

4 BIG IDEAS:  
EVERY IDEA A WINNER

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CONSULTANT

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NORTHERN

# EXPOSURE





## AWARDS SEASON ROLLS ON

*You're probably familiar with the Academy Awards, or Oscars, which were recently held in the USA, celebrating the film industry.*

If you're a music fan, you might follow the Grammy Awards, or closer to home, the Golden Guitar Awards. For TV tragics, March is the voting period for the TV Week Logie Awards, where people choose their most popular TV personality.

In Northern NSW, we have our own awards to celebrate staff making a difference during their working week. Right now, nominations are open for the annual Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards, where we honour nurses and midwives for their dedication and contribution to their practice, patients and colleagues. Read about how you can get involved on page 8.

The Tweed Hospital, Community and Allied Health have launched their new look Staff Appreciation Awards, to recognise staff for going above and beyond in their role. Later in the year we'll showcase the annual district-wide Quality Awards.

Unlike the Logies, the awards aren't popularity contests. They are opportunities for staff to celebrate the hard work and passion shown by their colleagues in all areas of our health service, and to recognise innovative approaches to solving problems.

So this awards season, get your thinking caps on and do it in someone who's doing a great job.

## NORTHERN EXPOSURE

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# Executive Update



**Wayne Jones**  
Chief Executive

*As you read this column, the NSW state election will have been held, with the federal elections still to come. As one of the biggest sectors in our economy and something which affects us all as individuals, health is often a key election issue.*

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports that in 2016-17, Australia's total health expenditure was \$180.7 billion, or 10.3% of Gross Domestic Product.

In our hospitals and health facilities across Northern NSW, our staff continue to provide excellent health care to the many thousands of people who access our services each month.

On a typical day in the Northern NSW Local Health District, 568 people present to our emergency departments, eight babies are born, 270 patients are admitted to hospital and 80 surgeries are performed. \*

The most recent Bureau of Health Information report shows that year on year, more patients continue to present to our facilities. For the October – December 2018 quarter, our hospitals saw almost 2500 extra patients compared with 2017.

Even while we are experiencing significant growth, our staff and clinicians are maintaining, and in many cases improving, the standard of care we are providing our community. I want to thank our workforce for their commitment and passion for working in health.

In February, we held our first BIG IDEAS presentation, with eight finalists showcasing their projects designed to make things better for their patients. This represented the final stage in our inaugural BIG IDEAS challenge, and I'm pleased to say it was a huge success!

Our finalists all presented well thought-out ideas with clear positive outcomes for their patients and the wider community. The judges chose to award each finalist with funding to complete their project, and I look forward to seeing these evolve over the coming year.

I hope these projects inspire you to start preparing your own BIG IDEAS for the next round, coming later in 2019.

\*Daily averages, NNSWLHD 2017/18 financial year data.

## From the Board Chair



**Brian Pezzutti**  
Board Chair

*All of us will experience losing people we love and care for during our lifetime. Despite this, conversations with our loved ones about death and dying are still very difficult and uncomfortable.*

I read an article recently about end of life care planning which reminded me of the importance of having these conversations to ensure we receive the medical care we prefer at the end of our lives.

We all have values and preferences for our own health. It's important to think about these, discuss them with your family and write them down in an Advance Care Directive so they are understood and respected if you come to be in a situation where you aren't able to communicate them yourself.

End of life care planning ensures your voice is heard. Whatever your age or health status, it's important that your Advance Care Directive is ready. It's not just for the elderly or people with chronic illness.

National Advance Care Planning Week is 1-5 April and I encourage you to take some time to understand end of life planning and speak with your family about your future health care wishes.

In the latest performance and patient survey, data shows that Northern NSW Local Health District continues to be one of the best performing health services in the state.

Data gathered by the NSW Bureau of Health Information from across NSW shows that NNSWLHD was the equal top ranked LHD for patient experience (mainly regarding the level of care) and second for patient engagement (information and staff interactions).

In October to December 2018, emergency presentations increased by 4.7 percent compared to the same quarter in 2017. Our EDs continue to perform above the NSW average for patients starting treatment on time and leaving the ED within four hours.

We have more work to do to reduce average surgery wait times but we are heading in the right direction, and more operating theatres opening across the district will help with these endeavours.

I am proud to say that we are recognised as one of the best regional health services in Australia and I thank staff for their hard work, planning and cooperation.



Clockwise from top left: Peer worker Tess Biasion and colleagues present the "Hearing Voices" project; BIG IDEAS finalists with NNSWLHD Chief Executive Wayne Jones; Kate Dougherty and Nicole Ashby teamed up for "Chance to Dance!"; Laurel Rogers (second from left) and Mary Torrens-Bell (third from right) with Aboriginal Health Unit colleagues; Kris Roberts and Mary Torrens-Bell present "Goori Yarning Circle"

## BIG IDEAS - Every idea a winner

**When the first-ever BIG IDEAS finalists took to the stage to promote their innovative projects, they had to overcome more than just stage fright ...**

If you thought the BIG IDEAS working group had a tough time shortlisting eight finalists from almost 70 applicants, the four judges had an even tougher time picking a clear winner from the presentations at the Senior Managers Forum in Ballina recently.

As well as managing their public speaking nerves in a room filled with peers and senior colleagues, the eight finalists had the added challenge of presenting during a power blackout, with Tropical Cyclone Oma circling off the east coast of Queensland. No power meant no presentation slides, no lights, no microphones, no air conditioning.

But the show must go on, and so it did.

The presenters worked hard to sell their ideas to the judges, and there was a tangible sense of pride in how their projects would improve patient care, improve health services or create better health outcomes for their communities.

The judging panel, made up of Northern NSW Local Health District Chief Executive Wayne Jones, Board Member Prof Susan Nancarrow, HARP Manager Jennifer Heslop, and consumer representative George Thompson, could not pick between the finalists, instead announcing that all eight projects would receive funding.

The judges specifically acknowledged the excellent applications and presentations on the day from:

**David Rabbolini:** "In the dark no more - Platelet function testing in regional centres"

**Cassandra Porter:** "Let's get physical - Improved health in mental health services, a practical toolkit", and

**Nicole Ashby:** "The chance to dance!"

For a full list of successful projects, head to the BIG IDEAS intranet page.

