


New life for Urbenville Emergency Department




▲ Students from Urbenville Public School present their painting to Urbenville Multi-Purpose Service. Students are joined by, from left, MPS Network EO/DON Nancy Martin, Relieving Principal Urbenville Public School Christopher Sifko and Urbenville MPS Nurse Manager Nicole Ellevsen.

► Urbenville Public School student, Amelia Russ, cuts the ribbon assisted by Member for Lismore, Thomas George. **Full story on page 5**





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Nurses share skills in the South Pacific



Page 9
Profile of Aboriginal Health Worker, Grant Tweedie

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.



This month I had the pleasure of opening the Professional Development Forum for Nursing and Midwifery Unit Managers held in Byron Bay.

The calibre of projects presented were outstanding and illustrates why we are able to maintain such good performance in the areas of quality and safety in our facilities.

The commitment of the Nursing and Midwifery Unit Managers and their teams to produce such a high standard

of research and quality improvement projects speaks volumes of their dedication to their patients and their communities.

I would like to thank the Nursing and Midwifery directorate, and particularly Rae Rafferty, our Associate Director Leadership, Culture and Workforce Development, for supporting the Forum, and I look forward to attending similar events in 2019.

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I recently represented Northern NSW Local Health District at the 'Dirty Laundry Day Project' coordinated by Social Futures.

This event, aims to increase awareness of domestic violence in the community and encourage people to speak out against it. Listening to a young woman tell her story of domestic violence made me think of our staff who work with women and children presenting to our services as a result of domestic violence.

I want to acknowledge the great work you all do and thank you for the difference you make in the lives of people experiencing domestic violence.

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This month we farewell two board members, Dr Joe Ogg (Intensive Care Unit, The Tweed Hospital) and Mr David Frazer.

Joe and David have been very active members on the Board, advocating for services and challenging myself and the Executive to ensure we provide the safest and highest quality care we can to our patients.

I acknowledge their hard work and commitment to this LHD, and thank them for their support and wisdom during their time on the Board.

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As I look back at the year I see the increase in services you have provided to many thousands of our community members. I see the continued high performance in the areas of safety and quality, and I see some great strides being made in creating a culture that our organisation can be proud of.

I look forward to continuing the momentum we have into 2019.

Wayne Jones
Chief Executive

From the Board Chair



Firstly, thank you all for another great year of service to our community and our visitors.

We can proudly point to the 2017-18 Safety and Quality Account that has recently been submitted to the Ministry of Health as a snapshot of the excellent care that our LHD is providing.

The Account reflects on the great work performed by our staff and their endeavours to provide excellent person-

centred care. It reports on patient experience, staff culture, standards met and improvements made over the year. Following endorsement from the Ministry, this report will be available on our website.

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The Festive season is almost upon us and will see the usual high levels of activity in our facilities and Community Health services.

The busy holiday period can lead to increased pressure on all our relationships, both at work and at home.

Please put your hand up if you need help, and I encourage us all to show empathy towards one another, especially during the Christmas period.

I especially thank those of you who are rostered to work over Christmas and New Year to keep our community and our visitors safe and provide our essential health services.

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You should be proud to know that Northern NSW Local Health District is a major part of the NSW network of

services, performing at consistently high levels.

To September this year we have provided more surgical services than Nepean Blue Mountains, Central Coast and Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health Districts, and more than the other six rural Local Health Districts.

We consistently rate among the best in the state for patient satisfaction surveys.

All this is down to YOU, our terrific staff, and the way you do your job, in all the variations that entails.

Well done all!!

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Our Community Stakeholder Annual Meeting will be held on 12 December, with guest speaker, the Hon Thomas George, Member for Lismore.

I encourage you to come along and hear about the great results achieved by our LHD over the past year.

Brian Pezzutti
Board Chair

Risk alerts improve responses for vulnerable women and children

Health workers are often the first people to respond to victims and survivors of violence.

A Northern NSW study has found that an electronic alert on a patient's medical record may help improve the responses of health staff to women and children at risk of violence, abuse or neglect.

Having access to information about a client's safety and wellbeing at the point of treatment means staff can make a more informed assessment, leading to better outcomes for vulnerable women and their children.

The research paper released this month by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) highlights results from a study of health workers in Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) using alerts applied to patients' electronic medical records (eMR).

As part of the study, 180 health staff were asked to assess the impact of 'child-at-risk' alerts on the way they responded to at-risk children and pregnant women presenting through the health system.

"Around three-quarters of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the eMR alert system helped improve health worker responses to at-risk women and children," Wayne Jones, Chief Executive, NNSWLHD, said.

"Results also show one-third of surveyed staff reported a change in their approach to the assessment of a patient after seeing an eMR alert on a patient file."

