



# School's out for summer

A Class of 2017 of a different kind graduated recently in Byron Bay.

On 1 December, 14 students delivered their final presentations as part of this year's Foundational Clinical Leadership Program.

The Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) 2017 cohort presented their work to the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC), LHD Executive and Board members in front of participants' sponsors, team members and managers at Elements of Byron Resort.

"This has been the culmination of 10 months' work with their respective teams to bring about change in the workplace utilising quality improvement methodology," Jonathan Magill, Lead Facilitator and NNSWLHD Nurse Manager Professional Development and Education, said.

"Feedback from Cathy Vinters, Program Lead, Quality Improvement Academy, CEC and Dr David Hutton, NNSWLHD Director of Clinical Governance, was that the standard of all presentations was exceptional."

The value of investing in



**Above, Northern NSW Local Health District staff and 2017 course participants celebrate completing the CEC Foundational Clinical Leadership Program. From left, Jon Magill, Nurse Manager Professional Development and Education, Ryan Armstrong, Melanie Franz, Katharine Duffy, NNSWLHD Director Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health, Brett Sahlqvist, Bronwyn Browne, Rae Rafferty, NNSWLHD Nurse Manager Workforce Development and Leadership and Coordinator – Foundational Clinical Leadership Program, Carol Agnew, Tracey Beck, Bronwyn Tillett, Anna Law, Cacey Dickson, Anthony Zuill, Deborah Hunt, and Row Golledge.**

leadership development is recognised nationally and internationally. NNSWLHD has been supporting clinicians and managers to complete the Clinical

Leadership program since 2007. This year there were presentations from Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health.

The 2017 cohort of students included Ryan

Armstrong, Nurse Unit Manager at The Tweed Hospital, Melanie Franz, A/ Nurse Educator Residential Aged Care Facility and GP

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Clarence Valley Mental Health initiative wins award



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Interviews with Junior Medical Officers Jasmin Smyth and Bryce Joynson

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.

# Executive Update

This past year our health service has dealt with significant challenges, and performed above expectation in many areas. First to mind is the March 31 flood which devastated so many of our communities, and which continues to affect people and businesses even now.

While the flood wreaked havoc on lives and property across our health district, the solidarity and community spirit it produced was beyond what many could have imagined.

From within our own staff, stories abound of people stepping up to provide medical assistance, mental health support, and emergency responses. I acknowledge each of these contributions and once again give my personal thanks for your selfless service.

For people with a lived experience of mental illness, and those staff working in mental health, 2017 brought substantial challenges, but also some forward strides.

The Our Healthy Clarence initiative brought a renewed focus to the mental health and support needs of young people in the Clarence Valley, and initiatives involving multiple government and non-governmental agencies are having an

important impact in this area.

The coverage of the tragic death of a mental health patient in Lismore led to a statewide review into the use of seclusion and restraint practices within the mental health system, which I am sure will bring about meaningful change and benefits for patients, staff, and our communities.

This year, we recorded our busiest winter ever, with unprecedented numbers of emergency department presentations across the district. Our staff rose to the challenge and, despite much of our workforce also needing time off due to the influenza strains, we continued to provide high-quality and safe care to the thousands of people who attended our hospitals and services. I commend you on this great achievement and commitment to our communities.

We're continuing our investment in extra staffing to support the growth in our populations and hospital activity. This year we've added over 100 new full-time positions for doctors, nurses, allied health, and other staff.

We've committed to expanding our research capacity and building partnerships, through our Director of



Research, and the Research Committee.

Our facilities continued to grow and modernise, as we welcomed upgrades at many locations across the district. I sincerely thank our dedicated planning and capital works teams, and thank our clinicians, nurses, and support staff for the input and expertise they contribute throughout the process.

I wish all our staff a safe and enjoyable summer, and most importantly a healthy, safe, and prosperous new year.

*Wayne Jones  
Chief Executive*

## From the Board Chair



On reflecting on the Board Chair articles this year, 2017 has been, by all accounts, an exceptionally busy year for the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD).

We started the year thanking an outgoing Minister, Jillian Skinner, and welcoming a new Minister, Brad Hazzard.

Changes were made in our Mental Health Services with the establishment of a sub-acute ward at Byron Central Hospital and redevelopments at Lismore to include an Older Persons' Mental Health Unit.

We acknowledged the loss of well-known elder Aunty Bertha Kapeen, an advocate for health services for

Aboriginal people over many years.

We noted the important work of our coders and clinicians in fully capturing our activity to support negotiations around the NNSWLHD Annual Service Agreement.

NNSWLHD received commendation from Deputy Secretary, System Purchasing and Performance, Susan Pearce, on our quality and safety, coming in on budget, and achieving Elective Surgery and Emergency Department targets. Funding was obtained for an additional 100 FTE staff, including 40 positions in community health.

Our LHD received excellent Patient Survey Results with 97% of patients rating their care as good or very good.

I reported on our stakeholder engagement structures, including attending a Combined Clinical Council Meeting with North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN) Clinical Council which had a focus on Mental Health.

NNSWLHD had a number of official openings including the Women's Care and Paediatric Units at Lismore Base Hospital, the Rehabilitation Ward at Maclean District Hospital, and Coraki Campbell HealthOne.

The Bulgarr Ngaru Aboriginal Medical Service opened a new health facility

at Casino and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service opened its new Helicopter base at Lismore Airport.

NNSWLHD participated in the NSW Health Save the Date to Vaccinate Campaign, Palliative Care Roundtables and celebrated a topping out Ceremony for Bonalbo Multipurpose Service.

