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treatment closer to home

NORTHERN

EXPOSURE





Change is everywhere!

They say the only constant in life is change, and healthcare is certainly a strong example of this concept.

In this edition of Northern Exposure there are multiple stories about how our services, and our individual staff members, are continually looking for ways to improve and change the way we care for patients.

From new medical imaging technology that will bring quicker access to information, to an Aboriginal Health worker finding ways to make it easier for her clients to stay fit, to computer system upgrades, or a new best practice maternity care model, there is no end to the reflection and improvement cycle.

As you can see from these stories, improvements can be small and targeted, or they can be wide-ranging and effect thousands of people. Either way, they're effective.

At the end of the day, both staff and patients benefit from these changes if they make a process easier, deliver better outcomes, or provide a better experience at work or while receiving care. Even though it takes time and effort to first get the ball rolling, and then to bring people along with you, that effort is worth it.

I am inspired by these stories, and I hope you are, too.

NORTHERN EXPOSURE

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Cover Image: Byron Central Hospital staff, L-R: Kylie Wilmen, Emma Power, Lee-Anne Collins, Ross Gulliver, Janine Hennessy and Stephen Felton

Back cover image: Kingscliff

Executive Update



Wayne Jones - Chief Executive

Since the COVID-19 vaccination rollout began, we've seen more than 211,000 doses administered by NSW Health, and a great proportion of our staff are among these figures.

Meanwhile, the loss of life we are seeing in some countries as a result of the pandemic is just staggering. We have

seen health care systems collapse under the strain of coronavirus, but also workforce unavailability as frontline health workers contract the virus and are too unwell to work.

In Australia we already have vaccines available to all our health staff, which is an incredibly positive development.

As with any medication, there are risks or side effects that are communicated to individuals so they can discuss what's best for them with experts they trust. Often that's your GP, or it could be your local Child and Family Health Nurse, in the case of recommended childhood immunisations.

Every person's decision to vaccinate is a personal one, which is why it's so important that our decisions are considered, and based on science and medical advice.

I've made my own decision, weighing up the risks and choosing to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine in the last week of April.

I had felt some apprehension about receiving this shot, but when I asked

myself why, I realised it was driven by negative media coverage, rather than the scientific advice. I understand the risk and I balanced that against the potential benefits to myself and my loved ones, in the event the unimaginable becomes reality in our country.

But don't take my word for it, or that of an influencer or media commentator. If you have questions, please make an appointment to speak with your GP; ask about the risk rating of the COVID-19 vaccines compared to many other common medications. Talk to your doctor about your personal situation and about what's best for you in terms of protecting yourself from severe illness, or potentially passing the virus onto someone you love.

You can also read the scientific advice that's readily available, either via the links on our intranet or from other reputable sources, or submit a question to NNSWLHD-staffquestions-COVID19@health.nsw.gov.au.

For me, I didn't want to wait and see what happens with future outbreaks before deciding to take the best path to protection that's available to me now.

From the Chair

Brian Pezzutti - Board Chair

We often think about climate change as an environmental problem. However there is growing concern among health experts about the impact of climate change on people's health and the health system.

The World Health Organisation says climate change is the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century.

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners cites climate change as a key public health issue and has committed to "mitigation and adaptation strategies".

Projected changes in Australia's climate that affect health include more frequent and intense natural disasters such as heatwaves, drought, bushfires and floods.

As we know all too well from our own region's experiences, these events contribute to increased adverse health outcomes, mortality, trauma and long term mental health impacts.



The NNSWLHD Board is keen to play a role in addressing this issue, and last year we established a Climate Sustainability and Healthcare Working Group to focus on a better understanding of the health impacts of climate change and to start work on an action plan for our District.

Under the leadership of Board member, Peter Carter, and Matt Long (Director Corporate Services), the working group has developed a position statement which has been endorsed by the Board and will guide our work on this important issue:

The Northern NSW Local Health District is committed to understanding the impact of climate change on the health of our population and working

with our health professionals and support staff to meet the challenges that climate change presents. We are also committed to reducing the environmental impact of our organisation, primarily through reducing our carbon emissions. This includes moving from traditional forms of energy production, where possible, and making more efficient and sustainable use of our resources.

One of the key steps in this work is to measure our carbon emissions so we can begin to reduce them.

We know from other health services that have already measured their carbon footprint, that 70-80 per cent of emissions are related to electricity consumption. That will be one obvious area of focus as we look for ways to reduce our emissions.

We don't have all the solutions and we have only just started this work, but we believe it is vital that we involve NNSWLHD staff, our partners, and the community in helping us develop a longer-term plan for sustainability. I look forward to seeing the changes we're able to make.

Our hidden heroes of healthcare

Corporate and support services employees often remain in the shadows when we think about healthcare, but the pandemic has highlighted their important contributions to keeping us safe.

By Louise Tingey,
Lismore Business Manager

When news of COVID-19 was first emerging, healthcare advice centred around testing, treating patients and keeping the public informed of positive cases. Vision of gowned-up and brave clinicians continuously streamed on news bulletins across every media platform.

But not widely discussed were the tasks non-clinical workers undertook in their own efforts to protect the lives of the community and clinicians on the frontline.

Rapid data sharing, procurement of personal protective equipment, developing accounting solutions and building pop-up clinics took place at record speed to ensure clinicians were in the safest position to respond.

Testing clinics a key part of the puzzle

To date, more than 5.6 million COVID-19 tests have been done in NSW, and establishing testing clinics has proven to be vital in promoting early detection of community acquired transmissions. Throughout the state, clinics have taken on a variety of unusual locations including drive-throughs, showgrounds, bowling clubs, churches and shopping centres. But scoping out and securing these locations is just the beginning.

While public health responses and services can often take months to design and plan, the response to COVID-19 has been at warp speed; clinics are often rapidly established within hours or days of newly identified cases.



