

4 Interns find their
true north

10 PROFILE: Associate Professor,
David Scott OAM

12 Kurrajong's journey
to smoke free healthcare

NORTHERN

EXPOSURE





NEW YEAR, NEW IDEAS

This is going to sound cheesy, but as a kid growing up I never thought that working in health would be an interesting and diverse career move.

Actually, I never thought about it at all. I had a few aunts who were nurses, but none of my immediate family worked in health, and it never really crossed my mind.

Here we are many years later, and no two days are ever the same.

Everywhere I look I see examples of people changing their minds, doing new things and going where opportunities take them, all within the massive, multilayered organism that is the public health system.

I speak to nurses who are on secondment doing something completely different to what they first trained in, and I work with colleagues who have hidden talents they've accumulated in past lives.

Doing things outside your comfort zone has paid off for many of the staff featured in this edition. Dr David Scott received an Order of Australia Medal for his work in anaesthetics, while Dr Ian Cappe is the new Lismore Citizen of the Year after a lifetime dedicated to radiology and the pursuit of new techniques.

Our emerging leaders, new mental health nurses and interns would attest to the benefits of stepping into something new, whether that be new skills for patient care, a new discipline, or simply a new viewpoint on the problems we encounter each day.

I hope their stories inspire you this new year.

NORTHERN

EXPOSURE

Editor: Fiona Baker, Manager Media and Corporate Communications

Phone: 6620 2141

Email: fiona.baker1@health.nsw.gov.au

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



www.facebook.com/northernnswlocalhealthdistrict/



<https://twitter.com/NNSWLHD>

THIS ISSUE

Executive Update	3
From the Board Chair	3
Interns find their true north	4
Dr Ian Cappe, Radiologist Lismore's Citizen of the Year	5
Mental Health volunteer wins Ballina Citizen of the Year	5
New spaces for patients and loved ones	6
New mental health nurses hit the ground running	7
Hospital coffee shop wins Volunteer group of the year!	7
Construction ramps up for the Tweed Valley Hospital	8
Learning leadership, the hands on way...	9
PROFILE: Associate Professor David Scott OAM	10
Kurrajong's journey to smoke free health care	11
Restoration and rehab go hand in hand	13
Smoke free champion grants now open	13
Daily practice reflections for working with CALD clients	14
Northern Highlights	14
Digital Dose	15
QR codes make COVID testing even easier	16
AUSLAN - a fascinating language	16
Health Pathways: New post-COVID-19 conditions HealthPathway	17
Help kids with their teething grin!	17
Vale Dr David McMaster	18
Remembering Yve Turner	18
Vale Elizabeth Hodgson	19
Stay informed about COVID-19 vaccines	19

Cover image: The Tweed Hospital 2021 Interns with Dr Grant Rogers, Director Medical Services at right

Back cover image: Sunrise over Ballina by Brett Payne

Executive Update



Wayne Jones
Chief Executive

I hope many of you had a chance to relax and recharge as we enter the new year which promises to be challenging and exciting.

I am confident that it will also bring ample doses of satisfaction and reward as we meet these challenges together in the health space.

As we wind back our alert level across our hospitals and health centres, I need

to sincerely thank all staff and community members for your support, particularly with regards to wearing masks to reduce the risk of further exposure.

The diligence and commitment from everyone was much appreciated, and a particular thanks to those staff who took on a stronger role of reminding their colleagues of the need to adhere to these regulations.

During the Christmas and New Year period we were extremely saddened by the passing of Dr David McMaster, a much respected and valued paediatrician who, for more than 20 years, worked at The Tweed Hospital. David's passing was so sadly felt by many, and none more so than the staff and clinicians at Tweed.

I wish to again pass on my condolences to David's family and to all those who worked with and valued David's contribution as a clinician, colleague and friend.

Looking ahead to this year, planning is well advanced on vaccinating our workforce for COVID-19 in accordance with the Australian Government's prioritisation program.

I appreciate there are many questions around the vaccines and the roll out program, and we will strive to make information available to our staff and communities as quickly as it becomes available.

We're continuing to work on implementing the positive changes brought about through dealing with COVID-19, including developing our virtual health plan and providing our communities and clinicians with alternative models of delivering care.

As we start to return to some of our strategic programs, it is important to remember that COVID-19 remains a significant challenge, and we all must continue to play our roles in keeping the virus at bay.

From the Board Chair



Brian Pezzutti
Board Chair

Australia's healthcare system is one of the most comprehensive in the world. However, one of the realities of such a large and complex system is that we don't get it right all the time.

When we don't get it right, it's absolutely vital that we hear about it, and learn from it.

Personally, it frustrates me when someone tells me about a personal health care experience which was less than satisfactory, but they have done nothing about it. No feedback given to the clinical staff at the time; nor any feedback given through any of the processes which health organisations have in place to hear from

patients, their carers and family members.

Be it complaints, criticism or compliments, feedback is vital for a modern health system. It supports system improvements and is integral to delivering care that matters to our patients and their carers.

"The customer is always right" is a phrase that is thought to have originated from UK department store owners in the early 1900s. They didn't intend it to mean that the customer was right in every situation, but rather to focus their staff on satisfying their customers regardless of whether they were right or wrong.

I believe the health system can learn a lot from an increased focus on customer service, or in our case, the patient and their carer's experience.

The Patient Experience Officers, or 'concierge' service now in place at several of our emergency departments has been a great success and is a fantastic example of customer service.

