

MURRUMBIDGEE

ISSUE 21 SUMMER 2023

MATTERS

MAGAZINE

IN
FOCUS:
ALLIED
HEALTH

FEATURE:
LEADERS
IN HEALTH

OUTSTANDING
EXPERIENCE
INFINITE
OPPORTUNITIES



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ABOUT US

Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) provides a range of public health services to the Riverina and Murray regions of NSW, Australia.

We provide services across a geographic area of about 125,561 square kilometres to a population of more than 240,700 residents. People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage make up four per cent of the population.

As the largest employer in the region, with more than 3,800 healthcare staff working across 33 hospitals and 12 primary health care centres, we are supported by hundreds of volunteers who make an invaluable contribution to enriching the lives of people in our care.

Our services are provided through:

- 1 Rural Referral Hospital
- 1 Base Hospital
- 8 District Health Services
- 5 Community Hospitals
- 16 Multipurpose Services
- 2 Mercy Care Public Hospitals
- 12 Community Health Posts
- 1 Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service

PUBLICATION

We would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land covering MLHD and remind people that we live and work on Aboriginal land.

Welcome to the 21st issue of Murrumbidgee Matters Magazine.

This quarterly publication is developed by MLHD. Information is correct at time of printing.

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FRONT COVER

Kayla Hill, Holbrook Facility Manager and winner of the Don Kendall Memorial Leadership Award.

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OUR VISION

Exceptional rural healthcare
Healthier together
Care tailored to people's needs



Passing the baton - Last years winner of the Don Kendell Memorial Leadership Award Dr. Megan Farrell (Right) passes the perpetual trophy to Kayla Hill.

DON KENDELL MEMORIAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

Kayla Hill, acting Facility Manager at the Holbrook Health Service was announced winner of the annual Don Kendell Memorial Leadership Award – the highest accolade awarded in the Murrumbidgee Local Health District.

Kayla was appointed to a maternity leave position in December 2021. Over the course of the year she has shown great passion, enthusiasm and incredible dedication in this position.

Chief Executive Jill Ludford said the judging panel decision was unanimous.

“Kayla is a leader who motivates healthcare workers to aim towards excellence in everything they do. She leads by example and is an inspiration for nurses across our District,” Ms Ludford said.

Kayla was nominated by the Holbrook Local Health Advisory Committee who describe her as a having a holistic, dynamic and inclusive approach to facility management.

“Kayla has worked tirelessly and innovatively to successfully recruit staff across all parts of the facility,” Holbrook LHAC Chair Mandy Locke said. “In a very short period of time she has created an environment that empowers

staff through education, leadership and team spirit.”

“She puts the residents and patients at the forefront of everything she does and is continually looking to improve the care and life experience of the residents.”

Some of her contributions toward improving the lives of residents in the Harry Jarvis wing over the past 12 months include:

Coordinating and developing a sensory room to calm or stimulate (as the need may be) residents using a Tovertafel digital system, massage chair, projection images and a light and bubble tower.

Purchasing a new BBQ and Pizza oven to offer diversity of menu to the residents and has encouraged family members to dine at the Wing with their loved ones.

Redevelopment of the resident’s grounds to improve quality of life including raised garden beds, workbench/potting area for supervised use and the arrival of two chooks for care by the residents.

“From a community perspective Kayla is impressive on all levels, she attends to matters promptly and efficiently,

communication with the LHAC is always clear, timely and thorough. She will always make time to meet with the LHAC to address queries or discuss upcoming meetings.”

Kayla provides confident and strong leadership to staff across the Holbrook facility.

“Her leadership style is empathetic, empowering and innovative,” Ms Locke said. “She is able to see the big picture and bring it down to implement at the local level to achieve the best outcomes for patients and residents.

Kayla is very organised when it comes to any educational or training requirements of the staff, encouraging and providing educational opportunities for the facility’s administration staff in their responsibilities.

The Don Kendell Memorial Leadership Award is presented annually to an emerging leader who reflects the values of aviation pioneer Don Kendell.

