

WE ARE

Issue 16 | Winter 2025 | FREE

Southern

Excellence in Care



Small activities make
a big impact in
mental health recovery

In this issue:

Excellence in nursing and midwifery
Construction progress for Eurobodalla
Breastfeeding accreditation for District



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New surgeons welcomed to
South East Regional Hospital

We welcome Drs Paul Liebenberg, Richard Bradbury, Adam Ofri and Connor O'Meara to the General Surgery team at SERH.

SERH Director of Medical Services, Dr Elizabeth Mullins, says the doctors are part of SERH's contemporary model of care for General Surgery.

"Our new doctors have made a strong commitment to rural healthcare," Dr Mullins said.

"As part-time Visiting Medical Officers (VMO) they bring the best of the city to the Bega Valley."

All doctors are working in the hospital's public surgical outpatient clinic and have dedicated theatre time to conduct procedures.

"For patients this model of care improves surgical care, enhances recovery after surgery, provides better access and can reduce waiting times," Dr Mullins says.

Dr Richard Bradbury is a rural and remote specialist, having joined us from the Northern Territory.

Dr Bradbury has family connections on the far south coast and was here, providing great assistance during the black summer bushfires.

Dr Paul Liebenberg is a rural generalist surgeon at heart, was born and raised in South Africa, and has worked in remote areas across the world, including other parts of Australia.

Dr Adam Ofri is a general surgeon with a special interest in breast surgery. He lives in Sydney and was a locum before making the commitment as a part-time VMO last year.

Dr Connor O'Meara is SERH's new ear nose and throat (ENT) VMO surgeon. He will also be teaching our nurses and doctors about ENT surgery management.

SERH Director of Nursing and Midwifery/ Site Manager, Sarah Little, says, "Southern are proud of our surgical team and look forward to meeting the needs of our community in the Bega Valley."



Top: Dr Adam Ofri pictured with Sarah Little and SERH Director of Medical Services, Dr Elizabeth Mullins.

Above: Dr Connor O'Meara, pictured with Dr Katie Hobbs at SERH.

Below left: Drs Paul Liebenberg and Richard Bradbury pictured here with SERH Director of Nursing and Midwifery/ Site Manager, Sarah Little, Relieving SERH Director of Medical Services, Dr David Dumbrell, and our dedicated theatre staff team members Amanda Young and Darci Masters.



To find out more, scan the QR code or visit: nsw.gov.au/SouthernSurgicalServices

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Message from our
Chief Executive

Welcome to the Winter edition of We Are Southern.

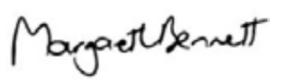
As winter settles across our region, it's a timely reminder of the importance of staying well and staying connected. In this edition, we share stories that reflect both the heart of our work and the strength of our communities.

Our cover features Cherry Sin Yin Hau, who works as a Diversional Therapist at Kenmore Hospital. Cherry is one of many talented and passionate people who have chosen to make Southern their home, enriching our services and making a real difference to the lives of our patients and residents.

Our staff at Southern are hard at work helping our community prepare for the winter season, promoting flu vaccinations, and working with initiatives like Flutracking.net, to track the season's impact. We're also proud to welcome the Big Red Kidney Bus to Cooma this winter, in a partnership that means people on dialysis can enjoy the beauty of our region while continuing their vital treatment.

Construction is well underway in the Eurobodalla, and we are strengthening our medical workforce, helping our community access specialist care closer to home.

I hope you enjoy reading about the wonderful work happening across Southern.



Margaret Bennett OAM
Chief Executive



In this issue

Anne Marie Brewster, Claire Blewett, Margaret Bennett, Kathryn Goldsworthy, Kerryn Maher, Jeremy Gilchrist and Chris Cheung at the 2025 Excellence in Allied Health Awards in Sydney

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Country life, community impact in the Bega Valley

Meet Matt and Mahlia, social workers who have hit the ground running with our Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs team.

40
Gold standard breastfeeding support

Southern's hospitals officially recognised as Baby Friendly, supporting families with the very best start to life.

Southern NSW Local Health District acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands within its boundaries, the Gundungurra, Ngambri, Ngarigo, Ngunnawal and Yuin tribes.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, community members and staff for their ongoing contribution to society and their commitment to improving health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

On the cover

Cherry Sin Yin Hau, Diversional Therapist at Kenmore Hospital.



On the road for the NSW Seniors Festival

In March, Southern's Health Promotion team visited communities across the District - from Batemans Bay to Bega, Goulburn to Braidwood - taking part in Seniors Festival events.

Sophie Evans and Ella Scott (*pictured above*), from the University of Wollongong, delivered healthy ageing education sessions in partnership with Eurobodalla Shire Council as part of their student placement.

"The NSW Seniors Festival celebrates the role and contributions of older adults to our local communities," said Health Promotion Officer Brodie Palmer.

"It's the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere, with over 500,000 people attending each year."

The team connected with community members about supports and services available to support healthy ageing - including state-wide offerings such as the Active & Healthy website and Get Healthy Service, local services available through our Transitional Aged Care Program (TACP) Care Navigator and Community Health teams, increasing awareness of Healthdirect service, and building our network of Heart Foundation Walking groups across Southern.



SERH celebrates solar installation

Southern is celebrating progress on the installation of its large solar project, an 850 kilowatt (kW) solar array at South East Regional Hospital.

The solar project will harness energy from the sun to assist in electricity provision to the hospital. The system is estimated to contribute to a reduction of over 1,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions annually.

Todae Solar have completed the installation of 374 solar photo voltaic panels mounted on the roof of South East Regional Hospital.

The remaining panels will be ground mounted in the hospital grounds to the northeast. When complete, the solar system will provide expected savings of approximately \$240,000 in annual electricity bills, with an anticipated payback period on investment of 5 years.

Southern is investing in solar power with funding provided through the Ministry of Health Energy Efficiency Fund.

NSW Health is strongly committed to significantly reducing our emissions; with the ambition of achieving a 50% reduction in emissions by 2030, and net zero by 2050.

Find out more about how we're becoming a high-quality, low-carbon and climate resilient health system at health.nsw.gov.au/netzero



Celebrate care with Healing Heart Award

Do you know a nurse or midwife who goes above and beyond to create a positive, caring environment? Now's your chance to recognise their dedication!

Nominations for the Healing Heart Awards are open from 5 May to 12 June 2025.

These awards are part of the NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards, and celebrate nurses and midwives who demonstrate exceptional commitment to a positive workplace culture, improving patient experience, and delivering safe, high-quality care.

The Healing Heart Award invites patients, clients, carers, and support persons to nominate a nurse or midwife who made a meaningful difference during their healthcare experience in a NSW public hospital.

To nominate, scan the QR code or visit health.nsw.gov.au/einma



Cuddle bed arrives thanks to community

Thank you to the Pambula Hospital Auxiliary for its ongoing fundraising efforts and dedication to enhancing patient care at Pambula District Hospital.

Thanks to their hard work - and the support of the Rotary Club of Pambula and the TLC of Eden - the hospital has received a Palliative Cuddle Bed.

This specialised bed valued at \$22,000 has many features to make it easier for staff to care for our palliative patients and for family to support their loved ones.

It widens to allow others to lie comfortably beside the patient, providing emotional and physical connection and support.

Pambula Health Services patient Peggy Holt turned 102 in February and is pictured above with Auxiliary President Maureen Hadley, staff and other members of the auxiliary and fundraising groups.

We are incredibly fortunate to have such a dedicated Auxiliary and a generous community supporting our hospital.

Thank you to the Pambula Hospital Auxiliary and all who contributed.

Goulburn team shaves the day

The foyer of Goulburn Base Hospital was transformed to a hair salon on 1 March, raising over \$9,000 for the Leukaemia Foundation to support people with blood cancer.

Tammy Ahearn, Michelle Blake, Bron Raymond, Brian Edwardson, Henry Tunks, Scott Black, Mary-Anne McEvoy, and Maree Edwardson took the bold step of shaving, cutting, or colouring their hair in solidarity with those affected by blood cancer, as part of the World's Greatest Shave.

