

Rescue missions mount

396. That's the number of missions the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter performed in 2017.

Based in Lismore, the Service had a busy year both in the skies and on the ground, with flood waters from ex-tropical cyclone Debbie inundating the old helibase, a move to a new home, and the arrival of a new aircraft.

In April, the Service moved to a purpose-built facility located on the edge of the Lismore Airport. This move was part of an amalgamation with Northern NSW Helicopter Rescue Service Ltd which also operates the Westpac Rescue Helicopter services in Newcastle and Tamworth.

The new beginning also coincided with the arrival of the Service's new Agusta Westland 139 (AW139) rescue helicopter which features advanced capabilities for faster response times and improved medical equipment and storage.

With an onboard Wi-Fi system, the medical team aboard the new aircraft is able to receive live-streamed updates from the scene of



▲ The Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter in action over Northern NSW.

an emergency whilst on route.

Throughout the year, 21 search and rescues, 186 hospital transfers and 189 primary emergency response missions were performed.

In December the Service

celebrated performing its 9,000th mission since it began in Ballina in 1982.

In late December the Service reached a further milestone through its 35th anniversary.

The Westpac Life Saver

Rescue Helicopter continues to provide unique training opportunities for junior medical officers, thanks to its partnerships with NSW Health and NSW Ambulance Service.

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Transition to
Mental Health
Nursing
graduates
welcomed



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We talk
applications
and IT with
Bob Harper
and Dave
Goulding

The Northern NSW Local Health District Board and Executive are committed to fostering a safe and inclusive work environment. Improving workplace culture is a key priority for 2017-18, with an emphasis on enhancing staff wellbeing and increasing communication throughout the organisation.

As I write this, I'm surprised by how quickly the year seems to be running along already. New staff are settling in to our facilities, diaries are filling up for the months ahead, and plans for the delivery of our strategic priorities are well underway.

A new year is a great chance to think about making changes to improve our health, and I'm encouraging all our staff to take this opportunity with the free health checks coming soon. From March, you'll have the chance to get a free and confidential 15 minute health check at work, as part of the Get Healthy program.

Last week I had the pleasure of welcoming new doctors and nurses to some of our facilities.

Clinical work is challenging, but very rewarding, and I welcome our new graduates and encourage them to utilise the support networks we have across the Northern NSW Local Health District. In the parlance of Between the Flags, if you do find yourself in trouble, put up your hand and help will be provided.

A new group of Mental Health nurses

also joined our ranks this year, having completed our Transition to Mental Health Nursing Program.

This is a great program to support Registered Nurses interested in Mental Health to obtain skills and experience to prepare them for a career in Mental Health. I want to acknowledge our senior Mental Health clinicians and staff for their support in encouraging and supporting new staff in the field.

Throughout this year, we have many exciting things ahead, with our Strategic Plan setting the direction for the District over the next five years.

In particular, I'm looking forward to the launch of our staff culture and wellbeing program early in the year. It is based on the extensive feedback we've received from our workforce to enhance recognition, support and inclusion of our valued work family.

I want to congratulate Dr Vahid Saberi, Chief Executive Officer of North Coast Primary Health Network, for his strong commitment to integrated care over the last six years.

As Dr Saberi moves on to other work,



I thank him for his leadership, which has led to both the PHN and our own Local Health District being recognised as leaders in this area. We wish him all the best in his next adventure.

Wayne Jones
Chief Executive

From the Board Chair



Welcome to 2018. Firstly, I acknowledge the outstanding work of our staff over the holiday period and thank you for your care and commitment.

As we commence this new year, I draw to your attention again to the encouragement by the Minister for Health to do our work and provide care with empathy and kindness, not just to our patients but to one another.

We work in a highly emotionally-charged environment and understanding the impact on ourselves

and those around us is also important.

Please don't hesitate to seek help if you need it, and do not be afraid to offer help to a co-worker if you think they could need a hand.

Recently, I attended the inaugural meeting of the reconstructed Northern NSW Clinical Council.

The Chief Executive outlined the role of the Council as ensuring Clinician engagement so we can work to do 'what is the right thing to do' and hear ideas from all cohorts of clinicians across the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD).

I encouraged the Council to take a lead from and engage with the Agency for Clinical Innovation and the Clinical Excellence Commission, and to drive change to ensure quality and safe practices that are person-focussed and effective.

I encouraged the Council to look to the Quality and Safety Account, developed by Dr David Hutton and adopted by the Board, as a living document to assist in the evolution of this important approach to ongoing improvement in patient care.

I look forward to the Council leading the development of a more effective team-based approach to care, which will assist us in delivering the best outcomes for our patients, especially in the delivery of Better Value Care for people with chronic diseases.

I thank Andrew Neil for undertaking the role as Chairman of the NNSWLHD Clinical Council.

