

Emergency boost

The Emergency Departments at Ballina District Hospital and Urbenville MPS are set for refurbishment, after recent funding announcements to upgrade these facilities.

Ballina District Hospital received \$400,000 to create a dedicated waiting area for patients, as well as improvements to the triage area, painting and general repairs.

Nationals Parliamentary Secretary for Northern NSW, Ben Franklin, made the announcement during a visit to the hospital on 5 July.

"We know that a visit to hospital can be a stressful experience, which is why we're doing everything we can to make that time a little easier for patients and their families," Mr Franklin said.

Ballina District Hospital is also undergoing a \$7.35 million upgrade to various departments, including medical records, surgical and other services.

"The physical environment in which doctors, nurses and other health professionals work has a major impact on



▲ From left, Parliamentary Secretary for Northern NSW, Ben Franklin; Acting Director of Nursing Ballina District Hospital, Denise McCall; and NNSWLHD Chief Executive, Wayne Jones at Ballina District Hospital.

the experience of patients and their families," Mr Franklin said.

In the recent NSW State Budget, Urbenville MPS received \$430,000 towards refurbishments to the

Emergency Department and facility.

"The community in and around Urbenville will benefit greatly from these improvements," Northern NSW Local Health District

Chief Executive, Wayne Jones, said.

Planning work for both sites is now being finalised, and work is expected to commence in the coming weeks.



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NAIDOC week
celebrations
in Casino and
Lismore



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We chat to Joe
McDonald,
new General
Manager of
The Tweed
Hospital

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.

Winter is here and our hospitals are experiencing increased activity associated with the winter months.

Thank you to everyone for your hard work and commitment to quality care, particularly during these busy periods.

We have recently seen the retirement of some long-term staff members who have committed the bulk of their working careers to the north coast. Some are featured on page 14 of this edition.

I want to thank them for the dedication and passion they brought to their roles, and on behalf of the Board and Executive I wish them a very happy and relaxing retirement.

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Recently, I organised for our Executive team to enjoy the same food we provide to our patients. It was a great experience.

I felt it was important for us to appreciate when a patient sends in either a compliment or complaint about the food that we understand where they are coming from.

I want to thank the Lismore Base Hospital food services department for providing the food and explaining how the My Food Choices ordering system

works.

Personally, I found the presentation, variety and taste of the food to be of a high quality, and the fact we all went back for seconds showed that the other members of the Executive team did as well.

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We recently welcomed Kirsty Glanville to the newly-created role of Associate Director Aboriginal Health. Kirsty brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to her role and I am excited about the opportunities she will bring to her team and Aboriginal Health services on the North Coast.

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I recently had a discussion with a patient who was concerned that we had lost her favourite shoes. They were her favourite because she had had difficulty finding comfortable shoes that also looked fashionable.

When the patient raised her concern through the normal channels she was fortunate to be put through to Sonya Riordan, Executive Assistant to the General Manager of Lismore Base Hospital. I say fortunate because Sonya was compassionate, caring and honest.

Whilst Sonya could not guarantee



she would find the shoes, she gave the patient confidence that she was being listened to and that all possible action was being taken to address her concerns. Sonya is still liaising with the patient to find a positive outcome.

I highlight it here, but it's just one example of the kind of reports I regularly receive of staff across our LHD looking out for our patients in various ways.

Wayne Jones
Chief Executive

From the Board Chair



I recently had the opportunity to privately attend two International conferences; the Canadian Society of Anaesthetists Conference in Montreal Canada, and the Evidence Based Perioperative Medicine Conference in London.

Early in the conference in Canada, a slide was shown where countries were ranked according to the quality and cost

of health services provided.

It was interesting to see the Public Health system in Australia being ranked highest, followed by New Zealand, with Canada and the UK sitting lower in the rankings due to costlier health systems and fewer positive scores for quality health care.

I was curious to hear the experiences of senior clinicians in other countries, and what they saw as some of the reasons behind where their health systems are currently ranked on the world stage.

One of the major concerns clinicians raised was a lack of communication channels between hospital-based and community-based care, with these aspects operating almost independently of each other.

The large percentage of elderly people who did not have a regular General Practitioner was also cited as an issue in this context.

I was also interested to hear from

clinicians about other issues which appear to be occurring internationally.

These include increasing health budget deficits, doctors working longer hours, and patients not being able to easily access some of the medications we take for granted in Australia.

While we shouldn't rest on our laurels, it is true that in Australia we are fortunate to have access to a vast array of health services, and a Medicare system which underpins our right to access these services.

It is certainly one of the world's leading public health care systems, and I have no doubt it will continue to improve thanks to the dedication of our health workforce and our robust governance framework.

Brian Pezzutti
Board Chair



NAIDOC week 2018



NAIDOC week is held each July, celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their achievements, culture and communities.