Their efforts, along with the generosity of the community, will help fund vital support services for people with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma, and related blood disorders, as well as contribute to life-saving research.



A big thank you to our volunteer hairdressers: Mick from Mick's on Auburn, Abbey from Jagged Edge and Bree from Sage.

Leukaemia is a cancer of blood-forming cells, which causes large numbers of white blood cells to be made. Chronic types of leukaemia

can be kept under control for many years. There are four main types of leukaemia, and the main treatment is with chemotherapy.

For more information about blood cancer and the work of the Leukaemia Foundation, visit leukaemia.org.au



Dr Saccasan Whelan appointed as advisor

Goulburn's Dr Trish Saccasan Whelan was appointed to the NSW Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel earlier this year.

Currently a Clinical Advisor in Critical Care, she has been working in rural critical care since 1987, and she is passionate about the delivery of optimal care to rural patients.

Dr Saccasan Whelan has held many roles at Southern, including

the Director of Emergency at Goulburn Base Hospital, and the Medical Controller and Health Services Functional Coordinator for Disasters.

The Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel was formed in 2023 to strengthen community engagement and foster genuine co-design principles in the development of healthcare in regional NSW.



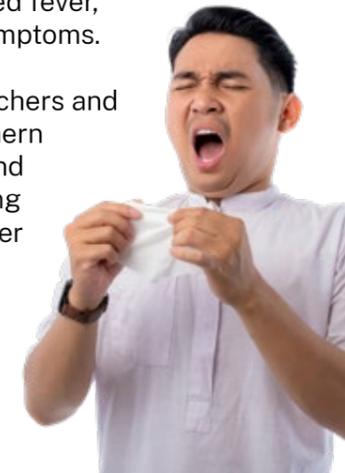
Be part of our flu-fighting team

Want to help protect your community from flu and other respiratory illnesses? You can - and it only takes 30 seconds a week! FluTracking is a simple, anonymous online health survey that helps health experts monitor flu-like symptoms across Australia.

By signing up, you'll receive a short email each week asking whether you or anyone in your household has experienced fever, cough or other flu-like symptoms.

Your answers help researchers and health services like Southern understand how the flu and other viruses are spreading in real time, meaning better preparation and faster responses to outbreaks.

Find out more about the program at info.flutracking.net



flutracking.net @flutracking @flutracking_au

Help us track respiratory illnesses

Over 50,000 Australians complete our **30 second** survey online each week

FluTracking

Find out more & sign-up at www.flutracking.net



Goulburn pathology now open weekends

The NSW Health Pathology collection centre at Goulburn Base Hospital is now open seven days a week, providing greater flexibility and accessibility for patients requiring blood tests and other pathology services.

Located within Goulburn Base Hospital, the collection centre is now open:

- Monday to Friday 7.30am to 4.30pm
- Saturday and Sunday 9.30am to 12.30pm

By providing services every day, the centre aims to reduce wait times and accommodate patients with varying schedules, including those who may find it challenging to attend appointments during traditional weekday hours.

NSW Health Pathology accepts all pathology request forms from your doctor, and bulk bills. You will not be out of pocket for Medicare rebatable tests.

To find your nearest NSW Health Pathology location, visit pathology.health.nsw.gov.au



New Pave app to support quitting vaping

The new Pave app from NSW Health provides users with helpful tips, motivation, tracking tools, distractions for when cravings hit, as well as activities and information to navigate common barriers to quitting vaping.

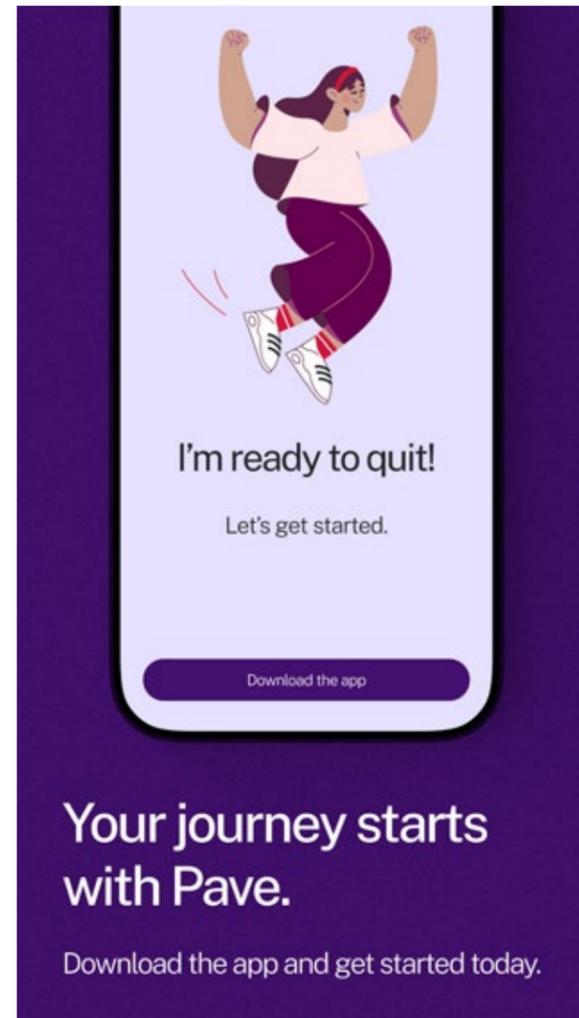
It provides a daily check-in feature supporting users to reflect on their progress and a click-to-call function to connect with Quitline counsellors.

The app was developed by the Cancer Institute NSW, and designed together with young people who vape or had recently quit vaping.

They helped to design the app name and icon, said what information they'd like to see in the app, and how they'd like to be supported by the app.

Pave was tested at each stage of development with young people to help us understand what works well and what needed to be changed.

The Pave app is free and available to download on iOS and Android.



Your journey starts with Pave.

Download the app and get started today.



Eurobodalla Regional Hospital

Radiotherapy a step closer for the Eurobodalla

The Eurobodalla community is one step closer to local access to radiotherapy services with a procurement process underway.

In early April, NSW Health and HealthShare NSW invited interested parties to respond to a Request for Proposal via the 'buy NSW Tenders' platform. Proposals will then be requested to provide a general radiation therapy service in the Eurobodalla region of Southern NSW Local Health District.

The Request for Proposal follows a successful market sounding process and the completion of a preliminary business case.

Construction has commenced on the new \$330 million Eurobodalla Regional Hospital (ERH).

The new ERH will be larger than both Moruya and Batemans Bay hospitals combined, designed with the capacity to grow as demand for services changes.

The ERH Master Plan has identified a future development footprint which would be able to incorporate a radiation therapy service on site, adjacent to the hospital development.

Major works have commenced at the site, with a large mobile crane recently delivered to support construction.

With a maximum height of just over 70 metres, the crawler crane can lift up to 110 tonnes and will be used to carry a range of heavy building materials required for construction of the new hospital.

The \$330 million Eurobodalla Regional Hospital will include:

- Emergency Department
- Eight-bed Intensive Care / Close Observation Unit
- Increased capacity for chemotherapy and increased access to renal dialysis
- Surgical and operating theatres and a day stay surgical unit

- Expanded medical imaging department, including MRI service
- Ambulatory care for community and outpatient services
- Paediatric and maternity beds, and a special care nursery
- Mental health beds for short term admission
- Enhanced education and training facilities, including a simulation lab.

Construction is due to be completed in 2027.



To find out more, scan the QR code or visit: eurobodallahs.health.nsw.gov.au



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Construction underway on new

Batemans Bay Community Health facility

Construction is underway on the new Batemans Bay Community Health facility, which will provide a sustainable, purpose-built community health service for the local community.

Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Regional Health and Member for Bega Dr Michael Holland attended a sod turn event to mark the major milestone, which included planting three trees on site.

The NSW Government is investing \$20 million to deliver a range of community-based services in one location for the communities of Batemans Bay and surrounding areas.

