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TRANSFORMING PRACTICE  
AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS

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SHOVELS AT THE READY  
AS CONSTRUCTION  
COMMENCES

10

PROFILE:  
WENDY THOMSON

NORTHERN

# EXPOSURE





## EXPERIENCING WHAT MAKES US HUMAN

*Initiatives in our LHD and across the state are aiming to improve the experiences that patients and health consumers have when they encounter our services.*

Some of our staff presented at the recent Patient Experience Symposium in Sydney. Projects that were shared included an integrative Aboriginal Chronic Care initiative helping patients drive their own care, and a Grafton-based model designed to boost the quality and safety of care by harnessing a patient's knowledge while in hospital. Read more on page 7.

At the regional level, we're partnering with North Coast Primary Health Network and Mid North Coast LHD to look at how we can improve the experience of navigating and receiving mental health and drug and alcohol services for patients across the North Coast.

Within our own workforce, the Public Health Unit have been addressing stigma and discrimination that injecting drug users report in the health care setting, encouraging staff to complete training on the issue.

Our hospitals and outpatient clinics regularly receive excellent results from patients rating their experience. One recent report ranked the North Coast Cancer Institute in Lismore as among the top three outpatient cancer facilities in NSW.

No-one wants to be in hospital, but it's the care and compassion that make someone's stay that little bit more enjoyable. There's a perfect example on page 14 that will warm your heart.

## NORTHERN EXPOSURE

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Northern Exposure is published 8 times a year by the Northern NSW Local Health District. We welcome your contributions, suggestions and feedback.



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Cover Image: Lismore Base Hospital nominees and winners at the 2019 Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards.

Back cover: Ballina Lighthouse - Brett Payne

# Executive Update



**Wayne Jones**  
**Chief Executive**

*We are fast approaching our busiest period of the year, and some of our facilities are already experiencing very high activity.*

When it comes to caring for our patients during this winter period, I know staff are doing their best and working hard to keep up with the increased demand that the cold season places on our facilities.

Don't forget that it's also important to take time to care for yourself, especially

in the colder months, by eating well and exercising regularly. The Fitness Passport might interest you; read more on page 5.

In tackling the winter period, I'm pleased to report that our Winter Strategy is once again going well, joining with North Coast Primary Health Network to keep our most vulnerable community members well and out of hospital.

This year we have again seen great take up, with more than 25 General Practices and approximately 750 patients involved.

During flu season we can all do our part to prevent the spread of flu by getting a flu shot. These are available free at your site, and I encourage you to make a time to see your staff immunisation nurse soon if you haven't already.

The People Matter Employee Survey is now open for 2019. This is your best opportunity to have a say in how your team

and your workplace can improve, and let us know what's working well, and what we can do better.

The feedback we received last year was extremely useful, and it has helped shape many initiatives now in place across the district.

Please take the time to complete this year's survey before 28 June, you can find all the details on the intranet.

With the change of financial year comes a new Service Agreement and a new budget for our health district. I'll be providing some more updates on that as we move into the new period. We'll also soon be launching our new Strategic Plan 2019 -2024, which sets out our priorities for the next five years.

It's an exciting time to be in health, and I look forward to seeing our services and staff grow and change to keep pace with the ever-changing healthcare landscape.

## From the Board Chair



**Brian Pezzutti**  
**Board Chair**

*Community participation in our health service will be vital to our LHD achieving our vision of a healthy community through quality care.*

The Board recently approved a new community engagement framework which was developed with input from many employees and the community.

The new framework will guide our health service to increase community involvement through a revamped network of committees and other activities.

Across Australia, patients, carers and families are actively participating in

hospitals and health services, sharing their experiences and providing valuable input.

Research shows that involving the community in planning, delivery and evaluation of health services leads to improved health outcomes, safer care and services based on local needs.

I encourage you to think about any projects or initiatives that would benefit from patient input. You can also identify patients and other users of our services who may be interested in participating in the new advisory groups and other processes that are being established under this new framework.

You can read more about the new framework on page 12.

NNSWLHD employees are now able to have their say in this year's People Matter Survey, which is on now.

The survey findings are reported to the Board and all employees and the feedback is used to identify areas for improvement.

Please make sure you take the opportunity to complete the survey and provide your

thoughts to help make NNSWLHD a better place to work.

The survey is open until 28 June.

I recently attended the annual Nursing and Midwifery Innovation Forum in Ballina along with other Board members, the executive and employees from across the district.

There was a magnificent turnout for what was a great conference and a showcase of the innovation and leadership being shown by our nurses and midwives. Well done to all involved and to our Nursing and Midwifery leadership team for their vision for our region.

In particular, I also congratulate the winners of the Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards, presented at a function following the forum.

Lastly, please take advantage of the free staff flu vaccinations now on offer at all our sites. This is essential to ensure that you are well-protected against the flu this winter. It also means you're less likely to spread the virus to your colleagues, patients and family members outside of work. Don't risk it, get a flu shot.



Madeleine Richey, winner of the Ena Williams Award- Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healthcare

## Transforming practice and celebrating success

**This year's annual Nursing and Midwifery Innovation Forum showcased best-practice innovations in person-centred care developed by nurses and midwives across the district.**

This year's keynote address given by NSW Health's Deputy Secretary, Susan Pearce, focused on the role of nursing and midwifery in improving the patient experience.

"Nurses and midwives contribute so much to our health system," Ms Pearce said.

*"They are there 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, caring for our patients, and I look forward to discussing how they can continue to lead the way in improving the experience of our patients and their carers."*

Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) Chief Executive Wayne Jones, a former nurse, told the audience that he had visited the Florence Nightingale Museum while in London recently and had reflected on the immense change within the health industry.

"Nursing will continue to change with technology and innovation, but nurses will always be needed. No matter what happens in the future, the greatest thing you can do for your patients is to be compassionate and caring. Nothing goes further than a smile and the touch of a hand," Mr Jones said.

