

# Northern Exposure



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# Northern EXPOSURE

**Editor** Fiona Baker,  
Manager Media and Corporate  
Communications

**Phone** 02 6620 2141

**Email** [nswlhd-media@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nswlhd-media@health.nsw.gov.au)

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# Executive update



**Tracey Maisey – Chief Executive**

What a year it has been! As you're reading this, I'd love you to pause, take a big deep breath, and stop to reflect on all your achievements over the past 12 months.

We've cared for more than 220,000 people in our emergency departments and performed more than 31,000 surgeries. We've celebrated the completion of the Lismore Base Hospital redevelopment, progressed

the construction and transition planning for the new Tweed Valley Hospital, and commenced the planning for Grafton Base Hospital's redevelopment. We've delivered essential dental services to kids in remote schools, held our first ever careers expo and launched a vaping taskforce to help reduce harm to young people in our area.

We've shared our successes through our Quality Awards, our Nursing and Midwifery Awards, our Allied Health Awards.

We've restructured our procurement team, supported our emerging leaders, launched Voluntary Assisted Dying, and rolled out access to Patient Reported Measures, as well as launching our new program, Creating a Sustainable Future Together.

Thank you, and well done, to each of you for the role you have played in providing health care to our patients and our community throughout 2023.

As we look towards the new year, I'm excited to see the improvements we can make in how we deliver our services, and how we enhance the engagement and wellbeing of our workforce.

Studies have proven that when employees are satisfied at work, the quality and safety of patient care is improved. A positive workplace culture means reduced staff turnover, better staff wellbeing, and improved productivity and performance.

As an Executive Team, we strongly support actions that are known to improve how we all work together. These include embracing transparency, recognising and rewarding valuable contributions, embracing autonomy among employees, practicing flexibility, communicating purpose and passion, and staying true to our core values.

We look forward to collaborating with you in this important work.

I wish you all a safe and joyous holiday period with family and friends.

## From the Chair



**Peter Carter – Board Chair**

In August 2023, the NSW Government announced a Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding.

The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry have a much broader sweep than funding, extending to governance, service delivery, workforce, models of care, education, training and more.

In the limited time available to make submissions to the Inquiry, our Board prepared a preliminary submission with a view to making further submissions over coming months.

One area of interest to the Inquiry is decentralisation of healthcare governance and operations versus centralisation. The Board argued strongly for continued, and even perhaps enhanced, decentralisation. This extract of our submission below shows an example of the advantages of decentralisation:

*In the Board's view, one of the main strengths of NSW Health is its decentralised structure which provides significant independence to LHDs to deliver services that are cognisant of local conditions and populations.*

*This was no more evident than during the COVID crisis. Our Health District, for example, was able to respond immediately to low vaccination rates in Aboriginal communities by partnering with local Aboriginal Medical Services (Bullinah, Rekindling the Spirit and Bulgarr Ngaru), Police and the Australian Defence Force to commission mobile, culturally appropriate vaccination clinics.*

*Vaccination rates rose quickly as a result and were soon comparable to the vaccination rates for the non-Aboriginal population. This demonstrates the value of decentralisation in healthcare governance, management and delivery, and it reflects national and international evidence that better outcomes are achieved for Aboriginal people when Aboriginal people participate in leading and managing services.*

The preliminary submission then expanded on the importance of addressing inequities in Aboriginal health and concluded by advising that subsequent submissions would focus further on this and on the other Board priorities, which are:

- workforce and culture
- patient flow
- environmental sustainability and healthcare.

More information can be found at the [nsw.gov.au](https://www.nsw.gov.au).

# Building community connection

More than 50 South Sea Islander community members gathered on the Tweed Valley Hospital site to place the final stones on the drystone walls for a new park on the hospital campus.

Acting General Manager for The Tweed Hospital, Adam Reid said the South Sea Islander Reflection Park recognises the history of the South Sea Islander people, and their connection to the hospital site.