While I believe all feedback is valuable, we must be mindful not to simply focus on

the negatives. There is much to celebrate in Northern NSW Local Health District and it is important that we recognise good performance and highlight our achievements. Recent patient surveys show that our hospitals are judged by our 'customers' as among the best in the State, and I thank all staff members for your commitment, compassion, caring and diligence to achieve these well-deserved results.

I encourage you all to share your positive stories, big or small.

Here's how you can stay in touch with what's happening across NNSWLHD and provide your input:

- Keep up to date with the latest news on our intranet and website, and keep an eye on your emails for this LHD newsletter and your local site-based newsletter.
- Connect with NNSWLHD on facebook, Instagram or Twitter.
- If you have a story to share, please email our Corporate Communications and Media team: NNSWLHD-Media@health.nsw.gov.au



Lismore Base Hospital 2021 Interns with Dr Tim Williams, Executive Director Medical Services

Interns find their true north

Around the wards in Lismore and Tweed, new junior doctors have begun learning the ropes as the 2021 cohort of Rural Preferential Recruitment program interns kick off their medical careers.

Julian Conboy, originally from Browns Plains, south of Brisbane, is one of 17 new faces at Tweed, taking up his place as part of the Aboriginal Medical Workforce Pathway.

Julian says he was driven to do medicine out of a desire to help reduce the indigenous mortality gap and create a more positive connection with modern medicine and health.

"Throughout my undergraduate degree, I did a lot of work mentoring and working with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high-schoolers both from the Gold Coast as well as rural and remote communities throughout the NT," Julian said.

"I also shared my own stories and history of my Torres Strait Islander heritage, descending from Sai Bai Island.

"I would often ask the kids about their perception and experience with medicine, doctors and GPs, and the majority of experiences were quite negative and full of distrust of the whole concept of western medicine, both metro and rural."

"I have an ambition to positively influence the negative perception that some of the young Indigenous community may have on modern medicine and health."

The Tweed cohort includes doctors who hail from the Maldives and Canada, as well as NSW and Queensland.

At Lismore Base Hospital, among the 11 new interns is Stefanie Ring, who is quite familiar with the place, having been born there and later returning several times as a physiotherapist and then as a medical trainee.

"The staff at the Base have always been so welcoming and helpful, and I'm sure

having lots of friendly faces around will ease the transition from student to doctor," Stefanie said.

Before taking up medicine, Stefanie worked in Australia and overseas as a physiotherapist.

"I have always had a strong interest in health and science, and a fascination with medicine. I found physiotherapy to be a great fit for me, and I really enjoyed working with people and helping to improve their health and quality of life. I was drawn to a career in medicine for very similar reasons with the added benefit of being directly involved in a patient's medical care."

As part of the two-year medical training program, new doctors get the chance to develop their skills in a wide range of medical specialties, including surgery, emergency medicine, paediatrics, obstetrics, psychiatry and orthopaedics. Stefanie is looking forward to getting hands-on experience and building solid foundations for the future.

"It's very exciting and a bit scary! It has been a long road, but I am so thrilled to be starting this new chapter."

Dr Ian Cappe, Radiologist - Lismore's Citizen of the Year

With more than 35 years on the clock as a Radiologist, Dr Ian Cappe is used to receiving calls at all hours of the day and night. But being told he'd been named the Lismore City Council Citizen of the Year was something he never expected.

Dr Cappe arrived in Lismore in January 1986 to begin work with North Coast Radiology, after training at Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney and watching his father develop the biggest radiology business in Sydney at the time. It wasn't a tough decision to follow in these footsteps.

"Radiology was exciting," Dr Cappe says. "It was ever-changing, and growing so fast. The human body is absolutely amazing, and being able to look at it with imaging is wonderful."

Dr Cappe initially offered basic interventional procedures and biopsies at Lismore Base Hospital, but he was keen to explore the new and growing field of cytology, which examines single cells to diagnose infections or disease.

"A new pathologist arrived in town, and approached me about doing it," Dr Cappe says. But the training opportunities for the discipline were few and far between.

A chance meeting at a medical dinner in Sydney led to Dr Cappe teaming up with a Canberra-based radiologist, Dr Rob Allen, who was looking for trainees to his cytology program. For the next four years Dr Cappe would spend his annual three-month holiday learning the techniques in Canberra.

"During those years, Dr Allen was on speed dial for us in Lismore, and helped us as the mentor on call at any time," Dr Cappe says.

As procedures became more advanced, Dr Cappe was an integral part of the growing radiology, surgical and urology teams at Lismore Base Hospital, welcoming the first MRI machine and providing increasingly advanced support to local clinicians.



Lismore Mayor Isaac Smith, Dr Ian Cappe, George Ellis Australia Day Ambassador

"We enabled the clinicians in Lismore to push the envelope in doing what they wanted to do in their own areas, knowing we had the local expertise to back them up.

"The transfer rate out of Lismore declined significantly, and at one point we were the busiest interventional radiology department between Newcastle and Cape York."

Some of the highlights of Dr Cappe's career include introducing ultrasound to Tonga in 1982 as part of a World Health Organisation team, and bringing a number of radiographers and sonographers from Samoa to train in Lismore and take their skills back to their home country.

He was also instrumental in teaching mammography to Samoan clinicians as part of the BreastScreen NSW program based in Lismore.

"It's been a lot of fun, and being able to help people has been wonderful," Dr Cappe says.

"Lismore Base Hospital has been supportive over the years with getting nurses on call and after hours. Everything has been a team effort and really came together well."

Dr Cappe finished his appointment at Lismore Base Hospital in September 2020, but continues to work with BreastScreen NSW and practices locally with North Coast Radiology.

Mental Health volunteer wins Ballina Citizen of the Year



Congratulations to Barbara Swain, the Ballina Shire Council Citizen of the Year.

