

# Northern Exposure



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Michelle Wilkes

# Northern EXPOSURE

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# Executive update



**Lynne Weir – A/Chief Executive**

It's that time of year again when we are celebrating the amazing work of our staff, and the innovative solutions which are helping to improve the way we provide health care to our local communities and patients.

I recently attended the Big Ideas finals, where four incredible projects were presented, all vastly different from each other.

The ideas ranged from education to support clinicians to care for people with disability, to culturally sensitive spaces for Aboriginal people receiving cancer treatment, to upskilling for midwives in how to diagnose breech presentations, and even 3D printed simulation aids.

Innovation can come from anywhere, which is why these opportunities are so important, as they provide a chance for anyone to put forward great solutions to issues which you, our staff, are passionate about.

We've also recently held our annual Quality Awards, our District's night of nights to recognise projects which are contributing to improved patient outcomes, safer care, and better ways of working. I congratulate every one of our finalists and winners.

We saw wonderful projects which are helping to reduce patient falls, provide nurses with leadership skills, speed up processing of referrals using artificial intelligence, and improve the physical health of patients receiving mental health care, just to name a few. Look out for our feature on the Quality Awards in the next edition of Northern Exposure.

Innovation can take many forms, and sometimes a simple solution can be a game changer. A great example is the new Health Communication Toolkit, which provides information and resources to support basic communication for people with communication difficulties or additional needs. Created through a previous Big Ideas grant, the toolkit is now available to all staff [via our intranet](#), and I encourage you to take a look.

## From the Chair



**Peter Carter – Board Chair**

Isolated and minority groups, whether indigenous minorities, ethnic minorities, economic minorities or social minorities are almost without exception worse off when it comes to quality of life and quality of health care.

As a group, Aboriginal Australians have one of the lowest life expectancy rates in the nation. Today, that life expectancy is on average 10 years less than for non-Aboriginal Australians.

A large part of this is due to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, respiratory disease and kidney disease. Many of these have common risk factors, including smoking, poor nutrition and lack of exercise.

In the 1990s, the then president of the College of Surgeons and I, as CEO, visited 'outback' Aboriginal communities. On returning, we reported to a College Council meeting that whilst the College's developing countries health outreach program was leading to improvements in health outcomes in those countries, we had largely ignored an almost identical problem amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our own country.

Our LHD has a higher proportion of Aboriginal people than anywhere else in NSW, and our Board has identified Aboriginal health as one

of its current top four priorities. We are working closely with the Aboriginal Health Directorate to ensure that we are embedding strategies to improve and extend our partnerships and increase our Aboriginal workforce.

This will allow our organisation to grow with a better understanding of the importance of cultural considerations and ensure Aboriginal people feel safe when accessing our services. Better health outcomes will follow.

NAIDOC week will be celebrated from 2 to 9 July this year with a focus on the important and prominent place Elders have in sharing and maintaining culture. Keep your eye out for a schedule of events near you and show your support and learn during NAIDOC week.

# Big Ideas get a kick start

The winner and finalists of the 2023 Big Ideas innovation challenge were supported to get their projects underway utilising \$50,000 prize money.

There were 29 submissions for this round, and the judging panel had the difficult task of narrowing the list to four finalists.

The finalists presented their Big Ideas on 1 June, at an event attended by invited community members, and broadcast virtually to NNSWLHD staff.

The finalists were:

## 1. Providing culturally sensitive space for Aboriginal people with cancer

Stephen Manley, Cancer Services Operation and Innovation Manager and Cameron Johnson, Workforce Manager Aboriginal Health, and supported by Michelle Wilkes, Aboriginal Cancer Care Coordinator and Kirsty Glanville, Director, Aboriginal Health.

## 2. DIY Simulation Aids

Rustin Quin, Deputy Director of Anaesthetics, Lismore Base Hospital.

## 3. Through our Eyes video series

Amanda McRae, Intellectual Disability Clinician and supported by Byron Community Advisory Group (CAG) members and Gerald May, Community Engagement Manager.

## 4. What a Bummer! Improving birthing options by reducing undiagnosed breech presentations at term

Alison Fels, A/Maternity Unit Manager, with Keltie Foster, Clinical Midwifery Educator Maternity and Astra Joynt, Clinical Midwifery Educator, Grafton Base Hospital.

## The winner

Whilst all projects were supported by the judges and will be progressed utilising the \$50,000 prize money, the winner of the 2023 Big Ideas Innovation Challenge was...Through our Eyes video series.

Congratulations to Amanda, Gerald and the Byron CAG. Their Big Idea is to develop a suite of educational videos showcasing the lived experience of patients with disability and their carers. The idea for the education resources came conjointly from community participants as well as a need identified by our own clinicians acknowledging a lack of training and education for staff in this area.

One of the videos already created was submitted as part of the project proposal and includes interviews with several community members.