The new facility will be built on the existing Batemans Bay Hospital site and located close to the Medicare Urgent Care Clinic which opened in 2023. The build will deliver a modern health facility with more spaces to better support healthcare teams in providing enhanced care to the local community.

The facility will include interview, consultation, and treatment rooms for a range of services, a gymnasium, as well as larger rooms that can accommodate groups and families and be used as education spaces.

The investment into community health in Batemans Bay builds on the \$330 million new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital which will deliver an enhanced level of healthcare service and more beds than Moruya and Batemans Bay hospitals combined.

Monarch Building Solutions Pty Limited has been awarded the contract to deliver the new Batemans Bay Community Health facility following a competitive tender process. Site establishment works will commence in the coming weeks, which will include the installation of site fencing and sheds.

Batemans Bay Hospital, including the current Community Health service, will continue to operate while the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital and Batemans Bay Community Health facility are built.

Construction of the new health facility is expected to be completed in 2026, followed by an operational commissioning stage to support staff moving into the new facility.



About the Batemans Bay Community Health development

The new, purpose-built Batemans Bay Community Health facility will include:

- Allied health
- Child, youth and family services
- Women's health
- Sexual health
- Community nursing and wound management
- Palliative care
- Aboriginal health
- Community mental health and drug & alcohol
- Specialist outpatient clinics
- Pathology

To find out more, scan the QR code or visit: hinfra.health.nsw.gov.au/bbch



ENT care closer to home

for Goulburn families

Southern has welcomed Dr Tesuven Naidu, an experienced Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Specialist, whose arrival marks the return of ENT surgical services to Goulburn.

In February 2025, Dr Naidu commenced the first ENT surgical list in Goulburn in recent years, re-establishing a vital service for the local community.

With more than a decade of experience as a specialist, Dr Naidu brings both deep expertise and a compassionate approach to patient care. His career has spanned the globe, with advanced training and clinical roles in South Africa, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia.

The return of ENT surgical services to Goulburn is a significant step forward for families across the region, particularly for Aboriginal children, who experience higher rates of ear health issues such as otitis media (middle ear infections). Untreated, these

conditions can affect hearing, speech development, and school readiness.

“We are proud to welcome Dr Naidu to the District and look forward to the positive difference his work will make in the lives of patients across Goulburn and surrounding communities,” said Kylie Strong, Director of Nursing and Midwifery at Goulburn Base Hospital.

With Dr Naidu now offering local care, children and families can access timely treatment closer to home - giving young children the best possible start to develop strong communication skills, succeed at school, and grow with confidence.

The return of ENT surgery to Goulburn highlights Southern's ongoing commitment to improving local access to specialist services. Dr Naidu's skills and experience ensure that patients no longer need to travel long distances to receive high-quality ear, nose and throat care.



Auxiliary

donation

for Yass

Engagement and sensory stimulation can bring real comfort to patients living with dementia - reducing anxiety, easing restlessness, and improving emotional wellbeing.

Thanks to the efforts of the Yass Hospital Auxiliary and the generosity of the local community, Yass Hospital has recently been able to purchase dementia distraction activity sets as part of an equipment donation to the hospital.

The Auxiliary continues to make a tangible difference in patient care at Yass Hospital. Their fundraising activities include events like garage sales, catering for local concerts, and hosting Melbourne Cup luncheons with fashion shows.

We are deeply grateful for their dedication and compassion.



Tracy's sweet act of remembrance for daughter Antoinette

In the lead up to Easter, Tracy Walker, Ambassador from the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation hopped into the Oncology unit at South East Regional Hospital as part of a nation-wide Easter egg drive in oncology wards across Australia to brighten the day of people with cancer undergoing treatment.

Tracy distributed chocolate Easter eggs to patients receiving chemotherapy treatment.

Fit and funny 87-year-old, Tonia Jauncey was delighted to receive the surprise gift (pictured below left, with Tracy).

Tonia lives on a rural property in Brogo and is receiving treatment for bowel cancer.

She told us she was out mowing last night until it was too dark to see and is still the designated

driver for her 60-something year old kids when they go out for their regular family lunch!

All ambassadors have some form of lived experience with ovarian cancer and the Easter egg drive aims to spread joy and foster awareness of the work of the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation.

It was a particularly poignant visit for Tracy, who last year tragically lost her 26 year old daughter Antoinette to ovarian cancer.

Antoinette was treated at South East Regional Hospital in Bega and Tracy is incredibly grateful for the opportunity to give back in her daughter's memory.



It's OK to ask "Have you washed your hands?"

At Southern, we want patients and visitors to feel they can speak up. Asking a staff member, "Have you cleaned your hands?" is not only acceptable-it's encouraged. It's a shared responsibility that helps keep everyone safe.

"We welcome and support patients who ask about hand hygiene," said Kelly Anne Knight, Infection Control Coordinator. "It shows they're engaged in their care, and it reminds us all to stay vigilant."

Hand hygiene is the cornerstone of infection prevention in healthcare and can reduce the risk of transmission of pathogens to patients, staff and visitors. At Southern, we implement, monitor and report on hand hygiene in our facilities as part of the National Hand Hygiene Initiative (NHHI) program.

Washing hands with soap and water is recommended when hands are visibly soiled, or when caring for a patient with infections such as *Clostridioides difficile* or *norovirus*.

So next time you're in one of our hospitals or health facilities, remember: it's OK to ask.



District-wide Hospital in the Home coming

A new District-wide Hospital in the Home (HITH) program is being introduced across Southern, making hospital-level care more accessible, comfortable, and closer to home than ever before.

Hospital in the Home (HITH) services aren't new to our region - they've been available at some larger hospitals for several years. We also offer Virtually Enhanced Community Care (VeCC), a service that provides virtual care and remote monitoring to patients living in the community.

These services are being combined and expanded to create a new, District-wide HITH model of care. This exciting change means that more patients, in more locations across Southern, will be able to access high-quality hospital care without needing to stay in a hospital bed.

The new model allows patients to receive hospital-level care in the comfort and familiarity of their own home (or a preferred location), with support from a team of health professionals. Care can be provided face-to-face or virtually, depending on what best suits each patient's needs.

Our HITH team will continue to provide regular updates, support, and training for staff to this new model of care.

Photo Gallery: Pride Week

From colourful celebrations to the fabulous Mini Mardi Gras Parade, Pride Week at Southern was a joyful reminder of the strength in being yourself and supporting one another. Congratulations to this year's parade champions, the vibrant Virtually enhanced Community Care (VeCC) team.



Braidwood



South East Regional Hospital



Cooma



Queanbeyan



Queanbeyan



Virtual Care



Batemans Bay Community Nursing



Cooma



South East Regional Hospital

Parkinson's newly diagnosed seminar a first for Goulburn

In February, a Parkinson's NSW Newly Diagnosed Information Program was held for the first time in Goulburn.

The one-day Program was open to people who had received a diagnosis of Parkinson's or commenced medications in the past two years, along with their care partners.

The agenda covered all aspects of Parkinson's medication and symptom management and involved local Clinical Nurse Consultant, Lauren Hogan as well as Goulburn-based allied health professionals.

Lauren presented an overview of Parkinson's disease and medications. Occupational Therapist, Alice Beardmore spoke on the benefits of occupational therapy in Parkinson's.

Clinical Dietitian, Brittany Hughes emphasised the benefits of good nutrition for people living with Parkinson's.

Speech Pathologist, Leanne

Cox covered the benefits of speech therapy and Senior Physiotherapist, Louise Condon emphasised the benefits of exercise for people with Parkinson's.

The program also included opportunities for participants to share their stories of diagnosis and support with the rest of the group.

The post event feedback forms delivered positive results including the majority of participants rating content as Very High Quality and saying they would be Extremely Likely to recommend the seminar to others.

Parkinson's NSW Newly Diagnosed Information Programs are delivered monthly in Sydney. Two per year are planned for Goulburn to meet demand in the region.

Below: The participants and speakers of Goulburn's first Parkinson's Newly Diagnosed Information Program.