Following the forum, the attention turned to the annual Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards, held on the same evening at Ballina RSL.

More than 150 people came from across the district to celebrate the significant contribution of nurses and midwives at this year's event.

Throughout the evening, 13 awards were given out to staff nominated by their peers, including the new Consumer Appreciation Award, presented to a nurse or midwife for their outstanding care as voted by members of the community.

Lismore Base Hospital midwife, Debra Young, won the inaugural Consumer Appreciation Award.

"I feel honoured and humbled to receive this award," Debra said.

"I have the best job of all, I have the privilege of being part of the most incredible journey of a woman to motherhood."

Katharine Duffy, Director Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health congratulated all the winners and nominees for their contributions to their profession.

"I would also like to acknowledge and congratulate all our nurses and midwives across the LHD that these awards represent," Katharine said.

### AWARDS AND RECIPIENTS

**Excellence in Nursing/Midwifery - Assistant in Nursing/Assistant in Midwifery**  
Robin Stabler, Lismore Base Hospital

**Excellence in Nursing - Graduate Enrolled Nurse, Graduate Registered Nurse or Graduate Registered Midwife**  
Sally Smith, RN Surgical 1, TTH

**Excellence in Nursing - Registered Nurse**  
Samantha Culver, Whole of Health, LBH

**Excellence in Midwifery - Registered Midwife**  
Vanessa Reidy, Women's Care Unit, LBH

**Excellence in Nursing - Enrolled Nurse**  
Emmy-Lou Brettnner, CDH  
Commendation: Shirley Roach- CDH

**Excellence in Innovation in Education**  
Noelene Williams, CNE Emergency, TTH

**Excellence in Innovation in Research**  
Graham Turner, Renal Nurse Practitioner, TTH

**Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healthcare - Ena Williams**  
Madeleine Richey, AIN, Aboriginal Cadet, GBH  
Commendations: Sheridan Creighton, RN, LBH  
Laurel Moore, Midwife - GBH

**Nursing & Midwifery Significant Contribution**  
Vicki Martin, RN Nimbin MPS

**Excellence in Person Centred Care - Board Recognition**  
Carly Boyle, CNS 2 Chronic & Complex Care, TTH

**Innovation Forum - Best Paper "Insights Application"**  
Vicki Wale, Nurse Educator- MPS Sites and Nerida Adams, RN Lilli Pilli, Lismore Mental Health

**Innovation Forum - Best Poster - "Reducing falls and serious harm from falls"**  
Sebastian Pilon, Registered Nurse C7, LBH

# Looking back to celebrate nurses and midwives

Celebrations took place across the Northern NSW Local Health District and around the world to recognise the hard work and commitment from nurses and midwives.

International Day of the Midwife this year fell on 5 May, with the theme Midwives: Defenders of Women's Rights. The International Confederation of Midwives said this year's theme aimed to raise awareness about the status of midwives and the essential care they provide to mothers and their newborns.

Across the District, sites held their own award ceremonies to celebrate local midwives.

At Lismore Base Hospital, awards were given out in E8 Women's Care Unit. Midwife Liz Jones won the Early Career Midwife Award, while Simone Druitt won the Dorothy Edwards Midwife of the Year Award.

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world on 12 May, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth.

The International Council of Nurses aims to



Top: Nurses at Lismore Base Hospital don historical uniforms for International Nurses Day

Bottom: Winners of the 2019 TTH Nursing Awards. Back row, from left, CNE Staff Development Team Sheridan Lowe; Graduate RN Surg 1 Sally Smith; Director Nursing & Midwifery Adam Reid; Director Nursing, Midwifery & Aboriginal Health Katharine Duffy; NUM Renal Unit Andrew Gosling; Summerland Branch Manager Audra McElwee. Front row, from left, CNE Noelene Williams; CNS Emergency Department Margaret Crilly; Assistant Director Nursing, Medicine and Critical Care Myra Drummond

transform health so no person is left behind, without access to care or impoverished because of their need for health care. This year's theme was Nurses: A voice to lead, health for all.

Nurses in Lismore donned traditional matron's uniforms, and led by 'Matron Melanie', inspected the wards before heading down stairs to celebrate with cake and tea.

## CROSS THE QUEENSLAND BORDER WITH YOUR FITNESS PASSPORT

*The Fitness Passport program of discounted access to gyms and pools has been available to staff in Northern NSW Local Health District for almost two years, and now more than 2000 people are reaping the benefits.*

In total, 930 NNSWLHD staff, along with 1166 family members have signed up. The program was recently extended to cover staff of Aboriginal Medical Services, and already that has led to new memberships.

Now the Fitness Passport takes you even further. After lobbying from Health Promotion, Fitness Passport has agreed to add Gold Coast facilities to those available to NNSWLHD staff. This means Fitness

Passport members who live, study or holiday on the Gold Coast have access to unlimited visits to gyms, gym classes and aquatic centres in the area.

*Fitness Passport is a different sort of gym membership - you and your immediate family members can use all of the facilities included in the initiative, and as often as you like.*

A Fitness Passport gives staff members and their families access to hundreds of participating gyms and pools in our region and across NSW and over the border.



Single Membership - \$12.95/week

Family Membership - \$21.95/week

For more information go to:



[www.fitnesspassport.com.au/NHN](http://www.fitnesspassport.com.au/NHN)



## Shovels at the ready as construction commences

**Two sod turnings in April officially marked the start of construction on projects in Grafton and Evans Head.**

Work began on the \$17.5 million Ambulatory Care Centre at Grafton Base Hospital on 24 April, as Member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis MP, turned the first sod on site.

The project includes a new two-storey ambulatory care building; new undercroft loading dock; new links to the existing hospital campus; and new public drop off zone.