The celebrations at the Casino Health Campus welcomed two of our newest Aboriginal staff members, Julie Collins and Mary Torrens-Bell, with a special morning tea on 12 July.

"We are excited to have Julie (CDMH Aboriginal Liaison Officer) and Mary (Community Aboriginal Health Worker) working with us towards improving culturally appropriate health services and outcomes for the local community," Casino District Hospital Executive Officer/Director of Nursing, Ellen Palmer, said.

"Thanks to the kitchen team who coordinated the event, the staff who bought in plates to share, and those who joined in the celebrations."

Staff in Lismore attended the community NAIDOC day at the Lismore Showgrounds, providing health checks including blood glucose levels, family history, cholesterol and blood pressure.

"Thank you to all the staff and volunteers who made these events such a success," Jennifer Smith, NNSWLHD Manager Aboriginal Health, said.

Head to the staff [intranet](#) to see more photos of the NAIDOC celebrations.



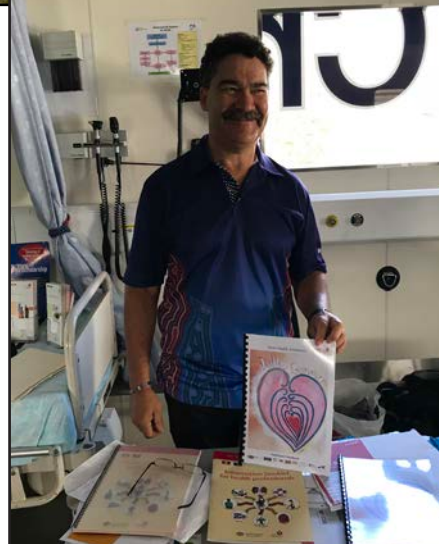
▲ NNSWLHD staff with community member Gary Poulton at the Lismore NAIDOC day.

► Anthony Franks at Lismore NAIDOC day.

▼ Staff from Casino Health Campus enjoy a NAIDOC celebration.

▲ Food services and cleaning staff at Casino Hospital.

► Mary Torrens-Bell, Betty Bennett and Julie Collins in Casino.



What's a kind word worth?

The longer I spend in the health care sector, the more it becomes apparent that good patient care is as much about compassion and communication as it is about medical skill and knowledge.

It's human nature to want to know what's happening, and to want to have someone acknowledge your pain, your achievement, or even just your current situation.

In this edition of Northern Exposure we feature many stories of people across the health care spectrum and in the wider community reaching out and making a difference where they can.

Whether it's a community forum around the tricky topic of death, a morning tea in aid of cancer support, or toy donations to a children's ward, it is clear that our world thrives on connection and compassion.

We can also see this being true within our own workplaces, where opportunities such as the staff achievement awards give us a chance to celebrate our colleagues and compliment them on what a great job they're doing.

But you don't need to wait for a public platform to do that. Let someone know you appreciate them today! You won't regret it.



Fiona Baker
Editor

Compassion, connection key for end of life care

An open forum about death and dying held in Ballina this month was the first of its kind in Northern NSW.

On 2 July, 70 people attended the Compassionate Communities Forum in Ballina to discuss what is working well and what can be improved when it comes to support for people at the end of life, and those caring for them during this process.

Anna Law, Event coordinator and End of Life Care Project Officer with Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD), said the event was a success.

"It was very inclusive and everyone got to have their say," Anna said.

The forum discussed the existing community support structures available to support people before and after a loved one's death. These included hospice services, grief support clubs, death cafes, churches and celebrants, men's sheds and even smartphone apps.

Participants at the forum also highlighted a range of areas which could be improved to assist people dealing

with death and dying. The need for a comprehensive directory of clubs or networks, improved death literacy, welfare officers, and geographical isolation in rural areas were just some of the challenges identified during the discussions.

The forum was a collaboration between NNSWLHD and North Coast Primary Health Network, supported by the Groundswell Project.

Northern NSW was recently selected as one of eight communities throughout Australia to be known as "Groundbreakers", who will receive mentoring and support over the next two years from national end of life care advocacy group, Groundswell.

The [Groundswell Project](#), who's vision is that when someone is dying, caring or grieving, we all know what to do, will be supporting the Northern NSW region for two years to develop our Northern NSW Compassionate Community.

A group of forum participants who responded to a 'Call to Action' will meet in August to further develop ideas.



▲ Participants at the Compassionate Communities Forum in Ballina.

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: View from Byron Bay

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!



Top honours for keeping them warm

A research paper based on a project to improve patients' temperatures after surgery has been recognised as among the top nursing journal articles.

Registered Nurse, Michael Koenen, recently returned from California, where his team's research paper was awarded third place in the research category of the 2018 Mary Hanna Memorial Journalism Awards at the American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nursing Conference.