[Watch the video here.](#)

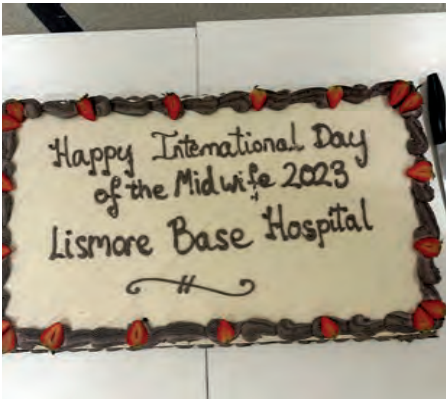


Front row from left: community representatives (CR), Zach and Andy

Back row from left: Jane Walsh (judging panel member), Debra (CR), Amanda McRae, Josh (CR), Catherine (CR), Dr Rustin Quin, Alison Fels, Cameron Johnson, Keltie Foster, Stephen Manley, Michelle Wilkes, Lynne Weir (A/Chief Executive) and Richard Buss (Director Workforce)

# In appreciation of all you do!

BBQs, cakes, chocolate freckles, laughter and dress-ups all featured in various staff appreciation days and awards events across the District, recently.



# Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards

With close to 100 nominations across eight categories, this year's Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards showcased the capability, commitment and compassion of the District's nursing and midwifery workforce.

At the awards ceremony, held at Kingscliff Beach Hotel on 1 June winners received a certificate, trophy, a gift and a \$300 professional development scholarship.

This year a new category, The Lifetime Achievement Award, was introduced to align with the NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards categories. The judges also awarded Special Commendations in some categories to recognise additional outstanding nominees.

Special guest, Jacqui Cross, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer NSW Health, presented the awards, alongside members of the NNSWLHD Executive Leadership Team, Kirsty Glanville and Tim Williams, and members of the NNSWLHD Nursing and Midwifery Leadership team, Rae Rafferty, Narelle Al Manro, Karen Bowen, Jennifer Richter, Fran Hofstee and Deb Hayhoe.

*"Acknowledging our staff, recognising their achievements, and hearing the heartfelt nominations from colleagues and patients is one of the best parts about leading the nursing and midwifery workforce," NNSWLHD Director Nursing, Midwifery Katharine Duffy said.*

Jacqui Cross encouraged attendees to reflect on the reasons this group of skilled, compassionate professionals have been recognised for their excellence.

*"Listening to their nominations, the positive influence they have on others is obvious to me," said Jacqui.*

*"These awards are important events. They not only recognise individuals for their outstanding contribution, but they also help us to define who we are by allowing us to identify the attributes and contributions that we value in our professions."*

## New to Practice Nurse and Midwife of the Year

**Bryan Goh – Ballina Hospital General Ward**

Bryan is a first year Registered Nurse who began his first rotation at Ballina District Hospital, General Ward, on the new graduate program in February 2023.

Bryan is described by his work colleagues as level-headed, calm, quietly spoken, polite and respectful, and has integrated into the multidisciplinary team with ease.



## Aboriginal Nurse or Midwife of the Year

**Jasmyne Carr – E10 Medical/Surgical Ward Lismore Base Hospital**

Jasmyne demonstrates cultural sensitivity towards all patients regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

Jasmyne provides compassionate support to ensure the person's care needs are individualised and met. She is a strong advocate for Aboriginal patients when required.



## Excellence in Midwifery New to Practice

**Roseanna Avery – Lismore Base Hospital Women's Care Unit**

Rosie is a gentle, passionate, compassionate midwife who can adapt to the needs and wishes of the women and families she cares for to meet their expectations for pregnancy, birth, and the postnatal journey.

She does this ensuring midwifery care is safe and that families are well informed so they can provide consent in an informed manner.



## Nursing and Midwifery Team of the Year

**Ward E9 – Lismore Base Hospital**

The E9 team are consistently recognised by patients and families for their customer service and delivery of care, and the LBH Executive regularly receive correspondence from patients' loved ones expressing gratitude for the care, compassion and dignity given during a patient's end of life journey.



## Nurse of the Year

### **Desley Cliffe – Enrolled Nurse, Casual Pool, Grafton Base Hospital**

Desley is the epitome of a compassionate nurse. Her level of insight has the power to remind us of the ‘human behind the behaviour’, as beautifully demonstrated in an interaction with a patient with dementia and his wife.

Desley recounts the twinkle in this man’s eyes when he told the story of meeting his wife and is just as suddenly lost again as his wife shares information about the ‘intruder’ called dementia that entered their lives and saw her become his carer.



## Midwife of the Year

### **Sinead Allen – Lismore Base Hospital Women’s Care Unit**

Sinead goes above and beyond in all aspects of her practice. She is a well-respected and valued member of the WCU team. She’s passionate about working with students and new staff and is involved in the Mentoring in Midwifery program.

A father recently provided high praise and gratitude for the amazing care, compassion and dedication shown by Sinead for his family’s journey for two children that Sinead provided maternity care for.



## Brown Ackerman Leadership Award

### **Nicola Scanlon - Nurse Manager for Education, Lismore Base Hospital**

Nicola is always available with a listening ear and gives earthy, practical advice. She also brings joy and lightness to the working day with her ability to laugh with the team and willingness to laugh at herself.