In engaging with our clinicians, whether they are part of the NNSWLHD service, or North Coast Primary Health Network, or in private practice, I hope that we will also be more effective in engaging with our community to ensure better health outcomes for everyone in the LHD.

My best wishes for a highly rewarding year ahead.

Brian Pezzutti
Board Chair

Feel better, get a healthy check-up

Most Australian working adults spend a third of their lives at work, and we all need support to get healthy.

Being healthy isn't just about avoiding the flu or eating your greens. It's about feeling good day-to-day and having the energy to do what you want to do.

To help you make this year your healthiest yet, free and confidential health check ups are being offered to all Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) employees.

A 15-minute Brief Health Check delivered by trained health professionals, SMG Health, will provide you with immediate feedback and advice on making healthy lifestyle changes and reducing your risk of chronic disease.

The appointments are totally confidential, and free!

Brief Health Checks will be available during the week beginning 5 March, 2018.

Dates, locations and how to register for your free health check will be circulated to all staff by mid-February.

Appointments will be offered



on a first in first served basis.

All staff are strongly encouraged to take up this opportunity. Your Brief Health Check can link you to a range of existing services such as the Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service, NSW Quitline, and many local services.

NNSWLHD is committed to supporting a workplace that

helps you and your colleagues feel fitter, healthier and happier.

When you're healthy you feel better, you're more active and you enjoy your work more, too. In turn, your career and your family benefits.

What does a Brief Health Check involve?

- Takes 15 minutes

- Voluntary, free, confidential and anonymous
- Conducted in a private space at your workplace or a nearby venue by a professional health practitioner
- A questionnaire/interview and waist measurement only, no blood or urine collected
- Immediate feedback and advice
- Referrals to FREE supporting health and individualised health coaching services

What happens to my results?

All personal results will remain anonymous, and results will be pooled and summarised for data.

Get Healthy at Work and NNSWLHD don't receive any results that could identify staff.

Get Healthy at Work is a joint initiative of SafeWork NSW and the NSW Ministry of Health (Office of Preventive Health).

To book your appointment, click [here](#), or contact Liz Patterson on 6674 9515 or 0432 507 630, or email Liz.patterson@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au for more information.

Making healthy choices - an easy way to win!

Are you a creative thinker? If you're a whiz when it comes to catch-phrases, we want to hear from you!

We're inviting you to help us come up with a catchy slogan to help promote the benefits of eating well and choosing healthy foods. And you can win big!

Enter our competition as an individual or in a team, by emailing your best slogan to fiona.baker2@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au.

The winning entry will receive a \$200 supermarket voucher, and three runners

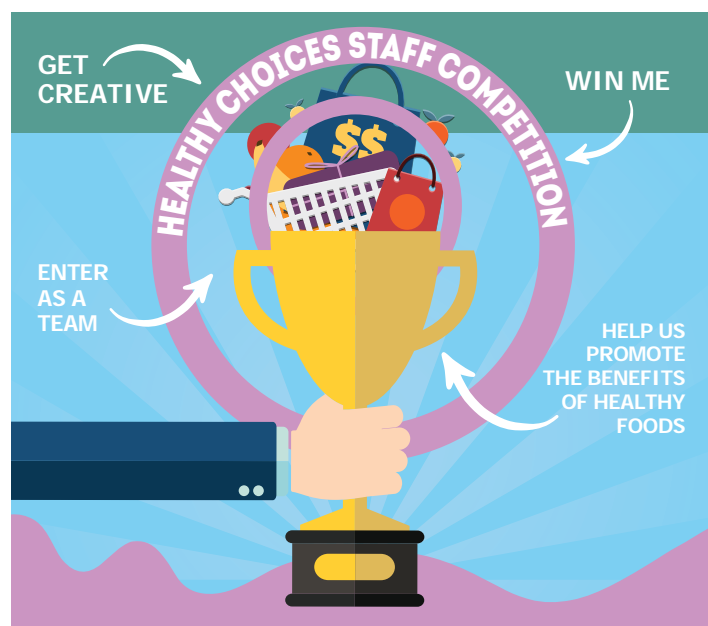
up will receive \$50 vouchers. Entries close 28 February.

Your answers will form part of our creative material throughout 2018, as we work towards making healthy food choices easier across the district.

Our LHD is proud to be setting a good example when it comes to healthy options for staff and visitors.

We're already well on our way, with our vendors working hard to increase the offerings of nutritious drinks available for purchase at our sites.

It's all part of a state-wide



effort to create a healthier NSW and give our staff and visitors a great start in making healthy normal.

For more information on how you can make healthy choices, head to www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au

Newbies, freebies and good yarns

Well, if there's anything to learn from this edition of Northern Exposure, it's that there will be a lot happening this year!

Christmas holidays are a distant memory, and new programs and initiatives are, or soon will be, in full swing, helping you to get healthy, support your patients, express your opinions and stay safe at work. You can even win stuff, too!