Speaking at the event, Mr Gulaptis said the centre was due to be completed in early 2020.

“Staff and other stakeholders have been involved in designing the building to ensure the space reflects the needs of the community now and well into the future,” Mr Gulaptis said.

The new Ambulatory Care Centre will provide a range of clinical services, including:

Top: Evans Head, from left, NNSWLHD Chief Executive Wayne Jones, General Manager Richmond Valley Council Vaughan McDonald, Mayor Robert Mustow, Clarence MP Chris Gulaptis, Manager Community Health Leanne Friis, Physiotherapist Dave Bowles and NNSWLHD Board Chair Brian Pezzutti

Inset: Grafton, from left, Tony Crayton, Business Manager Clarence Health Service, Clarence MP Chris Gulaptis, Jane Wear Manager Community Health, Clarence Health Services, Dan Madden, General Manager CHS and Mike Gillespie, Consumer representative and Oncology Unit volunteer

- Oncology, chemotherapy and haematology services
- Renal Dialysis Unit
- Physiotherapy Department
- Occupational Therapy Department and Outpatient Clinics
- Podiatry
- Speech Pathology
- Fracture and Osteo-Refracture Clinics
- Outpatient clinics for patients with chronic conditions including Cardiac and Respiratory Rehabilitation services, Diabetes education and Diabetes Foot Clinics.

On 29 April, Northern NSW Local Health District Chief Executive Wayne Jones and Board Chair Dr Brian Pezzutti joined Mr

Gulaptis, Richmond Valley Council Mayor Robert Mustow and a host of community members to ceremoniously turn the first sod on the Evans Head HealthOne project.

The new HealthOne is scheduled to open in April 2020, providing a modern health facility to accommodate additional health services in the local area, including chronic disease management, cardiac rehab and respiratory groups, child and family therapy groups, dietetics and diabetes education.

The new facility is located in the centre of Evans Head, on the site of the old Community Health Centre, and down the road from existing GP services which will link in with services provided by the HealthOne. The development includes additional car parking on-site for staff and clients.

# Home grown innovation on show at symposium

Staff from Northern NSW Local Health District joined international healthcare leaders, patients and carers for two days of inspiration and innovation at the NSW Patient Experience Symposium in Sydney in April.

Consumer representatives Gary Shallala-Hudson from Lismore and Anne Currey from Ballina were among the NNSWLHD contingent who attended the conference to hear about innovations improving patient experience and outcomes.

Gary said it was interesting to hear the diverse consumer stories and how the community was involved in various Local Health Districts across the state.

"There's so much going on. It was a real eye-opener to see the variety of consumer attendance and to hear how they are participating. I think there's a lot of opportunity for consumers to do even more with LHDs," Gary said.

Aboriginal Health staff Ragina Rogers and Marilyn Tolman presented the Integrated Aboriginal Chronic Care (IACC) project Integrated Aboriginal Chronic Care, Together we can, at the Symposium.

*"The project was very well received by everyone attending and there have been many follow up questions and phone calls from other districts asking 'how did we do it?'" Marilyn said.*

Marilyn said the Symposium was a valuable opportunity to showcase the work their team are doing in NNSWLHD, in particular in relation to integrating with key partners in the Aboriginal Medical Services and capturing patients' voices in their health journey to ensure we are delivering a quality service.

"We presented a journey of an Aboriginal patient through his personal health story



Above, Dr Abbey Perumpanani

Right, Ragina Rogers Integrated Aboriginal Chronic Care Coordinator and Marilyn Tolman, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Chronic Disease, Aboriginal Health.

and his voice to show how patients can drive their own care, by working closely together to make this journey seamless."

NNSWLHD Director Clinical Programs, Dr Abbey Perumpanani, presented on Patient Empowered Care (PEC), a novel clinical model designed to harness the talent and knowledge of patients and their families in hospital in order to boost the quality and safety of care.

At Grafton Base Hospital, the PEC model was trialled by providing patients with prompts for questions they could ask their treating doctor two days prior to their discharge. This led to a significant improvement in rates of completed discharge summaries. As a proof of concept it showed that when patients are empowered with tools to engage with the hospital system, they can become powerful drivers of quality and safety.



"PEC can be used to organise patients into a network that can continuously monitor our clinical processes and provide us with real-time feedback when they feel we are falling short," Dr Perumpanani said.

"Empowering patients with the tools to enable them to monitor in real-time the quality of the care being provided to them should be seen an essential part of good clinical care in the future."

**people  
matter**  
NSW Public Sector  
Employee Survey

**2019 | NSW Public Sector  
Employee Survey**

The People Matter Survey is on now!  
Don't miss your chance to have your say  
and tell us what's on your mind when it  
comes to your workplace, teams and job.

**Jump online and have your say!**

**[www.health.nsw.gov.au/survey2019](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/survey2019)**

**Survey closes 28 June.**

# New Aboriginal Stepping On program

The first Aboriginal Stepping On program was recently run by Aboriginal Health workers in Lismore.

The Stepping On program is a free falls prevention program for seniors that combines gentle strength and balance exercises with educational sessions on ways to prevent falls.

Falls can have serious consequences for older people, their families and carers. They can lead to reduced quality of life, disability, reduced physical activity, social isolation, functional decline and even death. In NSW, falls are a major cause of harm to older people and fall-related injuries impose a substantial burden on the health and aged care systems.

Aboriginal Health Worker Laurel Rogers said the local Aboriginal community wasn't aware they could access the Stepping On program.

"We wanted to show elders exercises and information to help with falls prevention," Laurel said.

"Aboriginal people are more comfortable, and more likely to attend a group if there are other Aboriginal people attending and they don't feel in a minority."

*The educational sessions included a presentation and Q and A session with a pharmacist and information on podiatry and things to check when buying footwear.*

At the start of the seven-week program participants had their strength and balance measured. After just three weeks a number of participants returned better strength measurements and found it easier to move from sitting to standing, compared to the start of the program.