Excellence, professionalism and integrity are key attributes as well as the ability to inspire team spirit and lead change. ■

LEADING LADIES

LAURA HAND-ROSS: DISTRICT CLINICAL LEADER MHDA ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Laura Hand Ross has an important seat at the table.

Laura has been appointed to the NSW Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel, aimed to improve health outcomes for people across rural and regional NSW

A proud Wamba Wamba/Muthi Muthi woman, with song and bloodline connections to the Gunditjmara, Wiradjuri and Ngunnawal Nations, Laura is passionate about giving a voice to the people who live in rural and remote communities.

Laura is the current Chair of the Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council, a founding and current board member of Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre and the Director of the Werai Land and Water Corporation.

Laura has worked for Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) Mental Health Drug and Alcohol for the past fourteen years in both Griffith and Deniliquin, including clinical lead and management roles and District Clinical Leader MHDA Aboriginal Peoples.

Laura is trained in clinical supervision and has recently completed the NSW Public Service Aboriginal Leadership Program.

Laura has a deep sense of responsibility to her people and culture and a passion to represent people from minority groups and those marginalised within the community.

“My Aboriginal community is matriarchal, where women are the leaders and at the forefront of cultural guidance and decision making,” Laura said.

“My parents used to take me on archaeological digs when I was a child and I thought I might like to be an archaeologist when I grew up, because it really was so fascinating in understanding our land and ancestry.”

“But being the eldest girl in my generation, as I matured and understood my responsibilities. I felt pulled into a role that involved taking care of the cultural needs and health and welfare of my people,” Laura said.

Laura saw the challenges her people faced accessing culturally appropriate services, particularly for those requiring mental health services

“I spent a large part of my youth in Sydney, attending large multicultural school. It was a culturally diverse school and it taught me a lot about inclusion and how ignorant people can be, how they sometimes do not understand,” Laura said.

“I wanted to educate others and make sure our communities valued and respected inclusion.

Returning from the city to Deniliquin when her son was three, Laura wanted to ensure he experienced his ancestral culture and land.

“I wanted him to feel the connection I had with my family and with our kin.

“As a single Aboriginal mother who is a part of the LGBTQI community, I have much lived experience around the obstacles that marginalised people face,” Laura said.

“My wife and I were amongst the first legally gay married couple in Deni. We felt so happy to be able to do that, but it does frustrate me that we are still having to have these kinds of conversations around people’s rights and inclusion.”

“I do not want my son to be having the conversations with others that I am still having today,” Laura said.

Laura always thought that she would end up in a counselling or mental healthcare role.

The curiosity of wanting to know more about how she could be of more assistance from a clinical perspective, became “an itch I needed to scratch,” Laura said.

Laura was among the first cohort of trainees that the then Greater Southern Health Service delivered in conjunction with Charles Sturt University.

“The aim was to deliver qualified Mental Health Clinicians to the Regional Areas where they were most needed,” said Laura.

Laura feels she was able to take the best learnings from a range of disciplines and tailor them to her clinical practice.

“Our growing team at Deni meant that I was surrounded by lots of different people from lots of disciplines, including senior nurses, social workers and psychologists.

“I had incredible opportunity to learn from a diverse group of people.”

Laura explains this was a crucial step in delivering appropriate and culturally sound care to her people.

Laura has navigated the challenges of living and working on her own country, with her own people.

“There are cultural considerations to work into your practices, many that had not really been previously noted or implemented.

“Historically Aboriginal people do not have good relationships with government agencies, and in particular Health.

“Mental health is an extension of that, so engaging with Aboriginal people cannot always happen within a facility or hospital.

“My people sometimes preferred to come directly to me at home, outside of work hours, so these became challenges our team at Deni recognised and were able to be flexible about,” Laura said.

“We ensured we had availability of an appropriate male and female clinician, so our people felt able to openly talk about medical issues and receive appropriate care and treatment,” Laura said.

Laura notes that our ability to be flexible in the way services are delivered can be applied to society as a whole.

“My role as a mental health clinician, who happens to be Aboriginal, really has learnings for the wider community, because I see the positive impact we can make in implementing respectful and culturally appropriate services to all people,” Laura said.

“It helps to break down the barriers that people experience when they are engaging with a new service,” Laura said.