Child-At-Risk eMR alerts enable health staff to share interpersonal violence, abuse and neglect concerns with each other 24 hours a day.

NNSWLHD has had a comprehensive Child-At-Risk (eMR) alert system in place since 2015.

NNSWLHD Child Protection Manager, Rosemaria Flaherty, said the system is not about re-reporting, but about additional referrals.

"It's about making it easier to remove barriers for people at risk who need further follow up care," Ms Flaherty said.

Around three-quarters of those staff in the study who had applied an alert to an eMR reported that they tried to



▲ From left, NSW Health Director of Child Wellbeing, Rosemarie Fitzgerald; ANROWS Director Evidence to Action, Michele Robinson; NNSWLHD Child Protection Manager, Rosa Flaherty; NNSWLHD Nursing and Midwifery Associate Director Leadership, Culture and Workforce Development, Rae Rafferty and NNSWLHD Chief Executive, Wayne Jones.

resolve any barriers to client attendance at appointments.

Professor Fiona Arney from the Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia, said the national frameworks for protecting children and reducing violence against women and their children highlight the importance of a collaborative approach to child protection.

"This research shows that it can become everyone's business, and that you can have, in a complex, large public health system, an approach that achieves this," Professor Arney said.

ANROWS CEO, Dr Heather Nancarrow, says that the research could

36.7%
reported a change
in their approach to
assessing a patient
after seeing an eMR
alert on file

have implications for health sector practices across the country.

"We know that the health sector has an important role to play in addressing violence against women and children and it's encouraging to see this role increasingly recognised," Dr Nancarrow said.

The research was conducted by University of South Australia and NNSWLHD.

The report, 'Examining the power of Child-At-Risk electronic medical record (eMR) alerts to share interpersonal violence, abuse and neglect concerns: Do child protection alerts help?' is available via the ANROWS [website](#).

76.7%
agreed that the
eMR system helped
improve health worker
responses to at-
risk women and
children

A moment in time

On a muggy spring day I headed off with a few colleagues to the far western reaches of our District. Our destination was the Urbenville Multi-Purpose Service, to celebrate the opening of their new Emergency Department, along with a community open day.



Fiona Baker
Editor

We arrived well before it started, but found the place already buzzing with staff, volunteers, aged care residents and an old-time guitar duo.

The three volunteers, Eve, Lyn and Mandy, hardly stopped all morning, organising breakfast for the late risers, handing out cups of tea, showing me the new flower gardens and fish ponds on the residents' patio.

Families soon arrived, bringing children to visit their grandparents, soaking up the sunshine, music and activity that had overtaken the courtyard.

Next came the school kids, wearing their uniforms on a Saturday, climbing over railings, dancing with each other.

The MPS staff showed what a beautiful team they have caring for the health of their community and residents. They welcomed us into their facility with pride and country hospitality.

A day I won't soon forget.

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.

Cover image: Byron Bay

Maternity care gets thumbs up

Results from the 2017 Maternity Care Survey show that women are receiving excellent care during their pregnancies and after birth in Northern NSW.

"From antenatal check-ups and pregnancy health advice, right through to labour, birth and follow up care, women across the LHD reported consistently high rates of satisfaction with their care," Northern NSW Local Health District Chief Executive Wayne Jones said.

Almost all patients in NNSWLHD (93%, the highest result in NSW) said they would speak highly of their maternity experience at the hospital where they gave birth.

88% of patients said the wards or rooms and toilets were very clean, significantly above the NSW average, and the highest across NSW.

Overall, 90% of patients across the LHD rated the care they received during labour and birth as 'very good'.

Byron Central Hospital (BCH) recorded a high proportion of significantly more positive results than NSW in the survey.

Almost all respondents (97%), if asked about their maternity experience at BCH,

would speak highly of their care to family and friends. 93% agreed the care they received in the first two weeks after arriving home from hospital was 'very good.'

"The model of care at Byron Central Hospital has a focus on continuity of midwifery care, and the development of strong relationships between the women, their families and the midwives," Mr Jones said.

"The team work of our midwives, combined with the state of the art facilities adds to the positive experience of women in our care."

97% of patients felt their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were 'always' respected, compared to 81% for NSW, and only 8% of respondents said they received conflicting advice from health professionals about feeding their baby, compared to 32% for NSW.

95% of patients agreed that the health professionals were 'always' kind and caring, and 93% rated the overall care they received during labour and birth as 'very good'.



▲ Byron Central Hospital Midwifery Group Practice midwives. Back row from left, Cathy Adams, Michelle Popple and Suzanne Weir. Front row from left, Patrice Hickey, Sarah Beadman, Vicki Gersh and Chris Smith.