After first recognising the consequences of perioperative hypothermia in 2009, Michael went on to lead a research project looking at practices for patient temperature management at Lismore Base Hospital (LBH), and identifying ways to improve patient outcomes and recovery after surgery.

"Anaesthesia is the primary cause of patients getting cold during an operation,"

Michael said.

Being under anaesthetic disturbs the body's natural temperature regulation and can result in a patient cooling down very quickly.

At the time, cotton blankets were commonly used to warm patients before surgery, but many patients still became too cold.

Michael's team compared the use of cotton blankets to cheaper reflective blankets, which were already used in many rescue and disaster situations, and found them to be much more effective.

"We widely introduced reflective blankets as a method to pre-warm patients and found a significant improvement in patient recovery temperatures," Michael said.

It was so effective that during 2012 the key indicators at the LBH Operating Theatres improved to become some of

the best in the state compared to peer hospitals. Prior to 2011 they had been falling short.

To formally evaluate the findings, Michael participated in the Rural Research Capacity Building Program during 2012-14, which led to a randomised controlled trial at LBH.

"When using reflective blankets patients often comment that they feel warmer. Feeling cold is often referred to as being worse than pain," Michael said.

Research found that when patients were warm they recovered more quickly, had less blood loss, fewer wound infections and better wound healing.

Michael said the Rural Research Capacity Building Program was a great platform to support novice researchers.

"As with all research, this project would have not been possible without the support of my mentor A/Prof Megan Passey and co-author Dr Margaret Wolfe, my managers Leanne and Colleen, Anaesthetists and Surgeons at LBH and most importantly all my colleagues who patiently collected the data."

The findings of the study were published in the Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing online in 2016.

"Since then our paper has been cited in several other research papers and articles and has informed policies for Perioperative Temperature Management in Southern NSW LHD and in Western Australia," Michael said.

Michael's team is now in the process of writing a LHD-wide policy on the use of reflective blankets, and they are now used on patients preparing for surgery at LBH.

"I'm very happy that a simple method can make a big difference to patients' wellbeing and outcomes and that the research we did at a small rural hospital has been acknowledged nationally and internationally," Michael said.



▲ Michael Koenen attended the American Society of PeriAnaesthesia Nursing Conference in California to accept an award for a research paper.

Bowls club supports Tweed

The Men's Bowls Section of the Kingscliff Beach Bowls Club are making a difference to patients in The Tweed region.

The club recently donated \$2000 to the Cancer Care Unit at The Tweed Hospital, raised at their annual charity bowls day.

Pictured at right, club member Tom Eadie presents the cheque to Emma Ryding, Registered Nurse, The Tweed Hospital Cancer Care Unit.

"We are very grateful for this generous donation," TTH Oncology Nursing Unit Manager, Sarah Burton, said.



Governor shines spotlight on women's hearts

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in Australian women, taking the life of 22 females every day. Almost three times as many Australian women die of heart disease compared to breast cancer, but awareness of this risk is low amongst women and the community generally.

The Governor of NSW, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, is the Patron of the Heart Foundation NSW, and is involved in the campaign to help combat heart disease among women. He visited Tweed Heads recently to help spread the message.

On 20 June, the NSW Governor attended an event with Heart Foundation members and heart disease champions and survivors to spearhead the Foundation's campaign, Making the Invisible Visible.

Heart Foundation NSW CEO Kerry Doyle said that more than 90 percent of Australian women have at least one modifiable risk factor for heart disease, and half of all women have two or three risk factors.

"Women in the Richmond Tweed

area are at even greater risk of heart disease, with over sixteen percent being smokers, compared to the national average of just over thirteen percent and over a third being obese compared to the national average of 27.5%," she said.

"Our statistics show that that the rate of heart attack among local women is considerably higher than the NSW average - it's actually the second highest in the state and the fifteenth highest nationally," Kerry said.



▲ Health and community representatives gather in Tweed Heads to heighten awareness around heart disease among women. At centre, Mrs Linda Hurley and His Excellency General the Hon David Hurley, Governor of NSW.

Big love for biggest morning tea

Bugalwena Aboriginal Health Service staff and community members recently joined forces to host a Biggest Morning Tea at The Tweed Hospital, raising funds for Cancer Council.

Community members served up a sensational feast, and staff also provided goodies to sell.

"Thank you to all staff who supported the day, which raised \$685," Tomasina Darling, Senior Aboriginal Health Worker, Bugalwena Service, said.

"A special thank you also goes to Annette Togo and her family who cooked amazing food for us all," Tomasina said.



▲ From left, Annette Togo, Haysie Penola of Bugalwena General Practice, and Bec Couch, Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer.

▲ Bugalwena staff and community members working together.