Laura values community consultation and is happy to facilitate honest conversations and answer difficult questions.

"I like to think that over the years I have been able to bridge that gap between indigenous and non-indigenous people, to facilitate meaningful conversations and relationships between our staff, Elders, the knowledge holders and people in the community," Laura said.

"I feel we have gained a lot of ground over the last 15 years, but there is still much work to be done.

For Laura, her role in being a voice for people in the bush is what drives her.

"That is why, I feel passionate and hopeful that my position on NSW Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel, my motivation to speak up, to be a truth teller, to say it as I see it, will be embraced," Laura said.

"This panel has the opportunity to help facilitate change for a great deal of the NSW population living in remote and regional communities," Laura said.

"I will be the one inviting the city people, the decision makers to the bush, helping them to see what we see, to better understand, and to keep it real.

"I hope the voice of regional NSW will be at the forefront of all our discussions.

In the meantime, Laura is adamant she will continue to be the person she is.

"My mother has just turned 70, the first one in her generation. She is one of twelve siblings, and there are only three of her generation left.

"She is an incredible person, a wealth of knowledge and has always been a truth teller. She can convey how she feels with a glance, and her presence is a force.

"My mother helped mould my love for country, for these lands, for my people who have been here for thousands of years.

"She keeps me grounded, inspires me and if I could be half the human my mother is, I would be so very fortunate," Laura said.

"I feel privileged to be a part of this culture and community. There is still a lot to learn, and if I can be a part of that, of affecting real change on the ground, then I would feel honoured and very happy indeed." ■



Laura Hand-Ross, Mental Health Drug & Alcohol Clinical Lead Aboriginal Programs



Meg Austin, Midwife Young Hospital

LEADING LADIES

MEG AUSTIN: A HEART FOR RURAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Meg Austin never dreamed that as an early career midwife, she would be one of the voices to help shape the future of health outcomes for people living and working in regional NSW.

"I have particular interests in antenatal care and midwifery-led continuity of care for women who live in regional and remote areas.

Meg wants people in regional and remote communities to feel empowered to be a part of the decision-making process, when it comes to making choices about their healthcare, to be in control. And she believes that can only happen with better conversations.

So, when Meg saw the expression of interest to participate on The Regional Health Ministerial Advisory Panel she felt compelled to apply, but did not hold out much hope of success.

When her application was successful, Meg was both excited and a little overwhelmed.

"The panel is made up of such an amazingly, qualified group of people with diverse and well-established careers, so as a bit of a new starter it is an amazing opportunity to give a different perspective," Meg said.

"I feel privileged to be involved, and it has been an eye-opening experience. I have an appreciation for planning and policy creation and understand why change takes time.

Meg's participation in the panel has given her insight into how policy and clinical care relate, and confidence to speak up about the things she feels are barriers and opportunity to improve.

"The Minister for Regional Health encourages honest, respectful and robust conversations, so that that she has a true understanding of what's happening on the ground.

"My role is about representing the newer graduates and staff, so that early career nurses, midwives and allied health professionals have some input about some of the things that we have experienced, what we see barriers to our work," Meg said.

Meg hopes to represent midwives working in rural NSW and to be the voice to outline the challenges and successes they experience as staff members.

Meg's recent position in Far West LHD (Broken Hill) as a continuity midwife has reaffirmed the value of such model of care - better patient outcomes, lower rates of smoking, less incidence of preterm birth, stillbirth and women are likely to feel more satisfied with their pregnancy experience

"Continuity of care midwifery really is the gold standard of care, and Meg would love to see this model more widely implemented across rural NSW."

Meg's journey to become a midwife began in 2017, where she completed some work experience in the maternity ward at Corowa Hospital as part of her HSC.

"Rather than treating sick people, the focus is on wellness, empowering women and enhancing people's health. Welcoming babies into the world is the best part of life and I just loved it.

Meg completed her Bachelor in Midwifery at both the Southern Cross and Canberra University and embarked on her first graduate year at Broken Hill Hospital, where a large cohort of her patients were Aboriginal families and from marginalised communities, where English is not their first language.