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!



\$1.2m boost for Mental Health facilities

People receiving mental health care in Tweed and Lismore will soon see physical improvements in their surrounds, as upgrades and refurbishments get underway.

Lismore Base Hospital's Tallowood acute mental health unit will receive \$810,000 to refurbish bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen facilities, lounge areas and waiting areas, as well as landscaping courtyards.

Lismore Base Hospital's Kamala unit will receive \$394,000 for refurbishing bedrooms, bathrooms and the laundry, modifying the sensory room, purchasing new furniture and landscaping courtyards.

"Well-designed physical spaces in acute mental health units help dignify our mental health consumers by meeting their needs for recovery, security, and connection," Member for Lismore, Thomas George said.

Tweed MP Geoff Provest also announced funding for The Tweed Hospital as part of the state-wide upgrade program.



▲ From left, Richmond Clarence Network Mental Health Manager, Warren Shaw ; Consumer Partnership Co-Ordinator, Heidi Keevers; General Manager Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol, Dee Robinson; Member for Lismore, Thomas George; and Operational Supports Alison Renwick and Christoph Groger.

▼ From left, Network Manager Tweed Byron Mental Health, Ian McLeish; Nurse Unit Manager Kurrajong Mental Health Unit, Lauren Maguire and Member for Tweed, Geoff Provest.

"The Kurrajong acute mental health unit will receive \$600,000 for refurbishing wards, building a new gym, creating a sensory room, designing a media room and a quiet family room, improving activities areas, landscaping courtyards and purchasing new furniture," Mr Provest said.

The funding is part of \$20 million state-wide for improvements.



Urbenville MPS officially opened

Member for Lismore, the Hon Thomas George MP, officially opened the newly-refurbished Urbenville Multi-Purpose Service (MPS) Emergency Department on Saturday 17 November.

The official opening was part of a community open day which also included free health checks, information stalls and entertainment by local school children.

The refurbishments to the Emergency Department were part of \$430,000 funding from the NSW Government aimed at improving the facilities for both patients and staff at the important service.

"It was great to see many locals turn out to the open

day, looking to see what changes had been made to the emergency department as well as finding out what facilities are available to them locally and across our health district," Mr George said.

"Some of the works which have taken place in the ED include refurbishment of the waiting and triage areas as well as the addition of a new treatment bay and examination area."

"Urbenville MPS plays a vital role in the local community and I'm excited to be able to open the doors and invite residents to see the variety of services on offer, tour the new Emergency Department and meet some of the fabulous

staff," Mr George said.

Students from Urbenville Public School attended the

open day, presenting a painting in honour of the opening of the new unit.



▲ Back row, from left, Urbenville MPS volunteers Eve Hanson, Lyn Brereton and Mandy Smith with aged care residents.

Nurses set course for South Pacific

Specialist emergency nursing skills are being shared with our South Pacific neighbours, thanks to the efforts of staff from Murwillumbah District Hospital (MDH).

Bronwen Griffiths and Angie Gittus, both Clinical Nurse Specialists at MDH Emergency Department, have been involved with the development of the Kiribati Emergency Nurse Training Program (KENTP) since first

volunteering in the region in 2016.

The first cohort of 16 emergency nurses completed the course in 2017, gaining relevant frontline skills for the small island nation.

Bronwen and Angie recently attended the South Pacific Nursing Forum in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, where they presented outcomes from the course.

Their co-presenter was Teitinana Ribanti, the



▲ Graduation ceremony for KENTP students.

◀ From left, Teitinana Ribanti, Bronwen Griffiths and Angie Gittus at the South Pacific Nursing Forum.



Nurse Unit Manager of Kiribati's largest Emergency Department. Teitinana was instrumental in developing the training program, as well as being a participant himself.

"Hearing him describe the ongoing effects on improved patient safety and the development of an emergency nursing culture

was a powerful incentive to keep developing the program which is attracting interest from other Pacific Island nations," Bronwen said.

The program draws on the World Health Organisation Basic Emergency Course and is accredited by The Australian College of Emergency Nursing.

Connections help ease the way back

A program to support people in the critical weeks after a suicide attempt was launched this month in Lismore.

Research shows that the three months after an attempt is the most critical time for people at risk of suicide. The new Way Back Support Service will provide crucial assistance during this period.

The Tweed and Lismore Base Hospitals can now refer people to the Way Back service, a Beyond Blue program delivered by not-for-profit social enterprise New Horizons with support from Roses in the Ocean, a national lived experience of suicide organisation.

Regional Manager for New Horizons North Coast, Luke Buckley said that after an attempt many people want support, but don't have the confidence or the right information to access it.

