

# We want you ...



**Return to Work Coordinator, Richmond Clarence Health Service Group, Julie McFadden is hoping staff will join her on her Fitness Passport to health, the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSW LHD) new initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of staff and their families. See Page 3 for details.**



Page 4: New EAP service provider means 24/7 access to support and counselling.



Page 7: Dr Rashmi Dixit shares her experience of moving to the Northern Rivers.



Page 10: Ballina Hospital Staff don beanies for Brain Injury Week.



# Say NO to Unsafe Work Practices

**Acting Editor, Lee McDougall**

As a Mental Health clinician (when I'm not being an Acting Media Manager), I know only too well the strong link between physical exercise and mental wellbeing.

This Edition of Northern Exposure features two initiatives from the LHD of which I would like to draw particular attention.

The first is the Fitness Passport program (see Page 1 and 3). While regularly attending a gym is, for many, their idea of a bad dream, Fitness Passport also provides access to a range of Aquatic Centres which the whole family can enjoy.

The modern-day gym also provides a broad range of activities and as a woman, I am well aware of the preventative benefits against osteoporosis that weight training provides.

While I have no ambition of becoming a weight lifter per se, regular weight training has been shown to protect women – and men – against the ravages of ageing.

I strongly encourage all staff to read the story on Page 3 and consider signing up!

The second initiative is the changes to the Employee Assistance Program (see Page 4).

For many, the first step of seeking counselling support

can be overwhelming. Add to those emotions the dread of being required to go through a convoluted process of 'applying' for EAP, and many simply don't apply.

Thankfully, that second hurdle has now been removed with staff now able to ring 24/7 the new EAP provider direct to request counselling support.

In my clinical experience, people tend to leave the option of counselling until matters have become quite critical.

The old adage 'A stitch in time' comes to mind. If counselling is accessed sooner rather than later, the benefits of counselling are often far greater.



## Your say

Do you have anything you would like to share with your colleagues and readers of Northern Exposure?

Contributions can be emailed to [susan.walker@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:susan.walker@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au) and should be no longer than 250 words.

## Anthony Franks - Quiet Achiever

*Nominated by Sue Rowell, Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC), Aboriginal Health, Casino Community Health*

Anthony Franks is the Aboriginal Chronic Care Officer based in Lismore. For the past eight years he has dedicated his time to reducing the number of Aboriginal people in the community living with chronic disease.

"I started working for Health in 1998 as a Health Promotion Officer, working for the then Northern Rivers Network, and became involved in the challenging field of Chronic Care in 2007," Anthony said.

"In recent decades there has been an increasing number of Aboriginal people living with, or at risk of developing, Chronic Disease.

"Part of my role has been to develop Aboriginal-specific programs that we can use in the community to address the risk factors associated with Chronic Disease, such as diet and exercise."



**Aboriginal Chronic Care Officer Anthony Franks has been tackling chronic disease for the past eight years.**

Anthony states that while working in Chronic Care can be very challenging, it can also be very rewarding.

"When you see people coming off their medications, losing weight, and starting to make significant lifestyle changes it is so encouraging and I just want to keep working with them

to continue to improve their health," Anthony said.

Casino Aboriginal Health CNC Sue Rowell said Anthony was an obvious choice for Quiet Achiever.

"I nominated Anthony because I have had the privilege of working with him on two 12-week Healthy Lifestyle Programs for

Aboriginal people this year," Sue said.

"He facilitates these groups in a calm understated manner. By sharing his story, participating in the exercise groups, and co-ordinating guest speakers, he has been pivotal in motivating participants to make positive health behaviour changes."



The Tweed Aquatic Centre is just one of the many aquatic centres which staff can take their families to during the heat of summer.

# Your Passport to health and fitness

## From Page 1

Health Promotion Manager Jillian Adams is hoping the warm spring weather will prompt people to shed their winter kilos by taking advantage of the latest Health Promotion initiative.

The Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSW LHD) has launched the Fitness Passport initiative aimed at encouraging staff and their families to embrace a healthier mind and body.

"Fitness Passport is a different sort of gym membership – you and your immediate family members can use all of the facilities included in the initiative as often as you like," Ms Adams said.

"Signing up allows you and your immediate family members to use a range of different gyms and pools that are participating in the program. And the cost is generally cheaper than a standard gym membership."

Fitness Passport provides access to 18 pools and 15 gyms (listed right) across NNSW LHD, as well as access to more than 180 fitness facilities across NSW.

To be eligible for Fitness Passport you must be a:

- Full-time permanent staff member;
- Part-time permanent staff member; or
- Contracted employee

(paid via payroll) who has more than 12 months remaining on his/her contract

Participating members will be provided with an ID card to gain unlimited access to all or any of the fitness facilities listed within the program.

"Participating staff and their families are able to visit the gym closest to their work

when the program is up and running so you can cancel your current membership," Ms Adams said.

"Until we do confirm this, please do not cancel your current membership.

"You can leave the program any time after the first 12 months of signing up. After you sign up, you must stay with the program for a minimum of 12 months.