Operation Art exhibition opens at Ngununggula

In April, the 2025 Operation Art Touring 50 exhibition opened at Ngununggula, Southern Highlands Regional Gallery. The exhibition features more than 50 vibrant and thoughtful artworks created by school students across NSW. Each piece designed to bring joy, comfort and creativity into hospital environments.

As part of the exhibition opening, Kylie Strong and Rebecca Miles (*pictured below right*) from Goulburn Base Hospital were on hand to meet the young artists and accept six artworks donated to the hospital through the Operation ArtBank program.

These works will remain on display at Ngununggula until the exhibition closes, before being installed in Goulburn Base Hospital for patients, visitors and staff to enjoy.

Operation Art is an initiative of The Children's Hospital at Westmead, delivered in association with the NSW Department of Education.

The program provides a unique opportunity for students to contribute to the wellbeing of others through visual art. It includes exhibitions, regional workshops, and professional learning opportunities that support creative education for teachers and students across all NSW schools.

Operation Art is now showing at Ngununggula, Southern Highlands Regional Gallery (1 Art Gallery Ln, Bowral NSW 2576) through to 15 June 2025. Entry is free.



Pharmacy research on show at conference

Southern's pharmacy team were on show in two presentations at the Australian Society of Infectious Diseases (ASID) Annual Scientific Meeting in Canberra in April. The ASID Annual Scientific Meeting is the peak Australasian meeting for adult and paediatric infectious disease and clinical microbiology specialists.

Network Chief Pharmacists Zeeshan Naseer (Inland) and Amelia Stanley (Coastal) (*pictured right*) shared their implementation of case-based rounding using telehealth across our District to optimise

the use of antimicrobial medications, in partnership with Dr Ian Marr, an Infectious Diseases Physician at Canberra Health Services, and our on-site medical practitioners. Through their work, compliance with Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) guidelines at Southern increased from 40% to 64% after implementing virtual AMS rounding.

Queanbeyan Hospital's Ammar Altayib and Chun Hong Chan (Tom) presented on their experiences as pharmacists as part of the team implementing Hospital in the Home (HiTH).



Cooma Key Worker Accommodation opens

The installation of Cooma's new healthcare worker accommodation units are now complete following their delivery earlier this year. The final touches are now being made, ready for the first residents to move in.

Thirteen units, including one communal unit have been installed on Bombala Street on the Cooma Hospital and Health Service site.

Each unit is fully furnished, self-contained, and features a light-filled living and dining area, modern kitchen, bedroom with ensuite, an internal laundry and a screened verandah.

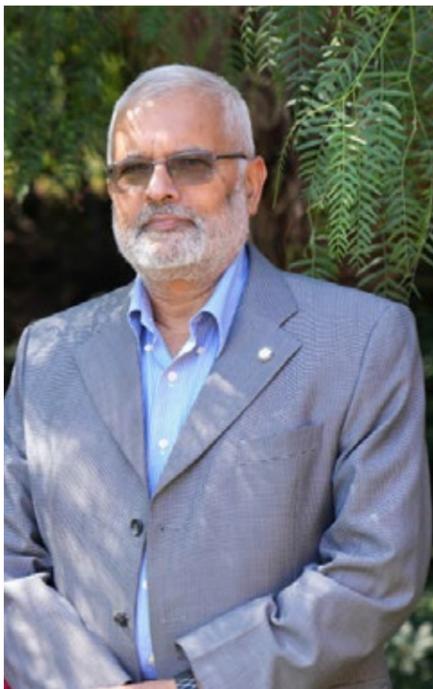
The units will help attract much needed healthcare staff by removing a barrier to finding accommodation for healthcare workers wanting to work in Cooma, meaning recruiting and retaining staff will be easier.

Southern is one of three regional local health districts to benefit from a \$45.3 million investment to deliver accommodation for health workers under the Key Worker Accommodation Program, which was delivered in partnership with Health Infrastructure.

To find out more, scan the QR code or visit: hinfra.health.nsw.gov.au/projects/project-search/key-worker-accommodation



Appointment strengthens medical leadership



Southern has welcomed Professor Pooshan Navathe as our new Executive Director Medical Services (EDMS).

In this role, Professor Navathe provides leadership across clinical services, governance, patient safety, and digital innovation.

Professor Navathe brings extensive experience, having previously served as EDMS at Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service and Director Medical Services at Maitland Hospital.

An Occupational and Environmental Physician, he has also held senior roles in aviation medicine with the Civil Aviation

Authority of New Zealand and CASA Australia.

He is a Wing Commander in the RAAF Specialist Reserve, Dean of Education at the Australasian College of Aerospace Medicine, and a Board member of the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators.

He also holds adjunct professorships with the University of Queensland and Central Queensland University.

We sincerely thank Dr Liz Mullins for her outstanding work as EDMS over the past four years. Dr Mullins will continue with Southern as Director Medical Services for the Bega Valley.

Falls the focus at Southern in April

'Falls Prevention is everyone's business' was the theme of this year's April Falls Month, an annual event supported by the NSW Fall Prevention and Healthy Ageing Network to encourage older adults to become more active and reduce falls.

Brodie Palmer, Health Promotion Officer at Southern NSW Local Health District, emphasised the importance of staying active.

"Whether it's joining (or starting!) a Heart Foundation Walking group, taking part in a local exercise class, or using the Active & Healthy directory to find a program that suits you, there are many ways to stay moving. Every little bit of activity counts, so find something you enjoy and make it part of your routine," Brodie added.

Throughout April Falls Month, Southern staff continued their commitment to preventing falls and keeping our patients safe across Southern, through education sessions, quizzes, and displays.

To kick the month off, staff at South East Regional Hospital (SERH) and Pambula District Hospital held 'End PJ Paralysis Day' to promote early mobility for better patient recovery.

"Keeping active is one of the best things we can do to maintain our independence as we age. Regular exercise helps improve balance, strength, and confidence, making everyday activities easier and reducing the risk of falls," Brodie said.



Why getting dressed

can help you feel

better in hospital

When you're in hospital, it's easy to think that rest is the best medicine. But did you know that one of the simplest ways to speed up your recovery is by getting out of bed, getting dressed, and getting moving?

That's the idea behind End PJ Paralysis - an initiative at South East Regional and Pambula Hospitals that encourages patients to swap their pyjamas for day clothes, get up and stay active during their hospital stay.

"Wearing your own clothes gives you a sense of normality and independence," explained Registered Nurse Phoebe Boyd.

"It helps you feel ready to start your day, get moving and take an active role in your recovery."

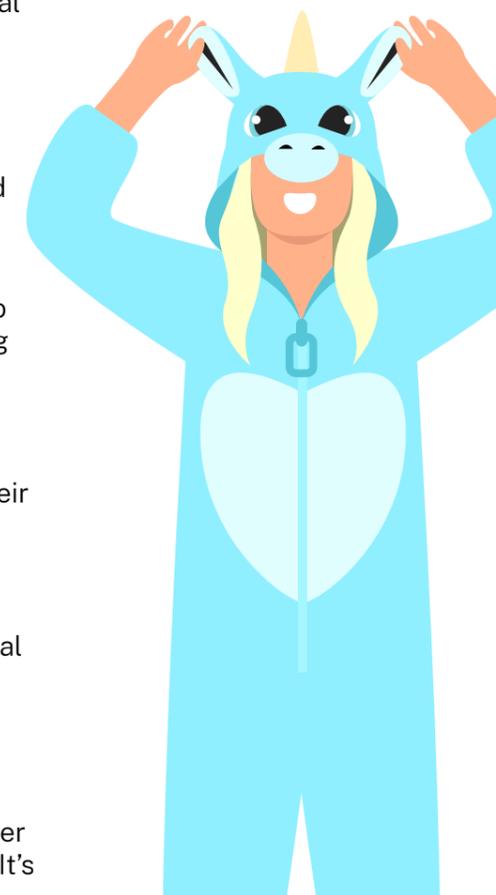
To help promote the initiative, staff donned their pyjamas for the day.

Acting Clinical Nurse Educator, Sinead Forde works closely with surgical patients and says the benefits start early.

