

Northern Exposure



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Northern EXPOSURE

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Executive update



Wayne Jones – Chief Executive

After such a challenging few years working in health, we want to say thank you to all our staff for your continued efforts to support our community as you do every day.

You may see our new Thank You banners welcoming you as you come into our hospitals and health services. Our Executive Leadership Team has started visiting sites

to commend your hard work in person, and to provide you with a commemorative badge marking this unique period in our history.

I am sincerely moved by the dedication we've seen to not only patient care, but to colleagues and communities over these past years. A badge and a BBQ will hardly be enough, but I genuinely hope these gestures go some way to conveying our gratitude and thanks for your contributions and sacrifice.

Another cohort of staff who I would like to thank are our agency nurses, who are assisting us to continue to deliver services as we recover from both the pandemic and the floods.

Thank you for supporting our permanent staff and our patients. I welcome you to our team and hope you discover a reason to stay even longer in our beautiful part of the world.

I am beyond relieved to see that the recent heavy rain events were not as

damaging as the predictions might have suggested. Even so, we know that the possibility of any flood event, no matter how significant, is distressing for our community at the moment.

If you are feeling anxious and would benefit from talking through your situation with a trained professional, our Employee Assistance Program is available to all staff and family members. I encourage you to seek out support if you need it. You can find all the info [on our intranet](#), or call 1300 361 008. It's completely confidential and independent.

Finally, if you are a Christmas gift buyer, yes it's almost that time of year, I encourage you to shop local this year.

Our communities are what makes the Northern Rivers such a great place to live, so please support local businesses wherever we can.

From the Chair



Mark Humphries – Board Chair

In October I attended the International Society for Quality in Health Care annual conference in Brisbane. It was large, rich and diverse, with 960 delegates from 57 countries gathering to discuss healthcare issues across the theme of *Designing for the Future – Community, Resilience and Sustainability*. There were 200 presentations and workshops, too many posters to count and multiple opportunities for networking with like-minded people.

Northern NSW Local Health District was represented by our CE, myself as Board Chair, two directors and several staff members.

My key takeaways were:

- the importance of 'coproduction' – the relationship between the healthcare professional, patient, family and community. During disasters e.g. COVID/floods, coproduction can suffer when the default response is often to return to 'paternalistic' medicine
- primary care is under threat worldwide and there is a need to rethink the interface between primary, social and specialist care
- workforce pressures and shortages are a universal challenge
- benchmarking as a quality tool.

Regarding coproduction, I believe during the pandemic our LHD managed to resist the default of reverting to paternalistic care. In fact, in many ways, we strengthened our relationship with the people we serve, through listening to the

community and disseminating information to our population through our staff, community, and social media networks.

As we took on board the messages from the conference, our NNSWLHD delegates agreed that whilst we share many common challenges with the global healthcare community, our Health District has excelled at maintaining the highest standard of healthcare services during the twin crises of COVID and the floods which changed the lives of so many of our residents.

This is all thanks to the outstanding people who work across the NNSWLHD and provide exceptional healthcare services.

I would like to extend a massive Thank You to every clinician and member of our workforce who together deliver our CORE values for NSW Health. The Board and Executive Leadership Team are truly thankful for your service and dedication.

Thank you!

Allied Health staff in the spotlight

We recently celebrated the incredible work of more than 14,000 allied health professionals working across NSW Health during Allied Health Professionals Day.

Across 23 disciplines, allied health professionals play an important role in delivering health care services and providing outstanding care for patients.

No matter where they work across our LHD, allied health is a vital part of the multidisciplinary care team – providing specialised expertise in preventing, assessing, diagnosing, and treating a range of conditions and illnesses.

The commitment of allied health to bettering patient outcomes helps to ensure our health system meets the unique needs of the community.

Thank you to all our allied health professionals for your incredible work in caring for patients, their carers and families!

Stay tuned for the results of this year's Allied Health Awards in the next edition.

Watch the [thank you video](#) to allied health professionals from NSW Health Secretary Susan Pearce.



Celebrating Allied Health professionals across our District. **Top left-right:** Casino and District Memorial Hospital, The Tweed Hospital, **Bottom left-right:** Maclean District Hospital and Ballina District Hospital

Gifts of time and support

Experts from Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (SCHN) Neonatal and paediatric Emergency Transport Service (NETS) recently visited Lismore Base Hospital's Special Care Nursery, delivering a two-day skills-based workshop.

"A small team of NETS doctors and nurses volunteered their time to run the workshop which focussed on simulation training and the latest advancements in neonatal ventilation, cardiac diagnosis, resuscitation and intubation," said Angela Casey, Critical Care Clinical Program Director at SCHN.

As well as training, the SCHN critical care team donated \$20,000 for staff training and \$2,000 worth of gift vouchers to health professionals devastated by the floods.

"The community has been through extraordinary trauma and loss, and we felt it was our obligation to do something practical," said Angela.