Barbara founded the Mental Health Support Group (MSHG) over 20 years ago, a charity that has grown to support people living with mental illness through providing housing, clothing, furniture and other necessities.

During this time, Barbara and the MSHG have also helped improve the patient experience for people receiving mental health care in Northern NSW Local Health District, donating equipment and arranging fundraising for local mental health units.



New spaces for patients and loved ones



Top, from left Registered Nurses Nicole Bennett and Lorraine Montgomery with Nursing Unit Manager Sue Boon at Maclean District Hospital

Bottom left, new outdoor area at Casino Hospital's Harmony Garden

Bottom right, a new palliative care room at Maclean

New palliative care spaces are making patients, their families and friends feel more at home.

Patients receiving palliative care at Casino and District Memorial Hospital can now benefit from a new garden and upgraded palliative care facilities, thanks to a share in \$263,000 in funding from the NSW Government, as well as \$8,000 raised by the local community.

The new environment provides a more thoughtful and comfortable space for patients and their families and carers.

New features include two new Smartplus beds with specially-designed mattress covers to prevent pressure injuries, and a shower chair to allow patients to lie in different positions while being washed.

Two new lounges that convert to beds for family members or carers staying overnight, and better facilities in the room such as tea and coffee making equipment and new interior decorating improve the comfort and reduce the feeling of a hospital setting by hiding equipment away out of sight.

The Harmony Garden is now a more welcoming, all-weather outdoor space for patients, with a new comfortable outdoor setting, BBQ, waterproof awnings.

Ellen Palmer, Director of Nursing at Casino and District Memorial Hospital acknowledged the generous contribution and support from the Casino community in what has been a difficult period for the township and surrounding areas with the bushfires and COVID-19.

"The community raised \$8,000 towards the palliative care upgrades, and throughout the process the health service and the community forged closer ties. Thank you to the Casino community for their outstanding support," Ms Palmer said.

Maclean District Hospital has also benefitted from the palliative care upgrade funding, with more comfortable and welcoming patient rooms, new medical equipment, new furniture and a new yarnning circle in the Sensory Garden.

At the entrance of the Sub-Acute ward and Rehabilitation Unit, a new 'Ginagay' sign welcomes the community in language.

New mental health nurses hit the ground running

Despite the difficulties of a pandemic and remote learning, six local nurses are one step closer to a new career in mental health.

The six graduates of the 2020 Transition to Mental Health Nursing program will soon be out on site after spending 12 months gaining the unique skills they'll need to care for people with mental health issues.

Nurse Educator, Shane Scofield, praised the commitment of the nurses, in what was a very difficult year.

"With remote learning and COVID, some things went well, and some didn't," Shane said. "But this year I am no less impressed with how the students have grown and developed over the year."

Of the six graduates, four will now continue onto permanent work in mental health in Lismore and Grafton, while two are joining the casual pool.

Dee Robinson, General Manager Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs,



From left, General Manager MHAOD Dee Robinson, Erica Finlay Dingle, Silas Warren Hendrickx, Samantha Collard, Vicki James, Natalie Wetherall, Nurse Educator Shane Scofield and Director of Nursing Mental Health Denise Jack. Absent, Isadora Amstalden Martins

said the program was an excellent way to nurture nurses into the mental health service.

"It's such a great way to develop our own workforce, and it says something about the program that the vast majority of graduates go on to stay and work within the Local Health District," Ms Robinson said.

The recipient of the Susan Law Memorial Award for all round academic and clinical achievement this year was Silas Warren Hendrickx.

Now in its ninth year, the Transition to Mental Health Nursing program is open to both new graduate Registered Nurses starting their careers, and more experienced Registered Nurses looking for a supported transition to mental health nursing.

HOSPITAL COFFEE SHOP WINS VOLUNTEER GROUP OF THE YEAR!

Congratulations to the incredible volunteers at the Murwillumbah Hospital Coffee Shop, which took out the '2020 Volunteer Group of the Year' at the Tweed Shire Council Australia Day awards.

Completely volunteer run, the shop is open five days a week, 48 weeks a year, offering a welcome smile to the sick and frail and those who care for them.

Over the past 11 years, the group has raised more than \$580,000 towards making patients' stays more comfortable. They have provided equipment and furnishings such

as chairs, blinds, TV's and numerous pieces of medical equipment for the hospital.

"We want to give a huge thank you and congratulations to our amazing coffee shop crew on their well-deserved recognition," Darleen Berwick, Murwillumbah District Hospital Director of Nursing said.



Murwillumbah Hospital Coffee Shop volunteers accept their Australia Day award

"They make an amazing difference to our hospital, both through their fundraising but also by providing a beautiful space for staff and patients to relax and recharge. Well done!"



<https://youtu.be/46zwls1uyw>



Health Minister Brad Hazzard, NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Tweed MP Geoff Provest with members of the Health Infrastructure project team, NNSWLHD Board, Executive and staff, and Bundjalung Elder Uncle Victor Slockee
Inset, Tweed Valley Hospital concrete pour

Construction ramps up for the Tweed Valley Hospital

Major construction works are now underway at the site of the \$673.3 million Tweed Valley Hospital, following the award of the main works contract to Lendlease Building.

With the first major concrete floor slab being poured in January, the hospital reached a significant milestone towards delivering the world-class facility that will open to patients in 2023.

In May 2020, the project was allocated an additional \$91.2 million in funding, and also announced as one of the NSW Government's 24 priority projects to have its planning approval fast-tracked, assisting with NSW's economic recovery and creating opportunities for thousands of new jobs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Infrastructure Project Director Jackie Hawkins, who has worked on the project since it began almost four years ago, says the new hospital will enable the delivery of brand new services for the region, including interventional cardiology and integrated cancer care; as well as incorporating new technology and evolved models of care.