## Healing Heart Consumer Recognition Award

### **Nicola Scanlon – Nurse Manager for Education, Lismore Base Hospital**

Nicola’s leadership, expertise and compassion shone through when she was participating in a ParkRun event. One attendee had a cardiac arrest mid-event, Nicola guided other participants (who happened to be emergency services personnel) in a resuscitation until the ambulance arrived. The team were tremendous in their efforts and with the aid of the ParkRun defibrillator, the runner’s life was saved.



## Lifetime Achievement Award

### **Sally Sesnan – Women’s Care Unit, The Tweed Hospital**

Sally has been a midwife for many years. She has “caught” babies, and years later “caught” those babies’ babies. She is an exceptional clinical midwife who always places the woman at the centre of her care.

She has promoted and supported improvements in maternity care and has an exceptional ability to engage the whole team in new ways of working. Sally has been instrumental in implementing innovative models of care that are evidence based and promote normal birth.

### **Merryn Wildschut – General Ward, Ballina District Hospital**

Through the years, Merryn’s kindness to patients and family has been evident. Examples include how she brings warm blankets for patients who may feel cold on the ward. She goes above and beyond at times at her own expense (literally!). She will bring in proper shaving cream/ foam to give elderly patients a good, clean shave or something gentler to wash their fragile, atrophied skin.



Sally (left) and Merryn (right) were joint winners of the Lifetime Achievement Award

# Providing culturally responsive healthcare to migrants and refugees

Working with people from migrant and refugee backgrounds is a new experience for Kym, but it's very rewarding to see the difference she can make.

Kym Watkins, Chronic Disease Management Nurse (CDM) with Tweed/Byron, provides care coordination and navigation to ensure people with chronic and complex health issues receive the healthcare they need.

A recent referral demonstrated the complex health issues experienced by refugees, and how our services can respond using culturally appropriate and trauma informed care.

*"I knew there were language barriers ... this patient had no English and was illiterate in her own language."*

A telephone interpreter was arranged, using the Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS) 02 4924 6285. The patient's health literacy was extremely low. The daughter was present, and with consent, was able to assist with sharing and managing the information and instructions. (Google translate had been used by previous services, but this was not safe, given the complexity of the health information being managed. Note: NNSW Health Policy requires use of interpreters through HCIS).

Rita Youssef-Price, Multicultural Strategies Officer, will be helping to train healthcare teams to understand and respond to the needs of refugees and migrants, and to implement healthcare programs to better serve vulnerable populations.

Rita is available to support your team and can be contacted on 02 6639 9109 or [rita.youssefprice@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rita.youssefprice@health.nsw.gov.au)

*"I was aware that there may be cultural differences around healthcare beliefs, values and practices ... I also assumed that since they had arrived recently, and on refugee visas, there may be trauma experienced by the family."*

It was challenging to acknowledge the cultural differences and to consider ways to provide sensitive care. I focused on patient-centred care, listened to her preferences and identified the barriers she may face accessing healthcare.

*"The patient had complex and untreated health issues that needed urgent attention."*

It was important to ensure clear communication using plain English with an interpreter. Working slowly and checking that the patient understood the information and instructions meant we didn't get everything covered in the allocated time. I needed to assist with more coordination and support than I might otherwise provide.





# A welcome like no other

Attendees at the first day of the recent Clarence Health Service accreditation (see page 15) received a one-of-a-kind welcome to country from Auntie Jo Randall—a poem written specially for the occasion.

Auntie Jo is from the Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr nations.

*“Cultural connection plays a vital role in my life and from cultural knowledge passed down from my dad, mum, family members, Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal community members—I hold this learning of our culture dear to my heart,” Auntie Jo says.*

She has worked in Aboriginal health and education, and is a member of the Grafton Base Hospital Community Advisory Group (CAG), sharing her experiences and being a voice for others.

*“Having family members being born under a tree or on a verandah due to not allowing mothers to deliver their child in a hospital back in the day—sinks my heart of how hard it was for Aboriginal mothers and their families,” Auntie Jo says.*

*“I have come across racism within the hospital system. Being talked down to, not acknowledged when standing in line, not knowing information of what the surgery you are going to undertake in full (I was too scared to ask sometimes) and spoken to in a way that you feel and felt uncomfortable.”*

Auntie Jo says the current leadership and involvement of staff in the CAG is helping to make her journey smooth and educational.

