

4 Ambulatory Care
Centre officially opens

10 PROFILE:
Mark Byrne

16 Air pollution alerts -
is the message getting through?

NORTHERN

EXPOSURE





WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES

September means many things for me – birthdays, spring weather, realising I have again left it too late to book a good camping spot at Christmas.

When I think back on this time last year, it's hard to comprehend how much has happened in between.

In early spring 2019, Northern NSW was already in the midst of a devastating bushfire season, with fires in many areas already having burnt thousands of hectares. According to the Bureau of Meteorology, in 2019 the total rainfall for NSW was the lowest on record, and 55 % below the average.

Fast forward to 2020, and instead of heatwaves and no rain, we are dealing with a somewhat invisible danger. Continually adapting to protect ourselves and our communities, and even to thrive in difficult conditions, we humans really are an amazing bunch.

In this edition, you'll find surgical advancements allowing patients to take their new knees home within a day, researchers helping vulnerable residents take care of their health during bushfires, Aboriginal medical clinics adopting technology to protect their communities, and a new stroke service connecting our patients with specialists in the blink of an eye.

We hear from Bonalbo GP Mark Byrne about his passion for remote medicine and find out about a team of breastfeeding mentors supporting mums in the Clarence Valley.

The seasons change, and so do the challenges, but we're still here plugging away.

NORTHERN EXPOSURE

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



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THIS ISSUE

Executive Update	3
From the Board Chair	3
Ambulatory Care Centre officially opens	4
Same day joint surgery program: amazing!	5
Telestroke service reaches Northern NSW	6
New dads get the spotlight	7
Local finalists in NSW Nursing and Midwifery Awards	7
Rising to the COVID challenge	8
A decade helping children stay healthy out of home	9
Arts and culture on the agenda in Tweed	9
PROFILE: Mark Byrne	11
New faces join the fight against tobacco use	12
Have you got the next Big Idea?	12
Need a better relationship with food? Start here...	13
Growing veggies and self-esteem	13
Occupational Therapists helping communities rebuild	14
Digital Dose	15
Air pollution alerts - is the message getting through?	16
Health Pathways: Mobile-friendly platform goes live on 29 October	17
Virtually a winner	17
Breastfeeding support is front and centre in Grafton	18
Biketober Business Challenge	18
Northern NSW Health bloody great lifesavers	19
Get screened at a location near you	19

Cover photo - General Manager Clarence Health Service Dan Madden, Member for Clarence Chris Gulaptis, Administration Officer Jodie Coffey and Project Manager Tara Chambers

Back Cover - Yamba image by Jeremy Billett

Executive Update



Wayne Jones
Chief Executive

As I write this, I am confronted by the near daily occurrence of people in our community trying to understand and manage the challenges associated with the border restrictions.

From someone needing to access a specialist service to someone else trying to see their dying parent, the arrangements for NSW residents to enter Queensland

for non-emergency care are causing significant hurt to individuals and families within our communities.

You, our clinicians and staff, are often caught in the middle of these sad situations, as you support patients and family members in working through these additional stressors.

The many stories I hear of our staff going that extra yard to provide care and extra assistance makes me so proud to be associated with our LHD and the staff that work across our many sites and services.

I want to particularly acknowledge the incredible work of our maternal and foetal medicine staff, our obstetricians, our midwives and our support staff who have had to assist mothers and families manage transfers for ongoing care as far away as Sydney.

Over recent weeks there has been a lot of

praise for the NSW contact tracing systems.

The true praise needs to go to our Public Health Unit staff and support teams for their expertise and tireless efforts in not just ensuring contact tracing is quick and effective, but for the whole range of activities they undertake to support our communities to remain COVID free.

Among their myriad tasks, our Environmental Health Officers have been particularly focused on ensuring our local business organisations are COVID-Safe.

They are working with businesses (who are already under enormous pressure) to develop business specific COVID-Safe plans, and providing a more detailed understanding of public health requirements than they have ever needed before.

On behalf of everyone in our communities, thank you and please keep up the great work.

From the Board Chair



Brian Pezzutti
Board Chair

At the August Board meeting we had the privilege of hearing from two of our employees who provide support to communities during local disasters.

Stephen Carrigg and Samantha Osborne are Rural Adversity Mental Health Program Coordinators who work with local communities during the bushfires and floods, helping link community members to services to ensure they get the support they need to help them recover from traumatic experience.

Their presentation included two astonishing images of Tabulam last year – the first showing an area in March 2019 after it was ravaged by bushfire, and the second showing the same area, taken only six weeks after the fire had passed.

The fire had left its mark. But I was surprised by how quickly the landscape had begun to rejuvenate and a blanket of green grass had emerged from the scorched earth.

Steve and Sam's presentation was a timely reminder about a message of hope during difficult times.

It's been a stressful time for many as we continue to deal with the pandemic and the uncertainty it brings. Feelings of stress, anxiety and worry are an understandable response.

If you are struggling at the moment, one of the best things you can do is to talk with someone. There are also many resources to help you.

If you feel overwhelmed, please seek support from your GP or a mental health professional.

I encourage staff to check out our Staff Wellbeing tab on the COVID-19 intranet page.

For members of the community, many services can be accessed from home. The NSW Health website has more information.

At our recent meeting the Board thanked Wayne Jones and our Executive Leadership Team for their diligence and tireless work in leading our staff over the last six months. That we have been free of community transmission since March is due to the enormous efforts of our wonderful staff, our communities and other agencies including NSW Police.

The Board also recognised the negative impact of the Queensland border restrictions on our communities accessing healthcare, and the challenges many staff are facing in just getting to work.