Theatre brings joy to Tweed kids

Children staying at The Tweed Hospital (TTH) will have more ways to take their mind off being in hospital, thanks to a generous donation of toys.

Each year the Tugan Theatre Company select a different local cause to receive the money they raise, and this year they chose the TTH Paediatric Ward.

The donation consisted of beautiful books, toys, games and equipment to keep the children on the ward happy during their stay.

"The staff of the Tweed children's ward wish to warmly thank Kristie, Jill, Brenda and everyone from the theatre company who raised funds for this wonderful donation," Acting NUM, Paediatrics, Samantha Petersen, said.



▲ TTH Acting NUM Paediatrics, Samantha Peterson (second from left) and Director of Nursing, Adam Reid (far right) accept toy donations from Tugan Theatre company.

Northern contingent on show at EOC

A large contingent from Northern NSW recently attended the Essentials of Care (EOC) 2018 Showcase in Sydney for the chance to engage with hundreds of EOC facilitators from around the state and share insights on improving patient care and experience.

Keynote speaker, Professor Brendan McCormack, gave an energetic and inspiring talk on the progression of Practice Development theory since the inception of the EOC program 10 years ago.

Prof McCormack is an expert in Practice Development and person-centred cultures. His presentation focussed on person-centred care and the development of a safe place where all persons can flourish in order to 'leave a person centred imprint'.

He noted that cultural isolation resulted in burnout and diminished staff retention, and that recognising the need for psychological safety in the workplace would lead to person-centred cultures.

The importance of caring for staff and nurturing staff development was linked to creating a 'culture of kindness and regimen of generosity'.

Values, respect and dignity were highlighted as being important in creating a person-centred culture, as well as collaboration, inclusiveness and participation of key stakeholders, which

underpin Practice Development theory.

Northern NSW Local Health District was represented by three teams showcasing their projects.

The Lismore Base Hospital midwifery team presented their collaborative experience of creating a quilt which reflected their team's shared values.

A poster from The Tweed Hospital Medical 2 Ward showed their efforts in managing patients with cognitive impairment, whilst the Tweed Community Health poster 'talking with patients about complementary and alternative medicines' was well-received.



▲ From left, Sally Bristow, RN TTH Medical 2; Vicki Bignold RN; Gaynor Knight, RM LBH Women's Care; Cacey Dickson, CME LBH Women's Care LBH; Lily Jones EOC Coordinator; Rosalie Scott, NE Tweed, Murwillumbah and Byron Community Health; Jacinta Felsch, CMC LBH Women's Care; Matt Peterkin, CNE TTH Medical 2; and Wayne Jones, Chief Executive NNSWLHD at the Essentials of Care Showcase in Sydney.

Changing perspectives through art

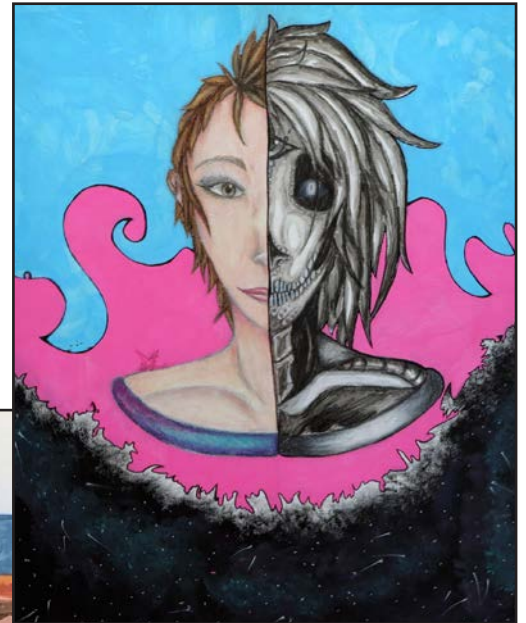
An art project in Lismore is helping to provide young people with a safe platform to share their personal messages of inspiration and hope.

Children and young people have been learning to express themselves through self-portraiture, thanks to a collaboration between Northern NSW Local Health District Out of Home Care Health Pathway Program and CASPA, the Child and Adolescent Specialist Programs and Accommodation.

The series of self-portraits highlights

the issues faced by young people in Out of Home Care recovering from removal from family, disrupted attachments and abuse and neglect. The young artists received support and guidance from CASPA's Fine Arts teacher, Jess Grace, throughout the project.

CASPA provides residential care and foster care programs for children and young people who cannot live at their family home for their own safety, welfare and wellbeing.



- ▲ CASPA Education Coordinator, Jess Grace, with some of the self portraits.
- ▶ Self portrait by female artist, aged 16.

The art project also aims to provide the wider community with a better understanding of the young people who reside in Out of Home Care.

The paintings are now on display on Level 4 at Lismore Base Hospital until December. The project was funded by a grant from the NSW Health and the Arts Framework.