*“Our CAG is deadly and when we meet, respect is given by everyone in attendance at our meetings through listening and sharing opinions,” Auntie Jo says.*

This is my story and memories of Grafton Base  
It is situated in the New South Wales State

It lies on the Clarence River of beds deep and shallow  
Above are clouds of white looking like marsh mallows

It flows through three Nations you see  
Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaegl to the sea

The Clarence Valley is large and beautiful  
Many communities and towns are wonderful

People who visit our hospital come from all walks of life  
They would come through the day and others in the night

The symptoms are different for everyone one  
Some need less help and others need more than some

One memory I have of the old children’s ward  
I was sick, crying for my mum and the nurse pulling the netting cord

I felt so alone and scared of the staff  
Because Dad and Mum were never too far

Now an adult and surgeries I have had  
The staff I have dealt with feelings of good and sad

Being a member of the Clarence CAG Team  
Hearing the Aboriginal Clarence Community’s needs

More interaction and Cultural Awareness to have  
The day of Culture for staff to grab

But steps have been taken in view of all this  
Our Aboriginal Staff has tackled many a wish

New life has been given to the GBH site  
The new additions have seemed just right

More have been planned in the years down the track  
With the hard work of staff looking after our back

I say Thank You to your hard work and dedication you give  
Let’s all come together in harmony to live

**I pay my respects to our Elders past and present  
I pay my respects to all other loved ones who have also passed  
I also like to acknowledge our up and coming youth  
The leaders beyond today**

**Jingiwalah Bundjalung Jugun  
Welcome to Bundjalung Country**





# PROFILE

# Jasmyne Carr

Registered Nurse, Jasmyne Carr is a quiet achiever with a smile as huge as her heart!

Jasmyne joined Lismore Base Hospital in November 2022, and her dedication and passion have already been recognised with a peer-nominated award.

Before joining Lismore Base, Jasmyne worked at a private hospital, but she wanted more!

*"I felt I needed more acute experience under my belt," Jasmyne said.*

*"LBH offers so many different pathways with multiple different wards with different specialities.*

*"I wanted to continue to learn and have the opportunity to continue to excel in my nursing career."*

And excel she has!

A beaming Jasmyne recently received the Aboriginal Nurse or Midwife of the Year Award at the NNSWLHD Nursing and Midwifery Excellence Awards (see page 6).

Jasmyne's family are Whadjuk Noongarn people from Western Australia, but she grew up in Kyogle.

*"Unfortunately, my grandmother passed away when my dad was little, and my granddad didn't like talking about her, so Dad never got to know his culture," Jasmyne said.*

*"My dad was very lost for many years and struggled with the concept of being Indigenous and knowing where he's from, and in one way or another this passed down to us. I've tried to do a lot of research about where I'm from and where my family is from. It's still a work in progress.*

*"I hope to travel to WA and find some answers and feel more connected to my past and learn where my family is from and the culture."*

Celebrating NAIDOC week, and the theme, 'For Our Elders', Jasmyne encourages people to get involved and learn all they can.

*"Our Elders hold the knowledge, history and stories, they pave the way for our future and for generations to come," Jasmyne said.*

*"I would also recommend that everyone look up and read about Closing the Gap, and the work being done to support Indigenous people to develop, determine and drive their choices that affect their life.*

Jasmyne's Aboriginal heritage informs the care she provides.

*"Every day I'm proud to be a nurse. We care for many vulnerable people at some of the worst times of their lives, including Indigenous peoples. I think it's highly important that we provide culturally safe health services.*

*"Last year I was looking after a very lovely patient, she was an old nurse, and her memory will stick with me for a long time. I was lucky that I was able to spend time with her, and we chatted about how much nursing has changed, and the good and bad of nursing.*

*"I think it's a good time to mention the bad experiences that stay with us as nurses. I'm not sure about anyone else, but I know that I am constantly critiquing myself, continuing to learn and be the best nurse that I can be."*

When she's had a less than pleasant shift, Jasmyne destresses by baking (and sharing) delicious treats, or heading outdoors.

*"I love being in the sunshine and being on the land and connecting with nature, it's a big thing for me. We live in such a beautiful area - there's so many outdoor activities we can do."*

Jasmyne said working in health means a support network is super important, and she has many amazing friends on E10.

*"We all have a good debrief and talk about a lot of things on our minds. I'm grateful for all their support - and my little cat!"*

Jasmyne has come a long way since she started a school-based Certificate 3 in Aged Care as a 16-year-old, working at Kyogle Multi-Purpose Service.

*"The staff were amazing, and the way they cared for residents was such an eye opener - so much respect and compassion - I knew that's what I could offer as well."*

# Introducing our Aboriginal Cancer Care Coordinator Michelle Wilkes

Michelle Wilkes is a proud Barkinji woman from Broken Hill. She spent her childhood living in the western suburbs of Sydney but joins us after 25 years living and working on Biripi Country (Taree).



Michelle is the new Aboriginal Cancer Care Coordinator for NNSWLHD. Her role will cover our footprint and will work in partnership with district Aboriginal health and cancer services. Michelle holds a Bachelor of Health Science, and her career has involved supporting Aboriginal people through their cancer journey.

*"I feel privileged to be living and working on Bundjalung Country. I will be able to support Aboriginal people to grow their knowledge of the cancer journey and work towards early detection and prevention," Michelle said.*

Michelle will soon be visiting services across the District to familiarise staff with referral criteria.

## More about the role

The Aboriginal Cancer Care Coordinator focusses on supporting Aboriginal people with cancer through their clinical care, in

particular the treatment phase. It provides a cultural link between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health services and assists with follow-up and coordination of care to improve the journey of the client through our health services.