The Board recognised the work being undertaken by the Executive, site Management and our clinicians in supporting our communities to access the care they need in Queensland.



Top, from left, Oncology staff, NUM Norelle McIntyre, Cancer Liaison Nurse Kerri-Anne Falla, Vicki Griffioen, Emma Freeman. Back, General Manager Clarence Health Service Dan Madden and Member for Clarence Chris Gulaptis. Bottom left, Dan Madden, Administration Officer Jodie Coffey, Project Manager Tara Chambers and Chris Gulaptis MP. Bottom right, Dean Loadsman conducts the smoking ceremony

Ambulatory Care Centre officially opens

Residents in the Clarence Valley now have a state of the art health facility, with the opening of the new Grafton Base Hospital Ambulatory Care Centre.

A Smoking Ceremony by Bundjalung Gumbaynggirr man Dean Loadsman marked the start of the official opening of the new \$17.5 million Grafton Base Hospital Ambulatory Care Centre (ACC) on 13 August.

The small COVID-Safe crowd were welcomed by Bundjalung Gumbaynggirr Elder Aunty Jannay Daley, before Dean encouraged those present to walk through the smoke and cleanse the new building.

In opening the new facility, Member for Clarence Chris Gulaptis said this was a 'huge deal' for Grafton, and just the start of things to come.

"Today we celebrate a massive improvement to our hospital; in the future it will be even bigger and better thanks to the \$263 million commitment I secured from the Nationals in Government for a further major overhaul," Mr Gulaptis said.

Staff, patients, and consumers were heavily involved in the design and fit-out of the building to ensure the space reflects the clinical needs of the community now and into the future.

Construction of the new ACC commenced in March 2019, with the building completed in July 2020 and services opened to the public in a staged opening from Monday 28 July to Monday 3 August.

The new ACC provides a state-of-the-art facility to a number of services and departments previously located across the hospital campus. There are:

- Oncology and Haematology services,
- Renal Dialysis Unit,
- Physiotherapy,
- Occupational Therapy,
- Podiatry,
- Speech Pathology,
- Fracture and Osteo-fracture Clinics,
- Dietetics and Nutrition outpatient Clinics,
- Occupational Therapy Outpatient Clinics,
- Outpatient Clinics for patients with chronic conditions including Cardiac and Respiratory Rehabilitation services,
- Diabetes Education and Diabetes Foot Clinics.

Staff and community members have reported that the new facility is 'just wonderful'.

Same day joint surgery program: amazing!

Patients needing major joint replacements will be able to rest easy in their own beds sooner thanks to a new pilot program at Grafton Base Hospital.

The new same day hip and knee replacement program is the only one of its kind in Northern NSW Local Health District, allowing patients to have their surgery and return home the same day when clinically safe and appropriate.

Advanced surgical and anaesthetic techniques and better post-operative pain management have reduced the length of stay for patients having major joint replacements, but it's still around four to five days in most cases.

Dr Sam Martin, orthopaedic surgeon and program lead, said the pilot program is based on research that suggests patients can have successful outcomes given the right care and support in their own home, without the added stress of a hospital stay.

"There is compelling evidence that for many patients, a day stay joint replacement is safe with equal or better results compared to a longer hospital stay, in terms of the patient's return to function," Dr Martin said.



Patient Sandy Van Veluwen, Member for Clarence Chris Gulaptis, patient Susan Robertson Halil and Dr Sam Martin Orthopaedic Surgeon

"We also know that getting moving again soon after surgery is shown to reduce the recovery time for patients.

"Within 3-4 hours of the surgery, under the care of our physiotherapy team, patients can begin moving, and will remain in hospital for at least 6 hours before they go home. This is a significant achievement for a small regional centre like Grafton."

One of the first two patients to receive the surgery, Sandy Van Veluwen, said she felt really confident ahead of the surgery, thanks to the pre-operative checks.

"It was amazing, way beyond my expectations. It was the new techniques and the pain management, I was really confident so when I got out of bed I knew straight away there was no trouble. It made me feel really good that I was able to go home," Sandy said.

Dan Madden, General Manager Clarence Health Service said the program is the culmination of an outstanding team effort, from surgeons and anaesthetists, to nursing staff, and allied health staff who support the patients before and after surgery.

"Patients will be supported through telehealth and face-to-face specialist care to review pain management and wound recovery, and patients also have regular physiotherapy sessions in the weeks following their surgery," Dan said.

Many aspects contribute to a successful day stay total joint replacement, including a streamlined preoperative physiotherapy and education program, a focused operating theatre unit, tailored anaesthetic and surgical techniques and nursing by staff skilled in shorter stay surgery. The pilot is expected to run for six months.

Coming 19th October

New, improved incident management system ims+



Ensuring the incidents, hazards, near misses and consumer feedback you report, make a real difference to everyone's safety

Your Voice for a Safer, Stronger Health System
Visit the intranet: imsplus.health.nsw.gov.au

Telestroke service reaches Northern NSW

Stroke patients in the Northern Rivers now have access to a new telehealth service as part of a \$21.7 million initiative being rolled out across NSW.

The NSW Telestroke Service is now available at Lismore Base Hospital, since going live on 8 September, to link stroke patients with specialist stroke clinicians via telehealth. The service enables time-critical diagnosis and treatment for patients in regional and rural areas.

At Lismore Base Hospital from January to December 2019 there were 253 stroke patients admitted to hospital.

“People in regional and rural areas have a far greater risk of hospitalisation from stroke and this vital service will provide them with immediate, life-saving diagnosis and treatment from the state’s leading clinicians,” Lynne Weir, Director Clinical Operations, Northern NSW Local Health District said.