In keeping with the theme of renewal, our Northern Exposure will soon be getting a facelift as well. Now's your chance to let us know anything you'd like to see more or less of in future.

We'll take your ideas on board, and while we may not be able to accommodate every suggestion, we'd love to receive your feedback.

As Dr Seuss says:

There are so many things you can learn about, but

You'll miss the best things if you keep your eyes shut.

The more that you read, the more things you will know.

The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.



Fiona Baker
Editor

Rescue milestones, relocations for life saving helicopter

from page 1

Lismore-based emergency medicine trainees are able to complete a six-month rotation in Retrieval Medicine with the Service, thanks to accreditation from the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM).

This rotation sees trainee doctors complete a 'pre-hospital' training course at the Greater Sydney Helicopter Emergency Medical Service before completing further training at the Westpac Rescue Helicopter base in Newcastle to become familiar with the aircraft.

Once complete, the trainee works as part of the retrieval crew from the Lismore helibase and plays a vital role

in the delivery of emergency medical care together with the Critical Care Paramedics on each mission.

Even today, the Service remains a not for profit run organisation, with all donation support made in the Lismore base's flight zone (QLD border to Macksville, west to Glen Innes and Tenterfield and beyond the coastline), staying in the region and directly supporting communities in the Northern Rivers, North Coast and Northern New England.

Anyone wishing to donate to the service can visit the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter website at www.heli Rescue.com.au.



▲ The Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter Service moved into its new base at Lismore Airport in April last year.

Northern exposure

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Northern Exposure is published 11 times a year by the Northern NSW Local Health District. We welcome your contributions, suggestions and feedback.

February cover image: Wollumbin - Mt Warning

Check out NNSWLHD Facebook page

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

It is regularly updated with the happenings across the LHD. Check out our [page](#) today!



Richmond first for nursing cohort

Fresh faces are set to join the nursing ranks at hospitals across the Richmond Network, with 23 Registered Nurses attending the Transition to Practice Nursing program in Lismore this month.

The program offers a range of rotations throughout Richmond, including at Casino, Ballina, Kyogle, Nimbin, Lismore and Urbenville. Nurses can experience working on surgical rotations, in medical wards, in Drug and Alcohol, and in Mental Health as part of the program.

Lismore Base Hospital Acting Director of Nursing, Nancy Martin, and Northern NSW Local Health District Chief Executive, Wayne Jones, addressed the recent graduates during their induction.



▲ Registered Nurses attend the Transition to Practice Nursing Program orientation before commencing positions at facilities across the Richmond Network.

"Nursing can be a hard job, but you'll find it's extremely

rewarding," Ms Martin said. "We wish you all the

best in your new roles and throughout your careers."

Tweed, Lismore welcome new medicos



"Interns who train in regional areas, such as Lismore, often go on work in regional areas, and that's great news for our growing population as our healthcare needs increase," Mr George said.

NSW guarantees intern positions to all domestic medical graduates of NSW universities.

Hospitals welcomed their 2018 cohorts of first-year doctors this month, as part of the Rural Preferential Pathway program.

Member for Lismore, Thomas George MP, and Member for Tweed, Geoff Provest MP, welcomed the new interns, who will stay in the region for two years as they lay the foundations for their medical careers.

Lismore Base Hospital has 12 new faces joining the workforce, while The Tweed Hospital has 18 new trainees.



▲ Top, Northern NSW Local Health District Chief Executive, Wayne Jones, and Member for Lismore, Thomas George, welcome interns to Lismore Base Hospital. Above, Member for Tweed, Geoff Provest, welcomes the new intern cohort to The Tweed Hospital.

Transition program opens doors

Five new faces have joined the Mental Health nursing ranks following the graduation of participants in the Transition to Mental Health Nursing Program (TMHNP).

Running since 2012, the program provides first and second year Registered Nurses with a supportive learning environment to

complete academic studies and work placements in a variety of locations and wards.

Richmond Clarence Mental Health Network Manager, Warren Shaw, said the program is also a great introduction into mental health nursing for those starting out.

"It's a fantastic way to

test the waters and be in a supported environment," Warren said.

"It is one of the major ways to attract nurses to mental health nursing."

Four of the five 2017 graduates have now gained permanent employment within the Richmond Mental Health Network, with the fifth candidate planning to

work casually within the region.

"This is a fantastic outcome both for the participants and the local health services," Warren said.

Throughout the program's history, more than half of the 28 graduates have gone on to work within the Northern NSW Local Health District.

"The new graduates keep our whole workforce fresh, and our senior nurses get a lot from running the program as well," Warren said.

Entry into the program is through a competitive recruitment process.