Our District is one of four LHDs involved in a pilot program to:

- embed coordination of cancer care services for Aboriginal people into existing care pathways
- develop, implement and evaluate orientation of the Aboriginal Cancer Care Coordinator into each LHD's services.

The role is managed and supported by the Nurse Manager Aboriginal Health and works in partnership with

the NNSWLHD Director Aboriginal Health, and the Director Cancer Services and Innovation.

## The aims of the service

- use a range of strategies to facilitate comprehensive and coordinated care for people receiving cancer treatment across all health settings (this may include care navigation, health coaching, care coordination, cultural sensitivity and case management)
- monitor and regularly review patients and carers clinical and non-clinical health needs
- connect patients and their carers to the most appropriate service for support.

## For further information contact:

[EmmaJane.Davies@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:EmmaJane.Davies@health.nsw.gov.au)

[Michelle.Wilkes@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Michelle.Wilkes@health.nsw.gov.au)

[Stephen.Manley@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Stephen.Manley@health.nsw.gov.au)

# Aboriginal welcome artwork for Tweed Valley Hospital

A prominent artwork celebrating Aboriginal custodianship and timeless connection to land and water will welcome patients, visitors, and staff to the new Tweed Valley Hospital.

Aboriginal artist Frances Belle Parker has been selected for a major public art commission, which will help create a vibrant, welcoming, and culturally safe environment for all hospital visitors, in particular our Aboriginal community members.

*“Located at the main entrance of the new hospital, the colourful glass artwork will present an attractive and inclusive space right from the entrance, a theme that will be carried through all levels of the hospital and the surrounding grounds,” Health Infrastructure Executive Director, Rural and Regional Amanda Bock, said.*

*“Natural light will filter through five freestanding glass panels, casting projections of colour, and at night the artwork will be illuminated to provide a calming presence for patients, visitors and staff.”*

Frances Belle Parker’s artwork, ‘The Path We Take’ was selected for its originality and connection

to the hospital site, portraying the local coastline and elements of Bundjalung Dreaming Stories of Gudgin and the Three Brothers.

A proud Yaegl artist from Maclean, Frances said her artwork is a homage to the Bundjalung country on which the new Tweed Valley Hospital stands, as well as the coastline and landscape, which is the caretaker of the creation stories for the area.

*“Within my designs that map Country, are many elements and symbols of great significance,” Frances said.*

*“Everybody has a journey, and it’s the many paths that we have taken throughout our lives which help pave the way for our next destination.*

*“The colours symbolise earth, particularly red which is found in the land around the hospital, as well as the waterways that flow across the land, while the linework represents connections,*



*journeys, travel, wind and pathways.*

*“There is a real sense of movement, which signifies growth and healing.”*

Health Infrastructure Arts Program Director Brigette Uren said Frances’ artwork was selected by a panel with representatives from the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council, Northern NSW Local Health District, and the project architects.

*“The new Tweed Valley Hospital development is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the culture and history of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the region and engaging artwork like Frances’ will enable the community to learn more about the region’s rich history, people and their stories,” Brigette said.*

Frances Belle Parker’s (pictured above) artwork has been designed in collaboration with creative team Collide.



Artist representation of Tweed Valley Hospital welcome artwork

## Cross-team knowledge sharing

A recent trial to expand Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs (MHAOD) training to all AINs has been a great success!

During the most recent workshop at Lismore Base Hospital, Assistants in Nursing (AINs) heard from a variety of presenters including the MHAOD Director of Nursing, NNSWLHD's Eating Disorder Coordinator, the Alcohol and Other Drug Clinical Nurse Educator, MHAOD Patient Safety and Quality Coordinator, a Community Mental Health clinician, and Consultation Liaison CNC.

This expert group provided AINs with an overview of services, the varied roles within the MHAOD service, and a variety of skills that can be used in practice to support some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

*"I found it very helpful in understanding the various*

*services available, as well as new understandings on meal support, motivational interviewing and AOD," said Jamie Lollback, AIN casual pool, Lismore Base Hospital.*

Thanks to the efforts of the presenters and participants, the day was a success, with opportunities for this workshop to be run elsewhere in the LHD being considered for the future.



From left: Parveen Singh, Peter St Clair, Fatima Espares, Jamie Lollback, Chloe Milgate, Tully Somerville, Emily Johnson, Jodie Clements and Dylan Bradmore

## Exploring kenkō shokuhin (健康食品)

Maintaining healthy eating (kenkō shokuhin) and lifestyles can be tricky when you're trying to find your feet in a new community and culture.

Things like language barriers and poor understanding of services and supports can affect the settlement process for newly arrived migrants, making it a lonely and stressful experience.

This is where collaboration and networking come together to support community.

Thanks to a Health Literacy Ambassador grant, Rita Youssef-Price, NNSWLHD Multicultural Strategies Officer, the Health Promotions team and the local Byron Bay Japanese community are helping to support the community's health and wellbeing.