Not all of the 10-12 participants were able to attend every session, due to ill health and sorry business.

Some aspects which the participants found most beneficial included:

- Learning exercises they could do at home
- The social side of the program – meeting with other elders, getting out of the house
- Sharing knowledge, experience and stories



Aboriginal Health Worker Laurel Rogers

- Great presenters and valuable information
- Being able to ask questions
- Information they could share with friends and family

The social aspect was a very important component, and it was suggested that in future an extra 15 minutes be added at the start, for a cuppa and catch up on community news.

Another Aboriginal Stepping On program is planned for October and people will be able to catch up on sessions, or redo the whole program. New referrals are also invited.

For more information about Stepping On, contact Freyja Smith on 6620 2553.

## Save the Date: NAIDOC Week 2019 - 7 to 14 July

**Northern NSW Local Health District acknowledges and celebrates NAIDOC Week every year with activities throughout the District in collaboration by our Aboriginal Health Workers, Partners and Community.**

NAIDOC Week celebrations are on from 7 to 14 July 2019. We encourage health professionals to take the time to respectfully reflect on the First Nation People of Australia, particularly during this time of celebration and give recognition to the richness of a culture that has been here for over 65,000 years.

This year's NAIDOC theme is Voice. Treaty. Truth – Let's Work Together for a Shared Future, which is linked to the Uluru Statement from the Heart. To find out more about the Uluru Statement from the Heart

please visit <https://www.1voiceuluru.org/>

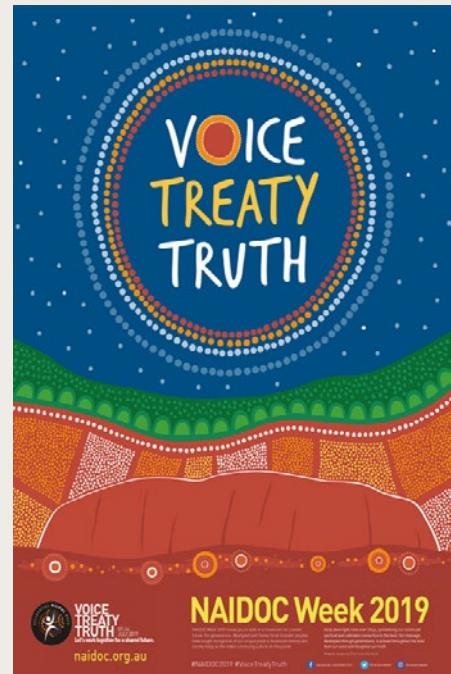
During NAIDOC Week celebrations there will be a number of events in different communities across the District. We encourage all health professionals to participate in celebrations and as the theme says, "Let's Work Together for a Shared Future".

To find out more about NAIDOC Week programs please contact Aboriginal Health Workers in your area.

More information can be found on the National NAIDOC Committee website:



<https://www.naidoc.org.au/get-involved/2019-theme>



# A new vision for health care: North Coast Collective

*A new regional collaboration of health agencies is working together to address social determinants affecting an individual's health and wellbeing, and to create better ways of addressing our health care priorities.*

At the outset, the North Coast Collective (NCC) involves North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN), the Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD) and the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) as founding partners.

The project was kick-started with workshops in Coffs Harbour and Ballina in April hosted by the ABC's Dr Norman Swan.

NNSWLHD Chief Executive, Wayne Jones, said the Collective's vision was to create a system that is better connected.

"We're interested in a system that puts the needs of patients and carers at its centre and gives them better lives," Mr Jones said.

"As NCC broadens its scope, we hope more organisations such as FACS, the Department of Housing and the Department of Education will join, working hand in hand as part of a whole of community approach to improving health and wellbeing."

## Mental Health the first focus

NCPHN Chief Executive Officer, Julie Sturgess, said the first focus area for the NCC is improving the lives of those living with mental health issues on the North Coast. The April workshops brought together more than 110 people from a large range of health, council and community organisations to talk about how we could improve supports for people suffering from mental ill health or those with alcohol and drug use issues to live better lives.

*"When we spoke to the North Coast community these health needs were identified as their most important priorities," Julie said.*



ABC's Dr Norman Swan.

## Social determinants key to healthy lives

Analysis by NCPHN shows that health and medical services only account for 11% of the total picture contributing to our community's health outcomes. Individual behaviours and social determinants have a much bigger role to play in overall health than medical services.

This means that in order to drive change and improve the mental health of our region we need to work collaboratively with other services which also influence these social determinants.

There are many social determinants of health, including:

- Housing instability/homelessness
- Poor housing conditions
- Incarceration or having a family member in jail
- Malnutrition
- Isolation and loneliness
- Unemployment or under-employment
- Domestic violence
- Low income
- Illiteracy

## Working together to remove barriers

Julie Sturgess said there was a need to do things differently and help remove some of the difficulties that consumers find when navigating a health system that's set up in silos.

"Differently means we need to take a system approach where we work closely together to remove barriers and duplication

to achieve better lives for people in the North Coast region," Julie said.

"Of course, working in this type of relationship takes a commitment and trust between the parties. That is something that already exists in spades on the North Coast, with both CEOs of the LHDs (Stewart Dowrick and Wayne Jones) being extremely supportive of NCC.

*"This will all take time. It won't always be easy, but we believe this approach will contribute to significantly improved outcomes for the North Coast," Julie said.*

The Collective is taking a more regional approach and looking at wiser ways of spending finite budgets to get better outcomes, shifting the focus to those outcomes that the community and the region want.

Business Consultant, Darryl Walker of GHD Advisory, is helping steer the process through an analytical and outcomes-based approach.

"There'll never be sufficient funds to cover everything and we need a new collective approach to work more efficiently and effectively in improving health. An approach where funders, fund allocators and health providers work collectively to do better," Darryl said.