We implemented a successful partnership with NCPHN throughout what is now known as the busiest winter on record. This saw significant increases in numbers of confirmed influenza cases, and diagnoses were assisted by the introduction of new rapid testing.

The North Coast hosted the 84th Annual Conference of the United Hospital Auxiliary in Tweed Heads and we celebrated the contributions of our many volunteers.

In closing, I thank all NNSWLHD staff, partners and volunteers for their outstanding efforts this year which resulted in high quality and timely care for the people of Northern NSW. I wish you all a happy time over the Christmas period and I look forward to continuing to improve the outcomes for patients in 2018 and beyond.

*Brian Pezzutti  
Board Chair*

# Recognition for women's heart health

Improving women's heart health is front and centre for clinicians working with Aboriginal communities in Northern NSW.

For the third year in a row, a local program has received a grant from the Heart Foundation for commitment to women's heart health.

The \$10,000 grant will help the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) raise awareness about heart health amongst older Aboriginal women living in rural communities across the region. It's part of the 2017 Women and Heart Disease NSW Community Grant funding provided by the Foundation.

"Aboriginal people make up approximately four per cent of our region's population and have twice the rate of hospitalisation for cardiovascular disease as non-Aboriginal people," Jillian Adams, Manager, NNSWLHD Health Promotion, said.

"The Ready Set Go! Healthy Heart program will consult with Aboriginal women from across the region and develop strategies to encourage women to exercise, eat healthy food and learn about maintaining a healthy heart," Ms Adams said.

In 2016, the LHD won a Heart Foundation grant for its heart disease awareness program and in 2015 the

Lismore Women's Health and Resource Centre received a grant for its Go Red for Women Northern Rivers program.

"It's encouraging to see so many programs established over the past three years in the Northern NSW region that are targeting women's health and heart

disease," Kerry Doyle, Heart Foundation's NSW Chief Executive, said.

"Heart disease is a leading cause of death in Australian women, taking the lives of 24 females every day and 48,000 women will be hospitalised with heart disease each year."



**Above, left to right, Kerrry Wilcox, Ronella Phillips, Tammy Johnson, Laurel Rogers, Kim Gussy, Troy Combo, Angela Hehir (Manager Heart Foundation), Nerida Colley (Lismore Women's Health and Resource Centre), and Anthony Franks at the Heart Foundation grant presentation held in Lismore recently.**

# Research boost for children at risk

It is well-recognised that sharing information about children at risk of harm can save lives.

Many child death reviews and commissions of inquiry have recommended 'information sharing' within and between agencies as a

strategy to prevent harm to vulnerable children.

The Northern NSW Local Health District's (NNSWLHD) Child-At-Risk (CAR) eMR Alert system is one such program which has been providing clinicians with child protection information since 2015.

The CAR Alert system allows clinicians to see whether their patient (child or at-risk pregnant woman) has been identified as having wellbeing concerns.

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) have shown interest in the potential of the CAR Alert, and following a very competitive research grant process, NNSWLHD was recently awarded \$50,000 to strengthen our knowledge of how the alert is delivering improved outcomes for children.

**At left, NNSWLHD Child Protection Manager, Rosemaria Flaherty and Out of Home Care and Child Wellbeing Coordinator, Nicole Ashby at this year's National Allied Health Conference.**

A study is now underway in partnership with the Australian Centre for Child Protection.

Our CAR Alert 'information sharing' system has produced excellent clinical outcomes since inception, such as clinician-initiated case reviews of children who have several CAR Alerts on their eMR, escalation of cases to Family and Community Services for a statutory response where required, and the ability to maintain wellbeing vigilance on cross-border patients.

It provides clinicians with the opportunity to assist families by checking that patients and families have been referred to relevant services, identifying where there is information about the family that should be shared with other prescribed bodies under legislation, and following up missed appointments by the patients or their family.

More information about the project, led by NNSWLHD Child Protection Manager, Rosemaria Flaherty, is available on the ANROWS website [here](#).



# A well-earned break, for some

With the summer holiday period now well and truly here, I find myself thinking about those people around us who don't get to take a break from their jobs to stop and smell the freshly mown lawns and overripe mangoes.

Ambulance officers, hospital workers, police, crisis counsellors and emergency services are just some of those people who continue to work around the clock making sure our communities stay safe while we down tools to unwind and connect with family and friends.

Unfortunately, we rush about so much in preparation for Christmas that we desperately need a break from the busyness we create for ourselves in December, let alone from the hard work of the entire year leading up to this point.

In the mad rush to get things finished before the holiday shut down, even my mechanic was so stressed that he'd stopped answering his workshop phone. There was no point in rushing to answer it just to tell customers he couldn't fit them in.

Over the years I have made personalised gifts, sewn Christmas ornaments and even been excited about the umpteen Secret Santa events I had to purchase presents for, but not this year.

In a two-working-parent household, this year it was a Christmas miracle that we'd managed to order our children's Christmas presents online in time for them to arrive in the post. I'm sure I'm not the only one who is looking forward to having a few days off to relax, recharge and refresh for the next year.

If you're one of those people who'll be working while most of your friends and family are celebrating, then I wish you good cheer at work, and a lengthy and well-deserved holiday sometime in 2018.



**Fiona Baker**  
Editor

# Tweed quiet achievers honoured

A hidden group of staff were recently honoured for their contribution to The Tweed Hospital (TTH).

The TTH Clinical Scheduling and Outpatient staff were awarded certificates of appreciation at an afternoon tea hosted by the Acting Director of Nursing and Assistant Director of Nursing.