“The Telestroke Service will improve outcomes for stroke patients in our region, giving them a much greater chance of surviving and leading a normal life.”

Telehealth delivering time-critical stroke treatment

Every year, around 19,000 residents in NSW have a stroke. A stroke can kill up to 1.9 million brain cells per minute, so time is everything.

Using screen-sharing technology provided by eHealth NSW, remote specialists gain full access to world-class patient imaging as it is being processed – allowing time-critical diagnosis and immediate treatment of stroke patients.

The improved timeliness and accuracy makes it more likely that patients will receive all-important reperfusion therapy



Telestroke pilot at Coffs Harbour Base Hospital

to restore blood flow through or around blocked arteries.

“Locally, the service will improve our stroke thrombolysis provision times, especially during out-of-hours,” Kim Hoffman, Lismore Base Hospital Stroke Coordinator, said.

“It will also improve our consultation with Gold Coast University Hospital around endovascular clot retrieval and timely transfers, and improve management of haemorrhagic strokes.”

The Telestroke model of care was originally developed by the Agency for Clinical Innovation, with the support of eHealth NSW and clinicians from Hunter New England, Mid North Coast and Central Coast Local Health Districts. The service will expand to up to 23 sites over the next

three years, with Grafton Base Hospital and The Tweed Hospital expected to roll out in the program in 2021.

Act F.A.S.T.

“It’s really important that people learn to recognise stroke symptoms and call an ambulance immediately, to give stroke sufferers the best chance of a successful outcome,” Ms Hoffman said.

The F.A.S.T. test is an easy way to spot the signs of stroke. F.A.S.T. stands for:

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

STROKE STATISTICS

Source: The Stroke Foundation



NSW is home to **12** of the country's top **20 hotspots** for stroke incidence, and **10** are located in regional and rural areas.



Regional Australians are **19 per cent** more likely to have a stroke than their city counterparts.



Regional Australians are more likely to die or be left with a serious disability as a result of stroke because they do not have access to **time-critical stroke treatment** and specialist care.



By **2050**, it is estimated that more than **45,000 strokes** will occur every year in NSW, compared with **19,000** currently.

New dads get the spotlight

For many years, NSW Health has provided parenting support, information and screening that has focussed on new mums. Now, we are finding better ways to offer the same kind of support to new dads.

The Focus on New Fathers pilot, that commenced on Father's Day, 6 September 2020, aims to assist fathers to feel confident and supported in their role.

NSW Health has partnered with SMS4Dads at the University of Newcastle to run the pilot program in four local health districts - Northern NSW, Northern Sydney, Murrumbidgee and Western Sydney.

The program is free. Once they have enrolled through the webpage, the father will receive regular text messages to assist with understanding how their baby is developing from their baby's point of view.

The messages focus on the father's self-care, support to their partner and father-child attachment. The messages can start from as early as 16 weeks into the pregnancy and continue up until 24 weeks following the birth of the baby.

Feedback from people who've used the SMS4Dads service have found it to be incredibly valuable:



New dad Albert, with his partner and baby

"I loved everything. The tips, the reminders to stay with it. How to help. Sometimes I felt like you could hear me because the tips always came right on cue."

Who can I talk to about the project?

Emma Murray is the new Project Coordinator looking after Focus on New Fathers pilot until 30 June 2021.

Emma comes to Northern NSW Local Health District from Queensland where she was working as a Principal Project Officer on multi-agency programs for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

Emma has extensive project management and policy experience, having implemented and coordinated various projects across Queensland. This includes piloting a



Emma Murray

program to ensure access is available to expert assistance for complex child protection proceedings. Emma is looking forward to meeting you all, so if you see her around promoting the service, please make sure you say hi!

If you are a new or expecting father, or know a new or expecting father, jump onto:



www.health.nsw.gov.au/focus-on-new-fathers

LOCAL FINALISTS IN NSW NURSING AND MIDWIFERY AWARDS

Our very own colleagues are among 24 statewide finalists nominated for the 2020 NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards.

The finalists have been selected from nominations across seven categories which recognise nurses and midwives who have made a difference in clinical practice, management and leadership.

Clinical Risk Resource Nurse, Anna Law from Lismore Base Hospital is a finalist in the Nurse of the Year category for her work in End of Life Care.

"The nomination was a surprise, and it was due to clinicians' engagement with the End of life care work that was being done," Anna said.

The Medical 2 team from The Tweed Hospital are finalists for the Nursing/Midwifery Team of the Year category.

"We're all delighted to be a finalist in the Team of the year award, not to mention surprised," said Gisele Armitage, Med 2 Nurse Unit Manager.



Anna Law

"It has given the team a great boost to know that their continued efforts to provide excellent nursing care to our patients, often in challenging situations, has been recognised."

This year, in line with COVID-19 safety measures, the Awards ceremony will be held in a virtual show on 26 November.

Rising to the COVID challenge

From the very first coronavirus case in the region, the Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation (BNMAC) have tailored services and adopted new care models to meet the needs of Aboriginal residents in Northern NSW.

A specific response for Aboriginal families

The multigenerational nature of Aboriginal communities was an important consideration in planning for the response to coronavirus.

"The need to protect elders was paramount, given their custodianship of precious community knowledge and their pivotal role in the community life," Scott Monaghan, CEO Bulgarr Ngaru says.

To prioritise the safety of elders and other vulnerable patients, BNMAC developed a review process to reduce the need for patients to attend face to face appointments if they could receive their care via telehealth.

"We established a process early on to identify patients at highest risk," Scott says.