*"This park has truly been designed by the community; from the concept of the nautilus shell shape, the inscription in the paving and the map of the South Sea Islands in the central plaque, as well as the selection of plant species," Adam said.*

*"Many individuals have shared their family histories and experiences with us, and these stories have been collated to create an information panel that tells the history of the hospital site, as well as the connection of the South Sea Islander community to it."*

The park space features two drystone walls, which have been constructed using stones from walls within the hospital development area that were disassembled, with the stones archived and stored on the site until the park design was complete.

Tim Mason, Senior Project Director for Health Infrastructure said, "We understand the significance of drystone walls to the South

Sea Islander community, and it was important to the team that we consult with the community to understand how they wanted to reinterpret the stones on the hospital site."

*"These new walls frame a beautiful park space for all hospital visitors to enjoy and represent an ongoing connection between the South Sea Islander community and the hospital site," Tim said.*

After laying the stones, the community were invited to have a birds-eye view of the park area from upper levels of the main hospital building, showcasing the unique design to its fullest extent. The event concluded with a joyful traditional dance in the park.

The community organisations attending commented that it was truly satisfying to see the project come to life after three years of extensive community consultations.

*"The South Sea Islander Reflection Park will honour our SSI history and acknowledge the dedication and lasting influence of our island ancestors.*

*"We are thrilled to be a part of something that future generations can cherish.*

*"An amazing tribute to our ancestors."*

The South Sea Islander Reflection Park is near the front entry to the hospital campus and will be accessible to all visitors to the hospital when it opens in May next year.

## Did you know?

As part of the planning approval process for the Tweed Valley Hospital, a historical heritage assessment of the site in August 2018 uncovered five dry-stone walls of varying length and condition, measuring around 750m in total.

The walls are believed to have been built through the labour of South Sea Islanders in the late 1800s when the land formed part of a sugar plantation.

Two walls and a small section of a third wall were positioned within the proposed development area for the hospital. In September 2019, the stones from these walls were removed and archived following the advice of the project's heritage consultant. More than 80 per cent of the walls on the hospital site have been kept and protected.





# Staff lay down roots at Tweed Valley Hospital

Staff and community members recently contributed their personal touch to the new Tweed Valley Hospital campus, planting a variety of native seedlings in the community garden.

The seedlings were gifted to staff and community members in December 2021, and have been grown and nurtured over the past two years.

Health Infrastructure Executive Director, Rural and Regional Amanda Bock said the planting of the seedlings signifies the role staff and the community have played in the design and planning of the major hospital development.

*“Staff and the community have been instrumental in transforming the concept of the Tweed Valley Hospital into an impressive health facility,” Amanda said.*

*“Over 400 staff members from The Tweed Hospital were involved in the planning and design of the new hospital, and more than 119 community members have generously volunteered their time and expertise along the way. The garden is an opportunity to acknowledge their contributions*

*and will serve as a lasting legacy of the important role they played in helping us get to where we are today.”*

Construction of the main hospital, health hub and the multi-level car park is now complete, and the opening date has been set for Tuesday 14 May 2024.

Northern NSW Local Health District Chief Executive, Tracey Maisey, said the opening date provides certainty to staff, patients, community members and stakeholders involved in delivering health services from the new site.

*“The move to the Tweed Valley Hospital is the biggest whole of hospital move in regional NSW history, and it is important for the safety of patients and staff that we allow appropriate time for this process to occur. We’re excited to work together with our staff and our community to deliver a smooth transition to the new site from the moment the doors open.”*

The community garden is at the east entry to the hospital and will create a welcoming place for patients, visitors, and staff.



Director of Emergency Medicine for Tweed, Byron and Murwillumbah, Doctor Rob Davies and his daughter Holly plant some seedlings at the hospital

## Voluntary Assisted Dying – what you need to know

Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) was legalised in NSW on 28 November 2023.

You can find information for healthcare workers on a range of topics on the [NSW VAD website](#)

- information covering obligations of healthcare workers
- ethical considerations for healthcare workers
- VAD handbook and other resources are available.

### Obligations of healthcare workers

All healthcare workers in NSW have obligations under the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2022, including those with a conscientious objection.