"Areas like the Outpatients and the Clinical Scheduling department work very hard in the background ensuring things flow smoothly for other areas of

the hospital, and can often be under appreciated," Wendy Howell, TTH Assistant Director of Nursing, said.

"Without the hard work of the nursing and clerical staff of both these units we would not be able to meet our surgical targets and we really just wanted to say thank you."

Registered Nurse, Outpatient Unit, Paul Maloney, said the team really appreciated the gesture, and felt very valued.



**Above, back row from left, A/ Director of Nursing, TTH, Peter Jeffree with Clinical Scheduling and Outpatient Unit staff Pam Randles, Orla Meade, Aimee Foran, Paul Maloney, Ingrid Steele and Rita van Gilst. Middle row, from left, Assistant Director of Nursing, Wendy Howell with staff Pauline Sullivan, Sandra Dawson, Vicki White, Michelle Burgess, Hanna Bellew and Nursing Unit Manager Clinical Scheduling, Michelle McDermott. Front row from left, Outpatients' Department Nursing Unit Manager, Roz Wagner with Donna Curtis, Natalie Ewington and Judy Schooley.**

## 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!



# Healthy minds come together for change

The Clarence Valley's innovative approach to improving Mental Health has been recognised at a recent awards ceremony.

Northern NSW Local Health District's Rural Mental Health Coordinator, Samantha Osborne, was honoured at the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP) State Co-ordinators meeting in November for her contribution to the Our Healthy Clarence initiative.



Our Healthy Clarence is a unique model that brings community and organisations together in a constructive and sustainable way to improve the mental health and wellbeing of youth within the Clarence Valley.

The RAMHP Innovators Award was established to celebrate and recognise the work undertaken by RAMHP Coordinators.

It recognises those coordinators who have taken an innovative approach towards the RAMHP's core activities.



**Above, members of the Our Healthy Clarence Steering Committee. At left, Samantha Osborne receives the Outstanding Innovator Award from RAMHP Program Manager, Tessa Caton.**

## It's Now or Never: End of Life Conversations

End of life care is not the easiest conversation topic. However, open and constructive discussion around what people want at the end of their life is precisely what's needed to create more effective care plans and support people to die according to their wishes.

Throughout 2017 the Northern NSW Local Health District has run a course aimed at giving clinicians the skills to have these very important conversations around end-of-life wishes and gaining confidence in knowing what to say and when.

Two NNSWLHD clinicians have also been trained to present the one-day course, 'It's Now or Never'.

"One of the biggest barriers to providing good end-of-life care is that people, both community and clinicians, are unable to have the important conversations regarding end of life. This course focuses on changing that," Anna Law, NNSWLHD End of Life Coordinator, said.

"It has been very well received by all staff who participate."

The course is valuable for everyone, since each person can benefit from improved compassion and connection with the dying and their families.

In 2018 the course will be run more often across the LHD as more local clinicians are trained to deliver it, through funding provided by NNSWLHD Integrated Care. Each session can accommodate up to 20 people.

For more information contact Anna Law on [anna.law@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:anna.law@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

## Class of clinical leaders makes the grade

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Practice Project, Brett Sahlqvist, Clarence Network Senior Physiotherapist, Bronwyn Browne, A/Nurse Unit Manager at Casino Community Health, Carol Agnew, Tweed/Byron District Senior Counselling, Tracey Beck, Ballina District Hospital Diversional Therapist, Bronwyn Tillett, Registered Nurse at Byron Central Hospital, Anna Law, NNSWLHD End of Life Project Officer, Cacey Dickson, Clinical Midwifery Educator, Grafton Base Hospital, Anthony Zuill, Lismore Base Hospital Occupational

Therapist, Deborah Hunt, Clinical Nurse Specialist 2 with Hospital In The Home, Row Golledge, Ballina District Hospital Facility Registered Nurse and Laura Kerr, Radiation Scientist at North Coast Cancer Institute - Cancer Care and Haematology Unit.

"Each year we invite next year's cohort along to see the finished product, and those that were able to attend found it beneficial as they start their own leadership journey with us in 2018," Mr Magill said.

NNSWLHD Board Member, Carolyn Byrne, attended the day and will report back to the Board on the work undertaken and outcomes from the program.

This year's cohort are now preparing to submit their work for the 2018 NNSWLHD Quality Awards.

"This program is just the start of the clinicians' ongoing journey in quality improvement, and we congratulate them on their achievements," Rae Rafferty, NNSWLHD Nurse Manager Workforce Development and Leadership, said.

# 10 years of respectful relationships

Lessons of love and respect will shine brightly throughout 2018 on a calendar featuring the work of year 10 students across the Northern Rivers.

The Love Bites calendar is a celebration recognising 10 years of the Love Bites program being run in local schools.

The one-day program provides a safe space for teenagers to talk about respectful relationships, prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault.

"Love Bites offers a fantastic opportunity to empower young people, and give them a place to talk about issues important to them," Anna Tonkin, Child, Family and Adolescent Health Clinical Nurse Consultant, said.

"It's a day that young people can safely discuss what a respectful 'normal' relationship looks like, what's acceptable, what is consent, as well as internet safety and legal issues."

During the one-day workshop, year 10 students are asked to express what they've

learnt through artwork and music.

The 2018 calendar is a collection of work done by students across Northern Rivers high schools including from Kadina, Lismore, Casino, Kyogle, Woodenbong, Bonalbo, Richmond River and Nimbin.

"For those students that have experienced Domestic Violence it would make you feel that you are not alone in dealing with this," Jasmyne Carroll, Kadina High Campus student, said.