"I provided care for particularly vulnerable women through the continuation of pregnancy, both in the hospital and community. I helped them manage their pregnancy needs right up to and after the birth of their babies. That was really special because you got to build these really great relationships with women and their families," Meg said.

"It was interesting work because Broken Hill is so close to the border and we worked a lot with SA Health, and there was just not a clean transition from one healthcare system to the next. It really made me question healthcare Australia wide and the disparities between our state policies that sometimes impact health care outcomes," Meg said.

Meg has spent most of the past five years, studying and working in border towns and

regional areas, including Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Dubbo, Bathurst, Cowra, Parkes, Forbes, Canberra and now Young, often caring for people from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Her recent move to work with Murrumbidgee Local Health District at Young Hospital inspired by a yearning to be closer to her family and friends in Canowindra.

“ You get to feel you actually have a really positive impact on people’s lives. ”

"It's nice to be closer to home, Mum and Dad are still in Canowindra, and I have brothers there, it's been nice to duck home for special events on the weekends.

"I have no interest in moving to a metropolitan city and will always work in regional areas.

"I just love the country, I grew up in a country town, and that sense of belonging, of community you do not get anywhere else.

"I have only lived and worked in Young for a very short period of time and already I'm starting to see new mums in the supermarket, out and about, and that is really special," she said.

Meg feels that when you live and work in a regional town, you are embedded in the community, with open arms, giving opportunity to build meaningful and strong relationships.

"It's why I am so passionate about making sure people feel empowered in their everyday conversations and choices, whether it be to with your work colleagues, your patients, your community, you get to feel you actually have a really positive impact on people's lives. ■

LEADING LADIES

MELANIE LACEY

CHIEF PHARMACIST PUTS PATIENT SAFETY FIRST

Melanie Lacey, Chief Pharmacist at Young Health Service moved for love but her other passion is no bitter pill.

Melanie has conducted a whopping 2,000 medication reviews for her patients in Young over the past twelve months in her quest to empower the people in her community to actively engage and educate themselves about the medication they may be taking.

"Murrumbidgee Local Health District has adopted the KNOW.CHECK.ASK global patient safety initiative which encourages patients to talk their health professionals about their medication.

"I think as patients, we sometimes forget that having our medication reviewed is an important step in our health care. What someone is prescribed a few months ago, a few years ago, may not be what the person needs now," Melanie said.

"I think it is just so important to educate, support and encourage the people within our communities to feel empowered about asking questions and raising concerns about their medication."

"It can be as easy as taking your medication list along to your pharmacist, your doctor's appointment or even to the hospital if you are being admitted. You can also request a home medication review by a pharmacist through referral from your GP."

Melanie says it is common to identify expired or incorrect medications or find that patients may be taking something their GP or health professional is not aware of, including things we tend to take without thinking like supplements and vitamins.

"It can sometimes be a real issue and impact negatively on health outcomes."

"Most weeks I identify someone who is taking medication that does not match what their GP thinks they are taking, which can be really alarming!" Melanie said.

Melanie prescribes that as a pharmacist there is much she can do to assist in ensuring people are taking their medication without harm.

"Sometimes we can adjust things like dosages or medication choice, based on a person's blood test results, so that is another really important part about understanding what we are taking."

"Things can change over time, as we age, or depending upon the other illnesses we may be dealing with," Melanie said.

"If we don't have the information from the patient about what they're thinking, what their concerns are, or what their side effects are, then we cannot determine what changes are needed.

"So it's perfectly fine to talk with and question your doctor, or pharmacist about what medication you are taking, if you have any concerns," encourages Melanie.

"That is why medication reviews should be as normal as having your blood pressure taken or booking your yearly health check-up."

Originally from Dubbo, Melanie found her way to her Young over 23 years ago, meeting her now husband whilst studying Pharmacy at the University of Sydney.

"My husband is from Young and he has generations of family who live here, it just made sense to move here once we started a family. Regional areas have so much to offer and a much quieter more connected lifestyle," said Melanie.

"I was fortunate to secure employment at a community pharmacy within three days of deciding to move to Young and eventually began locum work including at the hospital."