Along with funding for their BIG IDEAS, winners will receive support, training and mentoring from their Executive Directors to help them implement their projects over the next 12 months.

After the success of the initial round, we are now looking forward to the second BIG IDEAS challenge, to be held later in the year.



<https://intranet.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/big-ideas/round-1-2019-projects/>



# Six more grads complete top mental health program

*A career in mental health can be both challenging and rewarding, and being prepared through a specialised training program can benefit both staff and patients alike.*

For eight years, the Transition to Mental Health Nursing Program (TMHNP) has been producing graduates with the skills and knowledge to succeed and lead in a career in mental health care and other fields of nursing.

This year there have been six more successful graduates from the 2018 course based at Lismore Mental Health Unit.

Three graduates are heading straight into full-time mental health roles with Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD), while the other graduates are taking on roles in Lismore's emergency department, a major Adelaide hospital, and a tropical Queensland island.

Since 2012, the program has produced 38 graduates, with more than half gaining continued employment with NNSWLHD, while others take their skills abroad.

Graduates of past programs now hold sought after positions like Clinical Nurse Educators, acting Nurse Unit Managers, Clinical Nurse Specialists, and Case Managers.

The six staff selected for the program each year share clinical rotations in Child and Adolescent Mental Health (Kamala), Community Mental Health, Adult Mental Health (Tallowood), and Older Persons Mental Health (Lilli Pilli). Factored into these rotations are four-hour, fortnightly education sessions that incorporate senior clinicians across the Network presenting a wide variety of topics.

These include subjects such as evidence-based practice and research, psychoanalytic theories, and mental state exams, to name a few. Clinical supervision and debrief time is also planned and



From left, Program coordinators Ryan Rooney and Shane Scofield with graduates from the 2018 Transition to Mental Health Nursing Program

encouraged during these time slots.

*Each year the Susan Law Memorial Award is given to a graduate for outstanding Nursing Practice and academic achievement demonstrated during the year. The award is named in honour of former Mental Health Nurse, Susan Law, who passed away in 2010.*

Over the course of the 12-month rotation, the TMHNP participants also complete academic studies.

These requirements include oral projects, online learning commitments, competencies, and three major written assignments that critically examine aspects of Mental Health Nursing, such as risk assessment, models of care, legislation, and contemporary mental health care. Program participants are held to a post-graduate standard in their work, which means they can apply for advance standing in post-graduate nursing studies at Southern Cross University. Former participants have also been successful in gaining credit at other Australian universities.

The TMHNP course currently runs in both the Tweed and Lismore areas. There are plans to expand to the Grafton Mental Health Service in 2019.

For more information, visit the TMHNP website.



<https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/about/our-nursing-midwifery-services-ournams/nursing-new-graduates/>



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

Dorothy Edwards Education Fund  
Our Kids Paediatric Education Fund

For more information and applications contact:

**OUR KIDS**

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

# Grafton Base Hospital Ambulatory Care Centre

With the lead building contract recently announced, work is set to begin soon on the new Grafton Base Hospital Ambulatory Care Centre.

Patients, consumers, and staff have been heavily involved in the design of the Centre to ensure the building reflects the needs of the growing Clarence region now and well into the future.

The new two-story, \$17.5 million Centre is being constructed by Woollam Construction, with work expected to be underway by April 2019 and the facility complete in 2020.

The new facility will provide a suite of services for the Clarence community, including a new undercroft loading dock, new public drop-off zone, and new links to the existing hospital campus.



An artist's impression of the new Grafton Base Hospital Ambulatory Care Centre

The ambulatory care centre will improve patient treatment in areas such as:

-  Oncology, Chemotherapy and Haematology services
-  Fracture Clinics and Osteo-Refracture Clinics
-  Renal Dialysis Unit
-  Dietetics and Nutrition Outpatient Clinics
-  Physiotherapy Department
-  Occupational Therapy Outpatient Clinics
-  Occupational Therapy Department
-  Podiatry Department
-  Speech Pathology Department
-  Outpatient Clinics for patients with chronic conditions including Cardiac and Respiratory Rehabilitation services, Diabetes Education and Diabetes Foot Clinics.
-  Specialist General Medicine Outpatient Clinics

## SKILLS CENTRE BRINGS HEALTH AND TRAINING TOGETHER

*The new Tweed Valley Skills Centre is an exciting joint project between Health Infrastructure, Northern NSW Local Health District and TAFE NSW.*

The Skills Centre is the first of many initiatives to benefit from the location of the new hospital site adjacent to the TAFE NSW Kingscliff campus, and will play a key role in providing education, training and employment opportunities for local staff, students and the community long into the future.

The Skills Centre will include the construction of a Prototype and Simulation Suite, which will replicate the design specifications of the new Tweed Valley Hospital. This will be used to confirm the detailed design of key clinical spaces and be an ideal orientation and training space for our health workforce. In the longer term,

this facility will be operated by TAFE NSW as a low-fidelity simulation space for health education and other training programs, including Enrolled Nurse and Assistant in Nursing qualifications.

The second component of the Skills Centre is a Skills and Employment Hub. This initiative will help to further develop and connect the local workforce with employment, apprenticeships and other training opportunities on the Tweed Valley Hospital project, along with providing support in developing local business capability to tender for subcontract work packages and supply contracts. Around 400 workers are expected to be on site at the peak of construction in mid-2020, with 25% targeted as apprentices.

The long-term vision of initiatives like this is to offer a fresh start for many locals, providing supportive pathways into skilled jobs and recognised qualifications, while



helping to deliver the hospital project which will be of significant and lasting benefit to the community.

The Tweed Valley Skills Centre is expected to open in late 2019. This partnership between TAFE NSW and the Tweed Valley Hospital is the first of many initiatives that will be part of developing an integrated Health and Education Precinct across the two campuses over time.

For more information on this venture, see the Tweed Valley Skills Centre factsheet at:



[www.tweedvalleyhospital.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.tweedvalleyhospital.health.nsw.gov.au)



# Fresh faces in new places

New junior nurses and doctors play a vital part in our health workforce and this year we welcomed 32 interns and 85 new nurses and midwives to start their careers in our region.