### Training

A short, 30-minute, general awareness training for all staff is now available through My Health Learning – search Voluntary Assisted Dying or course code: 501951057.

Upon completing this awareness training module, healthcare workers will be able to:

- outline the broad concepts of voluntary assisted dying in NSW, including eligibility
- identify the obligations of healthcare workers in NSW under the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2022

- where appropriate, guide patients and their families to find further information and support resources on voluntary assisted dying.

### For all patient referrals:

NSW VAD Care Navigator Service  
Monday to Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm  
Phone: 1300 802 133  
Email: [NSLHD-VADCareNavigator@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NSLHD-VADCareNavigator@health.nsw.gov.au)

For more information contact VAD Project Manager: Suzie Kuper call 0472 727 286 or [Suzanne.kuper@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Suzanne.kuper@health.nsw.gov.au)

# State recognition for Assertive Outreach Service

The Tweed Assertive Outreach Service (AO) has won the NSW Premier's Award in the category 'Connecting Communities'.

The program includes experienced case workers from specialised housing services at Momentum Collective and Social Futures, housing staff from Department of Communities and Justice Housing, and NNSWLHD staff Sarah Mogler, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Assertive Outreach Program, Kingscliff Community Health and Donna Paris Clinical Nurse Specialist, Homeless Health Outreach Team (HHOT), Tweed/Byron Community Mental Health.

AO is an incredible program providing wrap-around support to vulnerable and long-term rough sleepers in our community while transitioning them into stable housing.

*"Our first point of contact with people is often when we are on early morning patrols engaging with people who are street sleeping. We have housed over 140 people in the past four years*

*with a high tenancy success rate," Sarah said.*

*"Winning the 2023 team Premier's award for Connecting Communities has thrown this work into the spotlight, highlighting the issues around rough sleeping, homelessness and most importantly the great work our team continues to do.*

*"Much of Health's role is building rapport and opportunity for clients to reconnect with health services. The work is varied and challenging.*

*"Both Donna and I have extensive contacts within Health which we utilise shamelessly. We truly can't celebrate the wins without acknowledging the support of our LHD family. Special mention goes out to the community and hospital staff whom we see go the extra mile for people every day."*

AO was initially funded as a pilot program by the NSW Independent Planning Commission to support Tweed LGA rough sleepers to access housing.



From left: Sarah Mogler and Donna Paris

NNSWLHD staff are invited to contact the team to discuss working collaboration opportunities to support people experiencing homelessness.

Contact 0437 288 905

# Training breaks ground for staff working with at risk Aboriginal youth

*"There is nothing we can't achieve as Aboriginal people if we believe in ourselves."*

This was a key message delivered at a recent three-day workshop on supporting Aboriginal youth through mental health crises.

In November, Dr Tracy Westerman AM (WA Nyamal woman) presented her ground-breaking work to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Tracy's PHD resulted in the development of the Westerman Aboriginal Symptom Checklist – Youth and Adults (WASCYA/A), and it is the only culturally and clinically valid tool for at risk Aboriginal youth.

*"We wanted Tracy to speak to this tool, discuss her groundbreaking work in community Indigenous suicide prevention and inspire us to do better in providing a*

*culturally competent service for Indigenous youth living in NSW," Paula Sheehan, Community Teams Manager, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) said.*

Tracy was the first Aboriginal person to complete a combined Masters and PhD in Clinical Psychology.

Tracy is developing the next generation of Aboriginal psychologists by personally funding and launching the Dr Tracy Westerman Aboriginal Psychology Scholarship Program.

Our very own CAMHS community Lismore Aboriginal Mental Health Clinician, Kelly Hyde, is being mentored by Tracy to complete her Psychology studies.



# People Matter Employee Survey 2023

Thank you for participating in the 2023 People Matter Employee Survey. Your feedback will further improve our culture and workplace environments.

We achieved our greatest response rate to date with 2,952 staff participating, around 46% of our total workforce. All reports have now been received and these are available on the [PMES 2023 results intranet page](#).