For more information about the Out of Home Care Health Pathway please call 02 6603 0922.

Workforce runners ahead of the field

Congratulations to four fit and active members of the Northern NSW Local Health District workforce team, who participated in the Gold Coast Marathon event on 30 June.

Mark Anderson, Lismore Base Hospital Security, completed the 10km run, Robyn Sears, Senior Claims Officer, ran the half marathon (21.1kms), Julie McFadden, Richmond Clarence Return to Work Coordinator, completed the full marathon (42.2kms) and John Wickham, District Manager Medical Administration, ran the 10km and half marathon events on consecutive days.

"Congratulations on your



- ▲ From left, John Wickham, Julie McFadden, Robyn Sears and Mark Anderson celebrate their achievements at the Gold Coast Marathon running event.

running events, it's a great

effort," Director Workforce,

Richard Buss, said.

Response rate soars for People Matter Survey

The response rates to the 2018 People Matter Survey are in.

Figures show that 40% of staff in the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) took up the opportunity to give feedback. This is a remarkable result, and an increase of 23% compared to last year's participation of just 17%.

"We are very pleased with the amount of staff taking an active role in improving our workplace and voicing where they feel our organisation can be better," Chief Executive, NNSWLHD, Wayne Jones, said.

"When the actual results are communicated in September we'll be able to draw on this feedback to develop our plans and initiatives to address challenges, both at the individual site level and for the overall LHD.

"A special thanks to all the survey champions who drove engagement with the survey and promoted participation within their departments."

At the Senior Managers Forum on 13 July, prizes were presented to those

sites that reached a response rate higher than 50%. Congratulations to staff in Ballina, Bonalbo, Byron Bay, Casino, Drug & Alcohol, Nimbin, and

Urbenville, who all received \$500 cheques for their workplaces.

The \$1000 lucky prize draw went to Ballina District Hospital.



▲ General Manager, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Streams, Dee Robinson, accepts a \$500 cheque from Chief Executive Wayne Jones on behalf of the Drug and Alcohol team.

Be like Judy: Get Smart with Get Healthy

Ballina Community Health Drug and Alcohol clinician and Psychologist, Judy Rankin, is a big advocate of the Get Healthy Service.

She regularly refers patients to help them stay on track and engaged on their health improvement journey.

You can be like Judy, and let the Get Healthy Service fill the gaps in between and after your patients' appointments to support their long-term health.

For clinicians, it can be a challenge knowing where to begin supporting your patients toward achieving positive health behaviour change.

Patients are usually at different stages of change, and there are so many factors to consider, especially with patients who have complex needs.

"About two years ago I started referring many of my patients to the NSW Health -

Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service (GHICS)," Judy said.

"Many of my patients with drug and alcohol conditions often struggle financially," Judy said.

"They may be isolated, lonely and have difficulty

socialising, getting out and about and travelling around. Often, these patients can experience social marginalisation, including from health care professionals and systems.

"Many were hesitant when I first discussed how the Get Healthy service could help them. As with

many government-based services, patients can sometimes have difficulty learning and accepting that the Get Healthy service isn't intimidating – in fact, it's the very opposite. Many patients that I refer develop good relationships with their

on their own phone at a time that suits them.

GHICS is a phone-based service that's FREE and CONFIDENTIAL for all adults over 16 years of age.

Clients receive one-on-one extended support from qualified coaches with backgrounds in exercise physiology, dietetics, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, nursing and psychology.

"I also receive regular updates on those I have referred. It's a valuable and worthwhile service that complements treatment choices for many patients with chronic health conditions. I recommend it to anyone," Judy said.

For more information, contact Liz Patterson, Health Promotion Officer, Get Healthy Program on 6674 9515 or Liz.patterson@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au or visit the [website](#).



coaches," Judy said.

GHICS helps people make lifestyle changes regarding healthy eating, being physically active, achieving and maintaining a healthy weight and reduce alcohol intake.

It provides a valuable point of contact in the privacy of their own home,

Profile : Joe McDonald

This month, Northern Exposure caught up with The Tweed Hospital's new General Manager, Joe McDonald, to talk about his international nursing and management experience, and some of the key moments that shaped his career.

Joe McDonald has come a long way, literally, to take up the role of General Manager at The Tweed Hospital.

Originally from Glasgow, Scotland, Joe's nursing career has seen him travel to England, Malta, New Zealand, South Australia and now NSW in search of new opportunities and new challenges.

After leaving school at 16, Joe worked in construction for 7 years, becoming a supervisor at the age of 23.

"I'd reached the top of where I possibly could go without doing any further study or going to uni, and I decided I wanted to do something completely different," Joe said.

At a pivotal time in his life, Joe experienced the loss of his grandfather to dementia at an early age. Over a period of only 8 or 9 weeks in hospital, Joe's grandfather's health deteriorated quickly until he passed away.