"It also brings to light that there are ways to work through it, and I learnt that

there is a lot of support out there for young people who may be victims."

In Northern NSW, Love Bites is under the auspices of Women Up North Housing (WUNH) and is facilitated by a collaborative team including government and not-for-profit organisations.



**Above, from left, Tahli Drew, Zec Woolley, Amara Bartlett (WUNH), Ben Hogan, Linda De Milford (NNSWLHD), Anna Tonkin (NNSWLHD), Emma Rolfe (Department of Education Senior School Counsellor), Jasmyne Carroll, Ian Davies (Principal, The Rivers Secondary College, Kadina High Campus), and Janine Russell (HT Wellbeing, The Rivers Secondary College, Kadina High Campus) celebrate the launch of the Love Bites Calendar featuring the work of local high school students.**

## Sights set on new Tweed Hospital

In June 2017, the NSW Government announced a \$534 million state-of-the-art greenfield hospital for the Tweed Valley.

As well as providing existing services within a new, future-proof facility, the Tweed Valley Hospital will also provide residents with more specialised health services closer to home, such as radiation oncology and cardiac catheterisation.

Planning for the new hospital is being led by an integrated project team comprising Northern NSW Local Health District and Health Infrastructure. It will be a collaborative process involving clinicians, staff, patient groups, local stakeholders and the community.

Clinicians and staff have already been involved in a vision workshop that has identified project aspirations under four main pillars:

- Models of Service Delivery
- Research and Education
- Technology, and
- Built form and the Environment

Planning and design for the Tweed Valley Hospital will happen during 2017 and 2018, with construction due to commence in 2019. The new hospital is targeted to open in 2022.

All staff and services at The Tweed Hospital will be relocated across to the new Tweed Valley Hospital.

The site selection process for the Tweed Valley Hospital is on-going. Around 20 properties were identified for further investigation during the Expression of Interest process.

Northern NSW Local Health District and Health Infrastructure are working hard to announce the preferred site or sites at the start of next year.

## Ditch the car, catch the bus to work

A new express bus service is now catering to commuters travelling between the coast and Lismore. Two services are running between Byron Bay, Ballina, Lennox Head and Lismore, with departure times coinciding with business hours for people working in the Lismore CBD and Lismore Base Hospital.

A six-month trial of the Monday-Friday services began on December 4, after advocacy from the Lismore Sustainable Transport Group, including Northern NSW Local Health District Health Promotion.

Fewer cars on the road reduces congestion and emissions, while public transport encourages social interaction and increased physical activity by walking to and from the bus stop. To find out more contact Adam Guise at [Adam.Guise@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Adam.Guise@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

# Santa's workshop? Right this way...

Competition was strong for this year's annual Christmas Door challenge at Lismore Base Hospital. Entries poured in from across the hospital, from Domestic Services to Allied Health, Finance to the Medical Wards.

The theme this year was 'Santa's

Workshop' with teams being awarded extra points for costume design.

The winning departments were announced during the staff Christmas BBQ lunch on 14 December.

In first place, in a three-way tie, were E9 Oncology/ Gastroenterology,

C6 Renal/ Vascular/ Cardiology and Domestic Services. Customer Services and Speech Pathology/ Dietetics were equal runners up. Prizes included Christmas teddy bears, certificates, chocolates and Christmas snow domes.



**Clockwise from left, Speech Pathology and Dietetics laid out snacks and a comprehensive supplements list to get Santa's helpers through the festive season, Ward C6 have an army of elvish workers at the ready, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy join forces for their display.**



**Below, from left, all signs point to Domestic Services' impressive display, and Customer Service elves greet visitors in the hospital foyer.**



## Health literacy in the heat

As summer rolls around, many visitors to our beautiful region don't know the dangers of sun and heat exposure. Here are some simple messages we can pass on to help others enjoy their holidays and stay well wherever they are:

### 1. Drink plenty of water.

Carry a water bottle with you. You can refill it from the drinking fountains you'll find close to many of our parks and beaches.

**2. Keep it cool.** Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day (10am - 4pm). If you do need to go out in the sun, wear a hat and sunglasses and apply a sunscreen with at least SPF30+. Keep it cool indoors by using fans or air conditioning, keeping curtains closed and opening doors and windows when it is safe to do so.

**3. Take care of others.** It is important to check up on others with a higher risk of heat illness. These include people over age 75, people with a chronic condition like diabetes or heart disease, people who are living by themselves or don't have social support (e.g. travellers), and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

**4. Have a plan.** Be prepared for a heatwave:

- Check the local weather forecast
- Make sure you have somewhere cool to store medication. Some medications like insulin don't work if they have been left in a hot car.
- Have a list of emergency numbers - the emergency number in Australia is 000.
- Put some water bottles or cool packs in the freezer the night before.

To print an A4 fact sheet with this information, click [here](#).

NSW Health has heatwave information on their website [here](#).

# Sound techniques on show in Ballina

Clinicians were put through their paces at a recent course at Ballina District Hospital.

The Point of Care Ultrasound course was specially designed to increase skill levels in Career Medical Officers (CMOs) who staff the hospital's Emergency Department, General Ward and Rehabilitation Unit.

Content for the two-day program was organised through liaison with local CMOs and the Australian Institute of Ultrasound (AIU) to ensure the training covered relevant and up to date techniques.

"The support provided by key management staff has been invaluable in getting this course off the ground," Dr Tien Khoo, Ballina District Hospital Staff Specialist General Medicine, said.

"I especially want to thank our Director of Medical Services, Katherine Willis-Sullivan, Director of Trauma, Dr Anne Drinkwater, and Nurse Educator, Andrew Kenyon, for their help."