"It was great timing, because while I love the intimacy of working in a community pharmacy, I enjoy the clinical input I can contribute working within our Hospital," Melanie said.

Melanie feels that her position as Chief Pharmacist at Young Health Service is a great

example of the multidisciplinary approach to patient care in a smaller regional facility like Young.

"From a pharmacist perspective the Hospital in Young is a great place to work because I can collaborate easily with all the health professionals and patients around me. We are all about putting the patient at the centre of their care."

"That is great news for patients, because while we hear buzzwords like multidisciplinary and positive patient outcomes- at Young Health Service we get to see this in practise daily, with people and patients who we know, who are part of our community and really benefiting from the open channels of communication that we have," Melanie said.

"We are fortunate to have a bonded healthcare team, the doctors, the nurses and allied health professionals, we really all do work as a team and have so much opportunity to talk face to face and consult each other regarding our patients and appropriate care.

"We are not restricted to just formal multidisciplinary rounds but can also go and talk to the patients, and really involve them in their health care and ability to make informed choices."

"If I am concerned about something I can address it quickly and easily with both my patient and their relevant health professionals. We can start to action things on the spot," Melanie said.

I am passionate about achieving the best outcomes for our patients possible, especially by empowering them to be part of the decision making process.

"I want patients to remember they have a right to KNOW-CHECK-ASK- about their healthcare- including their medication, and we welcome and encourage that!" ■



Melanie Lacey, Chief Pharmacist, Young Health Service

LEADING LADIES

LOURENE LIEBENBERG
PASSIONATE ADVOCATE



Lourene Liebenberg Chair of Deniliquin LHAC

Passionate about the wellbeing of rural communities, Lourene Liebenberg has seen first-hand the toll that stress and isolation can take on people's mental health.

From droughts, floods, bushfires to the COVID-19 pandemic, regional and rural communities have experienced high psychological distress, emphasising the need to remove the stigma around seeking mental health support.

Based in Deniliquin, Lourene is an Occupational Therapist and the Chair of the Local Health Advisory Committee, with more than 30 years' experience in mental health service provision and program development.

Her private practice, Minding Minds, is committed to raising awareness of mental health in the community, providing evidence-based mental health training as well as supervision and mentoring.

Originally from South Africa, Lourene moved to Australia 20 years ago and has called Deniliquin home ever since.

"We live in a beautiful town. We came here when our kids were four and six and they could do anything they wanted to under the sun, it's a great place to bring up kids."

Lourene, alongside all regional NSW workers, appreciates the diversity in the scope of work.

"I've seen a range of patients and delivered a range of services; including early intervention counselling for youth and children; cognitive behaviour therapy for adult men and women with anxiety and depression as well as sometimes just providing a space where overwhelmed mothers can talk through some coping strategies."

"There was not a day that I did not enjoy my counselling. It is very diverse space to work in and from a professional point of view, there's enough work here and the demand is high." ■

ARIAH STEELE

GP TRAIL BLAZER

It's clear from the moment you meet Dr Aariah Steel she is a convert to working in regional and rural health.

Ariah Steel is a GP registrar working in the Murrumbidgee Rural Generalist Training Pathway, which suits her specific skills to work as a rural GP.

The training program ensures that the GPs are trained to deal with a range of situations you may face on a day-to-day basis, working in a regional health environment.

Under the Murrumbidgee Local Health District program, Dr Steel works three days a week in GP clinic, one day in the local hospital emergency department and is on the on-call roster.

Dr Steel says the program allows her to interact more closely with patients, providing them with excellent, holistic care.

"The best thing is I may see a patient who has come into emergency over the weekend and instead of referring them back to their GP during the week, I am the GP they follow up with during the week, when I am working in the clinic."

Dr Steel rotates through a number of hospitals and GP clinics throughout the local health district on a four-to-six-year contract.

The employment contract is just one of the reasons the program has been a success, but the main reason is the training and variety and challenges it provides to these junior GPs.

Ariah grew up in Sydney and attended Notre Dame University, but she is staying in regional NSW.

"I travelled an hour and a half to get to Uni every day for six years, whereas now in Deniliquin I live a one-minute walk away from work," Ariah said.