◀ Graduates and facilitators of the 2017 Transition to Mental Health Nursing Program. From left, Rebecca Deaker, Jennifer Wood, Mental Health Nurse Educator, Shane Scofield, David O'Callaghan, Inkah Fischer, Tracey Fowlie, Richmond Clarence Mental Health Network Manager, Warren Shaw, and Nurse Educator, Ryan Rooney.



Support on hand for a smoke-free pregnancy

A pilot program has recently opened its doors to help pregnant women who smoke.

The You, Me & Baby Smokefree clinic at Lismore Base Hospital began offering services on 1 February.

The clinic will cater for all pregnant women across the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) who need support along their smokefree journey.

To do this, the clinic is engaging the help of local tobacco champions.

Women can book appointments directly with the clinic, drop in during opening hours, or be referred by their antenatal practitioner.

The program provides women with a mix of face to face and telephone/text support, assistance with Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) and

information to support them on their smokefree journey.

Women will also receive regular smokerlyzer readings to help monitor their progress.

For more information on the clinic or how you can refer directly to the clinic, contact Jenni Dann on 0477 368 182 or email jennifer.dann@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au

This pilot project is a partnership initiative between the Lismore Base Hospital Women's Care Unit and NNSWLHD Health Promotion. The program will run until June this year.

The You, Me & Baby Clinic is located in the Lismore Base Hospital Women's Care Unit Antenatal rooms. Open Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9am - 1pm.





ATTENTION MIDWIVES!

Are you looking for a program that will complement your work by ensuring clients are in good physical and mental health in preparation for birth?

Get Healthy in Pregnancy is a free telephone coaching service delivered by qualified dietitians and exercise physiologists to support women to make healthy lifestyle choices during their pregnancy.



Refer a minimum of 5 clients to the program this month and you'll receive a FREE reusable 'coffee cup'.

It's easy to become a referrer!
Simply download a referral form at:

- www.gethealthynsw.com.au
- fax it to **1300 013 242**
- or email to contact@gethealthynsw.com.au

www.gethealthynsw.com.au

Need more info?

Contact Tamara.Hojer@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au or visit www.gethealthynsw.com.au/program/get-healthy-in-pregnancy



Health



Duress tags coming soon

All staff working in Emergency Departments and staff opening public access doors after hours will soon have wearable duress tags.

IT staff are working closely with Workplace Health and Safety and Security to implement a standardised mobile duress system across the Northern NSW Local Health District.

The new system is designed to improve staff safety and duress response times, as well as making workflows more efficient and increasing the accuracy of locating an activated tag in the event of a duress incident.

The mobile tags use the newly upgrade WIFI network and unique signal strength signatures to provide an accurate location. They are fitted with LCD screens that display duress alerts, battery levels and instant messages, and are powered by rechargeable lithium batteries.

The new tags give staff two ways of activating a duress from the one device, and also alert other staff close by when a duress incident is occurring.

Some departments at Lismore Base Hospital and Lismore Mental Health Unit have begun using the new tags, along with Coraki Campbell HealthOne, Byron Central Hospital and Ballina District Hospital.

The system is expected to come online at remaining sites by mid-2018.

For more information contact the project co-ordinator on 6620 0806.

To view NSW Health's policy, Protecting People and Property, click [here](#) or visit the NNSWLHD Intranet Document Library.





New National Safety Standards

Did you know that health literacy plays a starring role in the new National Safety and Quality in Health Care Standards?

These are the Standards every NSW hospital has to meet to pass accreditation. Assessment to the new Standards starts at the beginning of 2019.

In this setting, health literacy goes hand in hand with Partnering with Consumers.

You can see the new Standards here <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/>

Don't miss this great chance to get a head start on accreditation! Now is a perfect time to plan some health literacy improvement to meet the new Standards.

Health Literacy Workshops

New one-hour workshops will:

- Give managers and staff an introduction to health literacy and why it's so important
- Equip you with simple ways to improve health literacy in your day to day work
- Provide you with easy-to-implement improvement ideas for accreditation.

Lismore Base Hospital

Tuesday 13th March, 1pm – 2pm,
Crawford House Level 2 Boardroom

The Tweed Hospital

Friday 9th March, 1pm – 2pm,
TCERI Building, Tutorial Room

Register by email: Taya.Prescott@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au

Nursing and Midwifery now under one roof

Staff from the Northern NSW Local Health District's Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health directorate have been welcomed into new premises in Ballina this month.

The move to offices at 89 Tamar Street will see staff who were previously located at facilities throughout the district now co-located under the one roof.

"This is a great opportunity for district Nursing and Midwifery staff to work more closely together in a site that is

more central and accessible to all of our hospitals and services," Katharine Duffy, Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health, said.

NNSWLHD Director Clinical Operations, Lynne Weir, will also be located at the new site, along with support staff in the Clinical Operations Unit.

To contact the Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health Directorate, please use existing phone numbers and email addresses.



▲ Northern NSW Local Health District executive staff learn how to operate systems in the new Ballina offices.