"If you leave your employment within this 12-month period then your membership will automatically expire but you must return your ID card to your workplace coordinator before payments cease."

Fitness Passport information sessions will be held at the following staff health events:

- Ballina Hospital main corridor, 3 September, 10.30-1.30;
- Tweed Heads Hospital Foyer, 8 September, 10.30 – 1.30;
- Lismore Base Hospital Cafeteria, 9 September, 10.30-1.30;
- Murwillumbah Hospital Foyer, 10 September, 10.30 – 1.30; and
- Grafton Base Hospital (balcony off the conference block), 2 September, 12-1.

For more information, email Workplace Fitness Passport Coordinator Kelly at [fitnesspassportnswlhd@gmail.com](mailto:fitnesspassportnswlhd@gmail.com).

## Membership pricing

\$11.95 per week | Single - Employee only  
 \$18.95 per week | Family - Employee + Partner + Children U18  
 \$11.95 per week | Dependent child U25

*\*Please note: partner and dependent children, U18 and U25 inclusive, all must reside at the same address as the employee to be eligible for the program.*

through the week or use the gym closest to their home on the weekend," Ms Adams said.

"If you have joined with a family membership, each immediate family member will receive his/her own card and enjoy the same benefits."

Ms Adams said the Fitness Passport program could only get off the ground if 700 staff sign up for an annual membership by 11 September, 2015.

"If you are currently with a gym but would like to have a Fitness Passport, we will give you plenty of notice if/

## Participating venues

### Richmond

Alstonville Heated Olympic Pool  
 Ballina Fair Swim and Gym  
 Ballina Memorial Olympic Pool & Waterslide (TBC)  
 Byron Bay Swimming Pool  
 Byron Gym and Fitness Centre  
 Casino Gym  
 Evans Head Aquatic Centre  
 Goonellabah Sports and Aquatic Centre  
 Lennox Aquatic Centre – Swim & Gym  
 Lismore Memorial Baths  
 Riverside Fitness, Ballina  
 SCU Fitness For You  
 Summit Sports and Fitness Centre for Women (Goonellabah)

### Clarence

Grafton Olympic Pool  
 Maclean Olympic Swimming Pool  
 South Grafton Indoor Pool and Boyd Natress Complex  
 Yamba 24/7 Health and Fitness  
 Yamba Community Heated Pool

### Tweed

Kingscliff Swimming Pool  
 Mullumbimby Petria Thomas Swimming Pool (TBC)  
 Revolution Health and Fitness at Seagulls  
 Sierra Fitness - Murwillumbah  
 Sierra Fitness - Ocean Shores  
 Transform Fitness Mullumbimby  
 Tweed Fitness Factory  
 Tweed Regional Aquatic Centre - Murwillumbah  
 Tweed South Indoor Swimming Complex



## In Brief...

### Health Pathways: making life easier

Health Service Specialists, Registrars, Nurses, and Allied Health Professionals can all benefit from the new Health Pathways located via the colourful icon on all workplace computer desktops.

Health Pathways provides information about the best-practice care for a range of conditions to assist professionals when referring patients onto local services.

There are currently 113 Live Pathways localised for our region and the Health Pathways team has identified a further 89 topics for completion in the coming months.

To access Health Pathways, click on the desktop icon or visit <http://manc.healthpathways.org.au>. Enter the Username: manchealth and Password: conn3ct3d. Select Mid and North Coast Localised Pathways from the menu on the left hand side of the Homepage and then scroll through the Pathways listed and click on the Pathway for viewing.

Feedback can be provided to the Health Pathways Team by using the "send feedback button" located on the top right-hand section of the Homepage or Pathway.

### Plan on internet

The Northern NSW Integrated Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Plan has been endorsed by the NNSW LHD Board and is now available on the NNSW LHD Intranet and Internet site.

The Plan was launched on 3 August 2015 and a Partnership Agreement to implement the Plan was signed off by the Partner Agencies.

To access the Plan and Partnership Agreement visit:

Internet: <http://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/>

Intranet: <http://int.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/>

## New EAP gives 24/7 support

Significant changes have been made to the NNSW LHD Employee Assistance Program (EAP), making it easier for staff to access counselling support.

From 1 September 2015, EAP services for NNSW LHD employees and their families will be provided by OPTUM Health and Technology.

The OPTUM EAP service provides a personal, confidential, free counselling service and support to NNSW LHD employees, and their family members, by calling 1300 361 008, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NNSW LHD Work Health Safety (WHS) and Injury Management Manager Yvette Bowen said the change meant easier access to the EAP.

"There is no longer a need for employees to arrange a

referral through NNSW LHD," Ms Bowen said. "Staff simply call 1300 361 008 and liaise directly with OPTUM."

The EAP provides short-term counselling and support for employees and their family

- Gambling and substance abuse problems;
- Stress management;
- Depression and anxiety;
- Workplace conflict and communication; and
- Critical Incident Support.

Any existing referrals will be completed by the current EAP service providers.

"OPTUM will be presenting information sessions at Grafton, Maclean, Lismore, Casino, Murwillumbah, and Tweed Heads with details advertised soon," Ms Bowen said.