## Doctors

The Tweed Hospital and Lismore Base Hospital have welcomed this year's interns into their ranks with the traditional morning tea attended by hospital staff and local delegates.

The annual custom accompanied by cheese and crackers, fruit and caffeine, marks the start of their two-year placement in Northern NSW.

Throughout the intern year, graduate doctors will alternate through various specialties of medicine, surgery and emergency as they complete their professional registration.

During their second year, the junior doctors spend time focusing on combining professional practice and experience in various clinical settings, while rotating through a network of metropolitan, regional or rural hospitals, as well as GP practices.

Working in a regional area can provide exposure to a wide range of medical cases and training opportunities, as well as the chance to work closely with senior medical staff.

This year 18 new interns started at The Tweed Hospital, with 14 joining Lismore Base Hospital.

*One of our upcoming medical experts at The Tweed Hospital is already a star on the pitch. Dr Georgia Redmayne is a talented cricketer, having most recently played in the Women's Big Bash League for the Hobart Hurricanes.*

Originally from Alstonville, Georgia is one of a number of doctors from regional NSW who are passionate about the delivery of health services in rural Australia.



Clockwise from top left: 2019 Richmond network nursing and midwifery cohort; Geoff Provest, MP, welcomes interns to The Tweed Hospital; Lismore Base Hospital interns with Director of Nursing Narelle Gleeson (front row, middle) and back right, General Manager Ian Hatton, Director Prevocational Education and Training Joe Gormally, and Director Medical Services Katherine Willis-Sullivan

## Nurses and midwives

A record 2500 graduate nurses and midwives will begin their careers in NSW this year, at 130 hospitals and health services across the state, including in Northern NSW.

The Northern NSW Local Health District welcomed 85 new graduate nurses and midwives this year who are kicking off their careers in the region.

During their first year, new nurses will rotate between operating theatres, mental health, general medical and surgical wards.

In the smaller health sites their placement will also cover some aged care, general ward and emergency department experience.

The new graduate nurses and midwives will be based at the following sites;

Clarence Hospitals	14
Grafton Base Hospital Midwifery	1
Lismore Base Hospital Midwifery	2
Richmond Hospitals	26
Richmond Mental Health	3
Tweed Byron Hospitals	37
Tweed Byron Hospitals Midwifery	2

# New faces on the Board

Three new Board members, including a clinician from The Tweed Hospital, have been appointed to the Northern NSW Local Health District Board.

Dr Alasdair Arthur, Peter Carter and Naree Hancock were appointed to the Board for three year terms from 1 January 2019. The appointments follow the resignations late last year of Dr Joe Ogg and David Frazer.

Board Chair Brian Pezzutti said the new Board members would enhance the Board's clinical and business expertise.

*"The vast experience of the Australian and international health care sector that we have on our Board will ensure that we have the skills to continue to focus on providing high quality care for our patients in a rapidly changing health care environment," Dr Pezzutti said.*

Introducing the three new appointments:

**Dr Alasdair Arthur** is Deputy Director, Emergency Medicine Specialist at The Tweed Hospital and has worked there for 15 years. Originally from Scotland,



From left, NNSWLHD Board Chair Brian Pezzutti, Dr Alasdair Arthur, Peter Carter, Naree Hancock and Chief Executive Wayne Jones

he has worked on the Gold Coast for 25 years. Alasdair has worked in hospitals in Queensland, Northern Territory, Scotland and Ireland and has served as a ship's and Antarctic expedition doctor and on the Careflight Rescue Helicopter.

**Peter Carter** has worked internationally in healthcare quality and safety in developed and developing countries for 30 years. His particular areas of interest are organisation for quality improvement, education, innovation, and the challenges of an ageing population. For 16 years Peter was CEO of the specialist medical colleges of psychiatrists and surgeons of Australia and New Zealand. In 2008/9 and from 2011 to 2016 Peter was acting CEO, then CEO, of the International Society for Quality in

Health Care based in Dublin, Ireland.

**Naree Hancock** has worked in senior business administration roles in health care, education and the corporate sector for 28 years and has a Masters of Business Administration. A graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Certified Practice Manager, Naree's primary focus in her current position at the University Centre for Rural Health is rural health workforce planning. She engages with schools and universities to attract both junior and senior health professionals to the North Coast. Naree also serves as a Board member with North Coast Primary Health Network and North Coast General Practice Training.

# Nominations open for Nursing and Midwifery excellence awards

*If you know or work alongside an outstanding nurse or midwife, don't keep it to yourself.*

The annual Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards acknowledge the contribution and dedication of nurses and midwives working across the Northern NSW Local Health District.

Nominations are now open for the 2019 awards, and close at 5pm on 12 April.

These awards have become an integral part of the District-wide nursing and midwifery calendar, culminating in an awards ceremony where finalists and winners come together to celebrate their

achievements with colleagues.

The awards recognise nurses and midwives for their excellence in practice, as well as for their significant contribution to their professions, their teams and the community through their practice, leadership and research endeavours.

This year, the new Consumer Appreciation Award invites members of the public to nominate nurses or midwives who have demonstrated outstanding patient care and support, or contributed to improved outcomes in our region.

The Awards will be presented at a ceremony on 7 May 2019.



Consumer Appreciation Award nominations can be made online via the NNSWLHD website, just search Excellence Awards.

Visit the staff intranet to get a nomination form for other categories and see all the award criteria.



<https://intranet.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing-midwifery/nursing-midwifery-events/>



# Aboriginal Chronic Care here to stay

*Five years after it first came to life as a temporary project, the Integrated Aboriginal Chronic Care program is now a permanent fixture of Integrated Care strategy.*

The Integrated Aboriginal Chronic Care (IACC) program was originally implemented in 2014 under Northern NSW Integrated Care, and following a glowing evaluation of the initiative, it will now form a permanent part of the strategy supporting chronic care services in the region.

From humble beginnings - yarns over coffee in fact - a small group met to discuss the concerns around gaps in service provision that they believed were affecting the health needs of the local Aboriginal community. As conversation circles widened and the yarn got bigger, the idea of a project was born; to make chronic care services, supports and programs easy to access for clients and clinicians.