Jo Ezzy, Nurse Unit Manager, Special Care Nursery, Lismore Base

Hospital, said it was a wonderful gift to have a visit from the amazing NETS team and the \$20,000 grant for ongoing education support for the special care nursery team.

"The neonatal nurses of Lismore Base Hospital are passionate and dedicated about what we do and come to work every day with a smile and give the best care we can to our preterm and sick newborns and their families. But you can feel a bit isolated at times," said Jo.

"The talk amongst our neonatal nurses and Paediatric Medical Team has been how brilliant the workshop was and how much we got out of it. We can directly attribute updating some of our practices to the workshop.

"The grant will support some of our SCN staff attendance at neonatal conferences and workshops. Keeping up to date with evidence-based practice and bringing that knowledge back from conferences and workshops is so valuable and helps us to continue to provide the high-quality care we strive to give and pride ourselves on."



Bek Battista Our Kids, Angela Casey SCHN and Sian O'toole SCN nurse with workshop group

Wellbeing Program survey results

During July and August, we surveyed staff as part of the NNSWLHD Staff Wellbeing Program.

The survey results outlined the current state of wellbeing across physical, social, financial and psychological domains and the impact of the floods on staff.

The survey results are being used to better inform the delivery of wellbeing support offered to our staff.

Some of the results are:

- staff rated their social wellbeing and future optimism highly, whereas sleep and fitness rated poorly
- 1 in 3 respondents indicated anxiety and worry were their top concerns, reflecting the LifeWorks Mental Health Index results which show there is a significantly greater need for mental health support amongst the Australian community post pandemic

- 42% of respondents indicated they would like an individual onsite wellbeing check with a further 14% being happy to participate in group sessions

Wellbeing programs offered:

- in response to the results, the LifeWorks NNSWLHD Staff Wellbeing Program is providing face-to-face WellCheck sessions at multiple locations. Virtual WellCheck sessions are also available, with appointments open later in the day, to 8.15pm
- a virtual all-staff wellbeing series will begin in November 2022 and will include achieving financial wellbeing, managing work/life balance, fatigue management, managing mental health in the workplace, building resilience, sleep better/feel better and eat



smart/work smart and physical activity for the busy worker

If you did not have the opportunity to participate in the recent survey, we have another one planned for 2023.

To read the survey results, learn about wellbeing support initiatives, or to register/ book an appointment go to: [NNSWLHD Staff Wellbeing Program | Northern NSW Local Health District Intranet](#)

Or contact Maree Frogley, Organisational Development and Learning Team: M 0427 523 022 or maree.frogley@health.nsw.gov.au

Health promotion returns to full steam!

After pausing full-service delivery to support COVID-19 surge work, the health promotion team is returning to full steam, with lots of good news to report.

Face to face prevention programs are back

Stepping On our popular program for those who've fallen or who are at risk of a fall has returned. During COVID-19, many seniors de-conditioned with lockdowns restricting opportunities to exercise, making Stepping On more important than ever.

Go4Fun will be offered in Term 4 by Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation. The after-school program runs weekly for ten weeks and supports children above a healthy weight and their families to make healthy lifestyle changes.

Helping U 2 Quit clinics continue to offer face-to-face and phone-based counselling support for the patients or clients of NNSWLHD services.

New faces on our team

Stephen Gammack has joined as the Program Coordinator, Clinical Engagement, and Kelly Williams has taken up the role of Program Coordinator, Healthy Lifestyles. Kelly, Stephen and their teams look forward to working with clinical staff to ensure our patients and clients make use of the great range of prevention programs and support that we offer.

Dr Avigdor Zask continues to lead Research and Evaluation, Adolescent Resilience and Healthy Environments, whilst also holding

down the fort for our Healthy Eating and Active Living team.

Ageing well, regardless of gender

Our programs to support ageing well include Stepping On, Healthy and Active for Life Online and Get Healthy tend to have lower male participation rates.

Health Promotion is working with University Centre for Rural Health researcher, Dr Amal Chakraborty, to better understand the local barriers and enablers to men's participation in healthy ageing programs.

Men aged 60 and over who are living independently and interested in participating in the research can contact Dr Chakraborty via amal.chakraborty@sydney.edu.au or 0422 473 881.

Reducing Risk Increasing Student Knowledge

Reducing Risk Increasing Student Knowledge (RRISK) will be presented online this November to Year 11 students across our footprint. RRISK provides useful survival tips to help young people handle risks associated with alcohol and drugs, driving and partying. RRISK is not about telling young people what to do, it's about sharing knowledge and skills young people need to keep themselves and their friends safe.