During this time, a student nurse, Stuart, had formed a good relationship with Joe's grandfather, and had been a central figure in that difficult end-of-life period.

A year later, Joe was working on a construction site across the road from an employment agency, where a big poster hung in the window that read, 'Do you want to be a nurse?'

Still wearing his high-vis construction clothing, Joe went into the job centre and filled in the form.

"In the back of my mind was what Stuart had done for my grandfather, and I remember thinking that was kind of special."

After three years of nursing training followed by a postgraduate year in Scotland Joe went to work on the island of Malta for a year in theatres and recovery.

"It was very cheap to live, it was warm, it was the Mediterranean. I loved it!" he said.

When he returned to the UK, Joe worked in various surgical and Intensive Care roles in England.

Joe moved to New Zealand in 2004

to work as a Charge Nurse at Wellington Regional Hospital. It proved to be a good decision, and led to him becoming Service Leader in charge of day surgery, extended day surgery, pre-assessment and recovery for the next three years.

While he was there, a new hospital was being built, and Joe became part of the project team as a clinical advisor and subject matter expert.

Joe then moved into government work with the New Zealand Ministry of Health as a senior advisor in quality improvement. This involved travelling all around the country to various health districts as a resource to provide quality improvement training, masterclasses and

Australian government decided to close the Repatriation Hospital, and Joe spent the next three years planning the closure of the 250-bed facility and moving 1700 staff and services elsewhere.

"It was a shocking time, the community were up in arms, there were petitions with 120,000 signatures," Joe said.

It was a much-loved hospital with a long history, and Joe said there was a great feeling of family throughout the staff, even at such a difficult time.

As the front-person for the hospital's closure, Joe found himself positioned between the government's objectives and his responsibilities to the staff and patients at the hospital, and learnt a lot through the whole process.

"I went and fronted all the questions, did a lot of community consultation. It was tough at times."

Joe went on to lead the EMR implementation for the \$2.3 billion greenfield facility at Royal Adelaide Hospital, before coming to Tweed Heads this year.

"When I came up here for the visit I felt very at home here. Everybody told me about the 'can do' attitude at Tweed, and the staff were excited about the new hospital. That was part



of the decision for me to come up here. There's a level of excitement, even though it's four years away," Joe said.

Joe is looking forward to getting everyone ready to move to the new Tweed Valley Hospital, and to designing a hospital that's right for the staff, the patients and the community.

"I think if you get it right for the staff they deliver really good care for the patients," Joe said.

"They can really shape the future of the hospital, which is a rare and unique opportunity."

"They often say that building a brand new greenfield hospital only happens once in your career, so it's unlikely that most people here would see it again."

Soon after he started, the South

Health data on hand day or night

The expansion of My Health Record provides NSW Health with a great opportunity to support a digital health infrastructure that will produce enormous benefits for our patients into the future.

The 'Opt Out' period for My Health Record has now commenced, and runs for three months to 15 October, 2018.

Under the 'Opt Out' model, every individual known to Medicare or the Department of Veterans' Affairs will automatically get a My Health Record unless they decide not to have one.

More than one in five Australians (5.8 million people) already have a My Health Record, and clinicians in the NSW Health system can access My Health Record via the HealtheNet Clinical Portal.

This allows clinical staff to view information in a patient's My Health Record and also share documents

from NSW Health which then gives all health care providers, both inside and outside the public hospital system, access to information that may assist with diagnosis and treatment.

All staff are encouraged to attend the information sessions that have been scheduled at sites across the LHD. Your facility will have details about when My Health Record staff will be available on site.

Alternatively, there are weekly 15-minute Skype webinars being run each Tuesday and Thursday at 2pm from now until the end of the year. Visit the staff [intranet](#) home page to join.

Consumer information packs have also been sent directly to hospitals for distribution.

For more information on My Health Record, please go to www.myhealthrecord.gov.au or contact the dedicated Helpline on 1800 723 471.



▲ At left, Amanda Wilkinson, North Coast Primary Health Network, with the My Health Record stand at this year's Aged Care Symposium. At right, Kerrie Keyte mans the HealthPathways stand.

Lismore celebrates high achievers

A long list of candidates vied for top honours at the recent Lismore Base Hospital staff achievement awards. More than 60 staff and managers turned

out to celebrate their colleagues being nominated for outstanding work.

Winners of the individual staff achievement award were Wardsperson,

Darryl Hickling and Renal Dialysis EN, Patrick McDermott.

The Hand Hygiene perpetual trophy was jointly awarded to E10 and Women's Care Unit.

The team staff achievement award was won by the Discharge Transit Unit, among strong competition from the other nominees: E9 Nursing Team, Operating Theatre, Physiotherapy Department, Renal Unit Staff, Specialist Outpatient Department, and the Nursing Team Surgical and Medical Short Stay Unit.