Above, Byron-based staff. L-R: Janine Hennessy – DDON, Lee-Anne Collins - Leading Hand Domestic Services, Emma Power - A/Executive CSO, Stephen Felton – Tradesperson, Kylie Wilmen - Executive Officer/DON and Ross Gulliver - Domestic Services



Top, Lismore-based staff working behind the scenes. L-R: Louise Tingey – Lismore Base Hospital Business Manager, Sally Harlen - Activity Based Management Officer, Amy Smith - Assistant District Management Accountant, Stuart Rollans - Corporate Services Manager, Trish Spillane - Clinical Performance and Redesign Unit Manager, Rashinka Perera - Systems Administrator, Nadine Smith - Health Information Manager, Kevin Allen - Senior Network Administrator, Mitchell Madigan - Operations Analyst, Matthew Woods - Systems Administrator Unified Communication

Responding to the need for a new clinic requires expertise and dedication from a team of corporate and support services to ensure each building is transformed with the potential to see hundreds of patients a day.

Work starts behind the scenes

Once the location is found, the maintenance teams commence work on constructing signage, fencing and petitions to guide patient flow. Whilst some basic and consistent design principles exist, elements such as traffic flow, wayfinding and protection from the weather can change with each location.

Inside, information technology technicians work to install computers, medical label printers and phones. More complex than just plugging in a device, this usually requires fitting additional data points, testing Wi-Fi connectivity and routing network configuration.

Working remotely during this time, software application specialists create

platforms to record patient activity, pathology results and medical notes for coding. Software development enhances data quality that is crucial for contact tracing and funding activities. Meanwhile, anticipating demand for stock, logistics, secure storage and waste management requires negotiation amongst stores, couriers, cleaners and procurement managers.

Time is ticking

Suddenly, it's only hours until the clinic will open to the public, and by this point, the corporate and support services are as much invested in being part of the frontline as clinicians – there is no allowable delay in providing quality service delivery and patient care.

Amongst normal daily maintenance, reporting and data reviews, the staff behind the scenes are always close by to receive and action feedback from clinicians, patients and the community.



L-R: Roslyn Edmonds – MNC & NNSW Project Support Officer; Teresa Tindill – MNC & NNSW Change Manager; Sadiya Askar - eHealth Program Support Officer; Etienne Mortier - SECTRA; Travis Bottomley - eHealth System Implementer; Jonathan Behrens - eHealth Program Manager; Tonia Nuttall - SECTRA; Leith Vaughan – MNC & NNSW Lead Implementer; Geir Teodorsen - SECTRA; Paul Green - Medical Imaging Manager Richmond Network, NNSWLHD.

Make way for the new RIS-PACS!

A welcome change is coming, with a new information and communication solution for medical imaging departments being rolled out this year.



The Radiology Information System and Picture Archiving and Communication System, or RIS-PACS, is an electronic solution used by Medical Imaging departments to manage their services. Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) is in the process of introducing a new RIS-PACS which will provide enhanced diagnostic services, with easy and quick access to images and results, allowing clinicians to make timely decisions regarding patient care.

The new, state-of-the-art system will mean Medical Imaging orders, examinations and results can be viewed and sent more easily to other clinical systems such as the electronic medical record (EMR), patient administration system (PAS) and enterprise imaging repository (EIR).

The current GE Centricity RIS-PACS system is at end of life and will be replaced with a new solution comprised of Kestral RIS and SECTRA PACS.

Medical Imaging departments will see the biggest change with new workflows and functionality, while clinicians who order and view images will experience better processes thanks to the new solution.

When is the system changing?

The project is aiming to commence a staggered Go Live period from late September, running through to November 2021, with implementation planned for 10 sites within NNSWLHD and another 7 sites in Mid North Coast Local Health District.

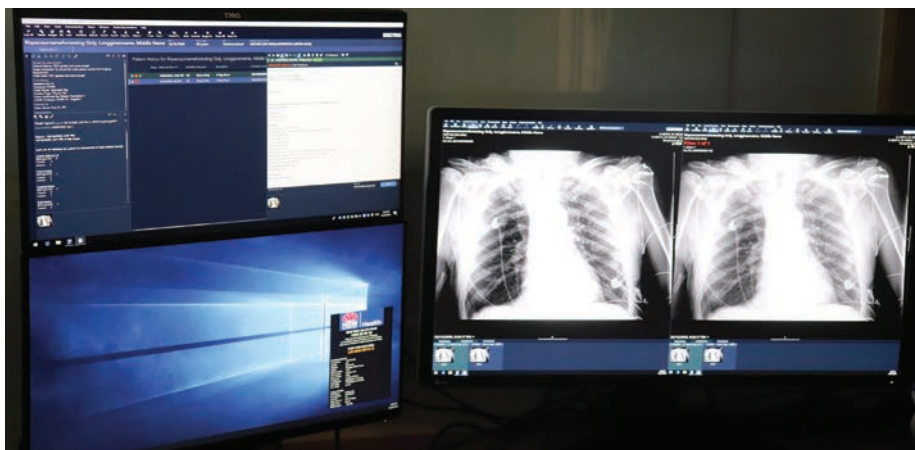
The new RIS-PACS will be introduced at:

- The Tweed Hospital
- Murwillumbah District Hospital
- Byron Central Hospital
- Lismore Base Hospital
- Ballina District Hospital
- Casino and District Hospital
- Kyogle Memorial Hospital
- Bonalbo District Hospital
- Grafton Base Hospital
- Maclean District Hospital

The eHealth NSW RIS-PACS Program is working in partnership with the NNSW and MNC LHD Project team and other organisations across NSW Health to implement the new system.

The Project team have begun engagement with key stakeholders, visiting hospital sites during late 2020 and early 2021. The system is currently being configured and tested, to ensure it meets the business needs of the LHDs and delivers the intended benefits of the Program.

More details around how this change may affect you and your departments will be communicated in the coming months. If you would like more information or have any questions, please email the RIS-PACS Project team on Teresa.tindill@health.nsw.gov.au or submit a question using the QR code. We are also establishing an intranet page, and will provide details of that soon.



A view of a reporting workstation with the new Medical Imaging SECTRA PACS reporting system.

HOME-GROWN CLINICIAN IS TOP OF THE CLASS

"I have always felt that there is a team of people around me who want to see me do my best."

Tweed-trained Dr Meg Wilson has won the coveted Buchanan Prize for achieving the highest score in this year's Emergency Fellowship Clinical Exam.

The two-day clinical exam is the final part of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) training program to become a specialist Emergency Physician or FACEM.