Find great resources for young people at healthupnorth.info/teens



Top: Stephen Gammack



Right: Kelly Williams

To refer your patients to high quality prevention programs, visit healthupnorth.info/refer

Face to face and online programs are available for:

- stopping smoking
- falls prevention
- children above a healthy weight
- Get Healthy Information and Coaching service for:
 - Type 2 diabetes prevention
 - pregnancy
 - alcohol reduction
 - healthy lifestyle
 - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people

Threads of hope and unity

We're all familiar with the floods that caused widespread devastation in Northern NSW earlier this year.

But do you know about the history of the heart banners that adorn houses and businesses around the Lismore area?

They first appeared in shop windows after the 2017 flood to show support to other businesses as they recovered and reopened. A few weeks after the February 2022 flood the idea was adopted by two local women Rebecca Ryan and Jodi

Dynan who wanted to also include anyone whose home was affected.

The banners are sewn at the "Heart Space - Healing through Art" in Lismore, thanks to donations of time and money from individuals and sewing groups such as Sewing for Charity Australia.

So far around 1400 banners have been distributed to homes and businesses. People say that

seeing the hearts makes them feel supported and recognised and gives the community a sense of unity. Most importantly it gives them a sense of hope. Check out the Facebook group, [Love for Lismore](#) to find out more or get involved.



Lismore Harm Reduction Programs showing support for their many clients who have been affected and displaced by the floods

Final year med students scrub up

To support our junior medical workforce, we've welcomed 13 final-year medical students—two at The Tweed Hospital, and 11 at Lismore Base Hospital— as part of the Assistants in Medicine (AiM) program.

AiMs work alongside an allocated medical or surgical team and are able to perform the majority of the tasks of a junior medical officer (JMO), with the key exception of prescribing.

In 2020 and 2021, the program ran successfully and AiMs reported a greater sense of preparation for internship compared to traditional pre-internship terms.

Having a defined role within their team, with clear responsibilities empowers JMOs to appropriately delegate to an AiM, and both groups of clinicians can work at the top of their capacity and skill level.

Back in 2020, at a time when many students had lost part-time jobs due

to the pandemic, having these paid positions was also a huge bonus!

This year's AiMs are hoping to gain confidence ahead of their

internships, as well as a better understanding of the roles of interns and junior medical officers so they can hit the ground running next year.



Assistants in Medicine at Lismore Base Hospital

Breast to be cancer aware

Did you know 1 in 7 women in NSW will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime? The good news is early detection through breast screening could save lives!

Why breast screen?

- a breast screen (or mammogram) is the best way to detect breast cancers early, before they can be seen or felt
 - early detection can mean treatment of breast cancer is less invasive, survival rates are better, and women can get back to their normal lives more quickly
 - the BreastScreen NSW program is FREE, and only takes 20 minutes
 - the biggest risk factors for developing breast cancer are age and being female. All women aged 50-74 should have a breast screen every two years
- It's important that all women get to know the normal look and feel of their breasts so they can identify any unusual change. Find out more about the signs and symptoms to look out for [online](#).

BreastScreen NSW has **many sites** across the North Coast, including clinics at Tweed Heads and Lismore.

Act now and book your free breast screen **online** or call 13 20 50.

Breast cancer doesn't wait, so don't wait to breast screen



Helping patients quit is an essential part of care

Tobacco is the leading contributor to Australia's burden of disease, has a negative impact on patient recovery and can reduce the efficacy of some treatments, including chemotherapy and radiotherapy. However, hospitalisation provides a unique opportunity for smokers to attempt to quit, as users are away from their usual smoking cues and have the benefit of managed care to support their attempt.



Four steps to help patients quit:

1 ASK:

Ask every patient if they have used tobacco recently:

- prompt patients by asking if they have used tobacco mixed with cannabis or nicotine in a vape
- ask the patient if they are using Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), these patients will also need NRT during their stay

2 RECORD:

Record your patient's smoking history in their patient file.

You can use the wording below to set up a pre-completed note that you can then access by simply pressing 'co'. Adjust the notes as needed.

The pre-completed notes are:

- counselled for nicotine dependence
- offered and explained the correct usage of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) accepted/declined
- offered referral to Quitline/ Helping U 2 Quit clinic –accepted/declined
- requested Medical Team to Chart so 3-day supply on discharge will occur as per SFHC PD 2015_003
- risks of leaving ward to smoke explained and advised of SFHC PD 2015_003
- patient left ward to smoke against medical advice

3 PROVIDE NRT:

Patients who are nicotine dependant are much more comfortable, less aggressive, and more likely to stay on ward when provided with enough NRT.

- arrange NRT by charting in e-meds
- can be nurse initiated but must be charted by the medical team to be prn (available as required)
- charting by the medical team will enable the patient to access at least 3 days of NRT on discharge, increasing their chance of staying smoke free
- remember many patients don't use NRT correctly and you may need to counsel them on proper use. For training in NRT contact stephen.gammack@health.nsw.gov.au
- we have a great range of NRT factsheets available at healthupnorth.info/quit

4 DOCUMENT IN DISCHARGE NOTES:

Give your patient the best chance of remaining smoke free by discharging them with:

- three days of NRT as discharge medication
- a referral to follow up support, use the:
 - [Helping U 2 Quit Clinic](#) referral form; or
 - [Quitline](#) electronic referral
- these forms and more information about referral can be found at healthupnorth.info/refer

X Smoking waivers should not be used and staff should not take smokers outside or off the premises to smoke.