Upcoming Events...

This new section will feature upcoming events across the Northern NSW Local Health District.

To include your event in this listing, please email dates and a web link or email address to fiona.baker2@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au. Entries should be received with as much notice as possible.

February and March events

- [Research Survey](#) - open now, closing on 23 February
- [Healthy Food slogan competition](#) - open now, closing 28 February
- [HealthShare Survey](#) - open from 19 February to 9 March
- [Health Literacy Workshops](#) - various

dates in February and March

- [Free Brief Health Checks](#) - from 5 March



Brian's story: a sacred journey

Patient stories are an important part of the Essentials of Care (EOC) program, which supports staff in our facilities to develop a more person-centred culture.

Patients and their families visiting hospital are encouraged to share their experiences to provide staff with valuable information about what they've done well, and what they could do better.

Brian Godden's story, as told by his partner, Laura-Bernadette, touched the hearts of those staff who cared for him during his time in Casino and District Memorial Hospital. It is published here with his family's permission.

Soon after Brian arrived in the inpatient ward, Trina (Nursing Unit Manager, Casino and District Memorial Hospital) offered for Brian's son and I to stay over so we could learn how to use the equipment and care for him at home without putting ourselves at risk of injury.

One night was extended to three, (we even received meals while training!) and doctors, nurses and wardsmen gave a great deal of their time and energy to helping us care for him.

This was so heartening. It was incredibly important to Brian, myself and all his family that such efforts were being made to get him to Drake, where he could be cared for and eventually die surrounded by family, friends and dearly loved animals in the home we'd

created over many years and that we had prepared for that moment.

Getting home had been our focus since the surgery, six weeks prior. It was clear that every nurse who cared for Brian and our family, did so with their version of love, respect and compassion, and we loved being part of and witness to the various ways that this manifested through all those personalities!

Though at times it seemed it was difficult for some to have us there - we got in the way, we questioned your practice, we needed to be shown over



and again how to do stuff, we asked for this and that, and this and that again!, we took over the fridge and even asked to use your microwave! - I can't tell you all how much it meant to us to be there, caring for our darling Brian who we loved so much. It really was so precious.

It's hard to write through the tears here sitting at my desk, remembering that time...

Now, I'm not so sure how it would have been if Brian had died here at home in Drake. I think if he had, being here might just be unbearable.

"Thank you all for being part of Brian's journey, his dying journey, just another part of his life journey, but a precious, sacred part, full of mystery and everydayness."

I've learned that it doesn't take a whole lot of time to make a home. In the gracious gift of that hospital space, and with all of your help: doctors, ward staff, tea ladies, wardies, cleaners included, a home filled with the care of loving compassion was created.

We, Brian, myself, his sons Amber and Kalyan, his daughter-in-law and grandson, his sisters and all of his family, and mine too, are so very, very grateful to have had the opportunity to be fully supported there in the hospital, by the members of a health care system that is all too often criticized and in a space that truly did become home for us.

Thank you, Trina, who surely is a wonderful NUM...goodness...who thought of that acronym? I don't think there's anything numb about you and the apparent team harmony is a testament to that!

Much heartfelt thanks to you all.

With warm love,

Laura-Bernadette and the Godden family.

For more information on patient and carer stories, visit the document library on the Northern NSW Local Health District intranet [here](#).

Bowls day funds roll in

The Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary Club recently held its annual John Heugill Memorial Charity Bowls Day at Cherry Street Sports Club, raising \$750 for the Ballina District Hospital.

The Rotary Club's donation was matched by the Ballina Hospital Auxiliary, who provided the remaining funds to purchase a wheelchair to assist patients needing leg elevation.

"On behalf of our staff and patients, we really appreciate the kind support of the Rotary

Club, the Sports Club and the Auxiliary," Denise McCall, Ballina District Hospital Deputy Director of Nursing, said.

► Back row, from left, Ballina District Hospital NUM General Ward, Mel Young; Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary Club President, Donella Kinnish; Tash Hayes of Cherry Street Sports Club; Peter Graham of WFI Insurance and BDH Deputy Director of Nursing, Denise McCall. Seated, Rotarian Clarissa Heugill tests the new wheelchair.



Profiles : Dave Goulding and Bob Harper

Lismore-based information technology experts, Dave Goulding and Bob Harper, share an appreciation for computing and managing successful teams. They spoke to Northern Exposure about their long careers in IT and the ever-changing technological landscape.

Bob Harper

*Clinical Information Systems Manager,
Mid North Coast & Northern NSW LHDs*

I'm responsible for management, support and training of the electronic medical record (eMR) and the PACS/RIS system, a radiology information service.

I came to Lismore in 2000 on a tourist visa. I saw the bush, Byron Bay, Nimbin, no need to go anywhere else. I also met the lady who is now my wife.