Meg completed her training at The Tweed Hospital Emergency Department where she commenced in 2014 as an Intern.

"Tweed Hospital was extremely welcoming to me as an intern," Meg said.

"I have always felt that there is a team of people around me who want to see me do my best."

Meg grew up in Inverell and knew that she wanted to work in a regional setting.

"I realised very quickly that I wanted to go into Emergency Medicine and so in 2016 I joined ACEM and worked towards my initial Primary Exam."

In 2018 Meg left to get experience working elsewhere, always with the intention of returning to this area having gathered new skills. She worked in Townsville Hospital, Lismore Base Hospital, and as a Retrieval Registrar

with the Westpac Life-Saver Rescue Helicopter.

After completing a stint at Gold Coast University Hospital in Paediatric ED and Paediatric Critical Care, Meg returned to The Tweed Emergency Department in 2020.

"One of the biggest drawcards for me to work here in NNSWLHD was, very early in my career, finding mentors who I wanted to aspire to be like. I tried to model myself off them," Meg said.

"These doctors in Emergency Medicine made a profound impression on me as a junior doctor. They directed and encouraged me to do things that are fulfilling for me both professionally and personally."

"They have taught me not only about the intricacies of Emergency Medicine, but of the importance of patient care, with a focus on holistic Emergency care."

Dr Rob Davies, Director of Emergency Medicine for Tweed, Byron and

Murwillumbah Hospitals said the team were extremely proud of Meg's achievements.

"Having been with us since an intern we always knew she was a gifted clinician," Dr Davies said.

"We are blessed to have so many incredibly talented doctors caring for our community. Meg is our second Fellowship prize winner in as many years."

Meg is hoping to secure employment as a FACEM within the District.

"Emergency Medicine is the best! You don't know what is going to happen on any day. Some days are bad days, but not all days."

"You are never alone in the ED. We have a very good collegial relationship with each other, and I have never felt more accepted than I do in the Emergency Department."

Congratulations on such an impressive achievement Dr Meg Wilson!

21 years of helping her community

Ronella Mulheran's role as an Aboriginal Health Worker is one of health promotion and collaboration with the Aboriginal community.

Bundjalung woman, Ronella Mulheran has been an Aboriginal Health Worker at The Tweed Hospital for 21 years.

"I started in 1999 in the old Community Health building, one day a week," Ronella said.

Ronella's main focus is on delivering the Healthy Lifestyle Program which includes exercise, healthy eating and health education. She also supports clients who are on the six-week Quit Smoking Program, helping them with a brief weekly intervention and planning for how they will stay smoke-free the following week.

"Ours is the only QUIT group program in NSW that gives free Nicotine Replacement Therapy. We help clients with behaviour change and offer ongoing support after the six week program is finished," Ronella said.

For the past eight years, Ronella has been involved in the Knockout Challenge, a healthy weight loss program funded by the Ministry of Health.

"The Tweed team is called the 'Tweed Goorie Go Getters'. All Aboriginal communities in NSW are invited to form a team and compete against each other. The team with the largest percentage of weight loss wins. We won third place in 2018 and received a \$5,000 prize."

The Knockout Challenge has grown from its humble start in a rented hall in South Tweed once a week providing cooking classes, exercise and education, to three sessions a week with 62 members currently attending.

As part of her role helping local people get healthy and stay healthy, Ronella approached local gyms to ask them to run specific classes for the indigenous community.

Knockout Challenge members now have access to three sessions a week with a personal trainer, education, guest speakers who talk about chronic diseases and nutrition, and free access to the gym seven days a week.

"The growth of the Knockout Challenge program is great, but I don't have just one career highlight as I just love my job – I have a passion for helping my community," Ronella said.



"The team here at Tweed Aboriginal Health have formed good friendships, we see each other five days a week and all knew each other growing up."

Ronella is extremely grateful to Aboriginal Health Management for their support in delivering and growing these essential programs.

"Without the support of management funding the programs we run, we wouldn't be able to support the Aboriginal community the way we do."

In the future Ronella aims to develop specific youth-tailored programs with focus groups to address suicide prevention, quitting smoking and healthy living.

CAN'T FIND THE ANSWER IN THE STAFFLINK GUIDES?

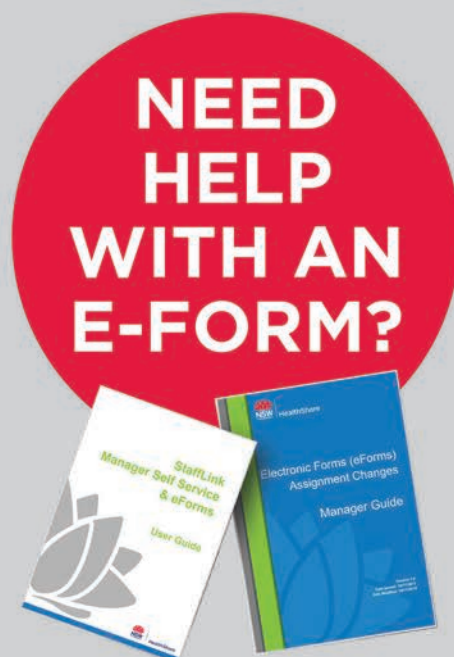
DO YOU HAVE A GENERAL STAFFLINK ENQUIRY?

Email your local StaffLink team

NNSWLHD-WorkforceSupport@health.nsw.gov.au

The NNSWLHD-WorkforceSupport inbox is checked on a daily basis by your helpful StaffLink team with the aim to reply within 3 working days.

Please don't send Contingent Worker Set Ups to this email address. Please send these to the NNSWLHD-WorkforceOnboarding email address.



Hospital open day a virtual success

The new Tweed Valley Hospital site came to life for locals at a virtual Open Day on Wednesday 24 March.

In a first for the project and Health Infrastructure NSW, the Tweed Valley Hospital project reimagined the traditional community open day, presenting an online event to engage the local community through a range of interactive materials.

The Open Day showcased the progress of the new hospital and addressed questions from the community through a live Q&A panel session, a virtual site tour video, site flyover, videos sharing 'A Day In the Life' of project team members, and other new publications.