"The Way Back Support Service will ensure they are connected to the right services and support for their individual circumstances," Mr Buckley said.

Northern NSW Local Health District

Chief Executive, Wayne Jones, said suicide prevention required a whole of community approach.

"The service will provide an essential link for people who have been supported in hospital and need targeted assistance when they transition back into their

communities," Mr Jones said.

The service is funded through North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN) as part of the Federal Government's National Suicide Prevention Trial.

For crisis support, phone Lifeline on 13 11 14.



▲ From left, NNSWLHD staff Guy Dayhew and Trent Taylor; Peter Orr of New Horizons; Deputy CEO Beyond Blue Susan Anderson; CEO Roses in the Ocean Bronwen Edwards; Member for Page, Kevin Hogan and Chair, North Coast Primary Health Network, Dr Tony Lembke.

Plans in progress at Evans Head

Progress is continuing on designs for the new Evans Head HealthOne, with the development application now in the final stages of preparation, expected to be submitted for Council approval in early December.

The NSW Government announced a new state-of-the-art HealthOne for Evans Head late last year, as part of the \$100 million statewide HealthOne program.

On 8 November, information stalls, concept plans and a family barbecue were all part of a community information session to provide people with a chance to find out more details about the new facility.

Northern NSW Local Health District Director Clinical Operations, Lynne Weir, said it was a good opportunity to speak with local residents about the design for the new HealthOne.

"We had concept plans on display, and it was great to see community members come and take a look," Ms Weir said.

"I spoke with the local residents about the opportunities the new facility would bring.



▲ Community members, Health Infrastructure staff, NNSWLHD representatives and staff from Richmond Valley Council at the HealthOne information session in Evans Head.

"Having a modern and contemporary health facility will mean that we are able to introduce additional health services into Evans Head. Having a gymnasium will allow us to introduce cardiac and respiratory rehabilitation services.

"The HealthOne will be built on

the current community health site, ideally located close to existing GP services which will link into the services provided by the HealthOne," Ms Weir said.

The concept plans also include additional car parking spaces.



Are you a Midwife or work with children and need support for your professional development?

Dorothy Edwards Education Fund
Our Kids Paediatric Education Fund

For more information and applications contact:



info@ourkids.org.au or phone 6620 2705
www.ourkids.org.au

Healthy minds at work

Workers around NSW will have better support at work while overcoming mental health challenges thanks to a new Mentally Healthy Workplaces strategy.

In October, NSW Minister for Better Regulation Matt Kean launched a workplace intervention program, a new website with free support and resources, and additional funding to help drought-affected farm workers living with mental illness and distress.

"We know about one in six workers will experience significant mental illness in any four week period. Because mental illness can sometimes reoccur, the proportion of the workforce experiencing this in any year may be even higher," Mr Kean said.

"When mental health challenges arise, it can

often mean time off work. But returning to work is an important step in recovery because it can help give structure and a sense of purpose."

Minister for Mental Health Tanya Davies said the strategy was developed in consultation with people with lived experience of mental illness, as well as academics, advocates, industry and worker representatives.

"We need to work together to tackle the stigma that still exists around mental illness, and these new initiatives will make it easier for people to take the sometimes daunting step of reaching out for support to stay in, or return to, work."

To find out more, visit the new Mentally Healthy Workplaces [website](#).

Wall of fame for Kyogle campaigners

A group of volunteers whose decade-long advocacy helped maintain local health services were honoured this month in Kyogle.

Member for Lismore, Thomas George, joined Northern NSW Local Health District Chief Executive, Wayne Jones to unveil a plaque on the new Wall of Fame at the Kyogle Multi-Purpose Service (MPS).

The plaque recognises the outstanding contribution of the Kyogle Health Services Planning and Steering Committee in advocating for a Multi-Purpose Service at Kyogle. The Kyogle MPS was opened in November 2005.

Wayne Jones paid tribute to the founding members of the committee, Ruth Barringham, Joe Llewellyn, Mary Garred and Tom FitzGerald, OAM.

"I am delighted to formally recognise the tireless commitment and support Ruth, Joe, Mary and Tom provided in developing this magnificent facility for the Kyogle community," Mr Jones said.

"This is a fantastic example of what can be achieved when dedicated community members and the Local Health District share common goals and work together."

Committee chairperson Tom FitzGerald said he was pleased by the recognition.

"The Kyogle Community strongly supported the Steering Committee in their endeavours to obtain a new model of Health Care for Kyogle District," Tom said.

Member for Lismore Thomas George said one of the first representations ever made to him when he was elected in 1999 was from Tom FitzGerald and the committee.

"At the time, the committee had been working hard to develop a plan and seek Government support for the Kyogle Multi-Purpose Service project.