Using smoking waivers could create liability for staff and NNSWLHD. If a smoker leaves the hospital premises against medical advice to smoke, this should be recorded in the patient notes using the pre-completed note: 'Risk of leaving ward to smoke explained and advised of SFHC PD 2015_003 Patient left ward to smoke against medical advice'. This would form important information for any liability that may arise whilst the patient is out smoking.

Smoking cessation advice in hospitals is not just a prevention issue, it is an essential part of the treatment we provide.

Remember, the Health Promotion Clinical Engagement Team is here to help you to help patients be smoke free.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to the Clinical Engagement Program Coordinator stephen.gammack@health.nsw.gov.au

Find everything you need to help patients to be smokefree at healthupnorth.info/refer

Health hub buildings to complement new hospital campus

Construction kicked off in September on two 'Health Hub' buildings to complement the main hospital building on the Tweed Valley Hospital site.

Local Aboriginal community members joined representatives from NNSWLHD, Health Infrastructure and ADCO Constructions to mark the milestone and stand on the site that will be the new home of the Bugalwena Aboriginal Health Service when the hospital opens late next year.

The Aboriginal Health Service will include work areas and quiet rooms for staff, consultation rooms and a large meeting room, which opens onto an outdoor courtyard.

"We were pleased to have representatives from our Aboriginal Health Unit and the community here for this special event; many of whom have contributed to the design of these important spaces, from providing input to the room layouts and ensuring that outdoor

spaces were included in the design, to the selection of plant species for the landscaping," Cameron Johnson, NNSWLHD Manager Aboriginal Workforce said.

"It was a great opportunity to recognise the contribution of staff and the community in the design of the buildings and to celebrate being one step closer to the community benefiting from these new spaces that they have helped to create."

The Health Hub comprises two buildings, a clinical building that will house the Aboriginal Health Service, as well as Oral Health and the HIV and Related Programs service (HARP); and a second building that will be a dedicated Learning, Development and Research facility,

delivering an 84-seat lecture theatre, simulation and skills rooms, immersive learning and research spaces, a library and computer lab training.

The \$723.3 million Tweed Valley Hospital is on track to open to patients in late 2023.



Top: From left: Cameron Johnson (Manager Aboriginal Workforce), Lyndal Smith (Aboriginal Health Service), Linda Brandon (Health Infrastructure), Auntie Ruth Green, Tina Pidcock and Uncle Franc Krasna
Bottom: all members of the project's Aboriginal Community Working Group

Making sexual health a priority

The latest NSW Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2022-2026 guides the prevention, testing, and treatment of Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) and sets out how you can support people in making their sexual health a priority.

Our aim is to reduce the prevalence and impact of STIs by focusing on prevention strategies, encouraging regular testing, treating, and managing STIs quickly, and enabling everyone to access the services they need.

The prevalence of STIs have been increasing for over a decade in NSW, therefore it's important to have a conversation with patients about their sexual health as part of routine medical visits, particularly as STIs can affect any sexually active person.

The Strategy aims to reduce the prevalence and impact of STIs in NSW by:

- preventing new infections through new and existing methods, education, and health promotion
- providing equity and access to services, reducing STI related stigma and removing barriers to seeking health care
- testing often, normalising testing, and promoting innovative testing models
- treating STIs rapidly and effectively and reducing onward transmission

Sexual health is an important part of our overall health and wellbeing. If left untreated, STIs pose significant health risks including reproductive health issues, adverse pregnancy

outcomes, neonatal infections, cancer, and increased risk of infections, including HIV.

Early access to testing and treatment before and during pregnancy means mother to child transmission of congenital syphilis can be entirely prevented.



Read about what we're doing to prevent, test and treat STIs in the latest

[NSW STI Strategy 2022-2026](#)



Alison Renwick

PROFILE

Alison Renwick

From the cleaning team at a small hospital in the '90s, to the management team of the Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Service today, Alison Renwick has put her hand up for countless opportunities over a 30-year career in health.

"After I finished my HSC as a 17 year old, I had no idea what I wanted to do," Alison said.

"I just wanted a job and I needed to earn money."

Alison's working life with the health service began as a Hospital Assistant Trainee at Ballina District Hospital, doing cleaning, kitchen and linen duties.

"A lot of my colleagues were middle aged women, and there were some pretty tough characters," Alison said.

"But I loved it, and I am still in contact with some of those people I cleaned with. We had some fabulous fun; the hijinks and pranks we got up to. It was a great start!"