"We would have loved to hold this event in person out on

the hospital site; however due to COVID-19 restrictions, our team has worked hard to bring everyone along on the journey in the virtual world," Project Director for Health Infrastructure, Jackie Hawkins said.

"We created a virtual site tour experience for staff and the community to take a 'walk' around the site, hosted by Senior Executives from the Northern NSW Local Health District, Health Infrastructure and Lendlease."

"We also held a live panel session, with members of the project team responding to questions from community members, on topics such as local employment, University partnerships, staff education facilities, our consultation with the local Aboriginal community and the impacts of COVID-19 on the hospital design."

The online platform proved a huge hit, with staff and members of the community enjoying the flexibility of being able to access the materials at a time and place that suited them. There were almost 800 visits to the portal in the first two days, and the virtual site tour video was viewed more than 450 times.

You can still access the videos and information from the open day on the project website, under the 'Get Involved' tab.

For more information about the Tweed Valley Hospital project, please visit tweedvalleyhospital.health.nsw.gov.au



**Give life.
Give blood.**

**United,
we give.**

Health Services

Blood Drive 2021

1 April – 30 June

 Australian Red Cross
Lifeblood

Northern NSW Local Health District is taking part in the Health Services Blood Drive.

Donate at the Lismore Blood Donor Centre or at the 'pop ups' in Tweed Heads, Murwillumbah, Ballina, Byron Bay, Casino, Kyogle and Yamba.

Join our Lifeblood Team and get involved at
<https://app.donateblood.com.au/FbBy>

 give blood

WE'D LIKE YOU TO MEET... DR SCOTT ARMSTRONG

Oral and Maxillofacial surgeon, Dr Scott Armstrong joined Lismore Base Hospital as a Specialist in December 2020.

Dual-qualified in both Medicine (2007) and Dentistry (2013) from the University of Queensland, Dr Armstrong has taken a long road to bring his unique skills to Northern NSW.

Dr Armstrong then went on to complete a Dental degree, which allowed him to gain entry into Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery training, a highly specialised field.

After four years of specialist training, Dr Armstrong spent a further year as a fellow at the Gold Coast University Hospital working in Head and Neck Oncology, being awarded the FRACDS(OMS) and gaining specialist registration in 2019.

Dr Armstrong and his wife Shreya relocated briefly to the UK, where he completed a 12-month facial deformity fellowship at St George's Hospital in London, building further on the strong foundation of his speciality area.

"I was really fortunate to be trained and mentored by some of Europe's leading deformity, rhinoplasty and aesthetic facial reconstructive surgeons,

and I have a special interest in these fields," Dr Armstrong said.

Dr Armstrong had previously worked in Northern NSW in a locum consultant role, and is thrilled to be back on familiar turf.

"My wife Shreya and I were drawn to the strong community atmosphere and amazing lifestyle on offer in the Northern Rivers region, and we chose to relocate to the area permanently on our return to Australia," Dr Armstrong said.

"I am committed to establishing a comprehensive Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery service for our local community."

Dr Armstrong has extensive experience in the management and reconstruction of facial trauma, as well as facial deformity, orthognathic (jaw repositioning)

and sleep apnoea surgery, oral pathology, temporomandibular joint surgery, salivary gland surgery, facial skin cancer, and dento-alveolar and implant surgery.

Dr Armstrong holds a regular public outpatient clinic at Lismore Base Hospital for all general Maxillofacial surgical conditions including facial trauma. He also offers consultant Oral Surgery services at Ballina Community Dental Clinic for patients eligible for public oral health care.

Maxillofacial referrals can be directed to Lismore Base Hospital Specialist Outpatients Clinic on phone 6620 7301 or fax 6620 7307. Oral Surgery referrals for public-eligible patients should be directed to a local public oral health clinic on 1300 651 625.

PROFILE

DR KIRSTEN SMALL

As the first Director, Obstetrics and Gynaecology for the Clarence Health Service, Dr Kirsten Small is working to ensure women have a smooth journey through pregnancy, birth and postnatal care.

For Dr Kirsten Small, her new role as Director, Obstetrics and Gynaecology in the beautiful Clarence Valley is a chance to combine the theory and hands on aspects of her long medical career.

"I came to the Clarence Valley because this role offered me the opportunity to use what I have learned from both my clinical practice and my academic practice and apply it to a health service providing care for a community with significant challenges," Dr Small said.

"I was ready for something new and rewarding, and so far the job has lived up to expectations!"

Dr Small became a Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in 2001, after completing her medical training at the University of Queensland. She managed Private Practice with a Hospital appointment and was the Medical Director of a Fertility Solutions Clinic on the Sunshine Coast for several years.

"My vision for this new role is to develop a midwifery group practice model so that women can have their own midwife

through their pregnancy, their birth, and the postnatal period," Dr Small said.

"This is widely recognised as the safest model of maternity care.

"I plan to strengthen ties with community organisations and other maternity services in the network so that women's journey through their care is as smooth as possible."

Dr Small has a special interest in Academia, becoming a Lecturer at Griffith University School of Nursing and Midwifery in 2012, and has recently gained her third research degree, Doctor of Philosophy.

The doctoral research looked at the impact of fetal monitoring systems on professional relationships between midwives and obstetricians. The research showed how cultural beliefs that undermine inter-professional practice were embedded within hospital policy documents and professional guidelines, and how that reinforced conflict between obstetricians and midwives.

During her eight years in academia, Dr Small wrote and taught a course to enable qualified midwives to be able to prescribe medications.

The first of its kind in Australia, the course has become a very popular midwifery prescribing course, and there are now several hundred midwives around Australia who have gained the authority to write prescriptions.

"I continue to be interested in finding ways to improve birth outcomes for women and their babies," Dr Small said.

Dr Small is also a star of the small screen, having appeared in the widely acclaimed documentary, Birth Time, which looks at some of the challenges faced by Australia's maternity system and what might be done to improve birth care. The documentary is helping to bring issues that are often not discussed to the awareness of a wider audience.

Dr Small is still pursuing research interests, and in her down time enjoys sewing and spending time in the garden.

With her children now having left home, living regionally also has other unforeseen benefits for a doctor on call.