"Since then it has been a privilege and an honour working with the committee and watching this important service take shape. The Kyogle community should take great pride in this achievement being documented at this facility."



▲ From left, NNSWLHD Chief Executive Wayne Jones, Executive Officer/Director of Nursing MPS Network Nancy Martin, Committee member Mary Garred, Member for Lismore Thomas George and Committee chairperson Tom FitzGerald OAM.

Healthy lunches at school, a recipe for success

A local primary school is leading the way in tackling childhood obesity and gathering state recognition in the process.

Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) Health Promotion Unit and Lennox Head Public School joined forces to create 'The Lennox Head Picnic Basket - A taste for Healthy Change' to address the school's challenges in bringing the canteen menu into line with new NSW canteen guidelines.

The project was among the finalists at this year's Premier's Awards.

When the NSW Healthy Canteen Strategy was announced in 2017, the Lennox Head Public School P & C was keen to meet the new healthy canteen

guidelines, but faced a range of obstacles.

These included defining what was meant by 'healthy choices', as well as making changes to food preparation, buying and storing ingredients within the time and space constraints of a school canteen.

The school approached NNSWLHD Health Promotion to address these challenges together with the school's canteen manager, P & C and staff, and Dietetics students from Griffith University.

In a unique approach, the school provided a classroom for two days to trial food preparation for the new menu, and had more than 100 children test the new items.

The children gave their tick

of approval to eight of the 11 items and the new menu was born.

Lennox Head Public School is now the first school in NSW to meet the Healthy Canteen

Guidelines. It has a menu supported by its community and also gives parents information on a broader range of healthy food options that their children like.



▲ From left, Lennox Head Public School Principal Deborah Langfield, Canteen manager Sue Tatum, P & C President Ange Flanagan and Health Promotion program coordinator Anna Huddy.

Profile : Grant Tweedie

This month, Northern Exposure caught up with Lismore Aboriginal Chronic Care Worker, Grant Tweedie to find out about his journey as a proud Yaegl man from Kyogle working in the Health Service.

Grant Tweedie is an Aboriginal Health Worker (AHW) for the Chronic Care for Aboriginal People (CCAP) service in Lismore. He is also working towards his Bachelor of Nursing degree and has just graduated from the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation.

A proud Yaegl man who grew up in Kyogle, Grant now lives on a rural property just outside Byron Bay.

Grant started his career in health in 1995 as a trainee at the Maclean hydrotherapy unit. He became a Wardsman at Mullumbimby Hospital, where he worked for 17 years until the hospital closed.

Grant held various roles at the old Byron Bay Hospital before he settled into his current post.

While working as a 'Wardie' Grant trained as a Registered Nurse and found there were few placement opportunities within Aboriginal Health Services.

He is driven by working towards better outcomes for Aboriginal people, it was this enthusiasm that led to him being asked to apply for the role in CCAP.

Whilst Grant says he feels like he fell into working for Health, he has quickly grown to appreciate the diversity of his career.

"I liked living on the edge when I was young. Now, I really like being able to rely on my experience and knowledge to make educated decisions," Grant said.

Grant cares deeply for his clients and gets satisfaction from making a difference to their lives.

"The day I stop caring about people, I'm out. If you don't care, you are in the wrong job," he said.

Grant feels the cultural history between Aboriginal people and Health Services can affect the time it takes to gain trust from his clients, but he says they are able to "suss him out" and can see that his intentions are genuine.

When he thinks about how much help his community needs, it can be overwhelming.

CCAP clients are Aboriginal people living with multiple chronic conditions, co-morbidities, social crisis, mental

health and drug and alcohol issues and other constraints.

"The responsibility can feel like standing at the water's edge, hands up, trying to stop the tide from coming in," Grant said.

Fortunately, Grant is able to draw on training from the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, from which he graduated in September.

Grant said this program has left him feeling far more confident and he would highly recommend the 15-day course.



He gained many skills and improved his communication ability.

"Prior to graduating I felt out of place in a room full of high-ranking health professionals, unworthy even, but now I hold my head high, without forgetting my roots."

Grant recently spoke to a room of over 350 people as a panelist at the NSW Health Good Health - Great Jobs 2018 Aboriginal Health Worker Workforce Forum, held in Sydney.

His manager, Marilyn Tolman was approached by the Ministry of Health to nominate an AHW to be on the panel and she said her decision to choose Grant was easy.

"Grant is an amazing AHW. He is respected by this community and his

team. He is a wonderful role model especially for Indigenous youth, he is a born leader and committed to Closing the Health Gap for his People," Marilyn said.