I later became a permanent resident, but I was stopped from working for a few years. In 2005 I joined the LHD, my first computer job in Australia, and my first in health.

I'd been in IT applications since 1968. I'm from Yorkshire, the centre of the universe.

I've been a concrete labourer, lorry driver, and then I went to work in a bank. In those days, before computers had really evolved at all, the computer rooms would have been this size for the power that comes in a watch today (Bob gestures around the open plan office space we're sitting in, enough space for 3 or 4 desks).

They thought in those days that if you were good at maths you'd be good at computers. Completely false! If you're good at logic, you'll be good at computers.

I was good at logic, so I went into applications. I went from programmer to senior programmer, to analyst to senior analyst, to data processing manager.

It was always interesting. As I started getting people working for me, I found that I liked the people management side of things. It causes a lot of problems, I'll be honest with you, but when it comes together it's very rewarding. The team is the be all and end all.

My team supports, trains and maintains the electronic medical record (eMR) which is really interesting, but also very complex and ever-changing.

Any other system that comes into health, we have to look at how it interfaces with eMR, because there's got to be one source

of truth.

The biggest challenge is coming up with the Tweed rebuild. When they put the building in the ground the medical records will be all electronic.

When a presentation comes in, they'll take the old paper record and scan it into the electronic record. Our team will be involved in that. It's such a big job, it'll take many years before you run out of paper records.

All the data is there for anybody in our two LHDs to see. With My Health Record, other users throughout NSW can see all that data as well. It reduces clinical risk because you can see medical summaries, what

I've been here ever since. I live out in the country near Dunoon with my wife and three children.

I manage the technical staff who look after desktops equipment, networks (including WiFi), servers and applications, video conferencing, telephony, web technologies and procurement. I manage around 18-20 staff across the four teams.

I've worked in IT in health since 1995. I started on the service desk, then desktop support, server and some network support. I then managed the Server and applications team, and have been the manager of the IT & T team since 2008. In 22 years with this

health service I've done a bit of everything.

Technology's changing all the time. By the time we do one project, the next one will be different.

Technology changes, the way we do things changes, policy changes, state government changes. It keeps everyone busy and changes our roles and makes the job interesting.

One of the biggest challenges is more and more centralisation of systems to Sydney, with less hosted by us. This can mean we have less ability to configure those systems.

However, I'm trying to put a bigger focus on ensuring that the technology we implement is as bullet proof as it can be, so we set up the right technology at the right time, so that we can minimise downtime and also that my staff have the right training.

It's gone beyond just our department and is changing how other departments go about their business.

Before, IT was classified as almost corporate, but for some time I've felt that we're clinical support. It's quite rewarding to know that you're doing what you can to improve outcomes for the community.

I have a really good team, and if there is an issue they'll think 'well, it's a hospital' and they'll go the extra mile to provide a service or fix an issue. At the end of the day, we're consumers of the same service.



▲ Dave Goulding, at left, and Bob Harper, have seen many changes in the Information Technology space throughout their careers.

diagnoses there were, drug prescriptions.

It's exciting stuff, I really like it. That's why I'm still working!

Our bosses also support us and seldom disagree with us. It makes the job far easier to do.

Away from work, Kath and I are Viking re-enactors, our persona is as traders and we sell various things. We've both had the DNA test and we both have 30% North Scandinavian heritage, so it fits.

Dave Goulding

*Manager, Information Technology and
Telecommunications, NNSWLHD*

I grew up in Lismore, and went to school and university here. I was doing work experience with IT at Lismore Base Hospital as part of my university degree. It was meant to be a six-week stint, and

Top contenders for rural research

A record number of candidates from Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) will have the chance to hone their skills in evaluation and research as part of a competitive program.

Six staff members have been accepted into the Rural Research Capacity Building Program (RRCBP) for 2018.

The program is only open to rurally-based NSW Health staff, and runs for 22 months. It is designed for health professionals wanting to develop knowledge and skills in rural health care evaluation and research.

Candidates learn about research in the context of rural clinical and health services, and develop skills in designing, conducting, and translating and communicating research. They also get the opportunity to develop and conduct their own research project as part of the program.

Competition for admission into the program was strong this year, with 31 submissions from across the seven rural and remote Local Health Districts.

In total, 17 applicants were accepted, with NNSWLHD having the highest number of successful candidates of any LHD.

Run by the Health Education and Training Institute (HETI), the program is taught via a combination of face-to-face workshops, small group video link-up, and teleconferencing.

The NNSWLHD 2018 cohort consists of Erin Brown, Registered Nurse, Perioperative Services at Lismore

Base Hospital; Rebecca Lavery, Acting Research Governance Officer and Acting Research Ethics Officer, NNSWLHD; Elsa Mangan, Health Promotion Officer with NNSWLHD Health Promotion; Shannon Morris, Patient Safety Officer, Clinical Governance Unit; Samantha Petersen, Paediatric Clinical Nurse Educator /

Clinical Nurse Specialist at The Tweed Hospital (TTH); and Andrea Thawley, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Emergency Department, TTH.