Congratulations to the following services/ work groups who met the team competition criteria for achieving a high response rate, making them eligible to receive a monetary prize, to be spent on a staff-related activity:

- Ballina District Hospital – non-nursing
- Ballina District Hospital – nursing
- Byron Central Hospital
- Cancer and Haematology services
- Casino District Memorial Hospital – nursing
- Casino District Memorial Hospital – non-nursing
- Health Promotion Services
- MPSs – Bonalbo, Kyogle, Nimbin and Urbenville



- Maclean – non-nursing
- Maclean – Nursing and Midwifery
- Murwillumbah District Hospital – non-nursing
- Murwillumbah District Hospital – Nursing and Midwifery

An initial review of the LHD high-level results indicates an improvement in key outcomes such as the staff engagement and job satisfaction scores. As well as a very high number of staff responding favourably/in agreement to the following:

- I understand what ethical behaviour means within my workplace
- people in my workgroup treat each other with respect
- I support my organisation's values
- I am comfortable notifying my manager if I become aware of any risks at work

- my workgroup works collaboratively to achieve its goals.

However, the results also indicate areas where we should focus our improvement efforts, and where we'll need to work together with our managers and teams to strengthen and grow. Some of the areas we will be looking at further include:

- leadership and management capability
- listening and taking actions
- communication and change management
- recruitment practices.

The ELT and senior managers are currently reviewing the results with their teams to identify priorities and actions aimed at creating positive improvements to our experiences of working in our LHD.

[Read PMES results.](#)

## eReferral pilot leads to District-wide roll out

After a successful pilot of electronic Referrals ('eReferrals'), the program is now rolling out across the District.

eReferrals are an alternative to fax, email and paper, saving time and improving safety and quality throughout the referral process.

Project Manager, Tim Marsh said the program provides a range of benefits to the LHD, with minimal change needed to implement it.

*"eReferrals makes external referral handling simpler and faster and saves time for our admin staff. It improves communication to external referrers, specifically for referral status updates and triage outcomes. eReferrals also improve named referral rates contributing to the financial sustainability of our services," Tim said.*

eReferrals were first enabled in the Lismore Base Hospital Outpatient Department, Lismore Pain Clinic, Integrated Aboriginal Chronic Care and the Lismore Knee and Hip Arthritis Service, High Risk Foot Service, Pulmonary Rehab and Respiratory Liaison services in June 2020.

Since then, over 10,500 eReferrals have been sent by GPs and specialists, and it has improved named referral rates by 15 per cent across these services.

In November 2023, the NNSWLHD Cancer Care Services went live with eReferrals. GPs and other referrers across the District can now use eReferrals to Tweed Medical Oncology, Lismore Radiation Oncology and Haematology at Tweed, Lismore and Grafton.

During November, all LHD services who accept external referrals, were given an opportunity to register their interest in using eReferrals through an EOI process.

eReferrals will be progressively rolled out to these services from early 2024.

If your service wasn't aware of the EOI, and is interested in eReferrals, please contact the project team. Late submissions may be considered for future rollout.

Project Manager: Tim Marsh  
02 6620 0829  
[timothy.marsh@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:timothy.marsh@health.nsw.gov.au)



# Profile: Denise Clarke

## Celebrating fifty years of community caring

Many things have changed in the 50 years since Denise Clarke began her nursing career. What hasn't changed is the dedication, thoughtfulness and love nurses show their patients and residents.

Denise is an enrolled nurse at Kyogle MPS, or the Memorial Hospital as it was called when she started her training aged seventeen in 1971 – the same hospital where she was born!

At the time, the hospital had 26-bed female and male wards, a five-bed children's ward, eight-bed maternity unit, an operating theatre and a 12-bed ward reserved for private patients ('The Unit'). There was also a 20-bed maternity unit located on Campbell Road.



Denise recalls this period as very busy and physically demanding but rewarding.