*"The Japanese community is very aware of the issues affecting their families. Partnering with them to come up with practical and culturally appropriate responses are key," said Rita.*

Together, a Japanese Kids Activity Day at the Cavanbah Centre where over 40 children and 25 parents

took part was developed. The day included:

- a plain English presentation about healthy eating and a delicious traditional Japanese lunch
- taiko drumming performance and workshop for the kids
- traditional colourful fish mobiles and hats making.

*"It's hard to understand new systems and to get information in my language," said one parent.*



*"Being able to meet with health staff has provided contacts and support to set up a mothers' and children's cultural playgroup."*

Rita's role will train and support healthcare providers to better understand the needs of refugees and migrants, with the overall aim of improving access to mainstream healthcare services.

You can contact Rita on 02 6639 9109 for further information or support to work with multicultural populations.



# Grafton ED celebrates inaugural rotation

Training opportunities for first-and second-year Junior Medical Officers in Northern NSW has now expanded to include Grafton Base Hospital.

*"We're excited to launch our inaugural Grafton ED rotation," Dr Harvey Lee, Director Medical Services for Clarence Health Services said.*

*"The ED team and the training program will benefit junior doctors wanting to develop their rural medicine skills to work in our hospitals or part of our GP networks."*

The newly accredited position, the result of several years of planning, provides second year junior doctors with a Level 4 rural ED experience, offering diverse patient presentations and a unique training environment, where JMOs can experience more hands-on training than offered by larger metropolitan sites.

Dr Pepe Mifsud, the first PGY2 Junior Medical Officer (JMO) to be welcomed on rotation in late February, reported a very positive experience.

He said his time in larger EDs with greater staff numbers, meant he had previously mainly observed ED case management, rather than taking part in the care.

*"Grafton ED offered a more hands-on experience with direct opportunities to develop my professional skills," Pepe said.*

*"Going into ED you feel like you might be in the 'deep end,' but at Grafton I felt really well supported. While there can be complex scenarios where rural-living patients may have had delayed access to care, those situations give me the chance to better understand the challenges of people who live away from all the amenities and convenience of city living.*

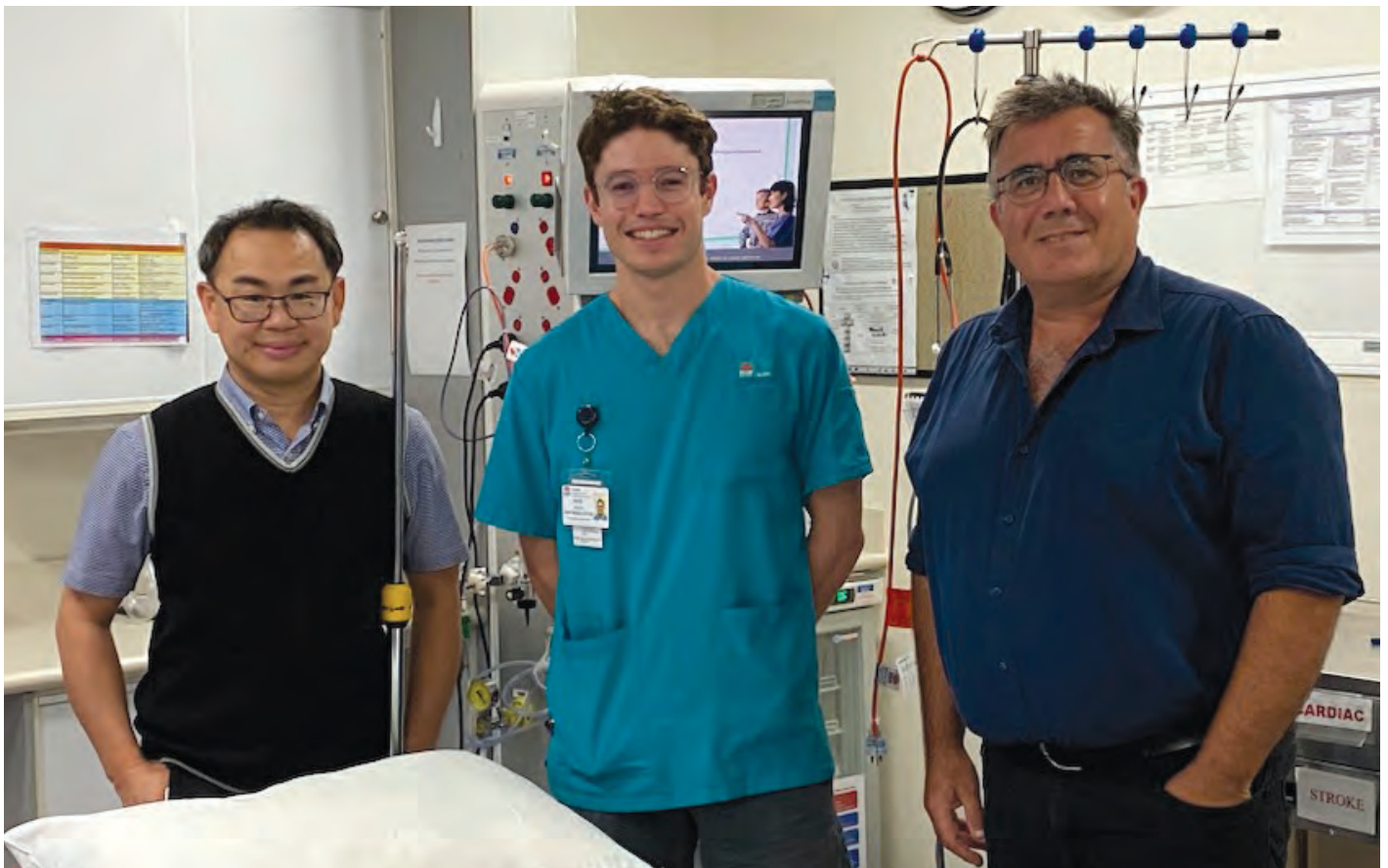
*"I feel like I've got an advantage over other JMOs who haven't been as hands-on."*