We wish our candidates all the best for their next two years in program, and eagerly await the outcomes of their research projects.



▲ Andrea Thawley
Clinical Nurse Consultant, TTH
Emergency Department

"I was excited and honoured to have been successful in gaining a position in the 2018 cohort."

"My project on triage models of care at The Tweed Hospital will provide vital research for our future planning for the new hospital. I would like to thank HETI and my managers for giving me this wonderful opportunity to contribute valuable research to the LHD."



▲ Elsa Mangan
Health Promotion Officer, NNSWLHD

"It is so very exciting to have been accepted into HETI's 2018 Rural Research Capacity Building Program and have the opportunity to contribute something further to our Local Health District!"

"As part of the program, I'm looking forward to honing my research skills, delving into the area of school lunchbox nutrition and further informing the support we currently provide in this space."

Elvis is back, and he lives in Parkes



Among the shining jumpsuits and big hair seen in Parkes each January, one of our own staff members could also be spotted in costume this year.

Jennifer Parsons, Executive Assistant to the Director of Integrated Care and Allied Health Services, recently attended the Parkes Elvis Festival, to celebrate the birthday of 'the King of rock and roll', along with thousands of other revellers.

Pictured at left, is Jennifer (third from left) with friends, dressed as 1960s Memphis Waitresses as part of the 2018 Festival Theme, '68 Comeback Special.

"I loved spending the summer break with Elvis enthusiasts, enjoying the talents of the many artists from when music was real music (in the 60's) and dressing up as grown ups!", Jennifer said.

Dental treatments within reach

Families in Northern NSW can benefit from a Commonwealth-funded dental scheme which provides assistance for treatment at local dental clinics and supports better dental services into the future.

The Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) provides eligible children access to \$1000 in benefits for dental services over two consecutive years.

Children are eligible for the CDBS if they're aged two to 17 years, are eligible for Medicare, and are part of a family that receives Family Tax Benefit Part A or an Australian Government payment through the Department of Human Services.

Dental services can be provided in private or public dental clinics, and can include: examinations; x-rays; cleaning; fissure sealing; fillings; root canals and extractions.



Medicare bulk billed dental care for eligible children

Child Dental Benefits Schedule

Children who have reached the \$1000 cap, or those who are ineligible for the CDBS, can still be seen by the public dental service.

Within the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) there are 10 public dental clinics.

These are located in Tweed Heads, Pottsville, Byron Bay, Coraki, Nimbin,

Casino, Goonellabah, Ballina, Yamba and Grafton.

Aboriginal Medical Service dental clinics are also located at Casino and Grafton.

Children who access CDBS funds through the NNSW public dental service will benefit from high quality oral health care and ongoing continuity of care.

CDBS funds are reinvested, supporting a better service for the future. Child dental services are primarily provided by dental therapists and oral health therapists.

For more information on CDBS visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/cdbbs. For public dental clinic appointments, phone 1300 651 625.

Rotarians turn food, wine into funds

The success of the 2017 Ballina Food and Wine Festival has meant patients at Lismore's North Coast Cancer Institute – Cancer Care and Haematology Unit (NCCI) have been blessed with new warm blankets.

Festival organisers, the Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary Club, donated \$4,000 towards the purchase of a blanket warmer for the unit, to help patients having radiation therapy stay warm during treatment sessions.

"The Lismore Cancer Care and Haematology Unit was one of those organisations to benefit from our festival this year, and we're delighted we could make such a meaningful contribution," Ms Kinnish said.

As an active Rotarian, NCCI Radiation Therapist Andrea Laszczyk has been able to combine her passion for community service with her dedication to her work in helping fundraise for the blanket warmer. Andrea knows first-hand the difference these blankets will make to her patients.

"Patients receiving radiation therapy

often need to have some part of their body exposed during the set-up and delivery of the treatment. A warm

blanket can make all the difference during this time to keep people comfortable," Andrea said.



▲ Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary Club President Donella Kinnish, with Rotary Club Secretary Jodie Shelley, and NCCI Radiation Therapist and Rotarian, Andrea Laszczyk, with the new blanket warmer.

Festival goers say 'YES' to drug checks

A study of the attitudes and behaviours of young people at music festivals has found that a majority would be in favour of drug checking, and would reconsider taking a drug if they were aware of its contents.

The study was conducted by researchers from Western Sydney University and the University Centre for Rural Health North Coast (UCRH), in collaboration with the North Coast Positive Adolescent Sexual Health Consortium (PASH) and the North Coast HIV and Related Programs Unit (HARP).

Western Sydney University medical students attended a major Australian music festival in 2016 and conducted the survey of 642 young people, aged 18-30 years, as part of a community research placement within UCRH.