*"My uniform was a dress with a starched cap and red cape, and because I grew up in Kyogle I lived at home with my parents before marrying Paul. In those days, most of the nurses lived in the nurses' quarters," Denise said.*

When she finished training, Denise began a 6-week rotating roster through each ward. However, Matron Bridie Gregory quickly recognised Denise's kind and compassionate disposition as being well suited to maternity nursing.

For the next six years Denise worked in the maternity ward, as in-charge on night duty, responsible for observations of up to eight mothers and babies, and bathing

and weighing each infant before and after feeds to calculate intake.

The nurse was also responsible for cleaning the ward and making tea and toast for mothers. During the nights, registered nurses would usually only be called if a birthing mother presented.

Denise reflects on the many changes in practice through her nursing career with many tasks now obsolete.

*"We were responsible for washing and rolling bandages for re-use, sterilising instruments, and making our own dressing packs.*

*"All patients had their hands and face washed before breakfast, and we were responsible for serving a hearty breakfast of porridge, toast, bacon and eggs from a large trolley.*

*"There were no mechanical lifters, nor wardpeople to assist us with mobilising patients.*

*"The Matron or a senior RN did daily ward inspections, ensuring pillowcase openings were facing away from the doorway, sheet hospital corners were crisp and neat, and trolley wheels were in perfect alignment.*

*"All metal surfaces had to be streak-free, using metho for shine. Every morning at 0600 hours, ENs had to clean the bedpans with big blocks of sans soap and steel wool, followed by Ajax before sterilising."*

Since the opening of the Multi-Purpose Service in 2003, Denise has continued to demonstrate a deep commitment and high aptitude in caring for all patients, in particular the permanent residents in the aged care unit.

NNSWLHD Director Nursing and Midwifery Service, Katharine Duffy, acknowledged Denise's 50 years' service in November this year.

*"Denise is by any measure a woman who found her true*

*calling in the nursing profession. A compassionate and helpful colleague, an advocate for all consumers and a pleasure to have in the nursing team," Katharine said.*

*"Denise was a finalist in the 2019 Excellence in Nursing Awards – Consumer Appreciation Category. Thank you for your professionalism, care and commitment."*

Denise takes the praise in her stride.

*"Just like my mum before me, I've been a carer all my life. I look after one of my grandchildren on the days I don't work, and I love supporting my elderly neighbours," Denise said.*

The one constant in Denise's life is how she starts her day.

*"A seven-kilometre walk at 5am, followed by a coffee with cream and honey. At 71 I'm on no medications – I'm sure it's the honey!"*

You may be wondering if Denise is planning on retiring soon? "No" was the empathic reply.









# Local Nurse Practitioner awarded mentor of the year

On 12 December, International Nurse Practitioner Day, we recognise the contribution to quality patient care that our nurse practitioners (NP) provide to our community.

Darren Smyth is a Nurse Practitioner working in Alcohol and Other Drugs, and he was recently awarded the Nurse Practitioner Mentor of the Year at the Australian College Nurses Practitioners conference.

This award recognises a Nurse Practitioner who is influencing the education and development of nurse practitioners in Australia through clinical supervision and/or mentoring.

Darren began his drug and alcohol work in 1988 at a counselling centre in West Sydney which provided the catalyst to embark on a career in the field. Throughout the past 30 years Darren has worked across regional and remote Australia in various roles including; detoxification units, rehabilitation programs, community dual-diagnosis, research, hospital consultation and liaison, management, and the prison environment, working in public and private practice within the drug and alcohol field.

Meanwhile, Darren also continued to expand his knowledge and skills with studies in anthropology, education and nursing.

Darren is an AOD NP in Lismore, working in the inpatient withdrawal unit at Riverland's Drug and Alcohol Centre, and facilitating an opioid replacement clinic.

*"I enjoy the extended scope the role provides, it's a great conduit between medical and nursing staff," Darren said.*

*"I am a strong advocate of AOD nursing as a speciality, and for those nurses who seek a clinical career pathway to know they have a trajectory of aiming for NP. Currently, I feel pleasantly challenged by the workload, focusing on primary health and the variety of patients I am seeing within the AOD space.*

*"The provision of a wholistic assessment within a nursing framework grants not only a wide scope of practice but*

*invites patients to be the centre of their care. Such care aims to address many of the social determinants involved in working with AOD patients and their comorbidities."*

Jason Harrison, a fellow AOD NP in Central Queensland, nominated Darren for the award.