"We see it all the time - patients who get moving sooner often recover faster and go home sooner too. It's

about shifting that mindset for both patients and staff, and supporting people to take active steps, literally, toward recovery."

Movement, even small steps, helps improve breathing and heart function, encourages better eating habits when patients sit up for meals, and reduces the risk of complications like pressure injuries, infections and blood clots that can happen with long periods in bed.



BreastScreen NSW now informing women of their breast density

BreastScreen NSW has begun to report women's breast density to help women better understand their breast cancer risk.

Breast density refers to the ratio of fibroglandular (dense) tissue compared to fatty tissue. It's estimated up to 40 per cent of women who have screened with BreastScreen NSW have dense breast tissue and for most women, their breast density reduces as they age.

While having dense breasts doesn't mean a woman will be diagnosed with breast cancer, extremely dense breast tissue can reduce the visibility of cancers on a mammogram and is a known risk factor for breast cancer.

NSW is one of an increasing number of states and territories providing this important information to help women make more informed decisions about their breast health and improve health outcomes.

Breast density reporting will be phased in over coming months using new technology recently implemented by BreastScreen NSW.

Information relating to a woman's breast density will be provided as part of women's regular screening results. There will be no change to women's appointment times or how long it takes to receive results.

BreastScreen NSW recommends women with high breast density speak with their doctor about their individual breast cancer risk factors and whether they may need additional testing.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women with breast density just one of many risk factors of the disease. Age is the biggest risk factor, with more than 75 per cent of breast cancers occurring in women aged over 50. Family history, genetic, reproductive and modifiable risk factors like diet and alcohol consumption can also increase a person's risk of the disease.

It is important to recognise that regardless of an individual's breast density, mammography remains the best breast cancer screening test, with 98 per cent of breast cancers treatable if caught early.

Regardless of their breast density, women aged 50-74 years are recommended to have a breast screen every two years. BreastScreen NSW recommends Aboriginal women start screening at 40 years.

Any woman who has noticed a change in their breasts, like a lump, should see their doctor without delay.

For more information and to make an appointment at a local BreastScreen NSW clinic or mobile van, call 13 20 50 or book online at BreastScreen NSW.

The Welcome Experience

If you are an essential worker thinking about relocating to regional NSW, The Welcome Experience offers tailored support for you and your family. Our dedicated Local Connectors will introduce you to the right people and services to help you settle into your new community faster.



What we can help you with



Relocation



Partner Employment



Housing



Cultural connections



Social connections



Leisure and recreation



Education and childcare



Accessibility and healthcare



Local knowledge



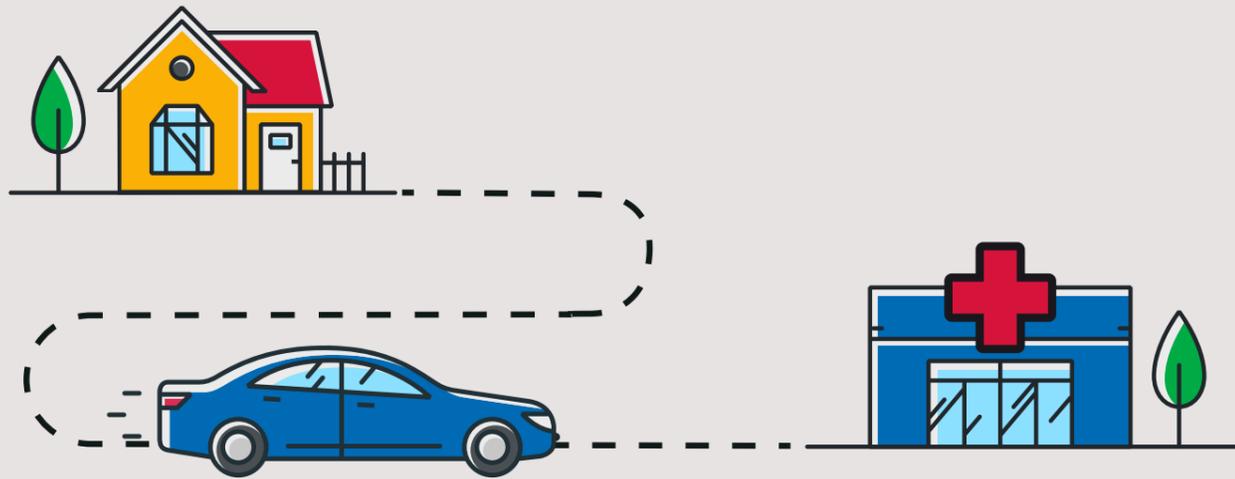
Regional NSW, make the move



Do you travel long distances for specialised healthcare?



If you travel more than 100km one way or 200km within a week you may be able to claim financial assistance towards travel and accommodation costs.



To find out if you are eligible



Ask

your social worker or healthcare team



Call

1800 478 227

or



Visit

iptaas.health.nsw.gov.au



Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme - IPTAAS

Scan the QR code to learn more.

PSS_22_015 IPTAAS-MOH_09/27/22

Big Red Kidney Bus makes holidays

possible on haemodialysis

The Big Red Kidney Bus is coming to Cooma, enabling people living with end-stage kidney disease to enjoy the beautiful sights of winter in the Snowy Mountains while receiving lifesaving dialysis treatment.

Kidney Health Australia's mobile dialysis bus allows families and individuals around Australia to leave their homes and have a holiday while still being able to continue their dialysis treatment.

In partnership with Royal North Shore Hospital, the Big Red Kidney Bus has capacity to provide up to 1,500 dialysis treatments a year under the expert care of the Royal North Shore Hospital dialysis team.

The bus will be based at Cooma Hospital from 30 June to 26 July 2025.

The Big Red Kidney Bus features three comfortable dialysis chairs

with individual entertainment systems and wheelchair access.

With three morning and three evening sessions available from Monday to Saturday on each bus, haemodialysis consumers can book a trip away with family and friends while maintaining their regular in-centre dialysis routine.

It travels to various popular holiday spots in NSW and Victoria throughout the year.

As well as the winter visit to Cooma, the bus will visit Merimbula from 15 September to 25 October 2025, and Batemans Bay from 3 November to 6 December 2025.

The Big Red Kidney Bus is open to all Australians on hospital, satellite or home haemodialysis, with full admission criteria found on the Kidney Health Australia website at kidney.org.au/bus



Southern celebrates nursing and midwifery excellence



We are proud to celebrate our outstanding nurses and midwives through the 2025 Southern Nursing and Midwifery Awards. Winners were announced alongside International Day of the Midwife and International Nurses Day, recognising excellence across six categories, from outstanding teams to emerging talent.

These awards honour the skill, compassion and leadership that make a difference to the lives of our patients, families and communities every day. Now part of Southern's Excellence Awards program, the recipients will be nominated for the NSW Health Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards.



Nurse of the Year
Emma Turner

Eurobodalla Health Service

Transitional Nurse Practitioner (NP) Emma exemplifies clinical excellence and leadership in rural healthcare.

Emma provides autonomous, high-quality care across emergency and hospital avoidance services. Emma's co-leadership in developing the Rural Generalist NP model and extensive contributions to stroke care, policy development, and clinical education demonstrate her impact.



Midwife of the Year
Liz Perks

Yass District Hospital

Liz is a passionate and compassionate Outreach Midwife providing services from Yass Hospital.

Nominated by her colleagues, Liz was recognised for her gentle, caring nature and outstanding clinical skills.

Her commitment to delivering woman-centred care for mothers and their babies makes her a valued and trusted presence in the Yass Valley community.



Nursing and Midwifery Leadership Award
Kim Patton

Goulburn Base Hospital

Kim, Goulburn's Community Health and Hospital in the Home Nurse Unit Manager, was nominated for for her exceptional leadership in clinical care and management.

Kim is hands-on and leads by example, earning the trust and respect of her team. She has been a driving force in the development of the new HITH model of care.



Nursing and Midwifery Team of the Year
Community Health

District-wide

Supported by Community Nursing Clinical Nurse Consultants Emily Laszuk and Leah Pennay, Southern's community nursing team have taken on new skills this year, and increased their scope of practice.