The forum was hosted by NSW Ministry of Health Aboriginal Workforce Unit in partnership with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association. It brought together NSW Health AHWs and Aboriginal Health Practitioners from across the state to engage and share information on career pathways, professional development opportunities and workforce initiatives.

Feeling a bit nervous prior to his address, Grant prepared a spiel beforehand.

"I was first off the rank to talk. I just threw the spiel out the window and spoke from the heart," he said.

Grant spoke about having appreciation for his good health, and when asked what is missing, he talked about the need to improve cultural awareness of health staff.

Together with local Nurse Educators, Grant is currently working on an initiative towards improving this.

"We need to change the conversations we have about Aboriginal Communities, break the cycle of deficit discourse and focus more on what is working,"

Grant said.

Grant enjoys the challenges of his role and is thankful for the strong mentorship and support he receives from his CCAP team, especially his manager, Marilyn.

"Maz is just the best boss, Rebecca Davey and all the others, I feel like I have a safety net under me... They inspire me and make a world of difference," Grant said.

Grant's passions are sport, music and cooking, and when he isn't at work he loves to cook food for his family and friends. A self-confessed 'foodie', Grant concedes that his hobby has become almost an obsession.

"I've been banned from buying any more cookbooks."

Big Ideas - the innovation challenge

If you have an idea about how we can improve your workplace, our services, or patient care within Northern NSW Local Health District, **Big Ideas** is your chance to share it!

Even a small idea can grow into a BIG IDEA to improve our organisation.

The new innovation challenge, Big Ideas, was launched in Grafton on 16 November. It will empower staff to "pitch" their idea, no matter how big or small.

These ideas can come from any staff, in any role, with the goal of improving our systems, creating a better patient experience, enhancing our health care or minimising waste.

It's an easy, guided process to get your idea in front of people who can help you turn it into reality.

Visit the Big Ideas page on the NNSWLHD staff [intranet](#) where you'll find a step by step application process to help you communicate your idea to our Big Ideas panel.

The panel will use your application to decide which ideas will make it through to the next step: presenting your idea live on stage in 2019.

The best Big Ideas will share in \$100,000 funding to help turn them into reality, and winners will receive mentoring and project management support from our Executive Leadership

team.

We are looking for ideas that will improve:

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

Big Ideas gives you the creative space you need to help your innovation take shape.

Applications for the first round of funding are open now, and close on 20 January 2019.

Visit <https://intranet.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/big-ideas/> to find out more.



▲ NNSWLHD Chief Executive Wayne Jones launched the Big Ideas innovation challenge at a staff forum in Grafton this month.

HIV Testing key to early diagnosis

With almost half of all people diagnosed with HIV in the late stage of infection, NSW Health is marking HIV Awareness Week by urging those at risk to be regularly tested.

HIV Awareness Week, 23-30 November and World AIDS Day, 1 December are timely reminders to test for HIV with various high quality HIV testing options available.

Northern NSW Local Health District Manager HIV and Related Programs, Jenny Heslop, said NSW is on track to achieving its goal of virtually eliminating HIV transmission by 2020, with a 21 per cent drop in the number of new diagnoses in NSW.

"Once a person is diagnosed, they can start treatment early, improve their health and prevent the virus from being passed on to others," said Ms Heslop.

"This reduction is due to more people seeking early testing and treatment, as well as the introduction of pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV (PrEP)."

PrEP, the use of medications to prevent HIV in those at risk, is also used traditionally to treat the infection. It is available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

"The highly successful NSW Health EPIC-NSW trial made PrEP available to 9,414 people at risk of HIV from 1

March 2016 to 30 April 2018."

In the first half of 2018 there were 49 per cent fewer Australian-born men having

sex with men diagnosed with early stage HIV infection, compared to the same period over the past five years.



▲ Manager HIV and Related Programs, Jenny Heslop, highlights the importance of HIV testing.

Eat more veggies, buy local, and save money!

A study of farmers' markets in the Lismore area has found vegetables and nuts were significantly cheaper at farmers' markets than supermarkets.

The Northern NSW Local Health District Health Promotion team and Lismore Red Cross supervised the research project by Griffith University students, comparing the price and source of a seasonal basket of goods at farmers' markets with supermarkets in the Lismore Local Government Area.

The research aimed to inform shoppers about the affordability of produce from farmers' markets and where their food comes from.

The results show that farmers' markets offer an affordable source of seasonal and locally grown vegetables.

The study found fruit, honey and bread were similarly priced at farmers' market and supermarkets, while meat, eggs and dairy were lower-priced at supermarkets.

With organic produce, the study found that organic fruit and vegetables were cheaper at farmers' markets compared to supermarkets.

Nearly 70% of farmers' market produce was sourced within 50 km of the Lismore central business district, while the surveyed supermarkets sourced only 12% of their produce within a 50 km radius.