Members of Northern NSW Local Health District, Aboriginal Medical Services, North Coast Primary Health Network and the University Centre for Rural Health formed the Aboriginal Chronic Care Working Party, while the overarching sponsorship and



The Integrated Aboriginal Chronic Care team

governance existed through a collaborative committee of Executive and Managers.

By enhancing how services worked together, these organisations continued to provide quality care, utilise their strengths and improve the patient journey. The IACC model of care and planning direction were based on input from the Centre for Healthcare Redesign Framework.

Project Officer, Rob Monaghan was instrumental in initially bringing the services together, and IACC is now supported by Ragina Rogers as the Coordinator. To date, IACC has received 503 referrals and held more than 90 Care Conferences.

Team meetings are an essential opportunity

for local service providers involved in providing care to Aboriginal people to network, talk through patient scenarios, get involved in discussion topics, plan for care conferences and hear and provide service updates.

*“The work that happens at these meetings is always for the good of the patient and works because it is done at ground level,” Marilyn Tolman, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Chronic Care for Aboriginal People, said.*

Planning sessions are helping to ensure that IACC continues to provide Aboriginal people with chronic conditions the right care, in the right place at the right time.

# DISASTER RECOVERY A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT

*While they can come and go in minutes, bushfires can leave long lasting damage, not just to physical property, but also to mental health.*

For people affected by the bushfires in Tabulam in February, support is available.

Rural Adversity in Mental Health Program nurse, Steve Carrigg, said people can be at an increased risk of developing anxiety and depression after a traumatic event.

“Following any disaster, it is normal for people to feel overwhelmed, worry a lot more than usual, have trouble concentrating and making decisions, and become tearful,” Steve said.

When these feelings and emotions last

more than a few weeks, or people stop doing things they’d usually be doing, that’s where mental health professionals can really make a difference. To reduce the likelihood of ongoing issues after a disaster, spending time with people who care and are willing to listen is one of the best things you can do.

*“Talk about what happened and how it has affected you, talk to others about the ups and downs of your recovery experience to people you trust,” Steve said.*

“Disaster recovery is a marathon, not a sprint. Go easy on yourself, and know that it’s OK to cry.”



RAMHP nurse Steve Carrigg and Cate Martinez of Red Cross provided support following the Tabulam fires

If you or a loved one is experiencing trauma, contact your GP or

Lifeline: **13 11 14**  
 Beyond Blue: **1300 224 636**  
 NSW Mental Health Line: **1800 011 511**



**Visit visit the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program website.**  
[www.ramhp.com.au](http://www.ramhp.com.au)







*This month Northern Exposure chats with Practice Development Consultant, Suzanne Kuper, to hear about her 'one adventure leads to the next' philosophy, and how that has led her to Northern NSW.*

## Suzanne Kuper Practice Development Consultant

When Suzanne (Suzie) Kuper finished school, she saw an education in nursing as her ticket to see the world. It was a choice which, as she describes, has led her from “one adventure to another”.

Suzie grew up in a small town in the south east of New Zealand’s North Island called Pahiatua. At the time it only had about 1000 residents. She knew she had to see more of the world as soon as she could.

“It was incredibly wet, and you didn’t dare step off the concrete pathway on the way to the washing line or you’d disappear up to your neck in mud,” Suzie recalls.

“I saw nursing as a ticket to adventure and a passport to the world.”

“That was the driving force for me to leave my little town and my gumboots, to go to Wellington to do my nursing training.”

Suzie went much further than Wellington, having now lived and worked in Australia and the UK, which fuelled her love for travel around the world.

Suzie’s first nursing job was in Melbourne, and she later worked in Sydney at the newly built St Vincent’s Private Hospital, which boasted the first computerised patient management system that “took up the whole ground floor of the hospital.”

The next adventure called when Suzie met her husband-to-be on a holiday back in New Zealand, and they settled in Taupo

for 20 years, Suzie working her way up to the role of Charge Nurse – the equivalent of our Nurse Unit Manager.

When Suzie’s two kids got older, she took time off work to do more “sport taxi driving”. This break gave her time to reflect on what she wanted to take on next.

Re-joining the workforce as an “adrenaline junkie” in the ED, Suzie also spent time working in community palliative care, something she had found profoundly life changing in previous roles.

After eight years building new palliative community services from the ground up, and finishing a Master’s Degree in Health Care, Suzie looked for her next adventure, back over the ditch in Australia.

*“My children grew up and moved out, my husband was ready to retire, and my mum at 87 was doing well. I figured I had five years or so - until I have grandkids - to have another adventure,” Suzie said.*

“The first time I got on the Northern NSW LHD job website, there was the job I wanted just waiting for me.”

Suzie explains that her Master’s degree practicum looked at nurse recruitment and the retention of the nursing workforce, and since her relatively new role with

NNSWLHD is solely focused on staff at the coalface, it was a step in the right direction.

You might be asking, what exactly does this role entail? Suzie likes to ask this too.

“I recently asked a Director of Nursing in one of my education sessions, and they replied ‘glitter and glue’,” Suzie said, recovering from a burst of laughter.

As a keen painter and potter, Suzie said she finds this approach largely true.