Dr Sabrina Pit from the School of Medicine at Western Sydney University said the study provides an insight into the views of Australian festival-goers on the contentiously debated issue of drug checking.

"We know that drug use is relatively common amongst young people who attend music festivals. In this survey, 73.4 per cent of participants reported using illicit drugs in the past 12 months," says Dr Pit.

The results of the study, published in the *Harm Reduction Journal*, indicate that young people are receptive to the notion of drug checking and, if available at Australian festivals, would utilise the services to determine the content and purity of drugs.

86.5 per cent believed that drug checking services could help users seek help to reduce harm, while 84.9 per cent believed that drug checking services should be combined with harm reduction advice.

HARP has been partnering with UCRH since 2013 to support UCRH's medical students from affiliated universities.

Bereavement initiative aids patients and staff

When a loved one dies, a simple thing, such as taking care of their possessions, can be a difficult task.

Whether someone dies in a hospital, hospice or residential aged care facility, it's not unusual for their possessions to be passed back to their family in a plastic garbage bag, but that may soon be about to change.

A sensitive and respectful approach has been developed in Queensland, and the Northern NSW Local Health District has been lucky to benefit from this project.

Started at the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS), who shared the idea via Palliative Care Australia, the Bereavement Bag is an initiative now being introduced at facilities throughout our health district.

With funding from Integrated Care, NNSWLHD has created a local version of this resource.

Prior to this, there was no consistent local bereavement advice or guide for families for after a loved one dies, which is often an extremely stressful and unknown territory.

A Bereavement Guide has also been developed, initially based on the Richmond Specialist Palliative Bereavement Resource and adapted from there to suit our whole LHD.

This guide will be in the bereavement bag and will give staff the

opportunity to hand back belongings in a sensitive manner, knowing that they have some information to assist the families and loved ones they have cared for.

This bereavement guide will also be found via Healthpathways, under Bereavement, Grief and Loss (see the HealthPathways article on page 14).

Wendy Pearse, principal project officer with SCHHS End of Life Care, said the aim of the handover bags was to convey to the family and staff that whilst the person was a patient, they were cared for and respected.

"This care and respect begins the moment they arrive with us, until the time they leave. We will treat their belongings with the same care and dignity that we showed to the person who died," Ms Pearse said.

In Northern NSW, the bags and bereavement guides will be ready for distribution within the coming weeks.

"So far, the feedback we've received from clinicians has been extremely positive, and it's great to be able to help our staff provide patients with this extra level of care and compassion," NNSWLHD End of Life Project Officer, Anna Law, said.

For information about the initiative, contact Anna Law on Anna.Law@nachs.health.nsw.gov.au or phone 0418 797 478.



▲ Staff from The Tweed Hospital, Medical Ward 3. From left, Mel O'Neil, Pauline McDonald, Brooke Osbourne, Firuta Maxim, Jeanette Capner, Emily Paczkowski, Constance Haupt, Laura Whitbread and Dr Alex Pace.

The last word...

Casino community farewells Gwen

Casino Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Gwen Hickling, was recently farewelled at an afternoon tea at Casino and District Memorial Hospital.

Staff and community members, along with Richmond Valley Council Mayor, Robert Mustow, gathered to honour Gwen as she retired after seven years in her current role.

Gwen had a great knowledge of the communities in the area, having lived and worked in the region over her life time.

Her local knowledge was a valuable aspect of her ability to understand and assist aboriginal families and their extended families within the health care setting.

Gwen had a great networking ability and was able to recommend links to appropriate services, leading to positive health outcomes for those she worked with.



▲ Casino and District Memorial Hospital Staff and community members. Back, from left, Peter Makejev, Shirley Roach, Rosemary Newman, Kayelene Guthrie, Tanya Creighton, Chris Bulmer, Corrine Green, Vicki Bennett, Leanne Mason, Margaret Cole, Sandy Hill and Marcia Armstrong, with at front, Gwen Hickling.

Rosalie passes on social work baton

A large group gathered to farewell social worker, Rosalie Kennedy as she retired from her role at Lismore Base Hospital (LBH).

Colleagues from across the allied health spectrum paid tribute to Rosalie's 20 year career with the health service.

Rosalie began working as a social worker with LBH in 1997, becoming the Social Work Manager after three years.

Rosalie has been a great advocate for her patients, and had a particular interest in child protection and domestic violence work.

During her time at LBH, Rosalie saw the expansion of social work services for inpatients across a range of clinical areas, including in Cancer Care and the Stroke Unit.

A passionate social worker, Rosalie will be missed by colleagues as she heads off to travel around Australia in her retirement.



◀ Rosalie Kennedy, pictured second row, second from right, is farewelled by staff from several Lismore Base Hospital departments, Richmond Network Community Health and Integrated Care.