Information on the new EAP are on the NNSW LHD intranet site under the new WHS page.

For further information on the changes contact Ms Bowen, on 6620 2521.



members on a range of personal and work issues including:

- Relationship and marital problems;
- Grief and bereavement;
- Relationships with others;
- Concerns about children or family members;

## Child protection is everyone's business

Child abuse and neglect is one of Australia's most significant social problems, with 35,000 Australian children proven to have been abused or neglected in the past 12 months\*.

To help raise awareness, National Child Protection Week is held annually in September and is now in its 25th year.

This year, Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSW LHD) staff are being encouraged to participate in several community and hospital events.

"Information displays will be set up and activities will be held during Child Protection Week at The Tweed Hospital (TTH), Tweed Community Health and TTH Emergency Department, Lismore Shopping Square, Grafton and Maclean Community Health, and Grafton Public Library," Out of Home Care and Child Wellbeing Coordinator Nicole Ashby said.

"Our staff are also assisting with the Ballina Byron Family Centre activities in Ballina. All



events will be registered on the NAPCAN website.

"Staff also need to keep a look out for our Child Protection Week competition which will arrive in your email box in the week of

7 September 2015."

Child Protection Week is launched Nationally every year on Father's Day and invites all Australians to play their part to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The central message is: "protecting children is everyone's business".

"This year NAPCAN is encouraging everyone to find out more about their role in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children," Ms Ashby said.

"The NAPCAN website [www.napcan.org](http://www.napcan.org) has excellent, easily accessible information about what all members of a community can do to help our kids. The website also has useful printable brochures to support parents."

For further details contact Ms Ashby on 6603 0921.

\* Source: NAPCAN – National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, August 2015.



## Chief Executive Report...

### Tough Winter

On behalf of the Board and Senior Management team I want to acknowledge the hard, dedicated and caring work of our frontline Clinicians, especially our Emergency Department (ED) Clinicians over this Winter period. It has been the toughest Winter for some years with the number of Patients treated up again on top of the rises experienced in the past couple of years. As set out below our Patients have been particularly sick this Winter.

It has been the most difficult Winter for the NSW Health System for some years. While the volume of flu cases is fairly stable, the severity of the illness has increased significantly. Anecdotally I am hearing that when people come down with the flu this year they remain ill for longer. This is reflected in our July 2015 ED figures with category 2 presentations being up 16.3% and Category 3 presentations being up 10.7% with Category 4 and 5 presentations being down. This meant that slightly fewer patients were able to be treated and out of our EDs within the targeted 4 hours.

The latest Bureau of Health Information figures, which cover the second quarter of 2015, indicate there was a busy build up to Winter in May and early Winter as reflected in the June figures was also very busy. Some Hospitals in Sydney were experiencing growth in presentations of 25.0%. This Report being released prompted headlines such as "Hospitals stretched to the limit" in the Sydney Morning Herald and this Winter's high Patient demand has caused the NSW Ministry of Health (MOH) to introduce special initiatives to support some Hospitals through the later part of the Winter period.

The situation at NNSW LHD Hospitals during July was mixed. Lismore Base and Grafton Base Hospital timeliness results deteriorated compared to last year, while the results at The Tweed, Murwillumbah and Ballina Hospitals remained good. It will be interesting to see what the August data reveals. Discussions held with Clinicians during August indicate it continued to be very busy at NNSW LHD Hospital EDs.

Normally, the Winter pressures linger through at least the first half of September. The NSW MOH advises that the flu season will have a late peak this year. Also I hear that the Brisbane flu is heading south and will affect the Gold Coast and Tweed Hospitals during September. So Managers and our Inpatient Clinicians need to remain at their Winter readiness for the next few weeks to support our EDs through the remainder of this high demand period.

### Reconciliation Action Plan

With progress on reconciliation between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander first inhabitants of Australia and the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities either stalled or at best in the slow lane, an increasing number of organisations are looking at what practical contribution they can make to the reconciliation process. It looks as though a referendum to include reference to the first inhabitants of Australia in the Constitution will not be held until mid-2017. Further to gain consensus support for that referendum, it is likely to be a largely a symbolic exercise. This should not be down played as symbolism is an important part of the long march towards full reconciliation. However, it leaves plenty of scope for practical actions to be taken to be taken by individuals and organisations at the day to day level to make their contribution towards the reconciliation process.

At its 29 July 2015 Meeting, the NNSW LHD Board decided that NNSW LHD should develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This decision followed on from a number of Board Members being aware of other organisations with which they are associated taking a similar step.

Nearest to us is the Lismore City Council (LCC), which developed a RAP a few years ago. But interestingly the week after the Board made its decision, Mr James Parker placed full page advertisements in major metropolitan newspapers announcing that his Crown Casino Corporation had recently developed a RAP. This is but one example of some of Australia's major corporations taking practical action to advance the reconciliation process.