*"Darren has been a strong advocate for implementation of more nurse practitioners into the drug and alcohol sector in NSW as well as Australia-wide. He implemented the first drug and alcohol NP symposium, which continues to grow in strength and numbers." Jason said.*

Darren has been admitted into the College as a fellow, a title which recognises individuals who make substantial contributions to the college and have demonstrated professional excellence in nursing and/or the health of the community.

Congratulations Darren!



Darren Smyth, above at centre. Yes, the awards night was held on Halloween!

# RnR space at Kyogle MPS now open for residents

A ribbon cutting on 21 November officially marked the opening of the new residents' lounge at Kyogle MPS.

The event was attended by NNSWLHD Board Chair Peter Carter, NNSWLHD Chief Executive Tracey Maisey, local MPS supporter Tom FitzGerald OAM, residential aged care residents and community members.

Peter Carter said the new residents' lounge will improve the aged care service environment and support activities of daily living.

*"I want to thank, and recognise the contributions of, the Kyogle community who supported the project, and also Fred Goodman, the NNSWLHD senior*

*project officer for the capital development," Peter said.*

The building works were jointly funded by the Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Aged Care and NSW Health.

The local community supported the refurbishment program through donations and other forms of support, including from Kyogle MPS United Hospitals Auxiliary, Kyogle Tidy Towns, Kyogle Amateur Theatrical Society and several private donors.



Opening the lounge from left: NNSWLHD Board Chair Peter Carter, Tom FitzGerald OAM, 103-year-old MPS resident Vera Gardener and UHA President Margaret Mitchell



# Staff health and wellbeing programs

As healthcare staff, we are often so focussed on looking after our community, we forget to look after ourselves!

So, here are some health and wellbeing programs available to all staff to help you prioritise self-care in 2024.

## Get Healthy Service

- ✓ a free, customised health coaching program for anyone who lives in NSW and is over 16
- ✓ to join, call 1300 806 258 Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm or register online at [gethealthynsw.com.au](https://gethealthynsw.com.au).

## Get Healthy in Pregnancy

- ✓ a free service for all pregnant women in NSW, ask your midwife, GP or obstetrician for a referral to this program at your next visit
- ✓ call 1300 806 258 Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm or register online at [gethealthynsw.com.au](https://gethealthynsw.com.au).

## Fitness Passport

- ✓ your pass to access an extensive choice of fitness facilities for you and your family
- ✓ there are over 800 fitness facilities available in our region, including most local swimming pools
- ✓ more than 1,200 NNSWLHD staff members already take advantage of this service and your whole family can benefit if you take out a family membership
- ✓ for more information including membership levels and pricing, visit [portal.fitnesspassport.com.au/NHN](https://portal.fitnesspassport.com.au/NHN).

Staff can also refer their patients to Get Healthy and Get Healthy in Pregnancy. To find out more about how to refer patients to these programs, contact Health Promotion on [NNSWLHD-HealthPromotion@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NNSWLHD-HealthPromotion@health.nsw.gov.au)



Michael Border and Anthony Franks exercising on free outdoor equipment.

# New Chair of the North Coast NSW Human Research Ethics Committee appointed!

Associate Professor Kazi Rahman has been appointed as Chairperson of the North Coast NSW Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

**This important position leads the HREC, which is an integral part of our research governance framework and is responsible for ensuring the well-being of participants involved in health-related research conducted in Northern NSW and Mid North Coast local health districts.**

Dr Alex Stephens, NNSWLHD Director of Research, welcomed Kazi to the role.

“Kazi brings tremendous experience and knowledge to this position, including insights gained from having lived and worked in our region. He brings a calm temperament, attention to detail and tremendous insight,” Alex said.

Kazi is an Associate Professor of Healthcare Innovations, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine with

one of our academic and research partners, Bond University.