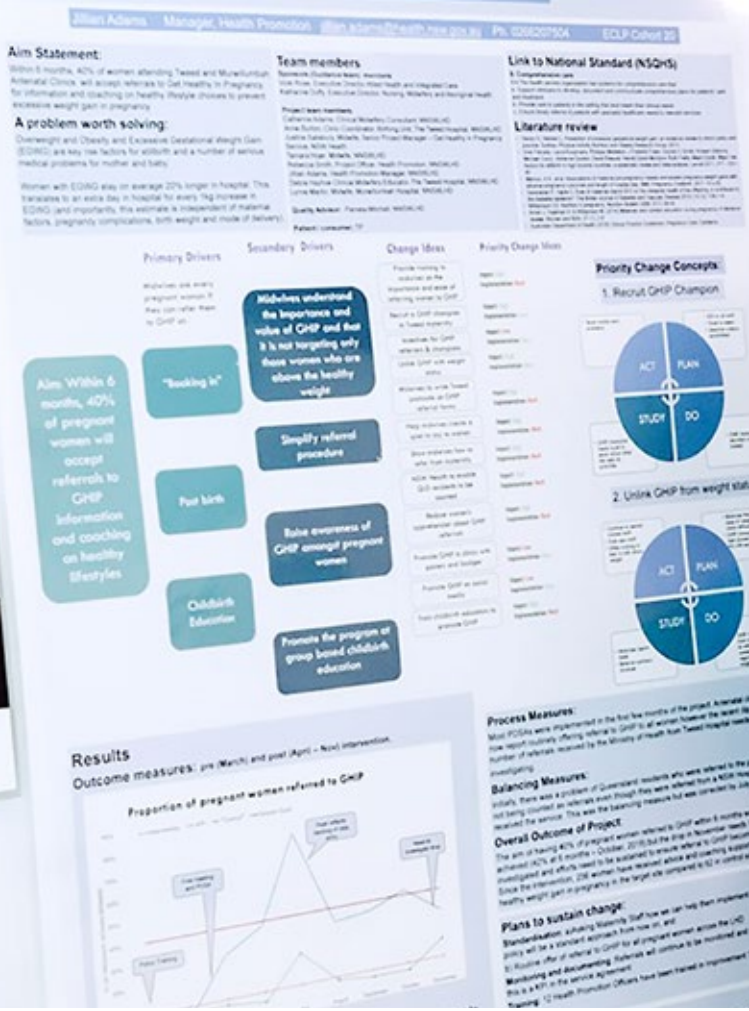
“Bringing that creativity to the fore shows people that there are different ways things can be approached.”

Along with creativity, Suzie reckons teamwork is another worthy endeavour.

“My mum always worked. And in a family of four children in the 1960s that was almost unheard of.”

“My Dad shared a big load of the household functions and we all learned to do everything. I grew up really valuing my brothers and sisters and teamwork to get things done.”

Suzie is known for riding her bright red bike to work every day, and doesn’t think she will bother buying a car. She loves living in Ballina, not just because it is flat, but also because she is right next door to her daughter, who also moved over from New Zealand.



# Clinical leadership helps women get healthy in pregnancy

Health Promotion Manager, Jillian Adams at the Executive Clinical Leadership Program graduation

**A clinical improvement project is seeing more women in Northern NSW access tailored advice to help them and their babies stay healthy during pregnancy.**

Health Promotion Manager, Jillian Adams, graduated in February from the Clinical Excellence Commission's (CEC) Executive Clinical Leadership Program, with a project focussed on helping pregnant women reduce their risk of adverse medical outcomes by staying healthy.

*“Obesity, overweight and excessive weight gain during pregnancy are key risk factors for stillbirth and a number of other serious medical problems for mother and baby,” Ms Adams said.*

“In fact, maternal overweight is the key modifiable risk factor for still births in Australia.”

Stillbirth rates have worsened over the past two decades.

“With six stillbirths per day, this is the most common form of childhood mortality.”

Ms Adams’s project, Get Healthy in Pregnancy, engaged midwives at The Tweed Hospital and Murwillumbah District Hospital with the aim of increasing referrals to NSW Health’s Get Healthy in Pregnancy program.

This free, evidence-based telephone and coaching program provides tailored information and support for pregnant women in NSW on diet, exercise, alcohol and appropriate weight gain in pregnancy. 84% of women who participate in the program achieve appropriate weight gain, compared to 47% in the general population.

Northern NSW Local Health District has been set a target for referrals to the Get Healthy in Pregnancy Program of 7.5% of the birth rate. Prior to Ms Adams’s CEC project, the referral rate was 3%.

Through collaboration with clinical midwifery consultants and educators, birthing unit coordinators, midwives, and

health promotion officers, within six months the referral rate had risen to over 40%.

“The midwives identified a number of barriers which needed to be overcome and developed change ideas to test,” Ms Adams said.

*“The team achieved a 42% rate of referrals in six months. The project will now be rolled out to other hospitals in our district.”*

The executive sponsors for the project were Executive Director Allied Health and Integrated Care, Vicki Rose and Executive Director, Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health Katharine Duffy.

The Executive and Foundational Clinical Leadership Programs are part of the Clinical Excellence Commission’s Quality Improvement Academy, which designs and delivers a range of education programs for staff working in patient safety, improvement and clinical governance.



# Promoting a healthy body and mind at Riverlands

*Patients receiving drug and alcohol treatments are learning to improve their physical as well as psychological health, thanks to a collaborative program in Lismore.*

A new Health Promotion schedule at Riverlands Drug and Alcohol Service is aiming to engage patients in discussions about their physical and psychological health.

Monthly health promotion themes are aligned with national and international awareness days, with Riverlands staff drawing on the expertise of their colleagues within Northern NSW Local Health District to provide resources and education sessions for staff and client groups.

February was 'Nutrition month', and staff used noticeboards at Riverlands and the

Nimbin Opioid Treatment centre to display colourful nutrition resources. Interactive displays encouraged patients to participate in health promotion activities.

Throughout the month, the Riverlands Opioid Treatment Program held a raffle with quiz questions for patients to win one of four prizes. The questions encouraged patients to peruse the information on the display boards in order to find the answer.

Nimbin Opioid Treatment held an "eat healthy fruit" day and offered clients cups of delicious fresh fruit as an alternative to processed, sweetened snacks.

Health promotion provides people with knowledge that can empower them to make better, healthier choices.

At Riverlands, patients can sometimes



Registered Nurse Helen Grant at the Nimbin Opioid Treatment Centre

attend the service for extended periods of time, providing many opportunities for sharing health promotion messages patients can take with them into the community.

## ENERGISE YOUR WORK DAY

*Although we work in the health sector, when looking after other people's health it can be easy to slip into habits that are not great for our own.*

If you find yourself spending hours hunched over a computer, too many hours sitting at a desk forgetting to stretch or take regular breaks, or long hours on your feet, your body may start to complain.

Studies show that including exercise in your work day can boost your energy levels, concentration and problem solving skills while lowering stress and promoting calmness. Who wouldn't want that in their day?

You may be able to fit in a quick session at the gym (remember, the Fitness Passport program offers discounted access to gyms and pools), or a brisk walk or bike ride in your lunch break, weather permitting.

For Northern NSW Local Health District staff working in the Lismore Base Hospital precinct there is an easy option for energising your day; a free weekly 45-minute Stretch and Strengthen class.