"Those aged 40 and over, with more than one chronic ailment, were categorized and each patient's health profile closely examined. After a review by clinicians, we contacted patients and developed a narrative about each client's circumstance which took their social, economic, health and housing situation into account."

"We established either weekly or fortnightly contacts with the individual by a nurse or Aboriginal health worker - a wellbeing check."

Collaboration the key to meeting community needs

In periods of significant change such as this, strong leadership, trust, and goodwill at all levels - community, clinician, and management - are crucial.

"We have seen this like never before,"



Aboriginal Health Worker, Karen Day, from Richmond Valley Clinic

Scott says.

"I really want to thank NNSWLHD Chief Executive, Wayne Jones and his team, for their leadership as we've worked together to help our community thrive and stay safe during the pandemic."

"Equally, all our AMS CEOs have really stepped up to the challenge and provided outstanding support to their staff and communities."

The testing clinics established in collaboration with the Local Health District (LHD), are an effective model which has made testing more accessible for people in outlying areas with limited transport.

"We have been able to collaborate, develop partnerships and establish joint integrated clinics that previously would have taken months, even years to set up," Scott says.

Adversity brings opportunities for change

During difficult periods, people can be more receptive and open to change, as BNMAC has experienced during the pandemic.

"We have been able to introduce innovations that have been in the pipeline for some time. Many gains have been made and improvements introduced," Scott says.

One example is the successful introduction of telephone based primary care at a scale not experienced before.

Telehealth has become an effective and vital supplement to face-to-face care. It has improved health care access for patients, eliminated transportation barriers, and facilitated swift communication between practitioners and patients.

"While nothing replaces a face-to-face consult, during this intense roll out period telephone consults proved to be an excellent addition to the service options available to the community," Scott says.

"This mode of health care delivery has given the clients the opportunity to speak more often to GPs.

"Furthermore, the phone consult option has reduced the need for those patients who, for whatever reason miss their appointment, to wait for another week or so to see the doctor and the number of no-shows has reduced."

Clients spoke more readily and freely on the phone, and there was also an upside for some mental health patients.

"These patients, often with serious trauma and anxiety, find coming to clinics stressful. The fact that they could receive their care in the familiar comfort of their home was beneficial."

Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation (BNMAC) operates a network of primary health care services covering the traditional clans of the Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr Nations and a large proportion of the Bundjalung footprint, providing a range of services to communities including Grafton, Baryulgil, Malabugilmah, Yamba, Maclean, Casino, Box Ridge, Muli Muli, Tabulam, Kyogle, Tweed Heads South, Chinderah, Fingal Heads and Banora.

A decade helping children stay healthy out of home

The Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) Health Pathway Program celebrates 10 years of operation this year.

Originally established in Northern NSW by Rosa Flaherty, Child Protection Manager, the program works to overcome health disadvantage experienced by children and young people in OOHC, which includes foster care, kinship care and residential care.

A Memorandum of Understanding between NSW Health and the Department of Communities and Justice for health screening, assessment and review underpins our program, outlining the commitment from both agencies to do our very best in improving health outcomes for children and young people in OOHC.



The Out of Home Care team L-R Karen Innes, Kate Dougherty, Kelly Crouch, Nicole Ashby. Absent: Natalie White

"We recognise that these children are incredibly special, and deserve outstanding care," Nicole Ashby, Out of Home Care Coordinator, said.

"We must thank each and every staff member in Northern NSW Local Health District for the way they have responded to our requests for assistance over the 10 years."

In the last decade the program has facilitated comprehensive assessment of more than 1262 children and young people.

Independent evaluation found the program 'has significantly improved the provision of timely and priority access to health services for children and young people' entering statutory Out of Home Care (OOHC) in New South Wales.

ARTS AND CULTURE ON THE AGENDA IN TWEED

The Arts Working Group for the Tweed Valley Hospital project met recently for the first time, with members bringing their vision and enthusiasm for incorporating arts and culture into the new Hospital.

NSW Health has an Arts in Health program, which encompasses diverse art forms including heritage, literature, visual, performing and dramatic arts.

At the recent Arts Working Group meeting, staff and executive team members from Northern NSW Local Health District, together with community members from established project groups received an overview of the Arts in Health program, and how it will be incorporated into the new Tweed Valley Hospital.

The state-wide program supports health services to connect with their local



Juluum-nyarr gaagalgu (Mountains to the Sea) 2020, Macksville Hospital Weaving Project - Gumbaynggirr community

community by integrating all forms of art into the interior, exterior and landscape design of hospitals

"Through the design process we identified clinical areas and locations within the hospital campus that could benefit from artwork," project architect Mark Healey from Bates Smart, said.

"Areas which may suit a major artwork include the village green (an open lawn space at the south western end of the site), pedestrian entry points, the main foyer and public café and viewing terrace."

Arts in Health has proven benefits for patients and the community; including improved wellbeing, reduced stress, fear or anxiety, reduced length of stay, reduction in pain relief medication, increased positive connection to local hospitals and increased trust in the health care system.

The Arts Working Group will provide input to the Arts Strategy for the new hospital and make recommendations on selections.

We welcome your suggestions and contributions. Contact the project team at tweedvalleyhospital@health.nsw.gov.au.



In this edition of Northern Exposure, we catch up with Bonalbo's Dr Mark Byrne to hear about life as a solo GP and what he loves about working in regional and remote Australia.

Mark Byrne

Dr Mark Byrne grew up in Western NSW, finishing his last few years of high school in Dubbo. Despite his parents instilling the importance of education in him from an early age, his path to studying to becoming a doctor didn't start right away.