He has a wealth of research and program experience in population health and formal education, including a degree in Medicine from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, a Master of Science in Epidemiology from Harvard University, USA, and a PhD in Epidemiology and Population Health from the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University in Canberra.

Kazi is known to our region, having worked as a Senior Epidemiologist, North Coast Population and Public Health Directorate and as a Senior Lecturer, Rural Research Education with the University Centre for Rural Health.

If you'd like more information about research projects in NNSWLHD, contact Rebecca Lavery, Executive Officer to the North Coast NSW HREC: [NNSWLHD-Ethics@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NNSWLHD-Ethics@health.nsw.gov.au)



# Two millennium plus years of service

Matt Long, Director Corporate Services took to the road throughout 2023 to meet with Corporate Services staff to acknowledge their years of service to NSW Health.

*"It is a remarkable achievement that some of our staff have over 50 years of service with NSW Health. It was really enjoyable meeting with staff and*

*showing our appreciation for their dedication to keeping our facilities and services running to support our community," Matt said.*

Corporate Services has a combined 2,390+ years of service to NSW Health. Well done, team!









# Nurses join our cultural melting pot

In the last few months, we've welcomed the first cohort of internationally recruited nurses who are now settling into hospitals across the District.

So far, 21 registered nurses have been welcomed from the United Kingdom and Ireland, with a further 39 scheduled to arrive before February 2024.

Director of Nursing and Midwifery at NNSWLHD Katharine Duffy said the incoming nurses will provide a significant boost to the local health workforce, with experience in areas such as emergency, theatres, intensive care, and medical nursing.

*"The majority of our new nurses are Registered Nurse year 8, which means they're bringing a wealth of experience to our facilities and communities," Katharine said.*

Nurse Meera Krishnan, who arrived from the UK in October, said the support from the NNSWLHD Nursing and Midwifery team has helped her quickly settle into Lismore Base Hospital's Surgical Ward.

*"We were very stressed when we were moving over to a new country, because it's a new place, we don't know how it will be, and the workplace will be very different," Meera said.*

*"But when we came, the people here welcomed us like their own, and we feel so comfortable, even on the first day.*

*"Actually, there was nothing to worry about, everything was at ease. I'm so happy for being here."*

Meera's colleague, Tessy Thomas, said the liveability of the region was a huge drawcard in helping decide to make the move to Australia.

*"The climate in the UK is too cold. We were searching for a good climate, and we got very lucky. It's almost like the Indian climate, so I'm very happy to live here," Tessy said.*

Indian national Kavitha Mathew, is settling in to work at Kyogle Multi-Purpose Service, having been drawn to the combination of acute care and aged care, which matches her earlier experience.

*"I'm very happy to work in Kyogle," Kavitha said.*

*"I like to live in a small town, because it's not rushed, it's quiet and calm. Australia is the dream destination."*



Resmi Vibin (Grafton)



From left: Meera Krishnan, Tessy Thomas, Feba Varkey (Lismore) and Kavitha Mathew (Kyogle MPS), Sreelakshmi (Lismore), Jinumon Xavier (Ballina)



From left: Berry Poduthas, Seena Mathew, Maya Sreekumar, Soumya Sugai (Tweed)

## Farewell Joe McDonald

We recently farewelled Joe McDonald, as he said goodbye after more than five years as the General Manager of The Tweed Hospital.

During this time, Joe played a central role in the planning and development of the new Tweed Valley Hospital.

*"Together, we embarked on a monumental journey, one that saw us build a new hospital from the ground up. The dedication and hard work of every, one of you has been nothing short of extraordinary. You should be very proud of your amazing new hospital you played a crucial role in this achievement," Joe said.*

Joe praised the staff at The Tweed Hospital for their ongoing commitment to patient care.

*"Our staff, from the nurses on the frontlines to the support staff working tirelessly behind the scenes, have been nothing short of amazing.*

Lynne Weir, Director Clinic Operations, said "I would like to acknowledge and thank Joe for his contribution to the Tweed Hospital and the LHD and I wish him all the best for his new position with Tasmanian Health."