Grafton ED offers JMOs extensive education as part of this rotation, with simulation training and 1:1 teaching with the ED consultants.

While Pepe enjoyed all his clinical placements as a medical student, his JMO placements in Lismore and Grafton have been unique.

*"The camaraderie of the teams in Lismore and Grafton is something special," he noted. "The multidisciplinary team culture is very supportive as you work together with the patients."*

*Pepe won't be leaving the region he's fallen in love with. He and his wife, Dr Amelia Jack, have secured places in the Northern NSW GP Training Program and will continue GP medical training in the Richmond and Clarence network.*



From left: Dr Harvey Lee, Director of Medical Services – Clarence, Dr Pepe Mifsud and Dr Will Davies, ED Director, Grafton Base Hospital

# Accreditation high-five for Clarence

Clarence health services passed their recent accreditation assessment with flying colours.

The assessment measures sites and services against the National Safety and Quality Health Service standards and is mandated by the Commonwealth for all public and private hospital and health service providers.

This has historically been done on a three-year cycle, but due to COVID-19 this latest Clarence assessment was deferred by 12 months.

The assessment team were impressed by the high quality of health care being delivered across all hospitals, community health settings and other streams. All standards were fully met.

## The assessors were impressed with:

- leadership and governance arrangements
- community engagement arrangements
- our staff education plan and risk assessments to inform education and training schedule
- efforts to manage incidents within timeframe. positive feedback from patients/family/carers
- establishment of working parties to address issues and improve clinical practice
- staff culture – everyone was accommodating and proactive to discuss their ward/department
- support of NNSWLHD Quality Awards – three entries this year.



Iluka Community Health

The formal assessment report is expected in mid-late July.

*“Thank you to all staff and managers for your efforts preparing for the assessment and for the great care we provide,” Dan Madden, General Manager Clarence Health Service said.*

Congratulations also go to Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Oral Health, and Aboriginal Health who received special mentions in the summation for their efforts.”

# Staff guide hospital redevelopment plans

Consultation with clinicians and staff at Grafton Base Hospital is ramping up, as planning for the hospital redevelopment moves into the next stage.

Kicking off with two staff information sessions in late May, the Grafton Base Hospital Redevelopment Team were on hand to share information about the master planning and to answer staff questions about the project.

Staff members from a range of clinical and administrative roles, including perioperative, community health and medical imaging, took time out of their busy days to share their lived experiences and knowledge of the hospital, and their ideas and priorities for the redevelopment.

The discussions ranged from functional planning such as the location of services to ensure easy connections and lifts large enough to accommodate patient beds and treatment teams, through to ideas about car parking.

Project User Groups have also begun. These are key staff consultation forums, and members represent the wide range of stakeholders across the health service. Project User Groups will run throughout the planning and design stages of the hospital development process.

All clinicians and operational staff are welcome to participate in the planning of the Grafton Base Hospital Redevelopment and are encouraged to contact their Project User Group representative to provide input.

For any enquiries about the Grafton Base Hospital Redevelopment, contact [HI-Graftonhospitalproject@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:HI-Graftonhospitalproject@health.nsw.gov.au)



The project team talk to staff members at the staff information sessions in May 2023



# Lismore welcomes new volunteers

On 30 May Lismore Base Hospital welcomed the first group of thirteen Healthcare Helper volunteers.

Volunteers participated in a purpose-designed induction conducted by Lismore Base Hospital staff and included training on infection control, fire and evacuation, and manual handling.

To ensure our Healthcare Helpers

will be happy, well-supported and productive in the workplace, interpersonal skills were also incorporated to the training.

The volunteers will work as Patient Companions in the Renal Unit, Greet and Guide volunteers in the main

For more information about the Healthcare Helper program, or to request volunteer support for your workplace, please visit

[intranet.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/volunteering/](http://intranet.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/volunteering/)

foyer and outpatient clinics, and as Hosts supporting women in the BreastScreen Assessment Clinics.