"My people are Wiradjuri from Western NSW and the Murrumbidgee. My mother was one of the first Aboriginal people to get a master's degree in Education as well as a nursing degree," Mark says.

"Even though I probably wanted to do medicine, I went to become a police officer after school."

"When I was about to leave school, I told the careers officer I wanted to be a doctor and he sort of said along the lines of, 'I think you're setting the bar a bit high'."

After several years as a western NSW cop and some post-graduate police training in criminal justice, Mark was back on his path to medicine after successfully applying to the University of Newcastle.

"My passion has always been rural and remote medicine, being a country boy so to speak. When I finished medical school I worked around Newcastle where I had studied," he recalls.

"But I wanted to head out west, so I got a job at Broken Hill as a fairly junior Emergency Doctor. In a pretty short time, I had worked my way up to the Director of Emergency there. I worked there for many years before going on to my remote and rural fellowship."

Mark also spent some years working Mudgee, as well as in remote Western Australia as a solo General Practitioner.

He was also Director of Emergency at Eurobodalla, in the Bateman's Bay area, before he moved to the Gold Coast with his family and ended up working with Northern NSW Local Health District.

Now at the Bonalbo Multipurpose Service, Mark is the full-time doctor and is on call 24/7.

"The nurses and the team are fantastic. They're committed to rural and remote medicine and understand the challenges that come with a smaller site. We all get on well, which is also a bonus," Mark says.

"We don't have access to specialists straight away, or to imaging, so making clinical decisions as a solo doctor is challenging and you have to have experience to make the right decisions.

"It's challenging and interesting, I'm doing general practice, I'm doing emergency medicine, aged care, as well as skin cancer work."

Mark has also done post-graduate study in emergency medicine and post-graduate training in skin cancer surgery, which he says has been particularly useful working as a solo rural GP.

While Mark says he loves the rural pubs and getting to know people in the small communities, he doesn't particularly care for other stereotypical country activities like fishing or hiking.

His real passion is golf. Luckily, Bonalbo has what he considers a "nice little course".

The border issues with Queensland have caused a headache for him, both personally and professionally, with his home and family just over the border in the Gold Coast.

"There have also been some cases where we've had to re-evaluate care since it would be complex or not possible to get the patient to Queensland," he says.

"Luckily, most of our referrals go to Lismore anyway."

New faces join the fight against tobacco use

For patients who want to quit smoking, the Helping U 2 Quit clinic is here to help.

Did you know, research estimates that in 2015-16, smoking cost Australia over \$136 billion (Whetton et al., 2019). That's an incredible burden on our health and our hip pockets, but we can do something about it!

The Helping U 2 Quit (HU2Q) Clinic provides evidence based treatment and behavioural support for patients and clients who want to quit smoking, get advice on how to stop, or get information on the most current treatment options.

Previously delivered by Health Promotion, the HU2Q Clinic is now continuing as part of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Services.

If you have a patient or client who is interested in quitting smoking, please send a referral and one of the HU2Q staff will contact your patient for follow up treatment, support and care.



Top left, Erica Harding - Tweed Heads. Top right, Deb Wilson - Ballina and Byron. Bottom left, Martin Duyker - Lismore. Bottom right, Kate Armstrong - Clarence Valley

The HU2Q Clinic staff will:

- undertake a smoking history and nicotine dependence assessment,
- provide information on Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), correct use and dose,
- advise on what other pharmacotherapies are available,
- liaise with other service providers, and
- develop a patient centred self-management/self-care action plan to improve their overall health and wellbeing.

There are four new staff appointed to HU2Q Clinics across our District. Erica Harding is based in Tweed Heads, Deb Wilson in Ballina and Byron, Martin Duyker in Lismore and Kate Armstrong in the Clarence Valley.

For referrals, please fax (07) 5506 7022. Find the referral form at:



<https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/health-promotion/adults/smoke-free/whats-happening-locally/helping-u-2-quit-clinics/>

HAVE YOU GOT THE NEXT BIG IDEA?

Submit your pitch for a chance to secure a share in \$50,000 funding.

Pitch your case to an expert panel and get a chance to receive funding to turn your idea into reality.

BIG IDEAS

Applications are now open on the intranet - submissions close 23 October

Need a better relationship with food? Start here...

Tweed Community Dietitian Casey James is passionate about staff wellbeing! She has been busy all year developing two staff wellness nutrition projects, and they are now available to our hardworking staff to help you nourish your bodies and minds for work and play.

Staff Wellness Reference Group- Intuitive Eating Workshops and Online Program

Intuitive eating is an evidenced based approach that has been shown to improve your relationship with food, mind and body and reduce risk of chronic disease. The program involves 2 x 60 minute face-to-face workshops plus 2 x 20 minute online modules (all four sessions are also available online).

The content covers the evidence behind Intuitive Eating; how to honour your body signals of hunger and satiety, how the approach integrates with the science of nutrition and exercise, mindful eating skills, emotional eating resilience and more.



Chief Executive Wayne Jones and Casey James

Fuel Your Shift: Nutrition Workshops for Shift Workers

Shift work has been linked to chronic disease risk and poorer nutrition choices. Find out how nutritional science, intuitive eating skills and a little planning can help reduce risk and fuel the mind and body during night shifts. This program is one 60 minute workshop which will also be available online.

The project was a winner in the 2019 Big Ideas Innovation Challenge.

The Intuitive Eating and Fuel Your Shift Workshops have been endorsed by our

executive and managers. All staff are warmly invited to get involved to discover a refreshing and inclusive approach to wellbeing.