"The new Tweed Valley Hospital is being built on a 19-hectare site and will have a gross floor area of more than 71,000 square metres – that's almost five times the size of the existing Tweed Hospital site and more than double the floor area of the existing hospital," she said.

"The Tweed-Byron community will benefit from the significant increase in beds, theatres, and ambulatory care spaces. Learning, Development and Research will also be embedded in the facility, providing training opportunities for both our current and future workforce."

The Tweed Valley Hospital Development will deliver a new state-of-the-art 430-bed facility featuring:

- expanded emergency department with 42 treatment spaces
- 12 operating theatres
- expanded outpatient services
- new interventional cardiology service
- new radiotherapy service as part of integrated cancer care.

Construction will continue to gain momentum and it is expected that the project will employ up to 650 workers at the peak of construction in 2022.

Fun facts

Around 120 concrete slab pours will be required to construct the hospital.

- The slab is located in the Basement level and is around 600m²
- Around 170 cubic metres of concrete will be poured to form the slab, and approximately 28,000 m³ of concrete will be poured in total
- The gross floor area of the new hospital is more than 71,000 m² - as a comparison, the existing Tweed Hospital is <25,000 m²
- There will be enough concrete in the Main Hospital Building to fill 12 Olympic size swimming pools
- Approx. 3,800 tonnes of REO steel will reinforce the hospital building structures

You can find an overview of the Tweed Valley Hospital project in a brand-new fact sheet on the project website, as well as a first look inside the new Hospital through a virtual flythrough video. Visit



www.tweedvalleyhospital.health.nsw.gov.au

Learning leadership, the hands on way...

After an interrupted year, the first graduates of the Northern NSW Local Health District Emerging Leaders Program are finally over the last hurdle.

Supported by their line managers and Directors of Nursing and Midwifery, graduates from the first cohort of the Emerging Leaders Program received their certificates and shared their experiences in a graduation ceremony in Ballina on 3 February.

"What an achievement to be the first group to complete the program developed specifically by and for Northern NSW Local Health District," Rae Rafferty, Associate Director Nursing and Midwifery Leadership, Culture and Research said.

"Every graduate did a tremendous job of presenting, and many of them were first time presenters."

The emerging leaders shared their own leadership philosophies and how these had developed, how their nursing practice had changed as a result of the program



The inaugural Emerging Leaders program graduates, with Jon Magill, Rae Rafferty and Wayne Jones

and what they wished they had known a few years ago. As one leader remarked: "Don't wait for the leader, it's probably you!"

Chief Executive, Wayne Jones and Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Aboriginal Health, Katharine Duffy addressed the new graduates, highlighting the importance of growing our future leaders here at home, and the value this training adds to our staff and the District.

Highlights of the program included:

- 95% retention rate over the 12 months
- 90% of participants had a promotional opportunity over the course of the program

- Evidence of positive growth noted in emotional intelligence scores, role-breadth self-efficacy, job satisfaction and resilience
- Evidence of improvement in understanding all four leadership domains: development of self, engaging and influencing others, introduction to systems and culture for improved care
- Participants reported improvements in their communication skills, confidence and self-awareness as well as their ability to actively reflect.

The program was facilitated by Rae Rafferty, Jon Magill, Casey McCarron and Jacinta Felsch and supported by excellent leaders across the District who provided guest presentations, mentoring and coaching throughout the year.

THE CODE OF CONDUCT MORE THAN A POLICY

Confidentiality matters in both a health setting and in our workplace. Confidentiality is one of the values outlined in NSW Health's Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct defines our standards of ethical and professional conduct at work, but it is much more than a policy.

The Code outlines how we take care of each other, how we promote ethical day-to-day decisions and behaviours and how we promote a positive workplace culture which is built on our CORE values of Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Empowerment.

Maintaining, practising and protecting confidentiality is key if we are to protect the privacy of our patients.

It's also an important feature of our workplace and social interactions, and in protecting organisational information.

You are encouraged to visit the human resources intranet site to learn more about the importance of confidentiality, including the adverse effects of gossiping in the workplace.



If you would like more information about this initiative, please contact your local Human Resources Manager for assistance.



<https://intranet.nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/human-resources/the-code-of-conduct/>

Anaesthetic

This month we chatted with VMO Anaesthetist, Associate Professor David Scott, on being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for services to medicine and anaesthetics.

Associate Professor David Scott OAM

Associate Professor David Scott is a familiar face around the hospitals in Lismore, Casino and Ballina. He joined Lismore Base Hospital 26 years ago as a newly minted anaesthetist, and apart from a sabbatical in California and a series of military deployments, he's been here ever since.

A leader in his field, AP Scott is a past President of the Australian Society of Anaesthetists, a Group Captain in the Royal Australian Airforce Reserves, and has been a Conjoint Associate Professor with the University of Western Sydney.

Even still, it was a surprise to be recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia in January this year.

"They notify you that you are being considered for one, to see if you will accept it," AP Scott said.

"But up until the point of actually reading it on the webpage, I didn't believe it was happening.

"I feel like almost everything I've done has been part of a team, it's just that I'm the one getting recognised for it, which is very nice.

"We are a key member of a very important team that provides care to patients, and none of it happens without everyone else in the team."

AP Scott decided on anaesthetics right from the outset. Beginning his medical training in Sydney in 1988, he later worked in Boston for 18 months at the Beth Israel Medical Centre, a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital, before moving to the North Coast.