So what you might ask is a RAP? Firstly, there is a symbolic element to it. By developing and implementing a RAP an organisation makes a commitment to the reconciliation process, says more needs to be done to advance reconciliation and that it is prepared to play its part in a practical sense. Secondly, it outlines the goals that an organisation will set for itself to move forward with reconciliation. For example both LCC and Crown Casino Corporation identify boosting the number of Aboriginal people they employ as a key goal. Another goal included within RAPs is assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to undertake more education or to offer apprenticeships to assist them to gain skills. Employment and education goals will be components of the proposed NNSW LHD RAP. Given our core business as a health provider and the importance of improving the health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to close the life expectancy gap, the provision of health services to our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities would be another key component of our RAP.

The NNSW LHD Executive has set up a small sub-committee to produce an initial draft of the RAP. This will in part draw its content from existing plans, such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing Plan and its companion Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Plan. Once the Executive endorses the draft RAP, it will be submitted to the Board for approval to release it for consultation both within NNSW LHD and with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It is anticipated that this process will take around six months.

### Patient Experience

Feedback has recently been received from Australian Clinicians and Health Managers who have visited the United States and Canadian Health Systems about the importance being given to "patient experience". Such is the high regard in which modern health systems are held, that Patients now expect that the health care they receive will be of a high standard. This has caused them to more rate their health care against what is known as "patient experience". This means what it says – did the patient consider that she had a good or bad experience in his/her interface with the health system. This is much more than receiving "uneventful" treatment and a good outcome. It relates to communications, respectful interactions, timeliness and involving the Patient in the care provision. In other service industries, these are called "moments of truth" being the moment when the service provider and receiver interact, such as at a supermarket check-out.

Does the care giver introduce him/herself, make eye contact, demonstrate a willingness to listen and carefully explain the patients likely illness, the investigations being undertaken and the care being given? These type of interactions feed into the patient's assessment of his/her experience. Nurses sometimes refer to this as "high touch" in contrast to so much of the care we provide, which is now "hi-tech". Some say that Health Staff are just too busy to engage in all these "niceties" which promote good experience. But others say it can be done with a smile or a quick explanation of why a delay is occurring due to busyness. Most patients are reasonable people and will show understanding if they know what is occurring and why. To assist our Clinicians and Staff to engage in improved "patient focus", the Board has set aside a small amount of funding in this year's budget to support some training in best practice "patient focus". More information about this training will be provided over the next couple of months.

*Chris Crawford*



## Breast cancer gene isolated

Melbourne researchers have isolated a gene that plays a complex role in breast cancer.

The PIPP gene ordinarily works to suppress tumours, but when breast cancer forms it causes the cancer to spread to the other parts of the body.

The Monash University researchers found that when the gene was removed from mice prone to breast cancer, the tumour itself grew bigger but cancer cells did not spread.

The researchers believe that if the gene can be inhibited, the potential spread of the cancers to the bones or the liver may decrease.

## \$3 billion hangover

Hangovers are causing 11.5 million "sick days" a year at a cost of \$3 billion to the Australian economy, new research suggests.

There are also fears that people who are mixing alcohol with amphetamines on the weekends are experiencing "Weepy Wednesdays" because of the delayed effects of their drug use, making them irritable and unreliable workers.

A Flinders University study has found that the more alcohol and/or drugs an employee consumes, the more time they are likely to take off work.

## Music soothes surgical beast

A review of more than 7000 patients has found listening to music before, during and after surgery reduces pain, anxiety and the need for pain medication.

Even patients who had music played to them while they were under general anaesthetic benefited.

*Courtesy The Lancet*

# Fighting chronic disease

By Robin Osborne

A group of Aboriginal people from local communities has recorded significant health and fitness gains from a program that saw them become the first Northern Rivers team to participate in the annual State-wide 'Team NSW Knockout Health Challenge'.

In addition, they came in the top 10 for NSW, a remarkable performance according to NNSWLHD Aboriginal Chronic Care Officer, Anthony Franks.

The challenge is a NSW Health initiative with the Bundjalung Burners group coming from the Jubullum (Tabulam), Casino, and Kyogle areas.

The group was supported by a partnership comprising Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation Richmond Valley Clinic, Casino Community Health, Northern NSW Local Health District, and Ballina-based Solid Mob.

Mr Franks said he was delighted by the uptake of the program by a diverse group of



**Members of the Bundjalung Burners stride it out during fitness training for the Team NSW Knockout Health Challenge.**

community members.

"They showed great commitment over the three-month-long program, which started with a health screening and assessment session, and included a fitness regime individually tailored to each participant and supervised by coach Mark Roberts," Mr Franks said.

"There was ongoing support from medical and community health staff at the various health services. This is continuing and being extended to others who, for various reasons, were

not able to join the Challenge but feel inspired by the involvement of family members and friends."

A key focus of the broader program is ensuring that Aboriginal people with, or at risk of, chronic disease have access to culturally appropriate rehabilitation programs.

The initial focus is on the Casino, Jubullum, and Kyogle communities who are currently not accessing mainstream chronic disease programs on a regular basis.

*Courtesy GP Speak [www.nrgpn.org.au](http://www.nrgpn.org.au)*

## Your Health Link just a click away

A broad range of health information is now just a mouse click away, following the recent launch of the NNSW LHD Your Health Link website.