"We're looking at what the gaps are for those things currently untreated or we don't have solutions for – because we haven't been able to fund them or the solutions aren't there. And the final part is that we're not looking at the landscape on a year by year basis, we're looking at it long term."



*In this edition of Northern Exposure, we catch up with retiring Nurse and trained midwife, Wendy Thomson, to hear how her calling to nursing led to a remarkable career and life in regional Australia.*

## Wendy Thomson

*As a child, Wendy always knew she had a calling – to be a nurse or a nun.*

Fortunately for the women of the Clarence Valley, Wendy followed in the footsteps of her aunt and commenced her nursing training between the wards of Prince Henry, Prince of Wales and Eastern Suburbs Hospitals in Sydney, graduating as a General Nurse in March 1976.

“I knew I wanted to get out of the city and work in rural areas,” Wendy said.

“Not long after I finished my midwifery training, I took up a role specialising in Community Nursing – which was a totally new concept at the time.”

With HIV/Aids identified as a growing health issue in the community, Wendy retrained in HIV Nursing at Prince Henry Hospital, becoming one of the first Community Nurses to specialise in HIV nursing in Australia.

As a Community nurse, Wendy worked in Eastern Sydney and then in Moss Vale and Fitzroy Falls.

*“I was working mostly with women in palliative care, and seeing clients in these moments turned my attention to preventative care,” she said.*

“I really thought and still think there is an opportunity to stop many of these cases long before they happen.”

After studying in Sexual and Reproductive Health, Wendy became a Women’s Health Nurse, CNS, in 1996.



Friends and colleagues farewell Wendy Thomson

While working at Bowral Community Health Centre, Wendy was seconded to the (now) Macarthur Division of General Practice as an educational detailer, training Doctors in the engagement of female patients for cervical screening, practice techniques, pathology audits and the management pathways for abnormal results.

Wendy completed a Masters of Nursing (Women’s health) at the University of New England in 2002.

In May 2003, Wendy combined her love of nursing, rural lifestyle and good weather, to take up the position of Women’s Health Nurse, CNC2, at Grafton Community Health.

Wendy identifies her greatest achievement in the Clarence Valley as the engagement of Aboriginal women in the health

screening process.

“This started out as me just running clinics at Pippi Beach, Baryulgil and Malabulgimah prior to the advent of the Aboriginal Medical Service,” she recalls.

*“I really enjoyed learning of the diverse stories and amazing resilience of the women in the community.”*

Wendy leaves Clarence Valley health to commence a new position as hands-on grandmother to five grandchildren.

Her colleagues say she will be sorely missed by them, her clients, and her many friends, and will be remembered for her intelligence, approachability, kindness and good humour towards all.

# Social determinants of health - Webcast series

*There is widespread evidence demonstrating the relationship between the health and wellbeing of an individual and the environments in which they are born, grow, live, work and age.*

Factors such as employment, housing, education and social support can work to strengthen or destabilise the health of people and their communities. These factors are referred to as the social determinants of health (SDoH).

Over a series of free webcasts, delivered from a state-of-the-art studio in Sydney, the Centre for Healthcare Knowledge & Innovation, together with Social Futures and Health Justice Australia invites health, social and community care providers to come together to learn about SDoH.

No download necessary, simply enter your

email, save the date and be ready to take part. If you can't make it to the live webcast, register anyway and receive a post-event link to the watch-on-demand video file.

The series will outline the theory behind SDoH and then contextualise them in the detail of factors such as early life, socioeconomic position, housing, communities and neighbourhoods. It will look at evidence, best practice and how you can innovate alongside the people in which you serve. To close the series, it will look at how health justice partnerships can help you to achieve better health and justice outcomes for vulnerable communities.



## SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

### Webcast Series

#### Registrations are open now for:

**Webcast 1: A Framework for SDoH**  
(Transpired)

**Webcast 2: Early Life**  
Monday 1 July | 2:30pm - 4:00pm

**Webcast 3: Socioeconomic Position**  
Monday 12 August | 2:30pm - 4:00pm

**Webcast 4: Housing, Communities & Neighbourhoods**

Monday 23 September | 2:30pm - 4:00pm

**Webcast 5: Health Justice Partnerships**

Monday 18 November | 2:30pm - 4:00pm

**#Tip** - If there's more than one of you wanting to view this series, why not talk to your manager about securing a room for afternoon tea?

 **Register at:**  
[www.thecentrehki.com.au/events/sdoh](http://www.thecentrehki.com.au/events/sdoh)

## WANT TO HELP IMPROVE YOUR LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES?

*When Coraki resident, George Thompson, wanted to have a voice in the future of health services in his local community, he joined the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) as a volunteer community representative.*

After becoming a carer for his wife after she suffered a stroke, George also saw an opportunity to share his own experiences and contribute to building better health services.

In the ten years since then, George has been involved in many initiatives across the LHD.

"I have found my involvement very rewarding. I have learnt a lot and met some great people. I encourage anyone to get involved and make a difference." George said.

We are now looking for community members to join one of the new

consultative committees that are being established across the region. It's a chance for people to share their experiences while thinking about how to improve future health services.

The new groups will provide advice, feedback and guidance on a range of plans and initiatives.

If you know of patients, health consumers and carers who might be interested, please encourage them to consider joining a committee.

NNSW LHD Chief Executive Wayne Jones said there was a long history of community advisory committees within the LHD, and that their contribution was invaluable.

*"Involving patients, carers and the community is vital to help improve our services," Mr Jones said.*



Consumer representative, George Thompson

An expression of interest form is available on our website and Facebook page.

The new advisory groups are part of the new NNSWLHD Community Engagement Framework. It includes the new structure and a two-year strategy, and has information for staff interested in bringing community voices into the health service. More information about the new framework will be provided soon.