"Anaesthesia is one of the few specialties that cuts across all the boundaries. We have

to give anaesthetics to the complete cross section of the community; from perfectly healthy individuals, to people with lots of significant other health problems.

"We have to know quite a bit about cardiology, quite a bit about endocrinology, the disease processes that have led to the patient's surgical problem, and the surgical side of things.

AP Scott likens the surgical team's interventions to a traveller taking a detour while still moving in the right direction.

"We take patients from their General Practitioner, and through a surgical procedure, and then hand them back in an improved condition. Everyone in the surgical team has a role; the surgeons, the anaesthetists, the theatre nurses, the recovery nurses."

Although he'll never know who nominated him for the OAM, AP Scott's citation reflects his teaching work, his anaesthetic appointments in Lismore, and his work on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) review under the Australian Government between 2016-2018.

The MBS review process was designed to look at all the item numbers in the schedule, in line with clinical evidence and practice, but Dr Scott and his fellow anaesthetists felt the end process was in danger of putting procedures out of the reach of patients.

"I was the President of the Australian Society of Anaesthetists at the time, and I raised the issue with the Minister, intending to recommend different changes which



Original artwork by Oral Roberts adorns the LBH Anaesthetics department

would still have some financial savings for the government, but not the same negative impact to patients.

"We were able to put a range of more sensible and implementable recommendations to the Minister, which were largely accepted."

It was a long and intense process, but one that is reflective of AP Scott's enthusiastic approach to work and life.

"For those two years I had six weekends home each year. I could find my way directly into the Health Minister's office in the Parliament House rabbit warren by the end of it!"

His best piece of advice to the younger generation? "Bite off more than you can chew, and chew like crazy!"

Kurrajong's journey to smoke free health care

The Kurrajong Tweed Mental Health Team are on a journey that has transformed the care they provide to patients who smoke.

Smoking is the leading preventable cause of ill health and death in Australia and people with mental health conditions are twice as likely to smoke daily as people without mental health conditions, figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show.

Smoking also interferes with a number of medications, including those taken for schizophrenia and depression.

Julie Butler, Clinical Nurse Specialist 2, and Kurrajong's 'Smoke Free Champion' said there was a prevailing view by staff that most patients would never want to quit and that patients would become aggressive, but in reality, that's not the case.

"The idea that mental health patients don't want to quit is a myth. We conducted a survey of patients and found that the majority of them wanted to quit or cut down," Julie said.

Whilst Kurrajong has technically been smoke free since 2010, it was common practice for patients to be given permission to leave the ward to smoke up to six times a day and for staff to take patients out for 'smoking leave.'

There was a lot of bartering, and sometimes aggression, between patients in relation to cigarettes.

The Kurrajong team has brought about change over time using a mixture of approaches, including:

- Applying for a 'Smoke Free Champions' grant that provided a smokerlyzer (carbon monoxide monitor) and training
- Conducting a patient survey to understand patient preferences
- Introducing the Fagerstrom test for nicotine dependence into their patient assessment workflow



Kurrajong NRT champions pretend to use NRT inhalors

- Stopping the practice of 'smoking leave' (waivers)
- Active, consistent provision of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)
- Delivering ongoing staff education sessions, including to all new staff
- Ensuring regular communication through inclusion of NRT into the agenda of the patient/staff morning meetings
- Reinforcing the smoke free status of the ward by the Nurse Unit Manager.

The results speak for themselves. Kurrajong is now smoke free and, there has been no increase in patient aggression in the past 12-18 months. What's more, a number of patients have become smoke-free during this time!

"The change Kurrajong has brought about has just been tremendous," said Christine Sullivan, Health Promotion Clinical Engagement Team, Tobacco Treatment Specialist.

"Kurrajong brought together input from patients, strong leadership, consistent training and communication, integration of nicotine dependence into their clinical assessments and provision of NRT support. They provide a roadmap that can, and should be, followed.

"One of the best things we can do to support patient health and wellbeing is to help smokers to become smoke-free."

To find out more, contact Julie Butler, Clinical Nurse Specialist 2 Kurrajong Tweed Mental Health Unit, on Julie.Butler1@health.nsw.gov.au or (07) 5506 7300.

Or contact Christine Sullivan, Clinical Engagement Team, Health Promotion, Tobacco Treatment Specialist christine.sullivan2@health.nsw.gov.au or (02) 6674 9500.

Restoration and rehab go hand in hand

Each Saturday morning, there is a hive of activity at the Ballina District Hospital Rehabilitation Unit, as some of the patients gear up for their Saturday social get together.

Instead of relaxing and unwinding, at the men's Saturday furniture restoration sessions you will see blokes outdoors; scrubbing, sanding, painting and singing along to some favourite tunes. It's about rolling up their sleeves and getting stuck into a rehabilitation therapy session with a difference.

Led by Diversional Therapist, Tracey Beck, the get together is an interactive session where the men meet to give tired older outdoor furniture a new life.

"We adapt each activity for each participant to maximise their independence and abilities, and to support them in attaining their rehabilitation goals," Tracey said.

Each participant has their own space and piece of furniture to work on. For those who choose to not to actively participate there are also the important roles of 'supervisor' and 'DJ for the music selection.'



Patient, Robert Jung hard at work

"It's about mateship and inclusion, and the men are rightfully proud of their achievements which are also benefitting the hospital by reducing the cost of purchasing new items, and improving the environment for other patients, staff and visitors alike."