The team work cohesively across the District, and their work has led to a reduction in admissions to acute care.



Aboriginal Nurse/ Midwife of the Year
Nicole Jorgensen

Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Directorate

Nicole is a passionate and compassionate nurse who has made an enduring impact on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people across Southern.

Nicole is dedicated to community-led healing and supporting Aboriginal staff, and always ensures that services are welcoming, respectful and culturally grounded.



New to Practice Nurse /Midwife of the Year
Stephanie Merton

Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Directorate

Stephanie works in Community Mental Health Nursing at South East Regional Hospital.

Stephanie was recognised by her colleagues for her skill in working with each consumer's unique needs, preferences, and values in healthcare, helping them to be actively involved in decision-making and supported to live their life as they choose.

Building the allied health workforce in Southern

The Rural Allied Health Educator Pilot Program, a joint venture between NSW Health and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), is building a pipeline of allied health clinicians in rural, regional and remote communities, by boosting the number of student placements in Southern.

Southern developed a new student-led clinic as part of its program to assess and provide therapy for pre-school children in Moruya. Ten allied health students have gone through the program with more planned for 2025.

Amy and Joanne completed their allied health student placement at Moruya Hospital in February 2025 where they worked with the Brighter Beginnings program, delivering paediatric development screening, communication and occupational therapy assessments and interventions.

“This rural placement has been thoroughly enjoyable and a wonderful opportunity to increase my knowledge and experience in the field,” said Joanne.

“We have been able to work with a multi-disciplinary team to help provide screenings and interventions at preschools, which has greatly increased our knowledge and experience. The Southern Coast is beautiful with

so much to offer, and the lack of traffic is such a luxury.”

Allied health clinical placements typically take 4-8 weeks and give students experience across a range of clinical areas relevant to their profession.

“I have loved undertaking my placement in the Eurobodalla region. It has been a wonderful opportunity to take the time away from my family commitments and focus on my learning and development in such a beautiful location,” said Amy.

“It has felt like a working holiday -enjoying the traffic free roads, friendly community and taking in all the sights along the coastline,” she added.

The program is enticing allied health students to stay and take up full time roles in rural, regional and remote locations.

A survey of students participating in the program found prior to commencing placement only 56.2 per cent were interested in working for NSW Health in a rural area as a graduate.

At Southern, the Allied Health Educators supervise students directly and work with universities to coordinate placements.

Allied health students are making a real difference in early childhood development across the Eurobodalla, said Cathie, Speech Pathologist at Southern.

“The allied health students have been an integral part of our Brighter Beginnings and Speech Pathology Services offered to preschools in the Eurobodalla region,” said Cathie.

“It has been great to see them develop their clinical skills working with our occupational therapists and Education colleagues to support children’s communication development,” she added.

“Providing students with quality clinical placements to develop their skills and love of allied health in the incredible communities found in our regions, and carry that passion with them through their careers has been an amazing privilege.”

Following completion of placement, 85 per cent were more interested in working for NSW Health in a rural area as an allied health graduate and 95 per cent of students were satisfied with their placement experience and would recommend a rural placement to other students.

The \$1 million Rural Allied Health Educator Pilot Program is running across Hunter New England, Western NSW, Far West, Murrumbidgee and Southern NSW Local Health Districts..



Left: Children enjoying the school transition group at one of the local preschools run by speech pathology and occupational therapy students (from left: Bridgette, Celia, Georgia and Caitlin)

Below: Caitlin, Georgia and Celia enjoying lunch at Batemans Bay between preschool visits



Greetings from the Eurobodalla

We have been working for the Brighter Beginnings Eurobodalla Service as part of our Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology placements. This service is a developmental screening program where we visit preschools all around the Eurobodalla region (from Batemans Bay all the way to Bega!).

We love working with the children and using play to analyse their skills and development including gross motor, fine motor, communication, problem solving and their personal/ social skills. In addition to the developmental screenings, we have learnt how to complete health checks on almost all of the children involving recording their height, weight and oral check.

Our experience as part of the program has been amazing, we have enjoyed building rapport with a diverse range of children and have enjoyed the travel component of the program - getting to see the beautiful locations the region has to offer. We have enjoyed working in a multi-disciplinary team, getting to observe the work of speech pathology and occupational therapy.

We have been presented with learning opportunities like managing a high caseload and navigating the nature of working with children - adaptability required! Our supervisors have been integral in this placement, they wear many hats and at the end of the day always ensure we are learning!

Caitlin, Georgia, Celia & Bridgette



Postcards

from

placement

New lifesaving equipment for Bega's tiniest patients



“We can keep the baby here and provide the care they need quickly and adequately with the right machines.”

Babies in need of urgent care at South East Regional Hospital (SERH) can now receive improved immediate life-saving support, thanks to the generous donation of two new resuscitation trolleys from the Humpty Dumpty Foundation.

These trolleys provide critical warmth, monitoring, and support for newborns who aren't breathing or face other complications at birth, helping to keep more families in Bega rather than transferring babies to Canberra for care.

Maternity Unit Manager at SERH, Sonia White (*above right*), said the unit was thrilled to receive the new PANDA resuscitation trolleys.

“We already had two resus trolleys but one had become so outdated, replacement parts were no longer available, so we put out a call to Humpty Dumpty and they graciously donated two new ones,” White said.

“When babies are unwell or facing complications, we can bring them onto these trolleys and do resus on them, the trolleys provide warmth with a heat lamp, as well as monitoring heart rate and other vital health metrics.”

One of the existing trolleys at SERH's Maternity Unit has been decommissioned and taken down to the Simulation Lab while the other will still be used in the birth space, meaning that Bega Maternity now has three resuscitation trolleys.

“Obviously we don't want to use these resus trolleys, but when we need them, it's really good because we can keep the baby here and provide the care they need quickly and adequately with the right machines,” White said.

“We would like to say a huge thank you to Humpty Dumpty and the families who have donated money to help us get these machines which cost several thousand dollars each,” she continued.

Families or organisations can donate money to the Humpty Dumpty Foundation which then disperse equipment where it's needed.

“These could have gone anywhere in the country, so for us to receive two trolleys is just fantastic,” Ms White said.

One trolley was donated solely by the Mead Family of Sydney while the other was provided by NSW Health.

“We thank Humpty Dumpty, NSW Health and the Mead Family for this amazing donation.”

The Humpty Dumpty Foundation helps hospitals and health services care for children by providing essential and often lifesaving medical equipment and initiatives that improve health outcomes.

Find out more at humpty.org.au



International Clinical Trials Day celebrates progress on improving access to clinical trials at Southern

On International Clinical Trials Day (20 May), Southern celebrated the progress we're making to bring clinical research opportunities closer to home.

Thanks to the work of our Research Office, and the support of staff across the region, patients in Southern will soon have better access to cutting-edge treatments without needing to travel far from their communities.

Around 88% of clinical trials in Australia happen in major cities - meaning rural and regional patients often miss out.

Southern's Clinical Trials Coordinator, Nada Bechara, explained, "By running trials locally, we can give people in Southern early access to new treatments and diagnostics that could be better than what's currently available."

Clinical trials aren't just good news for patients - they also bring lasting benefits to the broader community.

"Trials provide education and training for our local healthcare teams, helping them build new skills and stay up to date with the latest treatments," Nada said.

"They also raise awareness about important health issues and create stronger community connections."

Already, staff across Southern are building their skills. Whether it's planning the logistics, recruiting participants, or collecting data for the five clinical trials currently underway, their efforts are helping build a strong foundation for research in our region.

Staff working in priority areas for clinical trials will have the opportunity to support these trials through our upcoming Research Ready: Clinical Trials Initiative.

Southern is part of the Southern Cluster of the Rural, Regional, and Remote Clinical Trials Enabling Program (R3-CTEP) under the Office of Health and Medical Research which came

about from a Medical Research Future Fund Grant.

This partnership, and Southern Cluster, includes Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, Murrumbidgee local Health District, and Canberra Health Services, with the primary goal of improving access to clinical trials for patients in rural, regional and remote areas.