You can register for face-to-face workshops or complete the program online. Workshops are scheduled to commence from October at various sites around the LHD. Staff can attend both programs.

For more information or to register for either program please send an email to casey.james@health.nsw.gov.au

GROWING VEGGIES AND SELF-ESTEEM

A team of young people are transforming the CASPA Learning Centre in Lismore, with a new garden and outdoor space. The project is funded by a Youth Health and Wellbeing grant from NNSWLHD.

CASPA Education Officer Jess Grace says a group of teenage boys who had never had a garden before, have been happily staying past their lessons to work on the project and have really taken ownership of it.

"Joel Orchard from Future Feeders led the project and inspired the young people

to throw their energy into the garden. They worked together to design, build the garden beds, and learned about soils, worms, compost and gardening," Ms Grace said.

"The next stage is a pizza oven for the courtyard.

"As well as taking ownership and pride in the garden, these young people have built their self-esteem and confidence and developed new friendships.

"Together we have created a beautiful outdoor space for students and a sustainable garden to use in our cooking program."



Joal Orchard, Future Feeders and Jess Grace, CASPA Education Officer

The CASPA Learning Centre delivers educational programs and support to young people who are disengaged or unable to attend school due to complex needs and behaviours.

Occupational Therapists helping communities rebuild

The theme for Occupational Therapy week in 2020 is Resilience: Supporting our communities to rebuild, recover, and reengage.

This year, Occupational Therapy (OT) week not only shines a spotlight on the value of occupational therapist in our communities, but also serves as a call to arms to support those hardest hit in what has been a difficult year.

“Occupational therapists are vital in helping our communities recover, educating and training people to participate in meaningful activities that are important in their lives,” Jimmy Fitzpatrick, Occupational Therapist at The Tweed Hospital, says.

“As the community reengage in disrupted occupations such as daily routines, recreational activities, school and work, OT’s can support clients to adapt and participate in this challenging environment successfully.”

New service at The Tweed Hospital

The new Hospital Acquired Functional Decline (HAFD) program is a multi-disciplinary service combining OT’s, Physiotherapists, Dietitians and Allied Health Assistants.

It commenced in July as a pilot program, operating seven days a week, and has seen 72 patients so far. HAFD promotes optimal functional performance and recovery through support, education, retraining, nutrition support, equipment prescription and minor home modifications for patients to return home.

#THISISOT
Supporting our communities to
REBUILD
RECOVER
REENGAGE

Occupational therapy supports people of all abilities to engage in activities they find meaningful. Including leisure, self-care and productivity.

OT WEEK
2020 26OCT-01NOV
otaus.com.au/otweek

Occupational Therapy AUSTRALIA

A recent patient had this to say about the program:

“Dear Tweed Heads Hospital,

I would like to personally thank the Physio Erin, and all of the staff at Tweed Hospital for the way I was treated when I walked in the door. I thought my treatment was 100% and the patience Erin showed me, when I wasn’t feeling too good, I can’t speak highly enough of.

Erin got me to do the exercises and it’s given me the incentive, at 83, to start building a new life and I think I will now have a better and happier life. I can tell my balance has already improved and Erin was extremely professional. You couldn’t have anyone better doing that.”

The target group is patients over 18 years of age at risk of a decline in function likely to respond positively to therapy during their hospital stay, thereby promoting better patient outcomes and a more rapid transition back to successful community living.

The project is supported by Chris Hanna, Community and Allied Health Manager Tweed – Byron, and Vicki Rose, Director of Allied Health and Integrated Care Services.

Please contact the HAFD team for more information on (07) 5506 7545 – ask for Jimmy, Erin or Bec!



www.otaus.com.au

Digital Dose:

VIRTUAL VISITS

Technology is helping patients connect with family and friends near and far.

As part of our COVID-19 response, we have needed to restrict patient visiting to ensure the safety of both our patients and staff.

In addition, many people are unable to travel to see their loved one in hospital at the moment. This can lead to patients feeling isolated or disconnected from their family and loved ones.

To combat this and reduce the impact on patients and families, the Local Health District is providing iPads to inpatient units across acute services, Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug services.

These iPads allow the staff to facilitate calls using Facetime and Zoom, so their patients can connect and 'virtually visit' with their family and loved ones.



Bonalbo MPS resident, Lorraine with Nurse Manager Kim Grey and RN Jean Wong

More than 50 iPads are being distributed with 'how to' guidelines for both staff and families or carers.

The first cabs off the rank were the Multipurpose Services which have the strictest visiting regulations to protect their aged care residents.

All hospital inpatient units should have received their iPad by the end of September.

If you have any questions or require more information, please contact Lynn Hopkinson, Manager Service Redesign at lynn.hopkinson@health.nsw.gov.au.

WAITLIST OPTIMISATION PROJECT

The Waitlist Optimisation Project is progressing in partnership with Ministry of Health and Cerner.

There have been quite a few achievements in the past few weeks including the Waitlist Discern analytic reports being updated for the new Waitlist changes and User Acceptance Testing completed.

We are planning to finalise remaining testing in the coming weeks including all MoH EDWARD components.

The project team would like to congratulate all the staff who completed Waitlist Optimisation training. Change managers reported that the training was positively received.



Change Managers are continuing to work with waitlist users. Site key support users have been identified and we thank you for your support.

The project is planning refresher training and support through to go live.

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

VIRTUAL CARE PROGRAM

eHealth NSW and the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) have established a new multi-agency, clinically focused business unit called the Virtual Care Accelerator. This Unit will work with LHDs to progress advancements in virtual care.