Narelle Gleeson awarded a General Manager's Special Commendation to Physiotherapist, Peter Alexander.

Thank you to the Summerland Credit Union for sponsoring the awards.

◀ From left, achievement award winner Darryl Hickling, special mention Peter Alexander, NUM Discharge Transit Unit Cheryl Hambly, and achievement award winner Patrick McDermott.



Ballina staff upskill in ID, ultrasound

Ballina District Hospital hosted two educational events recently, namely the Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh Symposium (RCPE) in Infectious Diseases and the Ballina Ultrasound Course.

The Infectious Diseases symposium was televised live from Edinburgh, with high calibre speakers covering highly relevant topics related to clinical medicine and public health.

Like all RCPE symposia, the event was registered for CPD and CME points.

"The RCPE and Northern NSW Local Health District supported the symposium screening, which meant the event could be held free of charge to all health professionals and students," Staff Specialist, Dr Tien Khoo, said.

Attendees were primarily from Ballina, Lismore and Maclean areas.

Following last year's success of the ultrasound course facilitated by the Australian Institute of Ultrasound, another course was held in June. This time it was expanded to involve two streams covering point of care ultrasound and rapid cardiac



▲ Staff at Ballina District Hospital completed the Australian Institute of Ultrasound course recently.

echocardiography.

The event was attended by medical staff from Ballina District Hospital and Lismore Base Hospital.

"We are thankful to HETI and our Director of Medical Services for ongoing support in these valued educational activities," Dr Khoo said.

Next season's symposia will be televised live to Ballina, comprising the following disciplines: Oncology, 21 September; Diabetes and Endocrinology, 11 October; Neurology, 25 October, Cardiology, 2 November, Gastroenterology, 14 November; and Acute Medicine, 29 and 30 November.

HealthPathways News - July

The maze of medical cannabis

Medicinal cannabis, or medicinal marijuana, has attracted national attention in Australia in recent years. The use and acceptance of medicinal cannabis continues to evolve.

The current reality is that many medical specialists or doctors do not feel confident to go forward with applications for a number of reasons. They may not feel adequately informed about the safe use of medicinal cannabis.

This is not something that is typically taught at medical school or in continuing medical education programs. Doctors may not feel capable of adequately monitoring the patient after they commence the treatment. They may not be insured against adverse outcomes that occur with patients prescribed medicinal cannabis. They may just feel too overwhelmed to navigate the evidence and/or the process for prescribing.

HealthPathways has recently published a [Medicinal Cannabis](#) HealthPathway. The pathway navigates the user through the current evidence for the use of medicinal

cannabis, adverse events and interactions, route of administration and the available products.

It then goes on to highlight the ways medical specialists or doctors can prescribe medicinal cannabis through Special Access Scheme, Authorised Prescriber Scheme or through clinical trials. It provides essential links to the NSW Cannabis Medical Advisory Service and the TGA Medicinal Cannabis Hotline for Clinicians.

International HealthPathways Survey: Have your say!

If you are a Health Professional and you have a few spare minutes, we would love your feedback!

The International HealthPathways Survey is now open and will run until August 2018.

The survey is targeted at General Practitioners, Nurse Practitioners, Hospital Specialists, Practice and Hospital Managers and Allied Health Professionals.

Simply click on this link to take the survey <https://is.gd/HealthPathwaysSurvey> or next time you are on the HealthPathway

homepage, you can take it from there.

Access all the localised Mid and North Coast HealthPathways here:

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

Username: manchealth

Password: conn3ct3d

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

- [Emergency referrals](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health](#)
- [Bereavement Support](#)
- [Advance Care Planning](#)
- [Heart Failure](#)
- [Heart Failure Programs](#)
- [Physical Activity](#)
- [My Health Record](#)
- [Mental Health Psychosocial Support](#)

For more information contact Kerrie Keyte at kkeyte@ncphn.org.au



Estate agents get a healthy education

Northern NSW mental health services are leading the way in improving outcomes for people with mental health and homelessness issues wishing to access private housing.

In June, Richmond Clarence Mental Health Rehabilitation Coordinator, Guy Dayhew, and Far North Coast Social Futures Peer Linker Gary Shallala-Hudson, held a webinar for the Real Estate Institute of NSW (REINSW). It was part of a program looking at innovative ways to increase the independence and social participation of people with disability.

Gary has a lived experience of a mental health challenge, and shared his inspiring personal story of moving from homelessness through private rentals to home ownership.

Since 2012, Richmond Mental Health staff have been developing relationships with local Real Estate Agents and Property Managers, which has led to the successful annual Real Estate Engagement Days during Mental Health

Month each year (October).

These days bring together housing, homelessness and community-managed organisations to provide targeted education to local real estate representatives.