Alison went on to work as a cleaner at Ballina for 12 years, having two sons during that time. Once her sons had grown enough, she was ready for her next challenge.

A couple of TAFE courses in medical terminology and office procedures gave Alison the confidence to try her hand at administration work, starting with some volunteer experience at the hospital.

When a position opened up in Medical Records at Lismore Base Hospital, Alison jumped at the chance.

Alison was also active in the Work Health and Safety Committee, meeting people in a variety of roles along the way. When leave relief positions in different areas came around, Alison threw her hat in the ring for those, too.

Dan Madden was the Executive Officer of Lismore Base Hospital at the time, and Alison secured a temporary position as his Executive

Assistant. This led to a permanent role lasting several years, which later grew to incorporate a wider Richmond Network role.

"It's been a lot of hard work, but also lots of luck being in the right place at the right time. I've been supported by some fabulous people," Alison said.

In 2016 Alison moved across to Mental Health to roll out the new Mental Health Emergency Clinician – Rural Access Program (MHEC-RAP) and stayed to be part of the team who were leading the redesign of the Older Person's Mental Health Unit.

After a 12 month stint in the Workforce Unit, putting together the NSWLHD Workforce Plan in 2019, Alison came back to Mental Health to take on a newly created role of Workforce Manager, MHAOD.

Alison supports the clinical services and works alongside the management team to support recruitment and onboarding. She is also the line manager for the Aboriginal MHAOD Coordinator and works with managers to identify opportunities to grow the Aboriginal workforce in MHAOD.

Alison looks after onboarding of Health Care Australia agency nursing staff, marketing, position descriptions, and the new process of bulk recruitments for entry level roles for registered and enrolled nurses, both in Alcohol and Other Drugs and in Mental Health.

"The bulk recruitment is a major change to the way we recruit nurses," Alison said.

"I am a first point of contact for candidates, supporting them through the process, being their liaison. It's a streamlined process,

and they can apply for different positions with one application."

"Initially there was resistance because the Nurse Unit Managers thought they might not get a say in who they employ, but now they can see how it's working, they're very supportive. They still review and select their candidates, but it takes the pressure off because they don't have to do all the recruitment system entry and onboarding side of things."

On the weekends you'd likely find Alison visiting her grandchildren in Coraki, or with her head in the books. She's two units away from completing a Bachelor of Business (Management), after a hard six year slog, contending with COVID and the floods along the way.

When Alison enrolled in the course, she knew it was the right time to take that next step.

"From someone who has started in an entry level position, if you're prepared to work hard and do some professional development along the way, there are a thousand doors of opportunity working in health," Alison said.

"It's good that we don't pigeonhole people, and we recognise the contribution of everyone in the wider health team.

"The admin person, the cleaning staff, they have a major role to play.

"I've always been a huge advocate for non-clinical people, and for professional development for non-clinicians and support staff, because without those opportunities I wouldn't be where I am today."

Plugging into the brains trust to better understand eating disorders

Forty-three staff from across Northern NSW Local Health District are now better equipped to help their patients who live with eating disorders, thanks to the learning and networking on offer at the 20th Annual Australia and New Zealand Academy for Eating disorders (ANZAED) conference.

Nursing, allied health, psychiatry, aboriginal mental health and dietetics staff attended the conference with the assistance of LHD scholarships.

These clinicians work across inpatient and community, medical and mental health, and adult and child and adolescent services, where they will use their learnings to inform their practice and improve service delivery as part of an LHD-wide Eating Disorder Community of Practice.

Feedback from the conference was overwhelmingly positive and demonstrates the benefit of attendance:

“Treating those with eating disorders can be challenging, exhausting and rewarding; all bundled into one. What a privilege it was to be provided the opportunity by the LHD to go to the ANZAED conference and be immersed amongst the brains trust of clinicians who have dedicated their lives to helping those with eating disorders. This conference has definitely invigorated me to keep charging on and fight the good fight. The opportunity for learning and networking was invaluable. Thank you,” –CAMHS clinician

“Attending the conference was an incredibly valuable experience. I saw some fascinating presentations on new areas of practice and met some super interesting and knowledgeable people. It also highlighted how much more research and work is needed to support this vulnerable group. I’m very grateful for the opportunity, and looking forward to putting my learnings into practice,” –Dietitian TTH

“ANZAED allowed us to share knowledge and exchange our experiences. The networking was great, getting new ideas in how we can work better with our patients and better ways of making our MDT meetings more productive with these new insights to eating disorders was a great opportunity,” –nurse TTH

“I was very fortunate to attend the conference with many clinicians across the NNSWLHD, many of these I hadn’t met. It was fantastic to meet so many colleagues who have an interest and passion in eating disorders. I valued the opportunity to explore the future direction of eating disorders treatment,” –MH clinician Richmond/Clarence



L-R: Casey James, Acting Head of Dietetics, Tweed Byron, Deanna Bowen, NNSWLHD Eating disorders Coordinator, and Binti Jones, Case Manager, CMH Treatment Team Lismore, enjoying the city lights before two days of intensive education and inspiration for patients living with eating disorders

Take every opportunity, nothing can go wrong!