Locally grown food can be fresher, doesn't generate the costs and carbon emissions of transportation, and supports local farmers and the local economy.



DIGITAL DOSE - eHealth News

Screensavers are go!

Computer screens across the District are now showing a selection of rotating screensavers.

After a successful pilot at Lismore Base Hospital, the new screensaver program has been deployed to all sites and departments.

If your computer is inactive for five minutes, the screensaver will automatically begin.

The slides are a great way to communicate simple messages to staff, and they can be customised for particular sites.

If you know of an important promotion or message that you'd like featured at your site, contact your site manager in the first instance for guidance before approaching the Media Unit.

The Media Unit has a new intranet page where you can find templates and guidelines to assist you in creating a

Measuring children's height and weight – an essential part of every child's health assessment.



We are now recording children's height and weight electronically every 3 months

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▲ An example of a Health Promotion screen saver.

screensaver. Click [here](#) to visit the page.

New slides will become active around the 1st of each month, and will be active for a minimum of one month.

Each site will have a combination of LHD-wide slides and their own site-specific slides, depending on what has been approved.

Coraki wins Healthy Town Challenge

Coraki has taken out the title of this year's healthiest town.

Member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis, announced the small town of 1500 people had won the Healthy Town Challenge, an initiative of the NSW Office of Preventative Health and the Heart Foundation.

The initiative encourages small regional and rural communities to get active and eat healthier.

"Coraki took on the Challenge, led by Martina Pattinson, a health promotion officer working on healthy eating and active living projects in Northern NSW," Mr Gulaptis said.

As part of the Challenge, 32 people in Coraki signed up to the free, personalised telephone coaching 'Get Healthy Service.'

Coraki residents participating in the challenge from January to August reportedly lost an average of 3.3 kilograms each.

Mr Gulaptis said Coraki residents should be proud of their efforts in aiming to be as healthy as they can.

"This is a terrific result and a great example of how a small but determined community can tackle such an important health issue," Mr Gulaptis said.

The Healthy Town Challenge is one element of the NSW Government's comprehensive plan to support



▲ Coraki residents celebrate winning the 2018 Healthy Town Challenge.

individuals and families to eat well and be active.

Five towns were selected and given an initial \$15,000 grant to implement healthy initiatives, with the winning town receiving a further \$5,000.

The Coraki community invested its \$15,000 in a range of initiatives to encourage the community to be more active and foster healthier food choices, including:

- Establishing a local walking group
- Introducing healthy food options at the local takeaway shop

- The local supermarket adopting a healthy catering policy
- Investing in lights for the local tennis courts so they can be used after dark
- Providing equipment for sport and physical activity
- Sponsoring a young Indigenous woman to complete a Certificate 3 in fitness

Applications are now open for the NSW Healthy Town Challenge 2019.

Visit the NSW Office of Preventive Health [website](#) for more information.

HealthPathways News - November

National Disability Insurance Scheme

HealthPathways has recently published the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) pathway.

The NDIS is Australia's first national scheme for people with permanent and significant disability and aims to enable Australians under 65 to live an ordinary life and achieve their goals and aspirations.

The NDIS funds a range of supports and services related to a person's disability that are assessed as reasonable and necessary. These may include assistance with education, employment, social participation, independence, living arrangements, and health and wellbeing.

During their application for the NDIS, patients may ask their GP to complete a section of their personally identified Access Request from (ARF) or provide a

letter or other documentation confirming their disability.

The NDIS pathway provides you with best practice guidelines and resources to assist in presenting patients' needs and as well as functional impact of their disability in a way that is consistent with the requirements of the National Disability Insurance Agency.

This will reduce the need for follow up applications due to missing information and will optimise the support available to your patients through the NDIS.

The information section contains further information for GPs including:

- [Summer Foundation](#) – Getting the Language Right: A Health Practitioners' Guide to Writing Reports, Letters, Forms, and Assessments for the NDIS
 - [RACGP](#) – NDIS Guide for Physicians
- There is also a patient information

section with useful websites, phone numbers and printable guides to assist patients in their application.

For further information on HealthPathways, please contact kkeyte@ncphn.org.au or fryan@ncphn.org.au.

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

Username: [manchealth](#)

Password: [conn3ct3d](#)

See links below to access HealthPathways relating to articles in this edition of Northern Exposure:

- [Domestic and Family Violence](#)
- [Child or Young Person at Risk](#)
- [Mental Health and Addiction](#)
- [Suicide Risk](#)
- [Deliberate Self Harm](#)
- [HIV](#)

Challenge brings teams together

The Northern NSW Knockout Health Challenge (KHC) Get Together was held in Lismore on 20 October.