Contact Gerald May, Community Engagement Manager, (02) 6624 0333 or [NNSWLHD-Engagement@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NNSWLHD-Engagement@health.nsw.gov.au) to find out more.

# Reducing stigma and discrimination - it's up to us

**Data shows that 80% of people who inject drugs have experienced discrimination within the health care setting<sup>i</sup>, and North Coast Public Health Unit (NCPHU) is taking action to reduce this.**

The NCPHU recently ran an internal campaign to encourage staff in Mid North Coast and Northern NSW Local Health Districts to complete the My Health Learning online training, 'Stigma, Discrimination & Injecting Drug Use' (course code 96479339).

An amazing 644 staff across both LHDs completed the training and went into the running to win a \$50 voucher. The lucky winners from NNSWLHD were Heather Gould, Anett Rassow, Vicky Phillips and Pamela Brand.

Voucher winners stated that "this training was great at raising awareness about an important issue that they had never considered before", and encouraged "all health staff to complete the training".

Despite the success of this campaign, we still have a long way to go to reduce stigma and discrimination, and increase access to health services for people who inject drugs in Northern NSW.

Our rural region consistently shows high rates of receptive syringe sharing, reflecting the fact that accessibility and availability of injecting equipment is still a major concern for people who inject drugs.

Northern NSW also has some of the highest rates of hepatitis C, a blood borne virus (BBV) primarily transmitted via the sharing of injecting equipment.

Wayne Jones, NNSWLHD Chief Executive, said this training promotes NSW Health's CORE Values.

*"One of our core values is that we should never lose sight of our patients' fundamental right to be treated with dignity, compassion and respect," Mr Jones said.*



NNSWLHD Chief Executive Wayne Jones and North Coast Public Health Unit HARP Manager Franklin John-Leader discuss the campaign

"As health professionals, we should recognise that when a community member, including someone who inject drugs, accesses a health service, they are making a health-affirming choice and it's our job to encourage and support them in this process", Mr Jones added.

For more information on reducing stigma and discrimination, contact your local Harm Reduction Service or email Franklin John-Leader, Manager HARP Health Promotion and Prevention Programs, Franklin.JohnLeader@health.nsw.gov.au.

<sup>i</sup>Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL), 2012

## Kick-starting hearts with more than coffee

*Hearts are beating with joy following a generous donation of some new life-saving equipment from Murwillumbah Hospital's Coffee shop.*

Profits from the volunteer run coffee shop at Murwillumbah District Hospital help buy equipment for the hospital – this time in the form of six Lifepak 1000 Automatic External defibrillators (AED), which are known for their portability and user friendliness.

The six units will be placed at the Medical Ward, Surgical Ward, Assessment and Rehabilitation Unit, Recovery, Outpatient Clinic, and the Coffee Shop.

Nurse educators on site have been busy rolling out an education programme to train clinical staff in the use of the new devices.



Murwillumbah District Hospital staff and coffee shop volunteers with the new defibrillators

MDH Deputy Director of Nursing Kylie Wilmen said the lifesaving equipment is greatly appreciated.

*"Without the support of the amazing team who volunteer their time to our coffee shop, these donations would not be possible," Kylie said.*

"All of the staff would like to say a big thank you to all the team at the coffee shop who volunteer their time."

An AED is a sophisticated, yet easy to use device that can automatically analyse a heart's rhythm and assess if an electric shock is necessary, to help re-establish the heart's beat. The units are worth almost \$2,500 each.



# Digital Dose:

## eMeds Project

Following a successful go-live at Ballina, the eMeds team is off to Casino. Planning has already commenced for Grafton and Maclean, with those two sites electing to turn on Intake and Output prior to eMeds going live.

There have been some build changes which will be discussed later as well as some tricks we have gained from your valuable feedback to us, as you have become more familiar with using the application.

The eMeds team also ask that all Medical Officers and Nurses review your setup within eMeds and follow a QRG to ensure that the view you have when ordering medications is the correct one. This is part of a Coronial recommendation related to an issue that occurred in a major Sydney hospital.

### Mandatory Medication List for Medical Officers and Nurses

As a result of a Coronial Inquest in Sydney, we have revised the view around medication lists. Please reassess your medication view in light of this. This is a simple, one off process that does not need to be repeated.

Follow this link to the Quick Reference Guide.



<http://home.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/nor/emeds/>

### Warfarin Dosing

A reminder for Nursing – **DO NOT** remove the Warfarin reminder until a new dose has been ordered. It stops being a reminder and the potential for a missed dose is greater.

### Patient weight as an order

An order has been created to allow a task to pop up on Care Compass for Nursing staff.

The 'weight' order may be placed by either nursing or medical staff and will prompt the Clinician to complete a patient weight from 5am



Ballina eMeds go live

This complements the Intake and Output component in eMR for any patient where accuracy in weight is of clinical relevance. This is added like any other order.

The monthly option is to allow our Residential Aged Care sites to comply with their resident's care plans.

### Discharge Medication Accuracy

For medications which are **not going to continue** on discharge, a Medication Order Comment needs to be placed 'To be ceased upon discharge'.

### MAR view

We have found in some sites that the MAR is being reconfigured by the user to a view that offers Sort by next task due. The eMeds team **does not support** these changes.

The risks are:

- a)** you do not see the multiple orders of the same medications to review prior to administration (which may be accidental duplicates), and
- b)** staff cannot see the 'Additional Chart' order where expected.

### Changes in Build

#### Intake and Output default open

To assist clinical staff and minimise clicks where we can, settings have changed to allow the automatic default opening of intake and output.

New orders to manage Alcohol Withdrawal have been added to the Medication Formulary for Diazepam.

### Skype for Business is our primary communication tool, are you using it yet?

Skype for Business (SfB) is fully integrated with your Outlook calendar. From your Outlook calendar you can create new Skype meetings that include the ability to teleconference only and/or both teleconference (audio) and video-conference.