"I have moved into a place within easy walking distance of the hospital, great for those late night trips into birth suite!"

Explore: <https://www.birthtime.world/>





L-R: Dr Will Davies ED Director, Andrew White ICU Director, Health Minister Brad Hazzard, Member for Clarence Chris Gulaptis, Suskia Travis ED NUM, Skye Russell Telestroke Implementation Coordinator ACI, Marianne Taylor Stroke Coordinator and Luke Morrall eHealth.

Stroke service brings specialist treatment closer to home

Clarence Valley stroke patients now have 24-hour access to an innovative telehealth service, with the NSW Telestroke Service going live at Grafton Base Hospital on 8th April.

The NSW Telestroke Service offers people living in regional and rural areas increased access to life-saving stroke diagnosis and treatment by connecting local doctors to specialist stroke physicians via video consultation.

"This crucial service will provide Clarence Valley residents with rapid diagnosis and treatment from the state's expert clinicians," Clarence Health Service Director of Emergency, Dr Will Davies, said.

"Telestroke helps local doctors to decide the most appropriate treatment option for each patient which may include urgent treatment at their hospital to dissolve a clot or urgent transfer to a specialised stroke centre for more complex treatment."

The new Telestroke service at Grafton Base Hospital means patients will benefit from specialist stroke assessments closer to home, reducing the time between the onset of a stroke and a potentially life-saving intervention.

"Stroke is a time critical medical emergency that can kill up to 1.9 million brain cells per minute," Dr Davies said.

"Every minute counts, so the faster we can provide specialist advice and interventions, the better patient outcomes will be."

Every year, around 19,000 residents in NSW have a stroke. More than a third of people hospitalised for stroke in NSW are from regional, remote or rural areas. Implementation of the NSW Telestroke Service is a collaboration between the Prince of Wales Hospital, eHealth NSW, Agency for Clinical Innovation and the Ministry of Health.

The service will go live at The Tweed Hospital in May, and is already live at Lismore Base Hospital.

Learning to recognise the signs of stroke, getting to hospital quickly and calling triple zero (000) straight away are critical.

The F.A.S.T. test is a simple way to remember the signs of stroke:

- **Face:**
Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?
- **Arms:**
Can they lift both arms?
- **Speech:**
Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?
- **Time is critical:**
If you see any of these signs call triple zero (000) straight away.

Watch NSW Telestroke Service
<https://vimeo.com/295104771>

Falls prevention and COVID-19, what's the connection?

Whilst self-isolation and movement restrictions have been necessary measures to prevent the spread of the virus, staying at home can lead to many health problems that are associated with falls in older adults.

Recent research has shown that the isolation of COVID-19 has increased the risk of falls in older adults.

"... isolation might be an important measure to protect against COVID-19 infections. However, this may be a 'two edged sword'. As we have known well before the pandemic, there are negative consequences of social isolation for older people."
Pelicionia, P. and Lord, S. Braz J Phys Ther. 2020

For example, a lack of exposure to sunshine can lead to Vitamin D deficiency in older people, which can result in more severe injury after a fall. Not leaving the home as often can also lead to deconditioning, resulting in balance and mobility problems.

There are also strong links between social isolation, fear of falling and poor motivation in older adults. For these reasons, we are very pleased to be able

to reintroduce Stepping On groups in NNSWLHD.

Stepping On returns

Stepping On is a free seven-week program for people aged 65 years and over which combines gentle strength and balance exercises with educational sessions. It is designed to build knowledge, strength and confidence to prevent falls.

Who should you refer?

Stepping on is suitable for patients/clients who are:

- 65 years or older (Aboriginal people 45 years and older can be referred)
- Have had a fall in the past year or have a fear of falling
- Independent with or without a walking stick indoors
- Cognitively intact
- Do not have a progressive neurological condition.

Referrals are now open for Term 3, starting in July 2021 (Term 2 is full), and classes are scheduled for:

- Banora Point/Tweed Heads
- Ballina
- Yamba/Maclean
- Ocean Shores/Mullumbimby

New locations will be added, depending on the referrals received.

To refer your clients, please call/email/fax the Stepping On Coordinator:

Liz.graham@Health.nsw.gov.au,
phone (02) 6620 2553 or
fax (02) 6674 9599.



Safer steps for every body

During April Falls Month, staff took the opportunity to spread the word about what we can do to mobilise safely to help reduce the risk of falls among people older than 65 years.

This year's campaign, Safe Activity for Everybody focused on encouraging patients to get moving again by embracing balance and strength exercises and reconnecting with their community, after leading a more sedentary and isolated lifestyle during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Allison Wallis, Clinical Nurse Consultant for Inpatient Falls Prevention and Management for NNSWLHD led a team of people raising awareness at sites throughout the region.

"It's all about getting people up and moving, and letting

them know every move counts to help maintain physical function," Allison said.

"As well as moving, we highlight the importance of nutrition and staying connected with loved ones or groups, to keep active and healthy.

"Some patients we spoke with were unaware what their individual falls risks were, so it was great to be able to provide them with education on how they can stay safe when moving."



L-R: Melissa Ingram, Allison Wallis, Nicola Scanlan, Lea McAllister, Joel Organ, Crystal Griffiths (kneeling) with patient Terrance Walsh at Lismore Base Hospital.

From quizzes, to ukuleles, to afternoon teas, and even a Where's Wally-inspired poster to help staff locate the falls risks in a patient's room, the green-clad Falls crew had it covered!

If you want to know more about falls prevention, call Allison Wallis on 0448 310 007 or email

Allison.wallis@health.nsw.gov.au

COVID-19 case creates an Easter unlike any other

In the lead up to the Easter long weekend, local residents and tourists in Northern NSW were on high alert after a cluster of COVID-19 cases just over the border.



Left, Sydney nurses arriving at Ballina Gateway airport. L-R: Rhondra Hartley, Thomas Edwards, Rebekah Elliott, Cathy Diep and Mahesh Adhikari.
Right, Byron Central Hospital Fever Clinic manager, Lynette Black



By the time a locally-acquired case COVID-19 in Byron Bay was announced on 31 March, our first in 248 days, health authorities and local organisations were already in full swing to ensure the community could celebrate a safe, albeit subdued, Easter break.