Twenty new volunteers will be inducted in Grafton in June, with other locations around the District to follow later this year.



Healthcare Helper volunteers and staff from Lismore Base Hospital



## Be a voice for generations

Pictured at right are staff, ambulance personnel and community members at Lismore Base Hospital who are keeping up the momentum for change, in line with the theme for National Reconciliation Week 2023 (27 May-3 June each year).

Be a Voice for Generations, the National Reconciliation Week theme encouraged all Australians to be a voice for reconciliation in tangible ways in our everyday lives – where we live, work and socialise.



## A prime time to reach the community

This year, several health services joined forces to promote health and wellbeing to rural communities at the 2023 Primex Field Days in Casino.

Primex is one of Australia's largest primary industry expos, with more than 25,000 visitors and 300 exhibitors across three days each May.

NNSWLHD services collaborated in a special health and wellbeing hub, offering advice, information and resources and connecting visitors with services and support networks.

The participating services were North Coast Population and Public Health, Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP), Oral Health, BreastScreen, and HARP (HIV and Related Programs) services including Northern NSW Liver Clinics.

The HARP stall had approximately 174 interactions with attendees over the Thursday and Friday. There was a range of resources and merchandise and the Positive Adolescent Sexual Health (PASH) and Play Safe branding on display. Staff expertly assisted visitors to answer questions after they had a spin of the 'chocolate wheel'.

*"This was a fun way to broach a range of topics including sexual health, consent, blood borne virus risk, testing and treatment and safe disposal of injecting*

*equipment," Kate Salisbury, Nursing Unit Manager, Northern NSW Liver Clinics, said.*

*"From a mental health perspective, we were aware that a large number of primary producers had experienced multiple adverse events over recent years without having much respite between stressors," Steve Carrigg, RAMHP Coordinator, said.*

*"We were once again supported by our mental health Disaster Recovery Team colleagues from the Mid North Coast who helped us tremendously after the 2022 floods.*

The NNSWLHD Rural Community Counsellor was also kept busy

engaging with members of the public as well as key interagency partners such as Local Land Services, Department of Primary Industries and the Rural Financial Counselling service.

*"We're already looking forward to next year and hope that a multiple program health presence becomes a regular part of the exhibition," Steve said.*



Top: from left, Kate Salisbury (NUM, NNSW Liver Clinics), Larissa Smyth (Aboriginal HARP Health Promotion) and Deb Woodbridge (Harm Reduction Officer, Lismore NSP)  
Bottom: health service staff enjoying the sunshine at Primex

# Farewell Ken Hampson

Ken Hampson has been the Executive Director Clinical Governance at NNSWLHD since 2021, but his nursing career spans almost 50 years.

Starting at Blacktown Hospital in 1976, Ken later worked at Westmead and Mt Druitt Hospitals, before taking up the position of Director of Nursing Executive / Officer at Gloucester Hospital in 1994. Ken later became General Manager of the Lower Mid North Coast Cluster and Area Director of Nursing and Mental Health.

In 2017, Ken joined South Western Health District as Director Clinical

Governance, and later worked as General Manager at Fairfield Hospital. He was seconded to Blacktown Hospital to work on quality and safety and implementing recommendations of a resilience assessment in maternity services. Ken also worked in the United Kingdom at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital.

*“Ken has worked collaboratively with clinicians, staff and*

*managers to gain their insights and celebrate innovations and team accomplishments. His calm demeanour, principled approach and positive attitude will be truly missed,” Acting Chief Executive NNSWLHD, Lynne Weir, said.*

Ken retired in May 2023, and we wish him all the best!



Ken Hampson and Clinical Governance staff



## Voluntary Assisted Dying guidance added to HealthPathways

The Mid and North Coast HealthPathways team has launched a Voluntary Assisted Dying pathway in preparation for the Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) Act, which comes into effect later in November.

*“We anticipate that GPs in Mid and North Coast will be the first point of contact for many patients seeking information about VAD,”*

*said HealthPathways Clinical Editor Dr Susan Roberts.*

*“We want to provide GPs and other health practitioners with up-to-date information so they can advise their patients.*

*“By making the page ‘live’ now, GPs will be able to help patients seeking information about VAD and gain a greater understanding of their own roles in supporting VAD.*

*“This includes accessing mandatory training if they want to be involved in any stage of the process.”*

Healthy North Coast has established a VAD working group that will inform primary practitioners about the new law in the lead-up to its implementation.



NSW Health is also offering online information on voluntary assisted dying, including an overview of the legislation, information for the community and information for health practitioners.

[health.nsw.gov.au/voluntary-assisted-dying](https://health.nsw.gov.au/voluntary-assisted-dying)

# *Northern* **Exposure**

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#### **Front cover**

Winners of the Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards. Top row from left: Sally Sesnan, Desley Cliffe, Merryn Wildschut, Nicola Scanton, Lea McAllister and Sinead Allen. Bottom row from left: Roseanna Avery, Bryan Goh, Jasmyn Carr and Laura Dunne.

#### **Back cover**

Tweed Heads