Creating a new Skype meeting is as easy as opening your Outlook calendar and following these seven steps:

- 1. Near the top left hand corner of the calendar window, click on the New Skype Meeting icon and a new Meeting window opens**
- 2. Invite attendees, click "To" and search their name**
- 3. Type in the Subject field to include a subject**
- 4. To find a date/time when everyone is free, click on Scheduling Assistant, a scheduling window opens, at the bottom of the window modify start and end date/time until you find a majority of free blank spaces**
- 5. Return back to appointment mode by clicking the Appointment icon**
- 6. You can type a message to participants by clicking in the space above the dotted line and typing your message e.g. Join by phone we are using teleconference only**
- 7. To send the invitation, click the Send button**

Skype for Business learning modules are included in My Health Learning (MHL) which is available from the staff intranet home page. To access the modules, go to the MHL catalogue and search for Skype for Business.

# Five minutes with an Exec: Richard Buss

*In this issue we're spending five minutes with Richard Buss, Director of Workforce.*

## *Q: Where did you grow up?*

**A:** I was born in England, and I grew up in South Africa from the age of two, living in Johannesburg. I came to Australia when I was 14. My dad's work as an academic drew us to Rockhampton; in those days you had to have a job before you could emigrate to Australia and leaving South Africa was difficult and complicated.

I lived in Rockhampton for a few years before my family bought a farm near Lismore. I moved here halfway through year 11, and finished year 12 in Lismore. I went to University in Armidale before working in a number of locations across NSW before coming back to the North Coast.

## *Q: What spurred your family to make the move to Australia?*

**A:** I lived in South Africa during apartheid, so there was total segregation in schools, shops, buses etc. We came to Australia following the uprising in Soweto. South Africa was also at war with neighbouring Namibia and Angola, so this was a very unsettling time and my family decided to emigrate.

## *Q: You don't have a South African accent; did you lose that quickly as a child?*

**A:** I did! I'm the only one in my family who doesn't have an accent. Sounding different in Rockhampton as an adolescent was not cool so I lost my accent very quickly. The rest of my family has since returned to South Africa and now I visit on a regular basis.

## *Q: What brought you back to Northern NSW?*

**A:** I went to university in Armidale, initially studying psychology. I was a psychologist in Queenbeyan and in Coffs Harbour, and then I got a job as a child and adolescent psychologist in Lismore. When my father retired from his job at Southern Cross



University they went back to live in Kenya for a few years, and I came back to the local area to look after their farm at Coffee Camp. That was about 25 years ago, and at that time I worked out of the house where Population Health and Planning is on Uralba Street.

## *Q: How did you end up in Workforce?*

**A:** I had always worked in Mental Health. I've got an interest in legal issues and especially the complex nature of the legal system. I realised that if I wanted to remain current in health, then I had to understand the legal issues within the system, as everything we do has some legal basis to it. I have finished a Law degree which has helped in my Workforce role.

I initially did a stint in Workforce, replacing Janne Boot (former NNSWLHD Director of Workforce) while she was on leave.

I did a secondment for about 3-4 months as Director of Workforce when we were combined with Mid North Coast as North Coast Area Health Service.

## *Q: What do you love most about your job now?*

**A:** I really enjoy the staff and the good people that are part of health. I've been working in health on the North Coast for a long time, and the support of staff and their commitment to their work and to each

other makes my work life enjoyable.

## *Q: What pastimes did you have as a child?*

**A:** Sport! In South Africa it's rugby, rugby and a bit more rugby. Rugby and cricket, that's all they played; no other sports cut it. Rugby was compulsory at school. You had to play on Saturday, you'd go to school Monday to Saturday morning, then do compulsory sport Saturday afternoon.

I've always played sport and really enjoyed it. It's great to be involved playing sport and participating with your kids as they grow up.

## *Q: What's your favourite movie?*

**A:** The last movie I saw was Bohemian Rhapsody about Queen, and it was great, I loved it. It reminded me of growing up, they were really great songs. I think I'll go and see the Elton John movie as well. I also enjoyed Breath – a great Australian story of growing up.

## *Q: What about the first band that you went to see?*

**A:** In South Africa I remember seeing John Paul Young, who sang 'Love is in the Air'. He came to Johannesburg and it was big news because no artist would come to South Africa because of apartheid. At the time, I didn't know that I would end up living in Australia.



# Health Pathways

Mid & North Coast of NSW

## Influenza Immunisation

**The Influenza Immunisation HealthPathway has been updated to reflect the 2019 Department of Health Guidelines.**

Key Links are available to the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination - FAQs and 2019 Influenza Vaccine Presentations and Eligibility information sheet.

In the referral section, a link to the information has been added about why and when a referrer should contact the public health unit.

In the referral section, the following information has been added:

'For clinical advice and support about immunisations for patients with complex or unusual backgrounds, or for patients who have had an adverse event following immunisations, contact the Public Health Unit.

In the 'For Health Professionals' section, the link to the NSW Government - Seasonal Influenza Vaccination 2019 has



Lismore Base Hospital management line up for flu shots from nurses Maya Veit (far left) and Bronwyn Magri (far right)

been added, which provides you with all the current updates regarding the Government-funded influenza vaccine which became available in mid-April 2019.

*Annual influenza vaccination is the most important way to prevent influenza and its accompanying complications. An annual vaccination is recommended for anyone aged 6 months and over who wishes to reduce the risk of influenza and its complications.*

Influenza vaccines are funded on the National Immunisation Program in 2019 for the following groups due to their increased risk of complications from influenza:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over
- pregnant women (during any stage of pregnancy)
- all people aged 65 years and over

- all children aged 6 months to under 5 years
- people aged six months and over with certain medical conditions which increase their risk of complications from influenza

Four age-specific quadrivalent influenza vaccines are available for people aged under 65 years. For people aged 65 years and over, an enhanced trivalent vaccine is recommended.