Over the course of 36 hours in the week prior to Easter, health staff and private pathology providers established five new testing clinics to process the thousands of people coming forward for testing.

Our Aboriginal Medical Service partners provided a mobile pop up clinic at the Byron Bay Surf Club, which could easily be moved to new locations when needed.

"The effort and coordination of health staff to get so many clinics up and running in such a short time was outstanding," Lynne Weir, Director Clinical Operations, NNSWLHD, said.

"From our nursing and medical staff overseeing the clinical aspect, to our cleaning staff who stepped up and took on extra shifts to make sure these facilities were spotless and hygienic, everyone just pulled together to make it happen."

The four hospital fever clinics opened their doors for extended hours each

day, which took a significant amount of organisation and rostering.

"The clinic staff are amazing as they adapt to the constant changes in demand, including keeping up with new contact tracing locations" Ms Weir said.

Our Public Health team, an essential part of the emergency management response, was boosted by the help of staff who had been trained in contact tracing and follow-up of cases at the start of the pandemic. Environmental health staff also worked with councils, accommodation providers, government agencies and the LHD throughout the busy Easter break to support our communities.

"With each adjustment of the public health advice, our health workforce needs to adapt and absorb the new requirements, and that's not an easy task when you're more than 12 months into an ongoing pandemic," Ms Weir said.

"I also need to make special mention of our own security and cleaning staff who worked tirelessly to support the clinical efforts, including working at short notice on public holidays

and in different locations. We are incredibly proud and thankful for all your hard work and dedication."

Reinforcements from the big smoke

As Good Friday arrived, we welcomed six nurses from Sydney to bolster our local workforce. These staff worked in the COVID-19 testing clinics in Tweed, Lismore and Byron Bay, in the Emergency Department in Byron Central Hospital, and on the wards at Lismore Base Hospital.

"I have felt valued as a staff member in your team during the Easter period and greatly appreciate your team's hospitality," Nurse Cathy Diep said.

Nurse, Thomas Edwards echoed Cathy's sentiments.

"My time at Lismore Base Hospital was fantastic. I loved every minute of it," Thomas said.

"The staff on E10 were absolutely amazing. Honestly, I couldn't have asked for a better placement for the week I was there."

Review and name change for Suicide HealthPathway

Suicide is a prominent public health concern. On average, seven men and two women end their own lives in Australia every day.

In 2019 there was a six percent increase in suicides compared to 2018, and it was the most common cause of death for young people aged 15-24 years and adults aged 25-44. For every death by suicide, there are around six people experiencing intense grief, which may continue for many years.

Earlier this year, the Suicide Risk HealthPathway underwent a three-yearly review and was re-named to Suicide Ideation or Intent.

The pathway provides clinicians with best practice guidelines on the assessment of a patient at risk of suicide and a 'keep me safe' plan.

In Assessment no. 1, we've added a table that includes examples of the most appropriate language to be used when talking about suicide with patients. The referral section contains all the local referral information ensuring at-risk patients can be quickly referred on to the appropriate services.

The Information section provides a dropdown 'for health professionals' and 'for patients' and contains useful links to website resources and printable PDFs.

Help to keep safe

For ongoing management, you will find a suggestion to prepare a 'Keep Me Safe Plan' or a Beyond Now Safety Plan for your patient, and this can also be completed with the patient and carer. The individualised care plans provide a space to list the patient's name, contact details, support people, strategies to help the patient feel better and contains a list of emergency numbers and websites. The patient and their carer can keep a copy of the plan, so it's close by in a time of need.

Important priorities

The most important priorities are to engage the patient, provide hope, develop a crisis plan, bolster social supports, and restrict access to lethal means.

For a list of all localised pathways [visit the Mid and North Coast Localised Pathways](#):

Username: manchealth

Password: conn3ct3d

If you or anyone you know needs help:

Lifeline	13 11 14
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636
Headspace	1800 650 890



Phone fleet gets a boost

In February this year, Northern NSW Local Health District began working with Telstra to replace old mobile phones at no cost to the organisation, using available account credits.



IT&T Trainee Zari Maunder

The phone replacement process involved sending over 2000 text messages to mobile numbers inviting staff to reply if they wanted a new phone.

Those who replied 'Yes', received a new phone within a week, thanks to the quick work of IT & T Trainee, Zari Maunder.

Once received, a new SIM card was activated with the existing number, and users received instructions on how to set up the new phone. Zari called Telstra on the staff member's behalf to activate the new SIM card, and also provided help with setting up the new phones.

To date, 220 new mobile phones are in use, and 60 staff have confirmed they're happy with their current phone.

There were 323 mobile numbers which did not reply. If these numbers have not been used in the last six months, they may be disconnected.

This project has been great experience for Zari, who is also doing her TAFE Certificate III in Business Administration. Thanks Zari, for all your hard work and attention to detail!

Prevention program now available online for children above a healthy weight

The successful Go4Fun program is now available online, opening it up to families across our region.



[Go4Fun Online](#) bridges the gap for children aged 7-13 years who are above a healthy weight, and their families, who cannot attend a face to face program.

"Go4Fun Online is taught in a kid friendly way. The benefits are that the kids are out moving more and it's actually helped me, I've lost 6 kilos," Tracy, parent.

Childhood obesity is one of the most important public health issues facing Australia, with approximately one quarter of children and adolescents being overweight or obese. Children who are overweight are more likely to remain overweight or obese into adulthood, increasing the risk of non-communicable disease and premature death.

Evaluation of the Go4Fun program found significant improvements in:

- Weight and body composition
- Nutrition related behaviours
- Physical activity behaviours
- Cardiovascular fitness
- Self-esteem

[Go4Fun Online](#) is a 10 week program that provides children and their family with personalised phone, SMS and email support, an easy to follow set of online modules, connection to an online community and a report that summarises the changes made during the program.

Your role as a health professional

Many parents don't know when their child is above a healthy weight. That's why a health professional's role is vital, as they can screen for, and address, a child's weight status as part of normal growth assessments.

If you're a health professional, you can refer families to any version of Go4Fun (Online, face to face or Aboriginal Go4Fun) by completing this [online referral form](#). Our registration team will do the work for you and find the most suitable program for your patient, based on the information you provide and what is available.