Santa's helper, Joe McDonald with 'patient' Graham Beattie, domestic services



# Care now closer to home for Tweed kids

The Children's Hospital in the Home service at Tweed has received a make-over.

Melissa Rahmate, A/Manager Service Redesign Corporate Services and Samantha Peterson, Nurse Unit Manager, Paediatrics, The Tweed Hospital, along with their team, developed a model of care for Children's Hospital in the Home and Post Acute Care as part of the Graduate Certificate in Clinical Redesign course.

The 'Home Grown' project is about maximising the Tweed Children's Hospital in the Home and Paediatric Post Acute Care Service. It ensures local children are receiving best practice care as close to home as possible.

*"For children and their families, this means reducing the amount of time they spend in hospital or travelling to hospitals for follow up treatment. As the region grows, more choice of care settings will also reduce pressure on hospital beds and the carbon footprint from healthcare travel," Mellissa said.*

*"Hospital stays can be frightening and confusing for children and some families were having to spend a lot of time travelling across the border for services that could be provided here in Tweed," Sam said.*

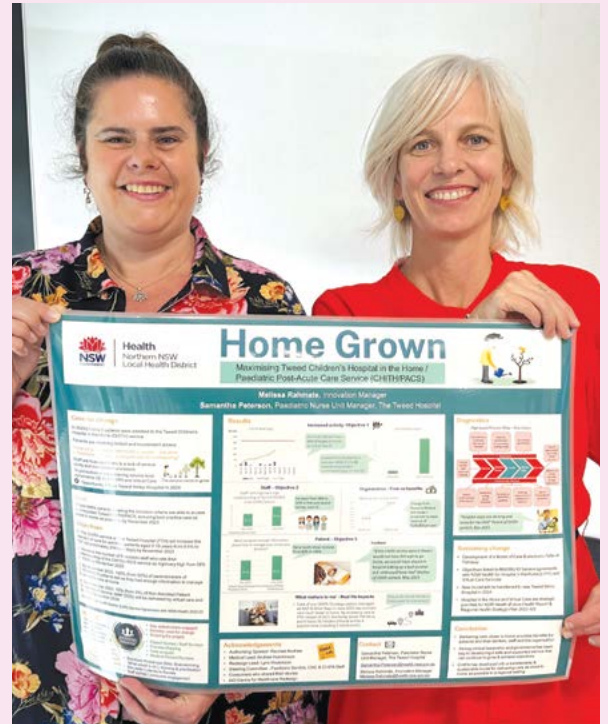
Following the redesign, a new service model was developed, called CHIPA: Children's Hospital in the Home, Infusions, Procedures, Acute Review. Through close collaboration with the medical lead, Dr Andrew Hutchinson and paediatric team, the service has been restructured to provide greater integration and access.

The project was presented to ACI and UTAS's Healthcare Redesign Symposium in Sydney in September.

The team is now very excited to be bringing this contemporary and sustainable model of care to the new Tweed Valley Hospital in 2024.



From left: Melissa Rahmate, Susan Pearce, Secretary NSW Health and Samantha Peterson



Sam and Melissa with the poster they presented at the Healthcare Redesign Symposium

## PAT - did you know?

Performance and Talent System (PAT) is the statewide system to capture and record performance reviews.



It syncs with Stafflink automatically and will show the performance review within 24 hours.

Find upcoming training for Employees and Managers on the PAT intranet hub [Pat intranet hub](#)

The PAT support team can be contacted for all enquiries [NNSWLHD-PAT@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NNSWLHD-PAT@health.nsw.gov.au)

# *Northern* Exposure

Issue 7, 2023 December



#### **Front cover**

The Tweed Hospital OB/GYN team, including Dr Bianca Bryce with baby Ronan (future OB/GYN), Dr Louise White, Dr Steve Abbey, Dr Laura Edwards and Dr Amanda Eames. Missing from the team is Dr Geeta Sales

#### **Back cover**

Richmond Valley