A Virtual Care Program Lead has been appointed at NNSWLHD to develop the LHD's Virtual Care Strategy. The Initial focus will include the key models of care implemented during the COVID-19 response, these will be assessed for their suitability to include technology such as remote patient monitoring.

Recommendations from the recent Telehealth-Virtual Care Clinician and Patient experience interviews will be included during consultation and technology assessment.

Contact: Virtual Care Program Lead, Wendy Roulston on 02 6620 0825.

Air pollution alerts - is the message getting through?

A group of researchers is looking at how to ensure health protection messages make their way to susceptible residents in bushfire prone areas.

Bushfire smoke and air pollution can be a health risk, especially to those with chronic or vulnerable health conditions. It's important to ensure our patients and residents receive timely, clear communication about the possible health effects of air pollution, and how they can protect themselves.

The North Coast Public Health Unit (NCPHU) in collaboration with NNSWLHD Integrated Care and Allied Health Services, and Health Promotion, as well as with the University of Sydney, University Centre for Rural Health, are currently conducting exploratory research to understand patients' and providers' perceptions of the delivery and effectiveness of messages on air pollution and health protection during bushfires.

In particular, the team is looking at the local experience with the catastrophic 2019-2020 bushfires in northern NSW.

"We know that bushfires result in air pollution and that can affect people with long term respiratory or cardiac conditions so that their health deteriorates," Research lead, Dr Kazi Rahman, Senior Public Health Epidemiologist, said.

"We wanted to understand what these susceptible people did during bushfires, in terms of protecting themselves from the air pollution, and how they accessed advice from different sources during the period of air pollution."

The Public Health Unit uses a range of methods including media releases to communicate with the public and with other health providers.



"It's a small scale study to generate evidence for further investigation into how the messages are received and utilized by the end users," Dr Rahman said.

The team is collecting data through interviews with patients, providers, and managers from the Public Health Unit, local Council and Rural Fire Service.

The preliminary findings from the qualitative research demonstrate that during the acute phase of bushfires, there was an emphasis

on the immediate physical and personal safety, and fighting the fire. The research is looking at ways to better convey health protection messages around air pollution during this acute phase.

Some options include using the Fires Near Me app from the NSW Rural Fire Service and local radio, as well as other information pathways outside of traditional media. There is also a need for vulnerable people to receive advice to prepare themselves for protecting their health from air pollution before the bushfire season starts.

As of 1 September, the Bushfire Danger Period has commenced in 27 Local Government Areas in NSW. Already in the past month, Public Health issued an air pollution alert for smoky conditions due to windy, dusty conditions and hazard reduction burns in Northern NSW.

The final step will be to make recommendations on how to improve the system, including the content and delivery of health protection messaging, with the research team presenting their findings at a conference later this year as well as through dissemination seminars.

Top, stock images
Left, Dr Kazi Rahman

Mobile-friendly Platform goes live on 29 October

From 29 October 2020, HealthPathways Mid and North Coast will default to a mobile-friendly view.

The newly improved site uses responsive design, meaning all pages shift and adjust the content depending on the device you are using (desktop, computer, laptop, tablet or mobile).

For users with older browsers or devices, a classic (current view) HealthPathways site will run parallel to the mobile-friendly version, to ensure everyone can still access local clinical guidance, regardless of their technology.

Clinical content is identical on the mobile-friendly and classic versions of the HealthPathways Mid and North Coast website.

New domain name

The mobile-friendly version of HealthPathways Mid and North Coast has a new domain. Existing bookmarks



Mid & North Coast of NSW

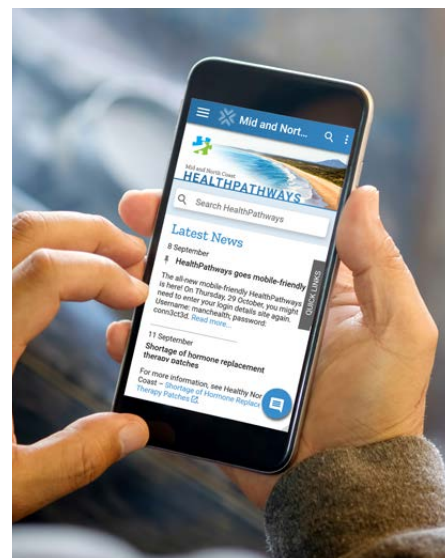
and links to the site will continue to work, but will be redirected to <https://manc.communityhealthpathways.org/>

Access to the new site

There are several ways you can access HealthPathways at all NNSW LHD sites:

- **Desktop Icon** - A blue and green 'H' Icon is located on all desktops. Simply click on the icon to get direct access to HealthPathways.
- **EMR** - Via the Clinical Links section
- **Intranet** - Can be accessed from the Clinical Tools section in Work Support Centre from the HealthPathways Icon. It can also be accessed on CIAP from the Diseases and Conditions.

For users on all other devices, the generic login details will continue to work, but you may need to log in again with the generic username and password due to the change in domain names.



Login details:

- Username: **manchealth**
- Password: **conn3ct3d**

If you haven't yet tried the mobile-friendly platform, simply click on the banner located at the top of the homepage

To learn more, check out our Latest News section on the HealthPathways Mid and North Coast HealthPathways website. For more information about HealthPathways email kerrie.keyte@health.nsw.gov.au



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

VIRTUALLY A WINNER

Instead of shutting the streets of Lismore to host hundreds of runners and walkers for the annual NAB Darrel Chapman Fun Run, this year the Fun Run went virtual to raise funds for Our Kids.

Going virtual opened the door for participants to do their chosen distance in a range of ways, which included running, walking, cycling, horse riding and even rowing dragon boats.

