and Maclean ED in 2016.

Sheryl Rogan started her training in Nursing at GBH in 1977, and has worked in various departments including Surgical, Medical, Aged Care, and Children's Ward. Sheryl



Amy Lowe and Sheryl Rogan

has been the NUM of Surgical Services since 1992.

"We are grateful for Amy and Sheryl's many years of service to the hospital and the community, and wish them all the best for their future endeavours," Dan Madden, General Manager Clarence Health Service, said.

SURVEY RESULTS AND SITE WINNERS!

People Matter Employee Survey results are now live on the intranet.

Executive Directors, General Managers and Service Managers will review and discuss their reports with staff to develop local workplace improvement plans for 2019/2020.

This year's competition winners can look forward to receiving a \$500 or \$750 contribution to a staff related activity or expense. To see the results visit:



<https://intranet.nswwhd.health.nsw.gov.au/workforce/workforce-culture-wellbeing/people-matter-survey-2019/>



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