Your Health Link provides a centralised gateway for fast and easy access to a large number of Australian health-related websites and resources.

It has links to more than 300 Government and Non-Government organisations, with the sites chosen by health professionals.

"The internet-based health portal aims to provide information and resources to the community to improve the understanding of a range of health conditions, and health outcomes," NNSW LHD Chief

of Staff Wayne Jones said.

"The Your Health Link website was an initiative of the Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD), which has generously provided permission



for the NNSW LHD to use from our homepage."

Your Health Link includes information on physical health, nutrition, sexual health, sport, mental health, finance, legal services, education and employment, health related videos, national events calendar, useful telephone numbers, and

the National Health Services Directory which identifies health services in specific local areas.

Your Health Link categories of: Child and Family, Youth Plus (12 – 25 year olds), Women's Health, Men's Health, Seniors, Carers, Aboriginal Health, and Multicultural Health.

Each individual category then contains tabs for relevant issues such as housing, health and nutrition, mental wellbeing, antenatal and postnatal care, and Domestic Violence services.

By clicking on a tab, the user is presented with a broad range of external links to organisations such as Pain Australia, beyondblue, Raising Children Network, and Lung Foundation.

# Interview with Dr Rashmi Dixit

*This month we talk to Dr Rashmi Dixit who commenced work at Lismore Base Hospital in February 2015 as the Infectious Diseases Specialist – Paediatric and Adult. Dr Dixit also has an interest in obesity and insulin resistance in individuals, and has recently completed a Fellowship in Travel and Tropical Medicine. Dr Dixit is currently completing her PhD, titled “Influenza in Vulnerable Populations” through the University of Sydney.*

*Q: What made you decide to move to the Northern Rivers?*

I was born and raised in New Zealand and completed my Undergraduate medicine training at the University of Auckland. I then moved to Sydney to commence my specialist training and soon discovered Byron Bay, which quickly became one of my favourite places in Australia to visit and holiday. I was thrilled with the opportunity to work, and live, in the Northern Rivers.

*Q. What drew you to the specialty field of Infectious Diseases?*

Both Infectious Disease and Obesity are generally amenable to environmental modification, and I like that. Globally, when we look at Tropical Diseases and Obesity, there are many factors which can be modified to reduce the severity. One of the ways that we can modify the environment is to improve vaccination rates.

*Q. Vaccination is a contentious issue on the Northern Rivers. Do you believe the low vaccination rate in this Health District is an issue that needs to be addressed?*

There is clear evidence that higher vaccination rates reduce the risk of infection, yet there are still some barriers to vaccination, including access to vaccines at

times and places convenient to families.

Exploring solutions to the many barriers to immunisation is a better use of resources than attempting to force those who are opposed to vaccination to be vaccinated.

It takes a lot of resources to change a mind that is already made up, yet there are those who do want to vaccinate their child but find it difficult to do so or who have unanswered questions.

Health policy and governments have a social responsibility to help people who want to vaccinate their child but are unable to do so due to a range of barriers.

*Q. Obesity and infectious disease seems like an odd match?*

Not really. Influenza is much worse in patients who are obese, smoke, or have chronic illness such as Type II diabetes. Diabetes is usually the result of obesity or insulin resistance, and insulin resistance is the result of being overweight.

There is a clear link between lifestyle and infectious disease and if we can modify lifestyle choices and reduce obesity, then we can reduce the risk of infection.



**Dr Rashmi Dixit.**

*Q. As an Infectious Diseases Specialist, what do you actually do?*

I provide a consultation service to inpatients. If a patient doesn't respond to standard care, or is in the Intensive Care Unit, or if there is something unusual in their presentation, then I am consulted.

Another part of my role is Antimicrobial Stewardship, which is making sure antibiotics are used carefully and appropriately in order to prevent antibiotic resistance.

I work as part of a team which includes Ashley Handy, the Antimicrobial Stewardship

Pharmacy Specialist, and Infection Control Clinical Nurse Specialist Vicky Denyer.

*Q. What is the best thing about living on the Northern Rivers?*

Lismore is a quiet, friendly town. It is very easy to live in. When you walk around the streets, or into any shop, people are always quick to say 'hello'.

I also like that I am so close to such a diverse range of natural environments as I enjoy being able to immerse myself in nature.

The fact that we are also very close and well connected to all that a metropolitan city has to offer is a bonus.



**Dr Dixit states obesity is a modifiable environmental factor in the fight against infectious disease, and chronic disease such as Type II diabetes.**



# Big year for Hospital Auxiliaries

August was a busy month for United Hospital Auxiliaries (UHA) across the NNSWLHD with most branches holding their Annual General Meetings (AGM).

In some cases familiar faces were returned to the Executives, while in other groups new Presidents and Executives were elected.

The common theme across all AGMs was the significant financial contribution each UHA made to its Hospital.

The Tweed Hospital Auxiliary held its AGM on 4 August with incumbent President Jennifer McKellar returned as President for the coming year.