Here's a snippet of feedback from the participants:

- It gets you out of your room
- Takes the boredom away
- Able to have a yarn
- You can tell a few stories and have a few laughs
- You get to meet people from different walks of life
- Relax and be with other people
- These are not projects you would think about doing in hospital – it's excellent!
- We get to do a bit of manual work
- We encourage and help one another.

"From a Diversional Therapy perspective, the restoration sessions have shown to have many benefits including engaging in a meaningful activity of interest, distraction from boredom and pain, utilising previous skills and abilities, and a sense of achievement," Tracey said.

Since the group began in May last year, the men have restored three outdoor tables and seven chairs. Patients who are interested in continuing their activities are also referred on to local men's sheds after discharge from hospital.

To find out more, contact Tracey at: tracey.beck@health.nsw.gov.au



Smoke Free Champion Grants NOW OPEN

The grants are open to full and part time clinical staff from NNSW LHD Hospitals.

To apply, download and complete the application form here:
bit.ly/smokefreechampion

APPLICATIONS CLOSE Wednesday 31st March

For more information contact:

Christine Sullivan, Health Promotion Tobacco Treatment Specialist
on **02 6674 9500** or email: christine.sullivan2@health.nsw.gov.au

"The idea that patients didn't want to quit was a myth"

Julie Butler, Clinical Nurse Specialist 2, Kurrajong Mental Health Service

Daily practice reflections for working with CALD clients

Building our understanding of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in our region means we can provide better services to our patients.

In our daily practice, it is important to consider what cultural factors may be influencing your client's health and their participation in their care. Reflecting on these factors will help you to provide an accessible, safe and culturally-responsive health service.

Migration and settlement

A client's migration and settlement in Australia can adversely affect their physical and mental health. The practical aspects of migration such as learning a new language and culture, finding housing, gaining recognition of qualifications can be stressful.

Whether the migration was voluntary or involuntary, the absence of supportive

family, community and social networks, and the experience of racism and discrimination may impact your client's health.

It is also important to note that symptoms of trauma and health issues can manifest many years after arrival in Australia.

Access to health services

Consider your client's ability to access appropriate health services. Assessing how well your client can understand and communicate in English is the first step, and then booking a Health Care Interpreter (if needed) is critical.

It is also valuable to consider your client's cultural perspectives on illness, knowledge of the health care system, and their previous experiences of health services in Australia or overseas.

There may also be cultural stigma or shame around particular health issues which could limit their participation in health care.

Disease and health risk factors

Clients born in certain countries have higher rates of particular health conditions. For example, people born in Greece have higher rates of heart failure, coronary heart



Hourieh and Hassan Saberi

disease, diabetes and dialysis than those born in other countries. It's important to consider your client's country of birth and cultural characteristics that may influence their health, such as nutrition.

If you are interested in learning more about our region's CALD communities, have a project to strengthen the cultural responsiveness of your service, or would like more information about the Health Care Interpreter Service, please contact Emily Raso at Emily.raso@health.nsw.gov.au or (02) 6621 1244.

Northern Highlights:

Our patients share their positive experiences of care. Names are published with patient permission

TWEED HOSPITAL PATIENT, OCTOBER 2020

I believe that the dedication and the thoroughness of all personnel and doctors and Tweed Hospital saved my life! Every conceivable test regarding my condition was pursued and everyone that did these procedures did so with an interest and enthusiasm.

The hospital appeared to have every facility available and specialist doctors to give opinions on any side effects caused by my original problems.

I believe that I was a difficult patient for the first couple of days, tearing out the lines from my arms whilst in delirium, among other problems.

After twelve days I was released to HITH and had nurses call to my home every day for well over two weeks.

Again, incredible and cheerful dedication meant that I was able to recover in the familiar surrounds of my own home. I had had no idea that this help was available.

So, regarding every aspect of care I was given, I can only say that Tweed Hospital and all staff and doctors deserve a 100% recommendation! Thank you. Thank you for my life!

Bill Lommel 28 October 2020.

MURWILLUMBAH DISTRICT HOSPITAL PATIENT, JANUARY 2021

In January, I was admitted to Murwillumbah District Hospital for a procedure.

I would just like to express my thanks to all the staff who looked after me.

Without exception all the staff I came in contact with were professional, friendly, cheerful and comforting.

They all made the whole process as easy and stress-free as it could be, and they should all be complimented!

Digital Dose:



HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE EMR

Are you happy with the Electronic Medical Record (eMR)?

Ok, it might not be that simple, but that's why it's critical you have your say on how we could improve this system.

A survey will be coming your way from 22 February 2021 and we're asking you to 'help us help you' by sharing your experiences in a way that has never been offered before.

The purpose of the internationally established survey, run by KLAS Research, is to help improve usability and satisfaction of the eMR through consistent measurement, benchmarking and collaboration.

It will be your chance to share your feedback, both positive and negative.

The annual survey will run for four weeks. For more information, please contact

EHNSW-KLASResearch@health.nsw.gov.au

The survey link will be available on the intranet from 22 February.

WAITLIST OPTIMISATION PROJECT

Go live for this project is planned for 1 March 2021. Our Waitlist Optimisation Project Team has been working closely with Cerner, eHealth and NSW Health teams to progress towards Go live implementation.

The project will streamline waitlist management for elective surgery at all elective surgical/procedural sites across Northern NSW Local Health District, with improved management tools such as worklist reports from the Patient Administration System (PAS).

It will also provide the ability to view automatic date calculations such as due dates, waiting times and 'not ready for care' days. EDWARD is the NSW Health data warehouse which is used reporting purposes.