Other in-kind support for the course was provided by the Health Education and Training Institute (HETI), the Ballina Hospital Auxiliary and Nursing staff.

Candidate to facilitator ratios were kept low to ensure participants had a personalised learning experience.

"The tailored training meant that our doctors were able to hone in on the particular skills they need to be able to provide care in a smaller facility, such as Ballina," Dr Khoo said.

"Following the success of this course, we would like to be able to offer it again in Lismore and possibly Ballina in 2018."



**Above, from left, AIU Course Facilitators Cathy and Stephen, with Ballina District Hospital staff Chris Bentley, CMO Emergency; Ben Rickard, CMO Emergency; Nadeesh Mahiepala, CMO General Medicine; Juan Vasquez, Senior CMO Emergency; Brenda Omune, CMO General Medicine; Ali Dogan, Senior CMO Emergency and AIU Director Kim Sanderson.**

## Information at your fingertips

If you're looking for health advice or local medical services over the Christmas break, the HealthDirect website is a great place to start.

Here you can find the location and opening hours of general practices,

pharmacies, hospitals and counselling services, as well as an online symptom checker and information about common health conditions.

Head to [www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au) to find out more.

# Profiles : Jasmin Smyth and Bryce Joynson

*This month, Northern Exposure caught up with Junior Medical Officers Jasmin Smyth and Bryce Joynson to hear about their plans for Christmas, and how they've found their first year of medical training ....*

## Jasmin Smyth - Intern, Lismore Base Hospital

"Like most people who choose this career I wanted to support people in their health. I came to medicine late in life, I have a daughter who I've raised on my own since she was 2 1/2, shortly before she was diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum," Jasmin said.

"She's high-functioning, and part of the reason I chose to pursue medicine was to show her that anything is possible, that labels like 'single mother' or 'autistic' don't define us or limit us unless we let them.

"I was fortunate to spend 18 months at Lismore Base Hospital (LBH) as a student, so I had a fair idea of what to expect here," Jasmin said.

"LBH has a wonderful community feeling within the work-force. Every day I feel I am a part of a team that is focused on quality patient care, from wardspeople and administration staff through to consultants.

"In terms of training we are lucky to have often daily interactions with consultants, including both formal and opportunistic teaching, as well as teaching from Registrars and fellow colleagues. I believe the benefits of this teaching are reflected in the clinical performance and morale of

the junior doctors.

"I'm on the GP training program with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. I'll do at least another year at LBH and then continue my training locally," Jasmin said.

"I plan to stay in the region and work as a GP. I like that GP training provides variety and the opportunity to pursue special interests.

"It's surprised me how much I have enjoyed living here, there really is a place for everyone within the community, and something to do or see around every corner. I grew up around Coffs Harbour and the Lismore region is very similar, so it feels like home here.

"On the weekends it's a short drive to beautiful beaches or bushland. This is such a beautiful region.

"Christmas for us is coming together as a family, enjoying good food and each other's company. When everyone is busy with their own lives, Christmas is the time of year we prioritise family," Jasmin said.

"We'll be having a family picnic at Ballina with my teenage daughter and my mother who lives locally in Alstonville. My brother is making the trip down from Queensland to join us too."



"I love meeting new people, and working as a doctor is a fantastic opportunity to do that everyday. There are so many opportunities in the world of medicine and I am excited to see where my career will take me.

"I have enjoyed my time at The Tweed Hospital. Working in a smaller environment has many advantages to your training as there are ample opportunities for hands on experience. I have enjoyed working with my other interns and staff at the Tweed who are all fantastic!"



## Bryce Joynson - Intern, The Tweed Hospital

"I grew up in a small dairy farming town near Kiama, on the NSW south coast.

"I was always involved in the community through surf life saving and that's where my interest in medicine first began, learning basic first aid and life support," Bryce said.

"Studying at Western Sydney University was a fantastic experience, but I always wanted to return to a smaller community closer to the coast, which is why I chose Tweed.

"I love that each day is always different. Being a doctor allows me to interact with a wide variety of people and be involved in their lives," Bryce said.

"I love meeting new people, and working as a doctor is a fantastic opportunity to do that everyday. There are so many opportunities in the world of medicine and I am excited to see where my career will take me.

"We usually have a late breakfast (with chocolate of course) and open our gifts around the tree. Hopefully the weather will be nice and we can go to the rock pools for a swim with our dog and then finish the day with a drink and relaxing with our horse.

"We love to have a Christmas ham and there always needs to be a Pavlova for dessert," Bryce said.

"My favourite rotation this year has been my surgical rotation, with so many opportunities to assist in theatre and get hands on."

"I feel so lucky to be able to work in such a beautiful part of Australia. You can't beat the amazing beaches here but I also love the countryside. The Tweed area offers both.

"Only 5 minute's drive from work and you have spectacular forests, beautiful farms and some pristine mountain walks.

"I hope to head down the general practice pathway and see where that takes me. Teaching is a real passion of mine and I can see myself being involved with a University in the future to help guide medical education," Bryce said.

"This year my partner and I will be celebrating our first Christmas on the Gold Coast, with my parents travelling up to visit from NSW.

"We usually have a late breakfast (with chocolate of course) and open our gifts around the tree. Hopefully the weather will be nice and we can go to the rock pools for a swim with our dog and then finish the day with a drink and relaxing with our horse.

"We love to have a Christmas ham and there always needs to be a Pavlova for dessert," Bryce said.