Lauren McDonald is one of the first students to complete a new Aboriginal Allied Health Assistant traineeship, and she's not looking back.

With her mum working in disability, her nan and aunties being nurses, and a cousin who just got a Masters in Midwifery, Lauren has had great role models who've worked in health.

"I've grown up around the health environment my whole life," Lauren says.

Lauren was born at Lismore Base Hospital, but her family are from the Weilwan and Wiradjuri mobs near the towns of Warren and Dubbo in central NSW. She grew up in Lismore and just finished her HSC.

Not one to rest, at the same time as doing years 11 and 12, Lauren also completed a Certificate III in Allied Health Assistant with TAFE NSW as part of the school-based trainee program.

During year 11, she worked one day a week at the Lismore Community Health Carroll Centre site at St Vincent's Hospital and enjoyed it so much she gradually worked up to three days a week during year 12.

Lauren later moved across to Goonellabah Child and Family Health Centre, where she got to work with younger clients from infants to young children.

"I never would have thought I would get the opportunity to do this traineeship," Lauren said.

"The teamwork that's involved in Allied Health, it's such a big aspect and there are so many pathways. It's so good getting to learn so many different areas. I didn't think I'd be working with so many different allied health professionals during my traineeship; it's been a really good experience."

Now she's almost finished, Lauren has applied for a Bachelor of Nursing, with a plan to go into midwifery.

"I've heard my cousin talking about midwifery, so I'd really love to work as a midwife or an occupational therapist."

Lauren is enthusiastic about the opportunities the traineeship is providing and has become an advocate among her peers.

"I feel in a way it's influenced a lot of the Aboriginal students, even at other local schools. Some of my sister's friends have asked me about it and are wanting to get into nursing."

"Nothing can go wrong, you're adding to your skillset, you learn a lot."



Quality and Safety the talk of the town

Five Quality and Safety champions from Northern NSW recently attended the 2022 International Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare.

We know COVID, bushfires and floods significantly impacted the Australian health system. We've seen innovation at speed when health staff collaborated with other agencies to keep our communities safe. Now, we're ready to learn from this to plan and prepare for future similar events.

At the conference, the Clinical Excellence Commission presented learnings from the COVID-19 response, and delegates discussed ideas for future proofing, such as simulation training and tabletop

exercises to improve our pandemic responses. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement also presented on workplace happiness, and how to support and sustain the health workforce for the future.

"Seeing the effect of fire, floods and COVID, we identified pandemic preparedness and workforce burnout as focus areas, whilst continuing to champion improved safety and quality practices for our staff and patients," Tracy Schipp, Program Manager, Clinical Governance Unit said.



From left: Deb Jansen, Quality Manager, Grafton and Maclean, Sally Smith, Quality Manager, Tweed, Tracy Schipp Program Manager, Between the Flags, Clinical Handover and Sepsis Kills Clinical Governance Unit, Sarah Mooney, Patient Safety Officer, Clinical Governance Unit and Mel Ingram, Quality and Safety Manager Lismore

Every child, in every community, needs a fair go

During Child Protection Week this year, NNSWLHD played our part in raising awareness about child protection and the commitment we have towards supporting children and families. Participating teams reflected on this year's NAPCAN theme, every child, in every community, needs a fair go.

Activities ranged from creating posters and staff in-services, to sharing afternoon tea.

Lyndall Ward from the Child Protection Counselling Service coordinated a momentous effort by entering a team in the annual Run Against Violence.

The team was made up of IPARVAN staff, family members and friends and with this combined effort they racked up a huge 956.46km.

Over \$200 was raised with all monies going to the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN).

"Staff were also invited to participate in the Teddy Bear's Picnic for Child Protection Week, where staff, along with a large panda, held a stall with various activities to promote healthy habits. It was a fantastic day and opportunity to be part of the community," Marishia Crooks, Child Wellbeing Coordinator said.



Top left: Panda at the Teddy Bear's Picnic, Tweed Heads
Bottom left: Lyndall Ward (CPCS) and Elliot
Top right: Tamara Day (back), Rhonda Bowman (front left) and Ann Eyears from Ballina District Hospital creating a hand collage 'Everyone has a hand in protecting children'

Tackling overweight and obesity in NSW

Minimising the impact of lifestyle-related chronic disease starts with helping people live healthily.

The NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy 2022-2032 outlines how we will continue to invest in reducing overweight and obesity in children and young people by five per cent and halting the rise and reversing the trend of obesity in adults by 2030.

The underlying causes of obesity are complex and often outside people's control, and as health workers we all play a key role in helping people achieve better health.