Waitlist staff refresher training started on 1 February 2021, and go live information will be provided to ensure our waitlist staff are prepared in time. The Change Managers are:

- Lisa Estreich @ Lisa.
MattasEstreich@health.nsw.gov.au
or 0455 418 006
- Daralee Alexander @ Daralee.
Alexander@health.nsw.gov.au
or 0400 060 128

For enquiries and more information, contact the Project Manager, Kylie Funnell @ kylie.funnell@health.nsw.gov.au.

TAKING TELEHEALTH TO NEW LEVELS

While most of us would be familiar with Skype for Business, not all staff use it in the same way...

In 2020, the LHD undertook an evaluation of Skype for Business, the video telehealth application used throughout the health service. The aim was to identify how clinicians used it for clinical care and what the barriers to use were.

Thanks to the input of 107 clinicians who participated in the evaluation, we found

that 79% regularly used phone functions only with 37% using the video telehealth function.

The technical issues experienced by the patient or client when using Skype for video telehealth were identified as a major barrier.

Overall, clinicians supported the concept of video telehealth, with 62% believing that further education would assist uptake and 58% indicating that video telehealth would enhance service delivery and complement face to face consultations.

Kathy De Souza, NNSWLHD Telehealth Manager, would like to thank all those



who contributed to the evaluation. The NNSWLHD Executive is committed to improving the uptake of video telehealth. We are now investigating other applications such as myVirtualCare and Pexip which are reported to be more user friendly.

If you would like to know more, please contact Kathy on 0467 785 416.

QR codes make COVID testing even easier

COVID-19 testing clinics in Northern NSW hospitals are paving the way for faster registration for results, thanks to a new, personalised QR code.

Come for a COVID-19 test in Lismore, Tweed, Byron or Grafton hospitals, and soon you'll be able to quickly register for your test results with a simple scan on a smartphone.

The new method will see patients handed a personalised QR code printout, which once scanned will automatically set up their SMS result registration using the details already entered into the testing clinic's computer system.

After a successful pilot at Lismore Base Hospital in January 2021, all four hospital testing clinics will progressively begin using the new QR method throughout February.

A project team involving NSW Health Pathology, eHealth and Clinical Information System teams from Northern NSW Local Health District led by Melissa Ingram has been working for



Nursing, reception and health assistant staff from The Tweed Hospital COVID-19 testing clinic

several months to develop the localised technology and systems to support the improved registration method.

"Using this new process, we're reducing both the time taken for a patient to register for the SMS result notification, and the possibility of data being incorrect or mismatched," Ms Ingram said.

"It's now a one-step scan, rather than having to enter multiple pieces of personal information over a series of text messages."

"For our community members who may speak another language, it will help reduce barriers for them to register to receive their results via SMS.

"If patients need help to register, our clinic staff are right there and can walk them through the process."

Feedback during the pilot was overwhelmingly positive, with patients saying the QR system was 'much easier' and 'user-friendly'.

To find out more, contact Project Lead, Melissa Ingram on 6629 4869.

AUSLAN - a fascinating language

AUSLAN, or Australian Sign Language is the primary signing language used by Australia's Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities.

Around 30,000 people in Australia use AUSLAN to communicate, and Northern NSW has the highest number of sign language users (per capita) than any other region in NSW.

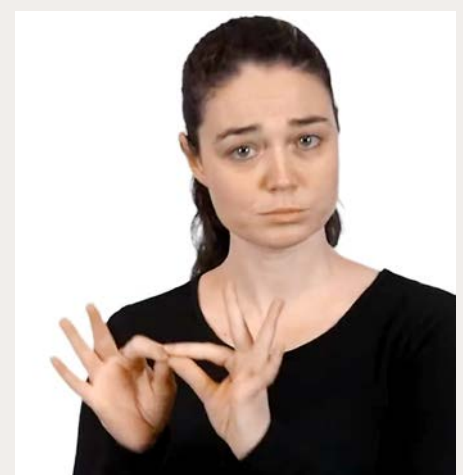
AUSLAN is a sophisticated, visual language that uses two-handed signs as well as a two-handed alphabet (fingerspelling).

It also uses facial expressions to ensure people understand emotions and tones. It was officially recognised by the Australian Government as a language in 1987, and continues to grow and change today.

AUSLAN provides much more than just word-for-word translation, and is a completely different language to English.

The Health Care Interpreter Service, which Northern NSW Local Health District uses, employs 33 AUSLAN Interpreters. 11 of these are based locally in our District, and all are available for videoconferencing.

NSW Health has a great video about AUSLAN interpreters. Click to watch video:



A screenshot from the video



<https://youtu.be/PmIHuNktBao>

New post-COVID-19 conditions HealthPathway

The Mid and North Coast HealthPathways team is continuing to work on relevant COVID-19 HealthPathways, with a new Post-COVID-19 Conditions HealthPathway recently published.

The background section of this HealthPathway advises that knowledge of post-COVID 19 conditions is still evolving. Recent suggested definitions are as follows:

- Post-acute COVID-19 – illness extending beyond 3 weeks from initial symptoms
- Chronic COVID-19 – symptoms extending beyond 12 weeks from initial symptoms.

Clinicians are provided with guidance on how to manage these patients who have been infected with COVID-19.

Patients presenting in the post-acute COVID-19 scenario are likely to be for:

- non-specific post-viral symptoms, particularly fatigue and breathlessness
- specific serious sequelae resulting from the acute infection, or as delayed complications



HealthPathways

Mid & North Coast of NSW

- recovery after severe illness that required intensive care management
- psychosocial effects of prolonged symptoms and functional impairment.

The Assessment section provides a step-by-step guide and checklist to assist clinicians in assessing their patients for post-COVID-19 conditions. It also provides advice about taking relative patient history and which investigations could be undertaken.