# Experience and training invaluable

Nurse Practitioners (NP) were honoured at a luncheon in Lismore in recognition of National Nurse Practitioner Day on 12 December.

NPs are Registered nurses with extended experience and expertise to manage the care and treatment of people with a variety of acute or chronic health conditions.

NPs have completed additional specialised clinical education at Master's degree level, gaining advanced clinical reasoning and diagnostic skills in the process.

The 12 December is celebrated each year as the anniversary of the first Nurse Practitioners to be authorised in Australia in 2000. Back then, there were six across the country, and today there are more than 1500 nurse practitioners endorsed nationwide by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.

Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) has 19 NPs working in specialities including emergency, mental health, chronic disease and psychogeriatrics, to name a few specialties.

The development of Nurse Practitioner roles in the healthcare system is deeply rooted in the discipline's commitment to

patient-centred care, meeting population needs and improving health outcomes.

Katharine Duffy, NNSWLHD Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health, hosted the luncheon to celebrate

the commitment and contribution Nurse Practitioners make to the health service. The Nurse Practitioners also gave a brief presentation about each of their roles within the District.



**Pictured above are eight NNSWLHD Nurse Practitioners; Helen Adams, Kris Liebke, Anne Moehead, Anne-Maree Cheffins, Rebecca Collins, Jane Ramsay, Karen Walsh and Graeme Turner with Darren Smyth, Clinical Nurse Consultant Drug and Alcohol, Katharine Duffy, Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health and Rae Rafferty, Nurse Manager Workforce Development and Leadership.**

## Students' hopes and dreams on display

A collaborative art project in Ballina is helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids express their hopes and dreams for the future.

Students at Ballina Primary School recently completed the 'Hope Wall' project, painting a large canvas with Aboriginal artwork, local icons and hand

prints with the help of local artist, Gilbert Laurie.

The canvas was revealed at a ceremony at Ballina Primary School and was presented to Bullinah Aboriginal Medical Centre where it will be hung permanently.

At the presentation ceremony, children performed

Aboriginal dances and spoke about their involvement with the art project and shared their hopes with the elders around them.

"Creating the Hope Wall has been a very aspirational project for our Aboriginal students. It gave them the opportunity to really think

about what they want to do with their lives," Bronwen Eady, Learning and Support teacher, Ballina Primary School, said.

"It is so important to build aspiration in our kids - it gives them a goal, something to work towards."

The piece will be a stunning visual reminder to the children visiting Bullinah Medical Centre to work hard for their dreams and never give up.

The Hope Wall project is the brainchild of Ballina District Hospital General Paediatrician, Dr Blessy Charles, and Kim Lillie, Psychologist at Ballina Community Health, and was funded by the Northern NSW Local Health District.

**Left, facilitators of the Hope Wall art project reveal the finished artwork at Ballina Primary School.**



# Workplace challenge pays off for patients

What began as worksite bragging has led to an inspiring fundraising effort by local building firm, Hutchinson Builders.

The result was an \$11,000 donation to The Tweed Hospital, to be split evenly between the Tweed Mental Health Unit and the Paediatric ward.

Hutchinson Builders' Coolangatta Health and Safety Manager, Steve Morrow, is a regular on building sites, inspecting them for safety and quality. But, according to his colleagues, he never does any manual labour.

During a site visit Steve was overheard boasting about his ability to remove formwork in a single day, a task which usually requires a team of three or four formworkers.

"I couldn't pass up the opportunity to set Steve a challenge to come good on his word," Kruse Carter, Hutchinson's Project Manager, said.

"We thought we could potentially raise some money for a local charity in the process."

Steve accepted the challenge, and Hutchinson staff and subcontractors

got behind him, pledging in excess of \$10,000 to see Steve strip the propping and ply from under the suspended concrete slab in a single day.

"Steve started bright and early, and finished the day a broken man, but he

completed the challenge, with just a little bit of assistance," Kruse said.

"It was the hardest day's work of my life, I've never been so sore!" Steve admitted. "But it was worth it to raise money for a good cause."



**Above, Hutchinson Builders staff Kruse Carter, Steve Morrow and Paul Hart, with TTH A/ General Manager, Dan Madden, second from right.**

## No future for microbiomes in Tweed

Antibiotic Awareness Week saw strange things happening at several facilities across the Northern NSW Local Health District.

Staff at Murwillumbah District Hospital tucked into a Petrie Dish Cheesecake while discussing this year's National Antimicrobial Prescribing Survey results.

At The Tweed Hospital, resident medical Officer Olivia Thorpe, posing as a multi-drug resistant bacteria,

joined Infectious Diseases Physician Alison Winning, Registrar Carlos Gallega and AMS Pharmacist Lydia Che to raise awareness about antimicrobial resistance.

They promoted appropriate use of antimicrobials and reminded staff that antibiotics are a precious resource, with interactive displays, a 'scavenger hunt' matching the drug to the bug and 'Antimicrobial Taboo'.



**Above, from left, TTH Resident Medical Officer, Olivia Thorpe (in costume), TTH Infectious Diseases Physician, Dr Alison Winning, and locum registrar, Dr Carlos Gallega.**



**Left, pictured left to right are Clinical Pharmacist, Elissa Mackenzie, Visiting Medical Officers Walter Hendrikse, Richard Wellm, Ian Kettle, Vanessa Lewis, Cameron Williams and Peter McMahon, Nursing Unit Manager, Phil Jones and medical student Eliot Wichtlinski.**

# All hands on deck to take the pressure down

Cowboy boots and large hats were brought off the farm and into work as staff highlighted the importance of World Wide Pressure Injury Prevention Day on 16 November.