"By working closely with the clinical trial units across the Southern Cluster, we can share resources and knowledge,"

Participants in local clinical trials will be supported every step of the way, said Nada.

"Patients participating in clinical trials have direct support from their regular healthcare team and a clinical trials coordinator, plus access to extra help if they need it."

"Clinical trials are about bringing better options to our communities, making sure no one misses out just because of where they live."

About International Clinical Trials Day

International Clinical Trials Day, celebrated around the world on 20 May to mark the day in 1747 that James Lind (*right*), a ship's surgeon in the British Royal Navy, started what is considered to be the first randomised clinical trial.

Lind studied the effects of different treatments on scurvy, a disease we now know is caused by a deficiency of vitamin C and was a major scourge for sailors on long voyages.

Lind conducted a clinical trial involving just 12 people, of whom only 2 received the treatment of citrus fruits.

Many historians believe that treating and preventing scurvy was the single most important factor in enhancing the physical health of the British fleet.



Midwifery Group Practice celebrates one year in the Bega Valley



There were squeals of delight and the smell of freshly baked cake filling the Level 1 meeting area at South East Regional Hospital (SERH) on 23 April as local mums, bubs, families and midwives came together to mark the first birthday of the Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) program.

Introduced in April 2024, the MGP model has transformed maternity care at SERH, offering continuity of care through a dedicated team of midwives who support women through pregnancy, labour, and early postnatal life.

At the heartwarming morning tea celebration, complete with face painting, cake, and lots of hugs, families reconnected with the midwives who guided them through one of life's biggest transitions.

For Bemboka parents, Keegan and Jenna, the experience of welcoming baby Ayla (pictured top left) into the world, was nothing short of transformational.

"From our first meeting with our midwife Nicole (Stenson), we felt so welcomed and supported. She understood us and helped us feel empowered throughout the journey," Keegan said.

"It felt like having a friend by our side. She knew who I was, so she knew what to give me and when to let me just do my thing."

"I'd definitely come back to Bega to give birth. It was a wonderful and personal experience."

Keegan's birth story is one of calm and connection, a sentiment echoed by Emily Bergsma from Coolagolite, who had a successful VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Caesarean) with her and her partner Jared's second baby, Nevaeh, just the week before the celebration, under the guidance of midwife, Claudia Mitchell.

"It was the most empowering and incredible experience of my life," Emily shared.

"Claudia had my back the entire time."

"Knowing that you've got somebody who knows you, knows what you want and is willing to advocate for you and support you through all the different nuances of being in a hospital. It was like having a home birth experience, but in a hospital environment, which is amazing."

Claudia worked to support Emily's choices during labour and birth, and said "I supported and always backed her and we ended up having a beautiful vaginal birth with minimal intervention, minimal people in the room and minimal pain relief. I think it really goes to show the importance of continuity of care and trust in the system, your midwife and yourself as a woman."

"Continuity of care is the gold standard - and we're proud to offer it here in Bega."



For the midwives at SERH, the celebration was more than a milestone - it was a moment of reflection.

"This model allows us to truly connect with families, to be there for them during some of the most vulnerable and powerful moments of their lives," said Nicole.

"It's like if you were to go and see a different GP every time you're unwell, it could be a little bit jarring or disconcerting and you might not have the confidence to be able to connect and really let everything out, but definitely we get some really interesting background and stories and we kind of get welcomed into their family a little bit as well."

"We're getting some really good stories about feelings of safety from mothers birthing at SERH,"

"We're getting to know people more, so we can build that trust and delve deeper into what's important and that helps in working towards reducing trauma, post-natal depression and connecting to other support services like mental health services."

Maternity Unit Manager at SERH, Sonia White, sees the program as a way to show what's possible in rural maternity care.

"We've seen outcomes improve dramatically," she said.

"VBAC rates are up while our caesarean section rate has come down as well."

"Continuity of care is the gold standard - and we're proud to offer it here in Bega."

With MGP now a cornerstone of maternity services at SERH, and expanding across Southern, the team is looking forward to many more years of empowering families, one birth at a time.

"Step by step, we're improving outcomes for women, families and babies in our region."



Country life and community impact for Matt and Mahlia

Matt and Mahlia have two things in common. They are both social workers and they both started at Southern in Mental Health and Alcohol & Other Drugs just this year.

Matt Jensen is a Senior Social Worker in the Mental Health Inpatient Unit (MHIU) at South East Regional Hospital (SERH) and as a new arrival to Bega from the busy inner-city suburb of Newtown, Matt is loving the 'serenity' of country life.

"Everyone is so welcoming here," Matt said. "I love the change of pace. I can walk to town and to work and everyone says hello."

The role is Matt's first job in public health care having worked in NGOs for suicide prevention, youth work and community development in Sydney for eight years, and he says he's felt welcomed and respected by the clinical team at SERH.

"The approach to mental health (at the MHIU) is very much aligned with my own values as a social worker," Matt says.

"I feel I can contribute in a meaningful way in the team."

Matt says for him the attraction of social work in mental health care as a profession is that he can impart positive values and take part in diverse work that helps individuals on their journey to recovery.

"Social workers provide practical support for people and help individuals find purpose and meaning – we can help them rediscover, or find, their values," Matt says.

'Social' by profession and social by nature, Matt's vibrant personality is contagious. Matt is already enjoying playing AFL for the Pambula Panthers and making new friends along the way.

Mahlia Smith Macpherson is the new MERIT Case Manager based at Bega. MERIT is the Magistrates Early Referral into Treatment program and is a court-based treatment program for adults in the local court who have issues related to their alcohol and other drug use.

Mahlia is a Bega Valley local and was previously working in youth homelessness while completing her social work degree. Also a newbie to public health care, Mahlia is loving the opportunity to make a difference to her community and experience tangible positive outcomes.

"I like working in a small community," Mahlia says. "I am invested in the outcomes and can feel and see the differences that social work and services like MERIT can make."

The Bega MERIT role is a new position, so Mahlia has been spending the last few weeks getting the word out. She's been connecting with services such as local courts, lawyers, corrections, family and support services to make sure there is awareness of the referral pathways for MERIT.

Mahlia says MERIT is a great team to work in. "They are all great personalities and so I'm enjoying getting to know people from across the District with a lot of experience and skills to share."

"I feel I can contribute in a meaningful way in the team."





Small activities are making a big impact at Kenmore

For older people receiving mental health care at Kenmore Hospital’s David Morgan Centre in Goulburn, Diversional Therapist Cherry Sin Yin Hau provides vital connections through recreational therapy.

“Diversional therapy (DT) interventions are leisure based,” Cherry says. “We support clients to achieve goals through leisure, physical activity, relaxation, creativity and social interaction,” Cherry says.

Cherry supports consumers with activities and interventions both in the Centre and out in the community.

“Facilitating group visits to Goulburn town centre enhances our consumers’ mental health by maintaining independence and increasing confidence in community access,” Cherry says. “It also increases social interaction and improves self-esteem.”

Initially studying occupational therapy, Cherry met a diversional therapist at the Nepean Mental

Health Centre in western Sydney and was inspired to switch to a Bachelor of Health Science in Therapeutic Recreation.

“I was amazed by how creative and rewarding this profession is,” Cherry says.

Cherry moved to Goulburn in 2023 and loves the regional area. Originally from Hong Kong, she says there are some challenges working in a rural area – mostly with nuances in language, place names and the Aussie accent.

“If the consumers have a strong Aussie accent, which is very common in rural places, it is harder for me, so I have to pay full attention to catch their meaning, or sometimes I have to ask them to write down what they have said – funny, but it works!”

Cherry says some of the most rewarding aspects of her job are when the consumers tell her that they are grateful for spending time and doing activities with them.

“Running activities, spending time talking to them may look like small things,” Cherry says.

“But it actually means a lot to our consumers, who are staying in the ward 24/7 for at least a few months, sometimes even a year.”