The Get Together involved teams from Northern NSW who are participating in the state-wide NSW Aboriginal Knockout Health Challenge.

The four local teams represent Ballina, Casino, Lismore and Tweed.

Approximately 40 people attended the Get Together, held at the Southern Cross Football Centre in Lismore.

This year, Matt Rose from Living Deadly, Australian Jillaroo and Women's NRL player Caitlin Moran, and South Sydney Rabbitohs player Cody Walker, attended the event.

Aboriginal Chronic Care Officer, Anthony Franks, said it was wonderful to have these well-known figures on board to highlight the benefits of being active and eating well.

"It's great to have the support of these role models helping lead the



▲ NNSWLHD Aboriginal Chronic Care worker, Anthony Franks, addresses the Get Together participants.

way in promoting healthy lifestyles and exercise," Anthony said.

Participants enjoyed the camaraderie of the day, saying:

"I enjoy getting together with other teams."

"An awesome day!"

"Great community spirit – really an awesome day."

"Absolutely loved it."

"Can't wait for next year get together."

"Great to get together and motivate each other."

The KHC is a healthy lifestyle and weight loss

program for Aboriginal people aged 16 years or older residing in NSW.

The challenge is a 10-week program held twice a year, and aims to improve nutrition, increase physical activity and reduce overweight and obesity, and link participants into local programs and services to improve their health and wellbeing.

The program began in 2012 as a partnership between the Agency for Clinical Innovation and NSW Rugby League (NSWRL).

Since 2016, it has been facilitated through collaboration between the NSW Office of Preventive Health and the NSWRL.



Emergency a highlight for medical students

The Clarence Valley is currently hosting four medical students from the University of Wollongong who are spending 12 months living, working and training in Northern NSW.

As part of their medical degree, students Keiran, Matt, Jack and Felix spend part of their week working in the Emergency Departments at Grafton Base Hospital and Maclean District Hospital.

The ED is often one of the most rewarding and challenging experiences of a regional placement, and the recent Jacaranda Festival added an extra level

of complexity to an already busy environment.

To stay ahead of the challenges, students and staff participate in simulation-based education designed to reflect the stressors and complexities of an ED.

"The ED provides exposure to such a wide variety of cases, from the least urgent, to those requiring resuscitation or immediate transport by helicopter to a bigger center. The teamwork and coordination is such a big factor," Medical student Keiran Davis said.



▲ Medical students participate in an Emergency Department simulation session at Grafton Base Hospital.

The last word...

Board farewells two of its own

The Northern NSW Local Health District Board farewelled two Board Members at a function on 31 October.

David Frazer, Deputy Board Chair, and Dr Joe Ogg, had served on the

Board since 2011, helping steer the LHD through a number of improvements to facilities and services, as well as a significant increase in staff numbers.

"We saw a marked improvement in

major performance measures, largely due to the hard work and dedication of all employees," Mr Frazer said.

"The Northern NSW Local Health District continues to be graded by the Ministry at the highest performance level.

"I'm pleased to see that the LHD is also now in a position where it can look at issues such as workplace culture."

Board Chair, Brian Pezzutti praised the contribution Dr Ogg and Mr Frazer have made to the Board.

"David revolutionised the way we think about risk, and was instrumental in improving the way finance and performance is presented to the Board," Mr Pezzutti said.

"Joe's passion for quality and safety issues and the importance of having reliable, understandable data was a great benefit to our health service."

◀ From left, Board Member Dr Joe Ogg, Manager Chief Executive Office Jenny Cleaver, Deputy Board Chair David Frazer and Board Chair Brian Pezzutti.



Garden Gurus to the rescue

Murwillumbah District Hospital now has a fresh entrance to greet patients and visitors, thanks to a working bee on 3 November.

Staff and community members gave the front entrance and the Nurses' Memorial Garden a makeover in time for spring.

Horticulturalist, Ulrich Koerner and his wife, Jutta Straub, both members of the Uki Gardening Club, and Plantsy Nursery in Burringbar graciously donated their time, despite the temperature reaching 28°C on the day.

Fertiliser, plants and mulch was generously

donated by local businesses and volunteers.

Green-thumbed staff members, the Garden Gurus also dug in, working to bring the memorial garden back to life as a tranquil place to sit and contemplate.

Thanks to Jenny Motum, Kylie Wilmen, Michelle O'Brien, Clare Timbs, John Reid and Darleen Berwick and her husband Derek for their hard work.

"It's lovely to see staff and the community pull together to bring the front entrance of the hospital and its memorial garden back to its former glory," Darleen said.



▲ The Murwillumbah District Hospital 'Garden Gurus' at the working bee.