You can help us achieve our goals by starting positive and non-stigmatising discussions with people about weight. Emphasising the benefits of healthy eating and active living, providing referrals as part of routine clinical care, and supporting long-term behaviour change are all ways you can make a difference.

NSW Chief Health Officer and NSW Health Deputy Secretary Population and Public Health Dr Kerry Chant said that while the 10-year whole-of-government strategy focuses on keeping everyone healthy and well, we need to increase our focus on priority populations who face significant barriers to adopting healthy eating and active living behaviours.

"It's vital that we work together to not only help people live healthier lives, but to really support those in our community who need it most," Dr Chant said.

With more than one in two adults and one in five children above a healthy weight in NSW, it remains important to help people live healthier lives.

To help tackle overweight and obesity, the Strategy outlines long-term, evidence-based actions under four strategic directions:

1. prevention programs and services to support healthy eating and active living
2. routine advice on healthy eating and active living as part of clinical care
3. social marketing to support healthy eating and active living behaviour change
4. healthy food and built environments to support healthy eating and active living.

Find out more about the strategy and how you can help reduce overweight and obesity in children and young people

[NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy 2022-2032](#)

NSW Health

NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy 2022-2032

Guiding the next decade of overweight and obesity prevention in NSW



Local landscapes available for Teams background

As the usage of Microsoft Teams is increasing across NSW Health, NNSWLHD has developed its own range of backgrounds to show off our corner of paradise.

The five local landscapes are consistent with NNSWLHD branding.

Show off your District in internal and external meetings!

[Northern NSW Local Health District Intranet.](#)



The backgrounds and Teams instructions are available on the intranet

[How to add NNSWLHD Background in Teams](#)



NNSWLHD eHealth team gets a new name

You may know them as eHealth, but not anymore. The digital and information technology branch of NNSWLHD NSW has had a name change, and are now called the Digital Health Services branch.

In addition, the current eHealth Governance Committee has been renamed as the NSW Digital Health Governance Committee.

These changes align to shifting reference from eHealth to Digital Health and to reduce some confusion between our local team and eHealth NSW.

As part of these changes, the current terms of reference have been reviewed and updated and are currently being finalised. Once approved, the terms of reference will be published on the intranet.

There's a new cart in town

Roll-out has begun of the new WAMEE clinical workstation.



They look the same but they ain't!

These clinical workstations now have a camera and speakers for Telehealth and Virtual Care built in.

They also have a light in the base of the PC to assist working at night.



Controls (incl light) are under the bottom corner. There are USB slots on the side to add a specialist wound care camera or the like.



Don't leave Health Literacy behind

The world of healthcare can be confusing – even for those of us who have worked in health for years.

Imagine what it's like for people who have very little to do with the health system. It feels a bit like:

- learning how to use a new computer program
- assembling flat pack furniture
- talking to your mechanic about the weird noise your car is making
- trying to help your teenager do their algebra homework
- finding your connecting flight in an airport you've never been to

Now add to that feeling of confusion and 'newness', the burden of feeling unwell. How much mental space is left for taking in new information about a complicated health topic? What about working out how to make an appointment or using brand new information to make a life-changing decision?

October, Health Literacy Month, has come and gone but using health literacy tools and resources to empower people to access, understand and use our health service is as important as ever.

Jargon	Plain language
acute	short term/sudden
adherence	follow plans/instructions
cease	stop
chronic	long term
discharge	going home

Email NNSWLHD-healthLiteracy@health.nsw.gov.au

for more information and ideas, or to book a health literacy workshop.

Here's our top 6 ideas for improving health literacy in your service:

1. hold a Drop the Jargon event – this can be as simple as coming up with a list of words that you use, but which patients and their families might find confusing, and a list of simple alternatives
2. have a colleague check your **teach-back** skills
3. map the patient journey in your health service to find health literacy barriers
4. **review consumer health information** used in your service
5. discuss health literacy in an **in-service**
6. check the **health literacy environment** of your service

Tweed Paeds making it fun for kids

The team at The Tweed Heads Paediatrics ward never let an opportunity to dress up pass them by!

Where's Wally is such an iconic book, it now has its own day to celebrate, 7 September. For *Where's Wally* Day staff donned their red and white stripes for a bit of fun.

In late October superheroes and favourite childhood characters worked the ward – proving not all heroes wear their undies on the outside.

“A little bit of laughter goes a long way!”



L-R: Tina spence RN, Jeff Fletcher Paediatrician, Rhonda Davies CNS, Sam Petersen NUM, Tennille Carmichael CNE, Danni Speer RN, Deb Ayuob ward clerk



From back left: Tennille Carmichael CNE (Laa Laa), Karen Greenway CNS (Tinkie Winkie), Danielle Cuthbert RN (Alice in Wonderland), Reshmi Rathi Kumari CNS (Harry Potter), Sam Petersen NUM (Little Red Riding Hood), Dana Gallo RN (Super Girl)

Farewell Susan Cross!