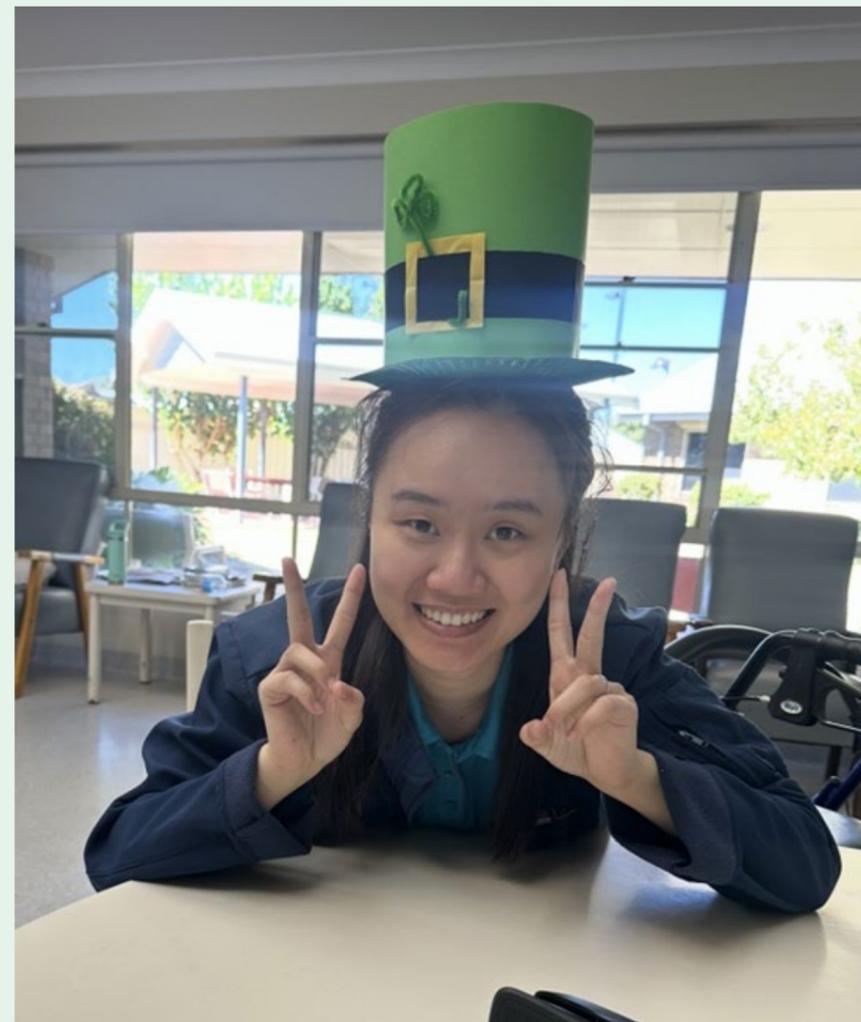
“Some of our consumers do not have family or any other social support, they have no one to visit them, bring them food, let alone take them on an outing” Cherry says.

“With diversional therapy, our consumers can go for a walk together on hospital grounds in the morning, do bingo, hair styling, nail manicure or just enjoy their cuppa and chat in the garden.”

“After lunch we do cooking, gardening, flower arrangement or simply watch TV and relax, and if they want, we can even go out for lunch and go shopping.”

Diversional therapists support people of all ages and abilities to improve their overall health

“I was amazed by how creative and rewarding this profession is.”



and wellbeing through leisure and recreation-based interventions, including physical, emotional, social, cognitive and spiritual functioning.

“Our activities are not necessarily fancy, but allow them to build friendships with each other, and the small talks and hugs support them emotionally.”

“A consumer with depression said to me last week after an outing, ‘I feel strong. I thought I couldn’t make it this morning, my legs were so sore, and I haven’t been out for nearly four months since I came here, I can’t believe that we made it, thank you for bringing me out Cherry.’”

Cherry says, “I think Goulburn is a good place for me and my partner to start our family here.”

“A milestone for mums and bubs”:

Southern’s maternity units awarded BFHI accreditation



Welcoming a new baby into the world is one of life’s most precious moments, and for families across Southern, that moment just became even more special.

Southern is proud to announce that all five hospitals with birthing services have been awarded Baby Friendly Health Initiative (BFHI) accreditation – making it the first Local Health District in NSW, and only the second in Australia, to achieve this gold standard for maternity care.

“This is a significant milestone for mums and bubs birthing in our maternity units,” said Clinical Midwifery Consultant, Jenny Flaherty.

The BFHI is a global program backed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF. It recognises hospitals and health services that offer mothers and babies the very best start in life, with practices that support strong bonds, safe feeding, and healthy beginnings.

Jenny said the achievement was the result of months of dedication by staff from across the District.

“The Baby Friendly Health Initiative focuses on creating an environment where mothers are supported to make informed decisions about feeding, where breastfeeding is encouraged but never pressured, and where skin-to-skin contact and bonding are a priority from the very first moments of life,” said Jenny.

The accreditation program is based on the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding (*right*) and demonstrates a facilities or health services commitment in offering the highest standard of maternity care to mothers, babies and their families.

Accreditation occurs every three years, ensuring regular independent assessment and providing facilities and healthcare services with the framework and support to continuously improve their practices.

“This accreditation means families can have confidence that no matter which maternity unit in the District they choose, they’ll receive compassionate, evidence-based care designed to nurture the healthiest start possible for both mother and baby.”

The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

Step 1: Have a written infant feeding policy that is routinely communicated to staff and parents; Comply fully with the international code of marketing of breastmilk substitutes and relevant world health assembly resolutions; Establish ongoing monitoring and data-management systems.

Step 2: Ensure that staff have sufficient knowledge, competence and skills to support breastfeeding.

Step 3: Discuss the importance and management of breastfeeding with pregnant women and their families.

Step 4: Facilitate immediate and uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact and support mothers to recognise when their babies are ready to breastfeed, offering help if needed.

Step 5: Support mothers to initiate and maintain breastfeeding and manage common difficulties.

Step 6: Do not provide breastfed newborns any food or fluids other than breastmilk, unless medically indicated.

Step 7: Enable mothers and their infants to remain together and to practise rooming-in 24 hours a day.

Step 8: Support mothers to recognise and respond to their infants’ cues for feeding.

Step 9: Counsel mothers on the use and risks of feeding bottles, teats and pacifiers.

Step 10: Coordinate discharge so that parents and their infants have timely access to ongoing support and care.

Courtesy of the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF



Recipe

One pot beef stew

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 tablespoons canola oil | 200g white cup mushrooms, cut into quarters |
| 500g beef chunk casserole steak, cut into chunks | 3 carrots, thickly sliced |
| 1 brown onion, diced | 1kg potatoes, cut into 4cm chunks |
| 3 tablespoon tomato paste (salt-reduced if available) | Fresh parsley, chopped (optional) |
| 1 tablespoon plain flour | |
| 2 cups salt-reduced beef stock | |

Method

1. Heat half of the oil in a large saucepan over high heat and cook beef in batches until brown. Transfer to plate.
2. Reduce heat to medium, add remaining oil and cook onion until softened.
3. Stir in tomato paste and flour, and cook for 1 min. Add stock gradually, stirring constantly.
4. Return meat to the pan, cover and bring to the boil.
5. Reduce heat to very low and cook gently, covered, for 1 hour.
6. Add mushrooms, carrot and potato. Replace lid and cook for further 1 hour. Serve with fresh parsley.

Tip: For a lighter version, trim any visible fat from the beef before cooking and swap half the potato for extra veggies like sweet potato, zucchini or green beans -it'll boost the fibre and add extra nutrients without sacrificing flavour

This recipe has been developed with Western Sydney Local Health District in partnership with St Vincent de Paul Society, Parramatta Central Council.

This classic recipe is packed with tender beef, wholesome vegetables, and rich, savoury flavours that only get better with time.

Serves: 4

Preparation time: 120 minutes

Level of difficulty: Easy

We are here for you

NSW Health is committed to treating every person with kindness, respect, and compassion.



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ACTIVE LIVING**

For more recipes, visit healthyliving.nsw.gov.au





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