Linda Heilbron from Health Promotion runs a free lunchtime session of gentle movements which combine body weight exercises, Pilates and yoga. The exercises are designed to improve joint movement, muscle strength, balance and flexibility.

While beginners are especially catered for, the class gives more experienced exercisers options to increase the level of difficulty of the moves.

What people are saying about the classes:

*"Linda knows which joints and muscle groups to target for those of us who have a job that is mainly sedentary. Through her gentle guidance and expertise, we have been able to improve our strength, balance and flexibility. Tuesday afternoons after the class it's "full steam ahead" as I feel invigorated and energised."* - Jane

*"The class is greatly beneficial both mentally and physically, and most of us have been doing the class since it started last year. It is a very positive step towards staff morale."* - Narelle



*"I, like most people, do not stretch enough, so I enjoy Linda's class which enables me to concentrate on stretching, core strength and balance. I return to work with my blood pumping, feeling alive and being more mindful of my posture. Everyone should try it!"* - Chris

The free Strength and Strengthen class is held at 12.30 on Tuesdays at the Seventh Day Adventist hall in Uralba St Lismore. Bring an exercise mat and water bottle. Shoes are optional during the class. The hall is air-conditioned, so there's no danger of returning to work feeling hot and sweaty.

For more information please phone Linda on 6620 7517 or email [linda.heilbron@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:linda.heilbron@health.nsw.gov.au).

# Kyogle challenging for the crown of healthiest town

*Ever wondered how healthy your town is? Kyogle has been chosen alongside four other towns in NSW to bring a healthy project to life.*

For five years running, the Healthy Town Challenge has given five towns, with populations between 1000 and 15,000 people, the opportunity to kick-start their own health project to encourage a healthier town.

After a competitive selection process, Kyogle has been picked alongside Culcairn, Nambucca Heads, Bowraville, and Ulladulla to join the challenge, which is a joint initiative between the Heart Foundation and the NSW Office of Preventive Health. Towns have six months and a \$15,000 grant to bring their proposed project to life, with the winner getting an additional \$5000 to continue its efforts.

The Kyogle community kicked off the challenge at the Kyogle Bazaar with free healthy food, music, yoga, and dance. Community members also had the opportunity to have their say about what healthy project they would like to see. Residents could also sign up for free Get Healthy phone coaching services on the day.

*“This was a fantastic opportunity for Kyogle residents to come up with their own ideas for projects for a more active, healthier, community,” said Jillian Adams, Health Promotion Manager for Northern NSW Local Health District.*

“The community projects will be supported by our health promotion officers, Kyogle Council and other organisations and groups.”

Some of the ideas pitched already include cooking sessions for youth, active travel throughout the community, free coaching sessions on the outdoor gym equipment, improving the use of the Active Kids vouchers, and planting shade trees. The



Kyogle yoga class in action

Heart Foundation’s Heart Health Manager NSW, Scott Walsberger, said the Healthy Town Challenge highlights the important role communities can play in helping residents eat well, move more and sit less.

“We are excited by the calibre and enthusiasm of this year’s challenge participants and cannot wait to see the results of their efforts later in the year,” Scott said.

The Healthy Town Challenge runs until August 2019.

To get involved or make suggestions, contact Suzie Coulston on 6632 1661, [Suzie.Coulston@kyogle.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Suzie.Coulston@kyogle.nsw.gov.au), or Martina Pattinson on 6620 7668.

## Healthy choices: MAKING IT EASIER ON YOURSELF

*When you’re rushed, hungry, and your blood sugar is crashing, it can be hard to make the best decisions. Ideally, we should avoid making important decisions on an empty stomach, which is why it’s so important to have easy options for healthy eating.*

As a public health service, Northern NSW Local Health District is leading by example, helping make healthy choices easier in our facilities.

During the past few months, healthy food and drink options have been increasing across the LHD, and in the near future, it will be even easier to make the best decisions for your health.

Sugar-sweetened drinks with no nutritional value have already been removed from 100% of businesses within our health facilities and replaced with healthier options. You may have also seen some gradual food changes in hospital food

outlets and vending machines.

More options of healthier ‘everyday’ foods like sandwiches, salads, pastas, stir-fries, wholegrain cereals and fruits will soon be available across NSW Health sites, while less ‘occasional’ unhealthy foods are reduced. There will also be healthier serving sizes.

Staff can still of course bring their own favourite food and drinks from home, and many of your favourite ‘occasional’ food options like hot chips and confectionery will still be available.

A survey in NSW Health facilities in late 2018 showed 80% of people surveyed across NSW supported removing sugar-sweetened drinks and 89% support healthier food choices.

Making new healthy habits can take time, but offering healthier options will help



support these changes, and make sure an empty-stomach decision is still a smart decision.

For information about this NSW Health initiative within NNSWLHD, contact Health Promotion Officer Phoebe Nicholls at [phoebe.nicholls@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:phoebe.nicholls@health.nsw.gov.au) or 6621 1932.



<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal/pages/default.aspx>



## Carer Stress and Carer Support

*The HealthPathways team and the Carers Program recently published the Carer Stress and Carer Support HealthPathways. The pathways have been developed to assist clinicians with assessment tools and online links to supports for family/friend carers.*

Family/friend carers are at a higher risk of health problems than the general population. They are an important part of the care team and can be vulnerable to physical, emotional and mental exhaustion. This is called “carer stress” and can lead to fatigue, anxiety and depression.

Carer health and wellbeing can also have negative flow on effects for your patients. By recognising and responding to Carer Stress, General Practitioners and health clinicians can play an important role in preserving the care arrangement.

The pathways provide best practice

assessment and management guidelines that are designed to help health practitioners to support the wellbeing of family/friend carers.

There are links to assessment tools and to the Carers Gateway, an online portal for carers to link with supports in their local area.

The pathways include a comprehensive list of patient referral and support services and a link which directs the user to the HealthPathways Carer Support pages. Each service listed on this page provides referral options, service description and contact details.

The patient information section links to a PDF which contains Carer Support Services and telephone numbers which can be printed by the General Practitioner and given to the carer during consultation.



For further information contact Kerrie Keyte at [kkeyte@ncphn.org.au](mailto:kkeyte@ncphn.org.au).