In her President's Report, Jennifer highlighted the hard work of the Tweed Auxiliary with almost \$352,000 raised for The Tweed Hospital (TTH)

Jennifer highlighted the number of volunteer hours provided annually by TTH Auxiliary members, totalling 35,888 hours this year.

In Lismore, outgoing President Rita Richards thanked the tireless work of the Lismore UHA's 28 working members who managed to log almost 9000 hours during the year.

In her President's Report, Rita paid special tribute to outgoing Treasurer Sandy Robertson who has served as Treasurer for 9 years.



The newly elected Executive of The Tweed Hospital's United Hospital Auxiliary, with UHA Deputy State President Mollie Strong, third from right.

The newly elected Executive of Lismore Base Hospital's United Hospital Auxiliary.



Rita congratulated the UHA members for their efforts in raising almost \$84,000 towards the Lismore Base Hospital.

NNSW LHD Board Chairman Dr Brian Pezzutti thanked the members and stated that the new surgical equipment donated as a result of fundraising was already being put to good use.

Rita welcomed incoming President Diane Miller and wished the new Executive a successful coming year.

## Car leasing, made easy!



### What is a novated lease?

A three way agreement between you, your employer and a finance company.

With a novated lease you've got choice - salary package a new, used or even your current car!

#### • Time for your dream new car?

- Smartleasing can save you time and money:
- Our buying power means we'll find your new car at a great price
- Pay no GST on the purchase price of the car
- Our affiliations with local car dealers means we can source your ideal car and even arrange the test drives for you

#### • Got your eye on a used car?

Salary package a used car as long as it's less than 8 years old at the end of the lease.

#### • Happy with your current car?

No problem, whether you own your current car outright or it's on finance - you can effectively 'sell and lease back' this car.

### What is an associate lease?

Your associate (spouse, partner, family trust or company) 'leases' a family car that they own to your employer - and your employer then provides the car back to you as a salary packaged fringe benefit. For your associate to be eligible to do this they must register for an ABN. The main advantage of an associate lease is that you can divert some of your taxable salary to a family member, trust or company to be taxed at a lower rate.

### Better still- with ANY car lease you can enjoy these great benefits:

- Tax savings on your lease payments, insurance, rego, CTP, fuel and other running costs
- Fleet rates on service and maintenance
- A choice of fuel cards
- A wide range of vehicle insurance, warranty and membership products and services.

### Interested?

To find out how you could benefit from a car lease with Smartleasing, call them on **1300 118 245**.



## Greater linkages in place

The Boards of the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSW LHD) and North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN) have agreed to continue the linkages established between the Community, Stakeholder, and Clinician Engagement structures for the two organisations.

This includes the Northern NSW Aboriginal Partnership with the Aboriginal Medical Services, the North Coast Community Engagement Advisory Council being the peak Community Engagement Structure for both organisations, an Annual Community Engagement Conference, recognition and participation with Ngayundi Aboriginal Health Council, and twice-yearly combined Clinical Council meetings between the two organisations.

As part of this collaborative approach, NCPHN sponsored Murray Spriggs, Manager Community Engagement, to attend a Consumers Health Forum Australia (CHF)

workshop entitled Consumer-led ideas for Better Primary Health Care.

A key Commonwealth reform discussed at this forum was the Primary Health Care Advisory Group (PHCAG) (visit <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/HealthCareAdvisoryGroup-1>)

The PHCAG will investigate options for reform of primary health care to support patients with complex and chronic illness and the treatment of mental health conditions.

The Chair of this Advisory Group made note of the importance of the inclusion of Dr Mary Foley NSW Secretary of Health on this group.

The Medicare Benefits Review Taskforce, led by Professor Bruce Robinson, Dean of the Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, will also consider how services can be aligned with contemporary clinical evidence and improve health outcomes for patients.

The Federal Government expects to have spent more than \$20 billion on Medicare services in 2014-15.

Currently, the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) has more than 5500 services listed, not all of which reflect contemporary best clinical practice. Most of these services have never been formally assessed.

At the workshop, Dr Nicola Dunbar, Director Strategy and Development, Australian Commission National Safety and Quality in Healthcare (NSQHS) provided an update on the review of NSQHS Standards with a proposed completion date of 2017/18.

Consultation on the Draft Version 2 of the NSQHS Standards is now open and closes on 30 October 2015.

Visit <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/accreditation-and-the-nsqhs-standards/current-consultations/#Version-2-of-the-NSQHS-Standards>

## Board Member Profile

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### Malcolm Marshall



**Appointed:** 1 January 2011 to 30 December 2016

**Board Committees:** Chair Finance and Performance Committee.

**Principle area of expertise/knowledge:** Business and Financial Management

Prior to his retirement in 2012, Malcolm Marshall was the Executive Director Corporate Services and Council Secretary for Southern Cross University a position he had held since 1993.

In this role, Malcolm was responsible for Finance and Business Services, Student Services, Human Resources and Facilities and Capital Works.

Malcolm has a long history serving the Health Services of Northern NSW having been a member of previous Health Service Boards for 15 years.

Malcolm is one of two NNSW LHD Board Members who is also a member of the North Coast Primary Health Network (formally North Coast Medicare Local) Board.