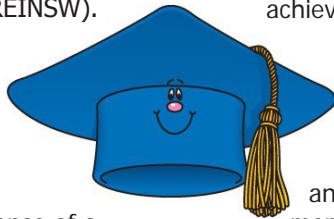
The success of this approach has delivered benefits to many people with mental health and homelessness issues, as well as real estate business who achieve well-supported tenancies.

REINSW was keen to expand this education to all their members through the webinar. It was well-received

and engaged hundreds of members across NSW, with a retention rate of 98%.

"Every indication is that positive seeds have been sown across NSW," Guy said.

"There is a real business logic which we presented in our webinar, and I would be confident that the education will contribute to excellent outcomes for many people with mental health and homelessness issues across the state."



Health staff rise to the challenge

Staff from across Northern NSW Local Health District have made an outstanding contribution towards saving 159 lives this year simply through giving blood.

The 2018 Health Services Challenge saw 53 total donations across the LHD, coming from staff at the Lismore, Ballina, Byron, Tweed and Kyogle facilities.

Lismore Base Hospital recorded 29 donations, with the next highest being Byron Central Hospital with 11.

"A special thanks from the Australian Red Cross Blood Service to everyone who has been able to assist," Community Relations Officer, Scott Morrison, said.

"Whether that is by spreading the word to work colleagues, family and friends, or by coming into the Lismore donor centre and our regional demountable site to give a vital whole blood or plasma donation."

"We hope to see everyone's continued support at any of the donor centre locations over the rest of 2018, as we know the need for blood and plasma doesn't stop."

Charity stitches up 1000 smiles

A Northern Rivers quilting group has notched up 1000 smiling faces, providing children with special quilts to brighten their hospital stay.

Over the last 12 years, the Quilts

4 Kids project has been gathering material and creating quilts for sick kids and babies, supported by local charity, Our Kids.

"We recognised that being in hospital

is not always a good time, so we thought giving a quilt to the children could help brighten up their bed and they would also have a memory of their stay," Quilts 4 Kids organiser, Carol Bonamy, said.

The 1000th quilt was gifted recently in the Children's Ward at Lismore Base Hospital to Rose Jarvis from Central Coast.

Rose was in Ballina on holidays and broke her leg on the first day. Rose and her mum, Leslie, ended up staying in the Children's Ward for the next four weeks.

"The quilt was the first bit of colour Rose had in hospital and something that Rose could have as her own, particularly since she was so far from home," Leslie Jarvis said.

◀ From left, Carol Bonamy, Quilts 4 Kids; Leslie Jarvis; Alison Leaver, Children's ward volunteer; and patient, Rose.



Staff farewells...

Murray Spriggs

Retiring Community Engagement Manager, Murray Spriggs, worked for NSW Health for sixteen years through the many iterations of North Coast Area Health Service, Mid North Coast Local Health District and Northern NSW Local Health District.

In his role as Community Engagement Manager, Murray formed strong working relationships within these health organisations and in the community.

Murray also provided

support for the former Area Health Advisory Council and was instrumental in supporting the first Northern NSW Local Health District Board in 2001.

Murray shared his wealth of knowledge with the Board, Executive and staff on how to engage the community to ensure that health services better meet the community's needs.

His cheerful disposition and 'can do' attitude were a great help to the Chief Executives and the Board.



▲ Murray Spriggs receives a certificate of appreciation from NNSWLHD Deputy Board Chair, David Frazer.

Bill Tyrrell

After a career of 41 years, Bill Tyrrell was farewelled by staff at Lismore Base Hospital on 9 July.

Bill Tyrrell is retiring from his role as a Clinical Nurse Consultant Grade 2, Continence Advisor and Stoma Therapy.

Bill commenced work as a student nurse at Lismore in 1977.

Throughout his long career, Bill has been an effective patient advocate, and also provided teaching and support for clinical staff.

Bill was well known for his exceptional skills in stoma management, continence advice and wound care, and he will be greatly missed by patients and colleagues.



▲ Bill Tyrrell celebrates his retirement from Lismore Base Hospital.

Cheryl Palin

Colleagues gathered to farewell Cheryl Palin after 37 years of working at Grafton Base Hospital (GBH).

Cheryl commenced work at GBH in 1981 as a hospital receptionist and switchboard operator. She later became cashier, and then a pay office clerk, before taking up the position of Payroll Manager in 1991, a position she held for 10 years.

Cheryl also held roles as an Employee Services Officer and later as Executive Assistant to the Director of Nursing and Executive Officer.

In 2017 Cheryl was appointed as Recruitment Officer where she worked until her retirement on 5 July 2018.

Cheryl's professionalism and dedication to her work will be greatly missed.

▶ Cheryl Palin cuts the cake at her farewell at Grafton Base Hospital.