Access all the Mid and North Coast Localised Pathways online:

- Username: manchealth
- Password: conn3ct3d



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

## Digital dose: eMeds - LIVE AT FIVE

*Following the successful go lives for eMeds at Lismore, Byron, Murwillumbah and Riverlands Drug and Alcohol Centre, the eMeds team has The Tweed Hospital go live underway.*

It has been a busy time for everyone at The Tweed Hospital with training for Transition to Practice RNs and ENs and new junior medical officers, as well as the existing staff to prepare for their go live on 20 March.

This is also an exciting time for eMeds as we are closing the gap in a referral loop and will expect to see significant changes for the better around inter-hospital transfers.

This will reduce the need for medication charts to be re-written, decreased printing and photocopying between sites, and greater synthesis across the patient

journey in both directions.

Following The Tweed Hospital, the eMeds team will be progressing their rollout to Ballina and Casino, and on to Grafton and Maclean hospitals. We will then progress through the MPS sites of Nimbin, Urbenville, Kyogle and Bonalbo.

The project has also recently employed local trainers for Grafton and Maclean. Keep your eyes out for us in your hospital as the rollout continues.

If you see one of us about in our green high-vis jackets, feel free to stop us for a chat.

For the sites that are live, be sure to remain in contact with your local Change Managers for any concerns ongoing.



eMeds team members outside the “donga” - eMeds central at The Tweed Hospital.

**eMeds Program Change Manager**  
**Adrian Walsh**  
[adrian.walsh1@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:adrian.walsh1@health.nsw.gov.au)  
**Mob: 0416 125 658**

**Ballina / Casino Change Manager**  
**Lisa Mattas Estreich**  
[Lisa.MattasEstreich@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Lisa.MattasEstreich@health.nsw.gov.au)  
**Mob: 0436 395 132**

# Five minutes with an Exec

*In this issue of Northern Exposure, we're spending five minutes with Brett Skinner, Director of Finance for Northern NSW Local Health District.*

**Q:** *Where did you grow up and what it was like?*

**A:** I grew up in a place called Gunningbland on a family farm, about 40 kilometres west of Parkes. I went to primary school in Gunningbland with about 14 kids from preschool to sixth class, I then went to high school in Parkes. There were only two to three kids my age through primary school, so I remember going to Parkes was a big step up, even though Parkes was also small.

My childhood was really about being on the farm, from driving the ute from the age of seven, to marking lambs, driving the tractor, and doing jobs with my three younger brothers. Childhood was very much about the farm, riding motorbikes and horses, shooting, fishing and camping.

I played State hockey, a lot of cricket and soccer during my high school years. I left Parkes to study at the University of New England and I still have family and friends living there.

**Q:** *You obviously love sport; do you have a favourite?*

**A:** Yes, I do love all sports, but probably tennis, golf and soccer at the moment. I like the competition; I like to see when the underdogs are getting up. It's been fascinating watching the Australian cricket and how they've been managing their current rebuilding. The Matildas have been fantastic to watch as well.

I have joined the local tennis in Lismore and have enjoyed meeting some local stars, some of whom work in Health or have family working with us.

**Q:** *Since we're on favourites... Have you got a favourite book or movie?*



**A:** I'm not a big reader. I do like science and science fiction, I think one of the best movies to come out recently was *Interstellar*. I also liked the *Bourne* series at the time. I saw *Amelie* on Netflix with my wife, Christine last week, it was different, not Hollywood, but very good.

I read the *Life of Pi* a while ago, I liked how it was written as it seemed to have an alternative meaning.

**Q:** *Other passions?*

**A:** I love the outdoors, I have a 4 wheel drive and enjoy the adventure of exploring our great country when I can, and also like taking my jet ski out on the water, which is a lot of fun. Some of the local community have been telling me about some good places to see, which I haven't got to yet!

I have four children, two boys and two girls. The youngest, Riley, has just finished the HSC and is on a gap year. Loch, the oldest is married to Susan and lives in Tasmania with our two grandchildren Mabel and Lilly, and Elise and Dana are both studying in Newcastle.

**Q:** *What do you like about Northern NSW?*

**A:** I've found the nature and rural settings here in the Northern Rivers are close and

easy to access. The beaches are great, and I've really enjoyed travelling around the area and visiting the sites. I was really impressed by Kyogle - it was a beautiful town, also equally nice were Mullumbimby and Murwillumbah. I am looking forward to seeing more of the district as the opportunity arises.

**Q:** *What are some of the other jobs you've done?*

**A:** After University, I worked for Price Waterhouse in Sydney for three-plus years. I then went to work for Kerry Packer as his personal accountant, looking after the polo ponies, the farms and other areas. I've got a few good stories, but there's no time for that.

Following on, I worked with a number of energy providers before becoming the Director of Finance for the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA). I interacted with a lot of Ministers and Premiers, which was a good experience, although challenging at times. I also worked as the GM of Strategy for Transurban before going on to consulting work in infrastructure around the world with companies and for myself.

We moved from Sydney to Port Macquarie for a lifestyle change while I was consulting before starting with the Northern NSW Local Health District 12 months ago.



# New librarian loves an information challenge

Lismore Base Hospital recently welcomed new librarian, Janice Knopke, to the team.

Janice said she is looking forward to helping people find the clinical evidence they need.

“Whilst at the university, I really enjoyed helping people returning after decades away from study, who were petrified of databases,” Janice said.



Lismore Base Hospital librarian, Janice Knopke

*“I can help you do scoping literature searches for new studies, or I am happy to do training with things like EndNote, or in methods on how to use our medical and allied health information sources.”*

“I just really like helping people look for information and evidence in an efficient and effective way.”

If you can't come to the library in person, Janice can assist via telephone or Skype.

To get in touch with Janice and the library services at Lismore Base Hospital, email [janice.knopke@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:janice.knopke@health.nsw.gov.au) (Mon, Tue, Thur) or phone 6620 2445. You can also contact the Library at [NNSWLHD-Library@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NNSWLHD-Library@health.nsw.gov.au)

# Ballina staff appreciation awards

It wasn't just the Academy Awards being handed out in February; staff in Ballina were recognised for their hard work and commitment as part of their Staff Appreciation celebrations.