To be eligible for Go4Fun, children should be between 7 and 13 years of age and classed as being 'above a healthy weight'

(>85th BMI percentile for age and sex). Parents or carers must be available to attend each session, too.

To refer multiple patients at one time, use this [bulk registration form](#). Families will be contacted individually by the registration team to identify the most suitable program.

Families can also refer directly by visiting go4fun.com.au/register or by calling 1800 780 900.

Go4Fun module for health professionals

Assessing a child's growth will help determine any support needed for a family.

Referring eligible children to Go4Fun can help support families achieve a healthier lifestyle. This 12-15 minute module outlines:

- how the Go4Fun program works
- the benefits of referring, and
- how to incorporate a referral as part of routine care.

You can complete the Go4Fun module on My Health Learning (HETI).

Course code: 290520953

If you have any questions regarding [Go4Fun](#), please contact the Go4Fun Coordinator, Rachel Adam at Rachel.Adam@health.nsw.gov.au

Colourful thanks from Lismore patient

Patient Jeff Blaikie created a beautiful artwork to thank the Lismore Base Hospital Specialist Outpatient Clinic.



Nola and Jeff Blaikie with clinic manager Kathy Hillier

I am a retired shipwright and now I volunteer at the Ballina Navel and Maritime Museum.

I started painting about 12 months ago after enjoying painting the background on a diorama I had made for the Museum.

I have not had any art lessons therefore I have no limitations except for my sight impairment and my imagination.

At the end of last year I had an accident and was taken to Lismore Base Hospital. While in there it was arranged for my further treatment at the Fracture Clinic at Lismore Base.

I am pleased to show my appreciation of the real care and professional treatment I am receiving at the Clinic.

Now that my injury has improved greatly, I am receiving treatment from the Community Nurses – it, too, is very good, with fortnightly visits to the Lismore Base Fracture Clinic.

I thank you. Jeff Blaikie

Between the Flags upgrade – Coming June 2021

Between the Flags (BTF) Version 4 upgrade has been developed to respond to growing needs to improve the management of a deteriorating patient.

Version 4 will increase usability in response to issues raised by staff. In addition, BTF will now include maternity and newborn patients.

Clinical staff who currently use BTF will receive updates as well as online training in the lead up to go live.

Staff in Maternity and Newborn settings who may not be familiar with previous BTF releases will be provided with face to face training.

BTF Version 4 upgrade will Go Live on 1st of June 2021 for all sites.

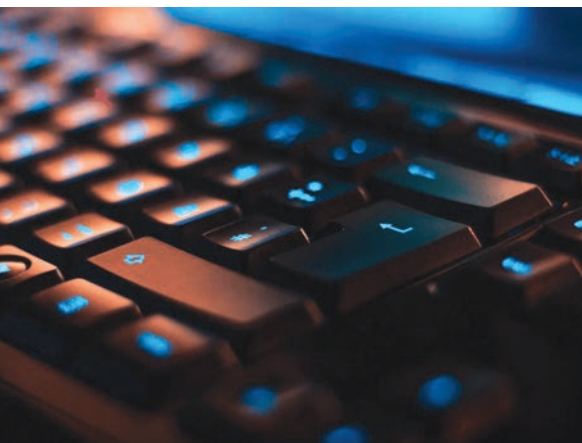
DIGITAL DOSE

Maternity and Special Care Nursery Go-Live dates are staggered to give staff in these units extra support:

- Tweed - 1 June
- Lismore - 16 June
- Grafton - 22 June

If your clinical unit would like a demonstration of the new functionality or would like more information, please contact:

chanelle.stowers@health.nsw.gov.au or
nichola.gregory@health.nsw.gov.au.



Put Cyber Security training on your to-do list

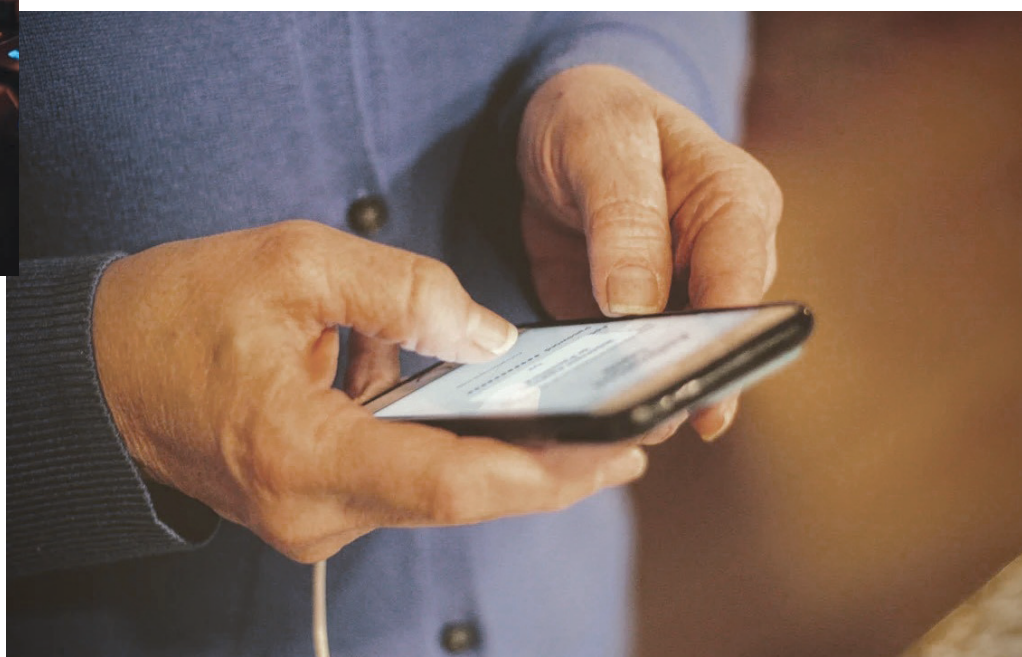
In April, a new cyber security training module was made mandatory for all NSW Health staff, contractors and students.

The Cyber Security Fundamentals will help you identify and prevent common cyber threats, recognise phishing emails, use email safely to protect personal, health or other sensitive information, and create and use strong passwords.