The end result was an outstanding final tally, with \$41,000 being raised for Our Kids.

"The NAB team are proud to have been part of the 2020 Virtual Darrel Chapman fun run and have been amazed by the support provided by the Northern Rivers community to this event," Nigel Rumble, NAB Business Bank Executive said.

"It was great to see so many business and community teams involved this year, whether that was participating in a run, walk, ride, swim or just donating much needed funds to someone who was participating."

"We want to thank everyone who was involved in the first ever Virtual Darrel Chapman fun run and made this event such a success," Nigel said

Like in previous years, participants were able to register online, choose their distance, and then complete in their own time.

"Raising \$41,000 is an extraordinary effort," Rebekka Battista Our Kids Fundraising Coordinator said.



Nigel Rumble, NAB Business (right), presents AMPT fitness with their winner's trophy.

The funds will go towards purchasing a BabyLeo humidicrib costing \$50,000 for the Lismore Base Hospital Special Care Nursery.

People from Brisbane to Melbourne, and even England participated in this year's event.

Breastfeeding support is front and centre in Grafton

Aboriginal breastfeeding mentors will be easier to spot in the Clarence Valley, thanks to a batch of new shirts designed by a local artist.

In October 2019, the Grafton Aboriginal Maternal Infant Health Service (AMIHS), hosted an Australian Breastfeeding Association Community Breastfeeding Mentoring Workshop in Yamba. Five community members, three Aboriginal Health Workers and three health professionals completed the workshop.

Following the workshop, the certified Aboriginal Breastfeeding Mentors have continued to share the importance of breastfeeding with the local community.

In February 2020, Grafton AMIHS won funds through the NNSWLHD Big Ideas Competition to create breastfeeding promotion t-shirts which our certified Aboriginal Breastfeeding Mentors will wear.

Local artist, past AMIHS client and breastfeeding champion Frances Belle Parker designed a print and slogan "Breast Milk is Best Milk" for the t-shirts.



Grafton Aboriginal Health Workers from left, Karen Duroux, Teaghan Flick, Carmel Monaghan and Laurel Moore

"I breastfed both my children for around 3 years, and it's such a special time which helped me as a mother develop a strong maternal bond with them," Frances said.

Teaghan Flick, AMIHS Aboriginal Health Worker said the t-shirts help families looking for information and support for breastfeeding.

"The shirts will help mums and families identify the mentors as people in the community who they can talk to about

any breastfeeding questions or issues," Teaghan said.

Grafton AMIHS also have plans to produce muslin wraps which bear the Breast Milk is Best Milk design to give to AMIHS clients.

NNSWLHD works to promote, protect and support breastfeeding as the optimal way for a woman to feed her infant. However, we also recognise that all women and their families have the right to clear, impartial and evidence-based information to enable them to make an informed choice as to how they feed and care for their infants.

Biketober

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

brought to you by Get Healthy at Work

1 - 31 October 2020

A fun workplace challenge open to everyone!

1

Log your ride or connect your Strava

2

Encourage your friends

3

Win great prizes!

lovetoride.net/nsw

Northern NSW Health bloody great lifesavers

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood would like to thank blood donors from Northern NSW Health who rolled up their sleeves as part of the national Health Services Challenge.

Over the duration of the challenge more than 100 donations were given by Northern NSW Health to help save the lives of some of Australia's most vulnerable patients.

The blood and plasma collected contributed to the (more than) 1.5 million donations collected country wide in the past year, and the 31,000 donations needed every week.

These donations help save the lives of cancer patients, new mums, those undergoing surgery, and even those Australians needing convalescent plasma to help them survive COVID-19.

"Recently Australia has faced unparalleled challenges, from devastating bushfires to the Coronavirus pandemic, yet one thing



Scott Morrison NNSW Life Blood Account Manager and NNSWLHD Media Officer Casey Fung

has remained consistent; the generosity of our donors," says Lifeblood spokesperson Scott Morrison – Group Account manager for Northern NSW.

"Whether it be rescheduling a donation, adjusting to new processes in our centres, or even changing donation type, Northern NSW Local Health District donors have continued to support us, support patients across the country and we cannot thank them enough."

Northern NSW LHD placed second in New South Wales, and in the top 25 nationally. Congratulations and thank you for keeping blood supplies flowing.

To book a donation call 13 14 95, download the app or visit:



www.lifeblood.com.au

GET SCREENED AT A LOCATION NEAR YOU

BreastScreen NSW provides free mammograms to eligible women aged between 50 to 74. Women are recommended to have a breast screen every two years.

BreastScreen NSW is taking all necessary measures in relation to COVID-19 (Coronavirus), to protect women, staff and the wider community. This includes:

- Pre-screening questions around personal health and travel
- Limiting the number of people in the clinic/van
- Practicing social distancing and providing hand sanitizer in waiting rooms
- A minimal contact check-in process
- Additional cleaning of equipment and commonly used surfaces.

9 out of 10 women
diagnosed with breast cancer do not have a family history.



GRAFTON	Until 17 Dec	BONALBO	26 Oct - 28 Oct
EVANS HEAD	Until 24 Sept	URBENVILLE	2 Nov - 3 Nov
CORAKI	28 Sept - 29 Sept	UKI	5 Nov - 11 Nov
KYOGLÉ	30 Sept - 26 Oct	BRUNSWICK HEADS	11 Nov - 17 Nov

BreastScreen NSW North Coast fixed sites offer screening all year round.

Clinics are located at Tweed Heads and Lismore. Mobile site locations for the next 3 months listed above:

Call 13 20 50 or book your free mammogram online at:



www.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au



NORTHERN

EXPOSURE