Under Management you can find a list of specific symptoms on a range of associated medical conditions. The Referral section contains a comprehensive patient referral pathway to local services.

There are a range of other COVID-19 HealthPathways which are updated on a regular basis:

- COVID-19 Practice Management
- COVID-19 Initial Assessment and Management



- COVID-19 Assessment and Management in Residential Aged Care
- COVID-19 Ongoing Assessment and Management
- COVID-19 Referrals
- COVID-19 Information
- COVID-19 Impact on Clinical Care
- COVID-19 Impact on Local Services
- COVID-19 Recent Changes
- COVID-19 MBS Items
- COVID-19 Telehealth

For a list of all localised pathways see:

Mid and North Coast HealthPathways

Username: **manchealth**

Password: **conn3ct3d**



<https://manc.communityhealthpathways.org/>

For further information about HealthPathways email: **kkeyte@hnc.org.au**

HELP KIDS WITH THEIR TEETHY GRIN!

If you work with children, you can access specific training to support you in improving their oral health.

The Oral Health training will help you identify, prevent and manage early childhood caries.

Four online learning modules have been developed to increase health professionals' confidence, knowledge and skills to help deliver better oral health outcomes for children.

The training takes approximately 45 minutes to complete, attracts 1 CPD point and addresses the following topics:

- Module 1- Prevalence of Early Childhood Caries
- Module 2- Dental Decay Process
- Module 3- The Role of Child Health Professionals
- Module 4- Preventive Advice

Public Dental Services are available across the District for all children aged 0-18 years with a Medicare Card. Please phone 1300 651 625 to make an appointment.

To access and register visit:



<https://oralhealthlearning.health.nsw.gov.au/>



Vale Dr David McMaster

Well known paediatrician and long-time staff member, Dr David McMaster, sadly passed away in January this year.

As a consultant paediatrician Dr McMaster dedicated 23 years to the Tweed and Murwillumbah hospitals and local communities, and was held in extremely high regard by his colleagues and friends.

Dr Mike Lindley-Jones, co-chair of the Medical Staff Council at The Tweed Hospital, paid tribute to Dr McMaster, having worked alongside him for many years.

"I personally worked with David for 16 years, I counted myself as his friend. He was a doctor that went beyond simply treating patients; he showed enormous care and compassion," Dr Lindley-Jones said.

"Many staff have said that David had not only been a colleague and friend, but also a doctor to their children, having been there for the birth and cared for their families when sick. He is hugely respected and was an integral part of our community and will be sorely missed."



Dr David McMaster

Dr McMaster supported his fellow staff and nurses, and mentored many junior doctors, some of whom are now consultants in pediatrics, emergency or other specialties.

Dr McMaster was well known for being an 'old-fashioned' doctor, where medicine was not simply his job, but a calling.

He is remembered for his willingness to help patients and families at any hour of the day or night, as well as for his approachable nature and wicked sense of humour.

A hospital memorial service for Dr McMaster was held at Tweed Civic Centre on 4 February, after which staff placed flowers into the Tweed River in remembrance.

Remembering Yve Turner

The team at Grafton Mental Health Services are joining the 'March Charge' fundraiser for cancer research in honour of Yve Turner, a much loved former staff member who passed recently after a long battle with cancer.

Yve worked with Clarence health services in Northern NSW Local Health District for over 20 years and is sadly missed by her colleagues, friends and family.

The team name is "In the Pink" a tribute to Yve's cheeky sense of humour

IN THE PINK

Share my page

f t e in JOIN US

demonstrated by her choosing to go out in a fuchsia pink coloured coffin.

The team has a target of raising \$1000 and would welcome your support via donations on the 'March Charge' website:



<https://www.themarchcharge.com.au/fundraisers/InThePink6617>

Vale Elizabeth Hodgson



It is with great sadness that Casino Community Health staff share the news of the passing of their colleague and friend, Elizabeth Anne Hodgson on 14 January 2021.

Liz began working as a podiatrist at Casino Community Health in 2008. Liz also held Outreach Podiatry clinics at Bonalbo, Kyogle, and Urbenville MPS sites. Liz regularly attended the Diabetes Complication Assessment Clinics in partnership with the Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation in Casino, Jubullum and Muli Muli, providing services to our indigenous communities with chronic disease.

Liz was known amongst her colleagues as a quiet and compassionate clinician who advocated on behalf of her clients to achieve the best outcomes.

Once you broke through her professional exterior, Liz was warm, friendly and engaging with a wonderful sense of humor.

Liz and her partner Cameron lived on a property in Stratheden where Liz dedicated her time to her dogs, working in her stables and exercising her horses.

During Liz's stay in hospital, Cameron and her parents were able to take her home from hospital for the day where she was able to help with the farm chores and caring for her beloved animals.

Following a sudden diagnosis of cancer in October 2020, Liz spent her final months at Kyogle Hospital where she received wonderful care from the staff. Liz was a valued member of the community health and podiatry teams and is sadly missed by her colleagues and her clients.

STAY INFORMED ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES.

Visit **health.gov.au**
for the latest information.

We are working to make sure everyone in Australia has access to safe, effective and free COVID-19 vaccines. Vaccines will give us the protection to go about our everyday lives.

To keep up to date with the latest progress, and to ensure your information is reliable, visit **health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines**



COVID-19
VACCINATION

Safe. Effective. Free.



Australian Government

Authorised by the Australian Government Canberra



NORTHERN NSW LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT NEWS

ISSUE 1 - 2021 FEBRUARY/MARCH

NORTHERN

EXPOSURE