The course supports PD2020_046 Electronic Information Security policy requirements, and takes around 20 minutes to complete.

Existing staff must complete the training within 4 weeks of targeting, and new staff must complete within 4 weeks of orientation

Find it through [My Health Learning](#).



Don't get scammed by coronavirus

Scamwatch is warning Australians of scams relating to COVID-19 vaccinations in Australia and overseas.

Scamwatch has received over 6,415 scam reports mentioning the coronavirus with more than \$9,800,000 in reported losses since the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus).

Common scams include phishing for personal information, online shopping, and superannuation scams, all intended to gain your personal information or hard earned money.

Scammers are hoping that you have let your guard down, so be cautious and

alert to this kind of activity.

Do not provide your personal, banking or superannuation details to strangers who have approached you.

Scammers may pretend to have a connection with you, so it's important to stop and check, even when you are approached by what you think is a trusted organisation.

Visit [Scamwatch](#) for more warnings and news about COVID-19 scams.

What a relief! Recovery outreach has us in stitches

A good chat, a shared meal and a laugh are at the heart of a comedy relief tour helping small towns and villages recover from drought, flood and fire.

Throughout April, the National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency visited rural communities in Northern NSW with a night of comedy paired with health and financial support.

Rural Adversity in Mental Health Program coordinator, Samantha Osborne, said the nights were all about connecting people to each other and to mental health and wellbeing support in a safe space. For small towns, that's often the local community hall.

"We brought the services to the people," Sam said.

"It was great to be able to have conversations, and provide a chance for social connections over a free dinner, finished off with some laughs from comedian Damian Callinan."

As well as the light-hearted side, the nights were a chance for locals to learn more about the sort of help that is

available to their communities which have been affected by one natural disaster after another, as well as the pandemic.

Staff from Northern NSW Local Health District's Bushfire Recovery Team, Rural Community Counsellors and RAMHP Coordinators, joined a host of support and recovery staff from government agencies and St Vincent de Paul to offer guidance, resources and a friendly ear.

"The events were really well-attended, and highly enjoyable," Sam said.

Multi-award-winning comedian, actor, screenwriter and storyteller, Damian Callinan, brought the house down with his stand up comedy act to round out the evening.

Events were held in Liston, Bonalbo, Mallanganee, Ewingar, Lawrence and Copmanhurst.

For support and resources, head to the [RAMHP website](#).



L-R: Fiona Couch - NNSWLHD Rural Community Counsellor, Trish Kench NNSWLHD Bushfire Recovery Clinician, Damian Callinan, Katrina McDougal - Rural Financial Counsellor, Sandy McNaughton - Regional Recovery Officer with National Drought and Flood Response and Recovery Agency.



L-R: Paula Hilliard - Rural Financial Counsellor, Lynne Shailer - NNSWLHD Bushfire Recovery Clinician, Janelle Saffin- Member for Lismore, Fiona Couch.

Country music star opens up on wellbeing and healing

The Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP), together with RAMHP Ambassador Melinda Schneider, are rolling out a series of free wellbeing events in rural communities.

We invite you to come and bring a friend, enjoy a cuppa and live music, and take some time out to reflect on your own wellbeing.

Hear from much loved Australian country music singer and song writer, Melinda Schneider, as she shares her story about her struggles with mental ill-health.

Learn what it means to be 'gentle on yourself' as you listen to some of Melinda's most healing songs.

Local RAMHP Coordinators Alex Grantham and Sam Osborne will host an engaging session about wellbeing and self-care, and how we can all find more ways of being gentle on ourselves.

There will also be an opportunity to connect with others over afternoon tea, and a Q&A to round out the day.



Melinda Schneider

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday 26 June - 12-2pm

Casino RSM Club, 162 Canterbury Street, Casino

Bookings are essential. Register at Eventbrite: shorturl.at/wK249

For more information contact:
Alex Grantham on 0428 886 752 or Alexandra.Grantham@health.nsw.gov.au

Farewell Patrick McDermott

Patrick has been a highly valued employee of both Lismore and Ballina hospitals over the years with many a tale to tell, in his best Irish accent.

Patrick is greatly admired for his ability to break the tension in chaotic situations and melt the ice of a straight-faced manager in a serious moment.

In his earlier health carer, Patrick worked as a wardsperson, and as an EN in operating theatres in Sydney prior to coming to Lismore, and has been the eyes and ears of many stressful scenarios, retelling them like a scene from *Are You being Served*, or *Fawlty Towers*.

There were many times when the ward was in a state of busy chaos where staff would ask "where's Patrick?!"

The majority of the time, Patrick would be found providing care or an ear and counsel to a struggling patient, ensuring they are not lost in the churn, and making their day in the process.

After more than 20 years at Lismore Base Hospital, Renal Unit Enrolled Nurse, Patrick McDermott is hanging up the apron.

The LBH Renal Unit staff nominated Patrick for a Staff Achievement Award in 2018. When Patrick won, he purchased an item for a vulnerable patient to improve her comfort during dialysis.

Patrick will be missed by all. We wish him all the best in retirement.



Patrick McDermott with LBH Director of Nursing Narelle Gleeson



Patrick McDermott (fifth from right) with Renal Unit colleagues.

Farewell Darleen Berwick

It was with sadness and excitement that Murwillumbah District Hospital said goodbye to Executive Officer/Director of Nursing, Darleen Berwick in March.

Darleen commenced employment with The Tweed Hospital before transferring to Murwillumbah District Hospital in 2013 as NUM of Surgical Ward. Darleen progressed to Deputy Director of Nursing in 2015, and then to Executive Officer/Director of Nursing from 2018 until her resignation in April 2021.

Throughout this time, Darleen strived to keep patients at the forefront of care, and continued to be part of service delivery at the Tweed and Murwillumbah hospitals.

Darleen's dedication to improving relationships with the indigenous community is evidenced throughout Murwillumbah District Hospital and has become an enduring legacy. Her drive for improvement and a creative mind enabled many memorable moments for those lucky enough to have had the pleasure of working with her.

We wish Darleen all the best in her new adventures!



Darleen Berwick

NORTHERN
EXPOSURE