For a list of all localised pathways see:

Mid and North Coast Localised Pathways

**Username:** manchealth

**Password:** conn3ct3d

For more information about HealthPathways email [kkeyte@ncphn.org.au](mailto:kkeyte@ncphn.org.au).



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



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

**Dorothy Edwards Education Fund**

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For more information and applications contact:

**OUR KIDS**

info@ourkids.org.au or phone 6620 2705

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

# Celebrating each other's success

Staff recognition awards are continuing across the Northern NSW Local Health District, with Tweed and Lismore having ceremonies in May to recognise their colleagues' hard work and dedication.

At The Tweed Hospital, the Tweed Hospital Award went to VMO Claims Management Officer, Lee-Ann Van Der Poel, with the winner of the Community and Allied Health Award going to Physiotherapist Kirsty Sked.

At Lismore Base Hospital, more than 100 people turned out for the presentations (and cake).

The Endoscopy Unit took out the Hand Hygiene Perpetual Trophy, joint winners Noel Clark and Anika Howard were awarded the Staff Appreciation Award, while the Staff Appreciation Team Award went to E9 Nursing.



Top, from left, Lismore staff member Anika Howard, LBH General Manager Ian Hatton, Bronwen Renwick, Noel Clark, Anita Coghill and Summerland Branch Manager Graeme Herne

Bottom, from left, The Tweed Hospital General Manager Joe McDonald, Community and Allied Health Acting Manager Chris Hanna, Physiotherapist Kirsty Sked, VMO Claims Officer Lee-Ann Van Der Poel and Summerland Branch Manager Audra McElwee

## NEW RECRUITS FOR RESEARCH CAPACITY PROGRAM

Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) was again represented strongly in submissions for the Rural Research Capacity Building Program (RRCBP), with four new candidates joining the program for the 2019 intake.

The program is designed for health professionals wanting to develop knowledge and skills in rural health care evaluation and research, and is run by the Health Education and Training Institute (HETI). The program is only open to rurally based NSW Health staff.

Candidates learn about research in the context of rural clinical and health services, and develop skills in designing, conducting, translating and communicating research over the course of 22 months.

Candidates also get the opportunity to develop and conduct their own research project as part of the program.

The four successful applicants from NNSWLHD are:

- Patricia Long, Registered Nurse, Kamala Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit, Lismore Base Hospital;
- Amy McAlpine, Physiotherapist, Grafton Base Hospital;
- Suzanne Kuper, Practice Development Consultant, Nursing and Midwifery, NNSWLHD;
- Jacinta Felsch, Clinical Midwifery Consultant, NNSWLHD.



From left, Jacinta Felsch, Suzanne Kuper, Patricia Long and Amy McAlpine

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

# Tweed on the ball at corporate games

**The Tweed Hospital fielded an eight-man squad for the Queensland Corporate Games, held in Brisbane in May.**

Terry Wilson, NSW Health Pathology Tweed scientific officer captained the basketball team made up of staff members from pathology, physiotherapy, ERIC and the medical team. The side was managed and coached by Tweed General Manager Joe McDonald.

Tweed started with a comfortable win over DHL Express, however the next two games saw Tweed up against stronger teams, and unfortunately they didn't progress to the medal rounds. It is being reported, though, that they were the unofficial Best Dressed team on court.

"The tournament itself was exceptionally well organised, and tremendous fun," Terry said.



From left, back, Jason Muller (ERIC), Josh Campbell (Physio), Owen van Eck (Pathology), Shang Bradley (Pathology), Luke Terrill (Physio)

From left, front, Joey Maynard Gray (Dr), Terry Wilson (Pathology), Kuyan Hamlin (Pathology), Joe McDonald (GM)

*"The Tweed Jam has already promised to be back again next year, bigger and better, with hopefully more involvement from other hospital staff in some of the many other wonderful sports that are available for competition."*

The Games draw nearly 3,000 participants from over 150 organisations to compete over the 3 days, all in support of charity, Beyond Blue.



The BreastScreen Bilbies

## BreastScreen Bilbies join Relay for Life

**Seven BreastScreen staff members recently participated in the Cancer Council's Relay for Life in Alstonville.**

The BreastScreen Bilbies team of Belinda, Jane, Gemma, Anne, Pam, Deb, and Maureen walked throughout the night to celebrate survivors, honour those lost to cancer and raise funds to support people affected by cancer, fund research and improve cancer prevention.

Together the team raised \$2347.

Congratulations!



Opposing teams pose for a photo after the game

## Howzat!?

**The annual hospital rivalry was in full swing again this year at the Murwillumbah District Hospital versus The Tweed Hospital Cricket match.**

The two squads ditched scrubs for whites and faced off in a big-hitting 20/20 match. With arguably Tweed's top player,

professional cricketer and intern Dr Georgia Redmayne being away, Tweed still managed to come out on top captained by General Surgeon Candice Silverman.

The final score after 40 overs was Tweed 217, Murwillumbah 185.

## Save the date! CYCLE for LIFE

**A fun and FREE social cycle aimed at raising awareness for organ and tissue donation.**

**Where:** Salt Central Park, Kingscliff

**When:** Sunday 28th July, 2019

**What:** You can participate in the 100km, 50km, 30km cycling events, or the Family cycle/walk

### Did you know?

By deciding to become an organ and tissue donor, you can transform people's lives. Due to the generosity of deceased donors and their families in Northern NSW, 23 people received life-saving transplants in 2018.



[www.cycleforlife.com.au](http://www.cycleforlife.com.au)



NORTHERN NSW LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT NEWS

ISSUE 4 - 2019 JUNE / JULY

NORTHERN

# EXPOSURE