Lismore Base Hospital and Casino and District Memorial Hospital held activities and education sessions designed to get their colleagues and patients talking about the importance of pressure injury prevention and prevent anyone from getting a 'rawhide'.

Freckle, the miniature horse, was a hit with visitors at Lismore Base Hospital, along with whip cracking and farm skills demonstrations. In 2015 the estimated cost associated with Pressure Injury management in the Australian acute care sector was approximately \$1.6 billion.



**Above, Casino District Hospital Health Security Assistant Gary Walker, Endorsed Enrolled Nurse Colleen Wallwork, Domestic Services staff member Rosemary Newman, Endorsed Enrolled Nurse Shirley Roach, Maintenance Supervisor Peter Makejev, Endorsed Enrolled Nurse Debbi Jeffrey, Domestic Services staff member Leanne Mason and Nurse Unit Manager Trina Kramer at celebrations for World Pressure Injury Awareness Day.**

**Left, Leigh Bryant, Clinical Nurse Educator Lismore Base Hospital with Freckle the spotted miniature horse at Lismore Base Hospital's Pressure Injury Awareness activities.**

## Respect and dignity reduces stigma

World AIDS Day (WAD) has occurred globally on 1 December every year since 1988 to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS along with showing support for those people living with HIV, whilst also commemorating people who have died from HIV related conditions.

In 2017 the theme of World Aids Day was 'My Health, My Right'. This refers to the right of everyone to make decisions about one's own health and to be treated with respect and dignity and without discrimination.

WAD encourages all Australians to educate themselves and others about HIV, to take action to reduce the transmission of HIV and to ensure that people living with HIV can participate fully

in the life of their community, free from stigma and discrimination.

"Research demonstrates that people living with HIV often experience stigma and discrimination within health care settings," Andrew

about their acquisition risk, inappropriate or unnecessary use of infection control practices, and non-consensual disclosure of their HIV status."

"All of these factors diminish or remove an individual's right to safe and

normal health outcomes as they age. Most importantly, whilst taking life-long, daily treatment they have zero risk of transmitting HIV to their sexual partners.

Northern NSW Local Health District has clinicians who work in the local sexual health services to support staff with online training about HIV and to review relevant information on HIV via HealthPathways.

You can also contact the Sexual Health Services in Tweed Heads, Lismore and Grafton directly if you are interested in having a specialist nurse provide education to your team.

For more information contact Andrew Buggie on [andrew.buggie@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:andrew.buggie@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au)



Buggie, Clinical Nurse Consultant, HIV and Sexual Health, said.

"Historically this has come from both clinical and non-clinical staff and includes issues such as judgements and assumptions

appropriate healthcare."

Advances in medical science have meant that people diagnosed with HIV who have access to supportive, engaging and appropriate care can expect a normal life expectancy, with

# Audit reveals sound cancer care in NSW

A report into public patient cancer care has found that patients in NSW are being provided cancer treatment that is consistent with best-practice protocols.

The final report into the Audit of Public Patient Cancer Care was released in November this year, after NSW Health conducted an audit to review care provided to patients who received cancer treatment throughout the state between January 2012 and December 2016.

The audit came after a 2016 inquiry into off-protocol prescribing of chemotherapy in NSW which investigated claims that chemotherapy treatment prescribed by a senior clinician in a metropolitan hospital was not consistent with NSW cancer treatment protocols.

As well as conducting a state-wide audit, a 1800 Inquiry Line was set up to provide a chance for people with concerns about their treatment to call and ask for their care be investigated.

Each Local Health District and Speciality Health Network in NSW established their own clinical review team to conduct the local audit process. The audit reviewed the care of 1802 patients across the state in a variety of cancer disciplines, including chemotherapy, radiation therapy, oncology, haematology and surgical services. Northern NSW Local Health District assembled a local team to review records as part of the audit.

The report showed that for 1795 of the cases, patients had treatment within expected and reasonable norms, while seven patients had treatment outside expected norms. In these seven cases, the local clinical review teams assessed the patient records and found valid rationale behind the treatment being outside the norm.

The report can be accessed on the NSW Health Website [here](#).

# Awards for excellence

Staff at Lismore Bease Hospital were recognised for their excellence in service to their colleagues

and patients earlier this month. Summerland Credit Unit Lismore Branch Manager, Graeme

Hearne, was on hand to present awards for four highly contested categories.



**Clinical Staff Award  
winner - Kellie Paisley.**



**Non-Clinical Staff  
Award winner - Richard  
Lewin.**



**Team Appreciation  
Award winners - North  
Coast Cancer Institute  
- Cancer Care and  
Haematology Unit  
Radiation Therapists.**



**Hand Hygiene Award  
joint winners - Ward  
C7 and Emergency  
Department.**

# DIGITAL DOSE - eHealth news

## eMeds Project - moving into 2018

The eMeds application inside a test version of the Cerner eMR (PowerChart and FirstNet) has been 90% completed and testing has begun so we can iron out all the bugs before go-live in late 2018.

The local eMeds team would like to sincerely thank all the clinicians and managers who have made time for them to contribute to our Clinical Reference Groups. Their input has been invaluable to help finalise the new workflows that staff will use when working with medications after go-live.

The local eHealth team has welcomed James Nunn as the Program Change Manager. James is following Wendy Roulston who has done amazing work as in that role, guiding the transition into new applications such as PAS, CHOC and EMR. We wish her well in her new role.

James and the team will be starting consultation meetings with specialty groups in early 2018 to iron out any issues with the eMeds workflows in all affected departments. They will be visiting clinical areas so please feel free to ask all the tricky questions you have about moving to eMeds. James will also be taking requests for demonstrations of eMeds next year.