On 14 February, Ballina District Hospital and Community Health staff celebrated their hardworking colleagues with the support of Summerland Credit Union, new sponsors of the Staff Appreciation Awards.

Taking home the trophies this time were Wardsperson Geoff Lee and Social Worker, Sharlene Hargraves.

Geoff's colleagues nominated him for this award because he displays an impeccable bedside manner. Patient care and safety are always at the forefront of his actions,



From left, Ballina Community Health Manager Lisa Diett, Social Worker Sharlene Hargraves and Summerland Credit Union Branch Manager Christina Emilio

From left, Ballina District Hospital EO/DON Peter Jeffree and Wardsperson Geoff Lee

and he is recognised as a supportive, hardworking team member.

Sharlene was nominated for always advocating for her patients, being a great support to her colleagues, and always making time to help even when she has a full workload.

Congratulations Geoff and Sharlene and thank you to Summerland Credit Union.

Keep an eye out for the next round of Staff Appreciation Awards.

# Culture and engagement - where are we now?

*Now 12 months old, the Culture and Staff Engagement Committee is seeing projects come to fruition across Northern NSW Local Health District, as staff set the agenda for how they would like to continue improving their workplace experience.*

Based on the work and consultation within the committee, as well as the valuable feedback gained through the People Matter Employee Survey, there are several workplace culture initiatives now underway across the LHD.

A district-wide review of the staff and management appraisal system is currently being tested within the Clinical Operations, Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health, and eHealth departments. Following the test period, the new templates will be used throughout NNSWLHD. They are designed to facilitate open and focussed discussions between staff and line management.

Another current initiative aims to understand why colleagues choose to leave the organisation, recognising that



Members of the NNSWLHD Culture and Staff Engagement Committee

information generated from exit interviews can be a valuable tool to assess where we can do better. To improve the exit interview process, a new pathway has been developed where colleagues have the opportunity to give anonymous and easy feedback via the staff intranet.

Any employee leaving the NNSWLHD can now complete a survey online, as a PDF or in a facilitated discussion with their manager or line manager. More information is available on the intranet.

Each site and streamed service has begun working on their own action plans to address issues raised by the People Matter Survey. In the Clarence Health Service, staff and management have developed a Culture Plan to identify and tackle important

local matters, with a range of long and short term initiatives being mapped out.

Lastly, our employee on-boarding and orientation is getting a make-over, with NNSWLHD taking a universal approach to reviewing our practices around welcoming new colleagues and providing them with the information they need to successfully start work.

A re-design plan is currently being developed by a committee lead by Casey McCarron, Project Manager Orientation, and we expect to start seeing changes within the second quarter of 2019.

For more information, contact Dennis Pfitzner on 0448 918 636 or email: [dennis.pfitzner@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:dennis.pfitzner@health.nsw.gov.au).

## REGISTER NOW FOR THE 2019 PATIENT EXPERIENCE SYMPOSIUM

*Now in its fifth year, the Patient Experience Symposium is an annual event that showcases expert evidence, local and international patient experience examples, consumer stories and draws leading speakers from around the globe.*

Registrations are now open for the 2019 symposium, which provides an opportunity for patients and health professionals to come together and share and showcase work, ideas and innovations that are improving patient experience and outcomes across NSW public hospitals.

Keynote speakers include television presenter and biomedical engineer Dr Jordan Nguyen, author, occupational therapist and stroke survivor Emma Gee and journalist, academic and The Malpa Project founder Don Palmer.



A range of health partners support the symposium each year. The 2019 partners are the Agency for Clinical Innovation, Clinical Excellence Commission, Bureau of Health Information, Cancer Institute NSW, Health Education & Training Institute, eHealth NSW, Healthshare, System Purchasing Branch and NSW Health Pathology.

The symposium will be held at the International Convention Centre, Sydney, on Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 April.

To register and for more information, visit the Symposium website.



[www.patientexperience.org.au](http://www.patientexperience.org.au)



# Murwillumbah farewells three of their own

*Murwillumbah District Hospital (MDH) has recently said goodbye to three long-serving staff members, bringing to an end more than 100 years of combined service for the hospital.*

Registered Nurse and Midwife, Cheryl Went was farewelled in December 2018, having commenced her nursing training at MDH in 1970 and working permanently at the hospital since 1980.

Cheryl worked in general nursing, midwifery, neonatal care, surgical nursing, birth suite, antenatal and postnatal care, as well as antenatal and gynaecology outpatients. Her empathy, leadership, reliability and high quality patient care made her a valuable team member.

As Nursing Unit Manager of the Women's Care Unit for some years, Cheryl ran the department with efficiency, integrity and compassion. Cheryl generously shared her wealth of knowledge and experience with others. Her cheery disposition and ability to make every woman with their unborn or newly born baby feel special will be missed.



Top left: MDH Deputy Director of Nursing, Kylie Wilmen presents Janette van der Hoek with a Certificate of Appreciation. Right: Trevor Brooks cuts his farewell cake made by MDH Executive Officer/ Director of Nursing, Darleen Berwick. Bottom left: Midwife Lynne Martin, Cheryl Went, Administration Officers Tamarah Egan and Nola McLaughlin

Janette van der Hoek, CNC Infection Control, was farewelled earlier this year after beginning her employment with MDH as a Registered Nurse in 1982.

Janette has made a valuable contribution in a variety of roles, including as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Wound Management and as a Clinical Nurse Consultant in Infection Control from 2006 through to her resignation in January 2019. Janette showed great dedication to the field of Infection Control, having achieved a Master


of Advanced Practice in Infection Control and also being published in this field.

Trevor Brooks started with Murwillumbah District Hospital in July 1988 as a carpenter in the Maintenance Department, a role he maintained through to his retirement on 12 February 2019. Trevor also acted as Engineering Manager at various times. Trevor demonstrated remarkable craftsmanship and was a valued team member well respected among his peers.


# Happy Birthday Ballina District Hospital Renal Unit



Happy birthday to the Ballina District Hospital Renal Unit, which celebrated 20 years of operation on 11 February 2019. Pictured are Ballina District Hospital staff with patient, Jeff Gilliver.



**National Advance Care Planning Week**  
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NORTHERN

# EXPOSURE