Malcolm was endorsed by his NNSW LHD Board colleagues, and subsequently appointed by the Minister of Health, as Deputy Chair NNSW LHD Board, a position he has held since the Board's establishment in 2011.

Malcolm has been, and continues to serve, on a number of other Boards within Northern NSW including 23 years as a Director for Norsearch, Chairman of the Lismore Turf Club since 2012, and as a Patron for Our Kids.

## Research receives national recognition

Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSW LHD) Board Member and Director of the University Centre for Rural Health (UCRH), Professor Lesley Barclay AO, has been recognised by the Federal Government for leading one of Australia's top-ten research projects over the past year.

The Ten of the Best Research Projects 2014 were selected for their innovativeness and potential to make a difference to the lives of Australians.

Professor Barclay's team conducted extensive research on birthing practices in rural and remote communities in the Northern Territory's Top End.

This led to the rollout of a model of care that is delivering



significant benefits for Aboriginal mothers and their babies.

"The benefits include improved care for mothers with potential for increased birth weights for infants," Professor Barclay, former midwife, said.

"At present, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women still have a higher maternal

mortality rate than women in Sri Lanka or Malaysia, with twice as many Indigenous babies (11 per cent in total) being of a lower birth weight than the general Australian population."

The research was supported by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

The work started when Professor Barclay was at Charles Darwin University and was completed at the University of Sydney.

"While most Australian mothers in urban centres have access to high quality maternity and infant care, those living in rural and remote Australia aren't so lucky," Professor Barclay said.

# Bangonabeanie for brain injury

Staff at Ballina District Hospital took advantage of the cold August weather to show their support for National Brain Injury Awareness Week.

BANGONABEANIE is the National campaign for Brain Injury Awareness Week, held from 17-23 August 2015.

To raise awareness of the more than 1.6 million Australians living each week with brain injury, the Northern Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service and staff at Ballina District Hospital banded together to host a BANGONABEANIE best beanie competition.

All money raised during the competition went towards providing support and assistance to individuals and families living with an acquired brain injury.

Without Brain Injury organisations, every day mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters would be left without the support they so desperately need when trying to reconnect their lives after a brain injury.

BANGONABEANIE supports one of the largest and most disadvantaged disability groups in Australia, and works to transform an 'Invisible Disability' into a very visible one.



Staff from Ballina District Hospital, from left, Brett Singleton, Liesel Jeffers, Stephanie Irvin, Maggie Green, Michael Corbett (kneeling), Lynne Ridgway, and Annabelle Vaughan don their beanies to raise money and awareness of acquired brain injury.

## Better care for adults with chronic disease

At the beginning of 2015, NNSW LHD was successful in its bid to secure funding to better integrate care for adults with Chronic Diseases and Complex Care needs.

A partnership has since been formed with the NCPHN, Aboriginal Medical Services (AMSs), and NSW Ambulance.

The first seven months has seen planning for the establishment of better care management based on patients' needs and goals.

Major activities have included:

- The establishment of a shared Governance arrangement with our partners;
- A planning workshop with 110 stakeholders meeting in Ballina in May;
- Information sessions to staff across the LHD ;
- Presentations at different forums such as PHN events and the Aged Care Symposium held in Ballina;
- The commencement of an Integrated Care Collaborative coordinated by the Improvement Foundation which involves general practice, AMSs, the LHD; and Ambulance working collaboratively to improve care;

Planning and implementing a range of IT initiatives has occurred to support integrated care including:

- Admission and discharge notification to GPs when patients present or leave hospital
- Secure messaging to enable timelier secure transfer of patient information between GPs, Specialists and LHD Clinicians
- Deployment of laptops to community health to enable timely documentation and clinical support.

Additionally, the LHD attracted additional funding from the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) to implement two additional initiatives under the banner of Integrated Care.

TTH is implementing the Building Partnerships Framework for integrating care for older people with complex care needs; and Grafton is implementing a Specialist Geriatric Outreach program working with Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs).

For information contact Catriona Wilson, Integrated Care Manager on 6620 2934.

## Time right to kick the butt

Northern NSW Local Health District Health Promotion Manager Jillian Adams is urging staff to make every day World No Tobacco Day, following on from successful days held in Lismore and Tweed Hospitals earlier this year.

Members of the Health Promotion Tobacco Cessation team set up displays and were available to provide tobacco cessation information to patients, visitors and health professionals.

The team ran a few competitions to encourage people to talk about all aspects of smoking and tobacco cessation.

Prizes were awarded to people who guessed the correct number of butts in a jar and to those participants who put forward the best tobacco slogans.

The winning slogans will be used in promoting and marketing tobacco cessation initiatives provided by the Health Promotion team.

Winners included: Mark Banbury, Elizabeth Nichols, Kerry Avery, Bruce Donnellan, Michelle Burgess, Scott Froyland, and Emanuel Roberts.



# DonateLife Week a huge success

“Have the chat that saves lives” was the message that kicked off August to promote National Organ and Tissue Donor Week.