You can reach him at [james.nunn@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:james.nunn@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au) and on 02 6620 0823.

## Help Desk calls during November

The state wide service desk (IT Service Desk) is available on 1300 28 55 33 and via the intranet, click on the button with the same name. When you log a job with the service desk on the intranet it is a good idea to type in the yellow box what site you are at and include your phone number so that the help desk staff can contact you to discuss the problem you are raising in the ticket. If you have a mobile phone, please list it, in case you are likely to be away from your desk.

In November the state wide service desk took 3,890 calls from our staff and answered 86% within 40 seconds. Only 1.7% of calls were abandoned before answering. Of those calls received 1,138 of them resulted in new tickets. These were logged either to IT&T staff or to the Clinical Information Systems Service staff. We realise that we don't always get back to callers in a timely manner and we apologise for that. We are always trying to improve our ticket resolution rate and speed of response.

## WIFI Issues Update

We recognise that staff are being very understanding about the ongoing problems with computer carts loosing connections and dropping out. We have now identified new settings for the WIFI which are progressively being applied to all sites.

Initial sites are reporting a great improvement in connectivity and we are planning on completing the roll out of the fixes in the coming weeks. If you have drop out problems, please log a job with the Statewide Service Desk, marked Attention NNSW WIFI Team.

## CHOC Laptops Update

IT&T technician, Anthony, is working full time inspecting all CHOC laptops and applying new settings. We anticipate this work will be completed before Christmas. To date, testing has shown a significant improvement in the behaviour of the CHOC laptops. Anthony will be going on the road with Community Health staff to experience firsthand the issues with using the CHOC laptops.

## eRIC Project

eRIC went live at Grafton Base Hospital ICU on 4 December with a smooth transition.



### HealthPathways continues to expand

The HealthPathways program is now in place and being used by all Local Health Districts in NSW, with the exception of Far West.

HealthPathways is a key tool that Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts, in partnership with North Coast Primary Health Network, provide to clinicians across the health system.

Health professionals can use the site to access:

- Best practice assessment and management guidelines on a range of medical conditions
- Local public and private referral pathways to help you get your patient to the right service at the right time

Here on the Mid and North Coast the site is growing in strength - check out our latest stats:

390 HealthPathways now live

11,455 page views last month

658 regular users last month

Each HealthPathway is reviewed and updated every two years, and the team immediately makes changes to service details as they are identified through user feedback.

The Pathways can assist you to provide safe transfer of care. You can include information about relevant HealthPathways in discharge letters to ensure primary care colleagues remember to check the pathway for ongoing management.

Check out the site to see how a HealthPathway could support your communication with GPs. You can access HealthPathways from the blue and green 'H' desktop icon, or by following this link:

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

Username: manchealth

Password: conn3ct3d

Click on the links below to access HealthPathways related to articles in this edition of Northern Exposure:

- [Cardiology](#)
- [Cardiology Assessment and Programs](#)
  - [Mental Health](#)
  - [Mental Health Treatment Plan](#)
  - [Bereavement, Grief and Loss](#)
  - [Advance Care Planning](#)
  - [Assault or Abuse](#)
  - [Domestic and Family Violence](#)
  - [Human Immunodeficiency Virus \(HIV\)](#)
  - [Oncology](#)

For further information email [kkeyte@ncphn.org.au](mailto:kkeyte@ncphn.org.au)



# The last word...

## Murwillumbah farewells loved VMO...

A celebratory farewell for Visiting Medical Officer, Dr Ian Kettle, was held in Murwillumbah on 29 November.

Dr Kettle resigned from his position at Murwillumbah District Hospital (MDH) after 30 years of devoted service.

Among the 40 attendees who gathered to share their memories of Dr Kettle's long career were a number of former and current staff of the MDH Women's Care Unit, a sign of Dr Kettle's years of devotion to local maternity services.

Former Midwifery Unit Manager, Cheryl Colley, paid tribute to Dr Kettle's dedication to the Women's Care Unit and Birthing Services over the years, being on call for births as a GP Obstetrician and participating in an on-call roster for neonatal services for many years.

Dr Kettle has been a valuable local resource for paediatric services. In his early years he also worked in the Emergency Department.

Dr John Moran praised the commitment from the local GPs to support MDH medical services and acknowledged Dr Kettle's many years of



**Above, from left, Dr Cameron Williams, Dr John Moran, Executive Officer/ Director of Nursing MDH, Susan Freiberg, Nurse Unit Manager MDH, Cheryl Colley, Dr Ian Kettle, Deputy Director Medical Services Tweed Byron, Dr Nilesh Parmar and Dr David Snedden.**

service to the hospital.

Dr Kettle thanked his wife, Michelle Stephens, for the hours of 'solo parenting' she has undertaken which allowed him to devote so much of his

time to the hospital and community.

Dr Kettle will continue to work in his own practice and is looking forward to devoting more time to this and to his family.

## Dance shoes dusted off for night of nights



Staff from across the Tweed Byron Health Service Group turned out in their finery for the annual staff social night on 28 October.

This year, a Gala Ball was held at Twin Towns, with over 120 people attending.

The night was a chance for staff to connect with their colleagues and those from other departments, including with senior management from across the Local Health District.

With a live band playing all evening, space was limited on the dance floor.

**Pictured at left, the Gala Ball organising committee, left to right, Terry Wilson, Kellie Thompson, Neroli Prestage, Jonathan Koopman, Bernadette Loughnane, Michelle Kerr and Di Weir.**