Susan Cross, radiographer with BreastScreen NSW North Coast has retired after 27 ½ years of service.

Sue joined the BreastScreen NSW North Coast program in May 1993 as a radiographer and was appointed senior radiographer in 2007. She led a team of radiographers through numerous technological and system changes which were introduced to the program during her time with the service.

Sue was a strong advocate of the value and importance of the screening program in the community.

Jane Walsh, Director Breastsreen NSW North Coast said Sue's love for her job and the support she has shown for the program is acknowledged and appreciated.

"We have worked together for over twelve years and saw many changes in that time. She helped to drive those changes across the state and in our local service and she should feel proud of that."

"Sue has a strong work ethic and has presented the program in a very positive way over the years," said Jane.

We wish Sue well in her retirement and hope she fulfills her plans of regular trips to Scotland where her sons and grandchildren live.



Sue Cross with BreastScreen NSW North Coast Director Jane Walsh

Thank you for all your years, Kevin

We recently farewelled Kevin Carter after 39 consecutive years working at NNSWLHD (and a few more before that)!

Kevin began his career as a trainee enrolled nurse at Kyogle Memorial Hospital in November 1974. He later completed his general nursing training at Kempsey District Hospital, midwifery training at Auburn Hospital and geriatric nursing certificate at Cessnock Hospital.

In 1983 Kevin returned to Northern NSW to work at Casino and District Memorial Hospital as a Registered Nurse/Midwife before moving to Kyogle Memorial Hospital.

Between 1984 and 1997, Kevin worked at Lismore Base Hospital Maternity Unit and as after-hours Nurse Manager. Kevin later became Midwifery Unit Manager and Care Centre Manager for Maternity and Paediatric Services, and then Deputy Director of Nursing and Business Information. This role was later redesigned and became Business Manager for Lismore Base Hospital. From 2013 until his retirement, Kevin was the Senior Business Manager for the Richmond Valley Network.

Kevin holds a Diploma in Nursing, a Degree in Nursing and a Master's in Health Administration.

"Kevin has made a valuable contribution to the Health Service and improved the lives of the community by the work he has been involved in over many years," said Narelle Gleeson, Director of Nursing at Lismore Base Hospital.

Enjoy your retirement!



Left, Kevin receives his General Nursing Certificate badge from Kate Kesby in 1980
Right, Kevin celebrates his farewell at Lismore Base Hospital

Dr Sue Velovski

Leaving a generational legacy is all in a day's work for Rural Doctor of the Year

Northern Rivers based Specialist General Surgeon, Dr Sue Velovski has been recognised for her work in supporting rural medical services and communities, being named Rural Doctor of the Year by the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA).

Sue played a major role in the region's response to the devastating floods and is active in supporting junior doctors and advocating for a safe workplace culture in the medical profession.

The annual Award recognises a rural doctor who has shown exceptional work 'above and beyond' the call of duty, and leadership in areas like improving access to quality healthcare for their community.

"Sue was a tireless advocate for cancer patients in Lismore during the COVID crisis, working hard to ensure they received surgical intervention at a time when the pandemic was impacting access to surgery," Dr Megan Belot, RDAA President, said.

"Sue also played a huge role in the medical response to this year's devastating floods disaster, working tirelessly to assist flood-impacted patients.

"As soon as she could leave her own home, she started helping patients with medication supplies and wound management for flood-related injuries wherever she could reach patients...even including service stations.

Sue continues to be actively involved in surgical education both in Australia and overseas, has a strong interest in global health and surgery, and has provided medical and surgical services in East Timor and the teaching of surgical trainees in Papua New Guinea.

She said she was humbled to have received the award. "For me, it has always been about working with my teams – no single person creates a good or better outcome.

"This Award really is for my practice staff, colleagues, trainees and medical students – particularly those who lived through the floods and helped so much in getting healthcare to those who needed it...and of course my mentors, who steered me away from city medicine to the challenges of global and rural health – Drs Bob Sillar, Hamish Foster and Johnny Graham.

"Being a Rural Surgeon has been an immensely rewarding career for me. "I love seeing good outcomes for trauma

patients – particularly when my metropolitan surgical colleagues say, 'How did you do that in country NSW?' I also love being involved with, and advocating for, my community as we face the challenges from nature, and life, that we all confront.

"Most of all, I love seeing young trainee doctors from all walks of life recognise their unknown potential and give back to their communities. After all, the only thing we leave behind is what we teach the next generation – both technical and non-technical – so it had better be good!"



Northern **Exposure**

Issue 7, 2022 November



Front cover

Grafton Base Hospital Allied Health staff:
Back row from left, Simon Quinn, Jo Martin,
Jane Linton
Front row from left, Sonia Allsop, Rebecca
McPhee, Michelle Bennett, Nikita Thiering,
Urszula Dmowski, Emily Fahey, Eleni
Glynatsis

Back Cover

Richmond Valley