DonateLife Week was held nationally from 2 August to 9 August, 2015, with residents of the Northern Rivers urged to ‘have a chat’ regarding organ and tissue donation.

NNSW LHD held a successful Cycle/Walk for Life day with 170 road cyclists and 50 family cyclists/walkers participating in the Cycle/Walk.

“Last year, 1117 Australian lives were transformed through the generosity of 378 deceased organ donors and their families who agreed to the donation proceeding,” NNSW LHD donation Medical Specialist, Dr Mike Lindley Jones, said.



**Above:** Cyclists prepare to take off for the for the DonateLife Week Cycle/Walk for Life event.  
**Below:** Organ Donor recipient Ben chats with local media to promote the ‘have a chat’ message.

“If you are happy to receive an organ donation, then you ought to be happy to give one if the situation should arise.”

As part of the NNSW LHD’s promotion of DonateLife Week, local Buslines buses also carried advertising for the month.



## WHS issues now a mouse click away

NNSW LHD management and staff now have a new one-stop-shop for all their Workplace Health Safety (WHS) and Injury Management information needs, following the launch of a new portal on the NNSW LHD intranet.

The Workplace Health Safety icon, located just below the HETI Online icon on the intranet, opens up a new page comprising a range of icons covering topics such as Fire Safety, EAP, Chem Alert, Fitness Passport, Injury Management, Staff Health, Non Work-Related Injuries or Health Conditions, Insurance Claims including Fleet and Liability, Security and Workplace Safety.



Workplace Health Safety and Injury Management Manager Yvette Bowen said the new website had been several months in construction.

“The new and improved intranet site comprises all the policies, procedures, and tools that managers and staff need when confronted with a WHS or Injury Management issue,” Yvette said.

“The new site includes a special section on Non Work-Related Injuries or Health Conditions, which provides a broad range of information

for managers on how to assist a staff member return to work following an illness or accident.

“Issues such as what to do when an employee requests a change to his/her substantive duties or roster, or when returning to work following extended sick leave, and what to do as a manager when a worker has returned to work after injury or illness but is not coping with his/her duties is all now available at the click of a mouse.”

Yvette encouraged managers and staff to familiarise themselves with the new website and to contact her on 6620 2521 with any feedback or further queries.

## Chemists can now do flu vaccination

Flu vaccination can now be administered by your local pharmacist under new rules introduced by the NSW Government.

In March the NSW Government amended the NSW Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 to allow pharmacists to administer influenza vaccines to people aged over 18.

NSW Minister for Health Jillian Skinner urged those who have not yet been vaccinated against influenza to do so now.

## HETI redesign

The Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) initiated a review of the NSW Rural Research Capacity Building Program last year, resulting in changes to the program.

The new program will have closer links with rural LHDs to ensure the program is relevant, productive, and embedded in the current rural health research agenda.

# The last word ...

## Farewell John Lambert

Staff and Board Members of the Northern NSW Local Health District gathered last month to farewell John Lambert, who retired on 28 August 2015 as Manager, Assets and Capital Works.

NNSW LHD Chief Executive Chris Crawford, thanked John for his outstanding contribution to NNSW LHD, and its predecessor organisations, during the past 24 years.



Above, from left: Bruce Smith, John Lambert, Jacob Ben-Porat, Sophie Morris, and NNSW LHD Board Chairman Dr Brian Pezzutti. Right, NNSW LHD Chief Executive Chris Crawford wishes John all the best for his next grand adventure in Tasmania.



## Thanks Humpty Dumpty

The Tweed Hospital Emergency Department (ED) staff have given a BIG thank you to the Humpty Dumpty Foundation and the kind donors Curt and Mary Zuber for the wonderful donation of the Panda Warmer.

The staff are very excited to have this new piece of equipment which will be used to care for sick and unwell neonates and/or infants presenting to ED.

Since its donation, it's been used with success on a five-week-old baby.

Pictured from left, Sally Crompton RN, Dr Michael Lattimore FACEM, Rachael Kealy, Mr Tony Lohead, NUM 3, Jon Barham- Nokes RN, Trish Johnson CNS, Dr Bruce Beal FACEM, Dr Rob Davies Director ED.

## Busy as a surgical bee

Few people would turn a four-month hospital stay into a creative experience, yet for artist Robyn 'Rowdy' Donoghue of Murwillumbah it made perfect sense to arrive at hospital with art supplies on hand.

Robyn was admitted in April 2015 for complication arising from a compound ankle fracture incurred during a horse riding event in November 2011.

"I arrived at the hospital ready for surgery equipped with two bags: one with clothes and essentials, the other with my arts

and crafts," Robyn said.

"I thought: 'You have to pass the time somehow'."

Robyn's admission lasted four months, spending time at both Tweed and Murwillumbah Hospitals.

"I was so well looked after by the nurses and doctors I decided to make them a special gift," Robyn said. "I came up with the idea of 'busy bees in the hospital hive'. They are such wonderful people and so dedicated to their jobs."

Robyn, pictured, donated the 'Life is a buzz when you're a bee'



art piece to the Surgical Ward at Murwillumbah District Hospital to

give thanks for the dedicated care she received during her stay.