"Not only that, I really love having diversity in my role and would hate to be doing the same thing every day. I love that working here I get to work in the ED, I work in the clinic, I do some obstetrics work, I love the variety.

"I love the community. Every morning you go for a walk with the dogs, you go to the same coffee shop, everyone knows you. You develop really good relationships with people in the community." ■



Find out more about Aariah Steele and the Murrumbidgee Rural Generalist Training Pathway: <https://youtu.be/dkc636pwAUK>



Reflections

The Year in Review

Jill Ludford
Chief Executive

YEAR IN REVIEW

We recently held our Annual Public Meeting, which gave me time to reflect on our achievements over the past year.

While the year has been challenging, it has also been a rewarding and fulfilling year as we really began to find our balance post pandemic, restore services and forge new and better ways to maintain wellness in our communities.

Faced with the emergence of an additional new virus in Australia this year, our Public Health Team responded to detection of Japanese Encephalitis. Case interviews, clinician alerts and collaboration with local industries were established quickly, to progress vaccinations. This was a crucial step in keeping our communities safe.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Some of our key achievements included:

> Griffith Base Hospital was the first NSW public hospital to introduce Magseed; a tiny, stainless steel 'seed' implanted in a cancerous breast tumour marking its location for surgery.

> We released our first Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-2024; outlining plans to reduce our environmental impact.

> We established the Murrumbidgee Health and Knowledge Precinct - a centralised excellence hub that promotes wellness, integrated services and education and research. The Precinct is the first of its kind in a regional setting and will act as a strong competitor to metropolitan areas.

> We employed our first Community Paediatrician supporting health care providers across Murrumbidgee better identify and respond to vulnerable children's developmental and behavioural needs.

> Safe Havens opened in Wagga and Griffith providing a new place for people experiencing suicidal distress to visit for care, offering an alternative to going to a busy, stressful emergency department.

> We established a Taskforce to support recruitment efforts in critical workforce shortage areas and doubled our annual intake of new graduate nurses through the GradStart program.

> We continued to progress our Murrumbidgee Rural Generalist Training Pathway - a model now being adopted nationwide - with seven doctors employed by the District.

> This year we launched education sessions into Clinical Yarning in 2021, a patient centred approach that marries Aboriginal cultural communication preferences with the traditional clinical model.

PARTNERSHIPS

Together with the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network we progressed work on an exciting initiative for people living with chronic disease, establishing pathways for improving quality of life and reducing demand for hospital services. Living Well Your Way has been co-designed with consumers and clinicians, using digital platforms to improve the link for patients from hospital to home. This initiative will use innovative technologies to support patients to manage their disease.

BUILDING PROJECTS

Several significant build projects were completed and celebrated with their communities. Major works continue at the Griffith Base Hospital with an important milestone reached with work commencing on the new Clinical Services Building, a major component of the \$250M redevelopment.

Service planning was completed for Coolamon, Finley and Temora.

QUALITY & SAFETY ACCOUNT

Our Quality & Safety Account (2021-2022) provides an overview of the activity and achievements of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District in the last financial year.

The document is now available on our website here: www.mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au



ABOVE: Kayla was presented with the Don Kendall Memorial Leadership award at the 2022 Annual Public meeting. Pictured with Board Chair Dr Tom Douch, Holbrook's Jenny Roach, Chief Executive Jill Ludford and last year's award recipient Dr Megan Farrell

CONGRATULATIONS!

I'd like to congratulate the following MLHD staff who have recently been acknowledged for their work

Sarah Buckton

Sarah from Corowa Health Service was a finalist in the New to Practice Nurse/Midwife of the Year category of the 2022 Nursing and Midwifery Awards.

Amy Salmon

Amy was a finalist in the 2022 Primary Healthcare Awards hosted by the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network. Amy was Highly commended in the Outstanding Contribution to Leadership in Primary Healthcare category.

Lockhart LHAC

Lockhart Local Health Advisory Committee was a finalist in the Murrumbidgee Grant of the Year at the 2022 Primary Healthcare Awards.

Wagga Wagga LHAC

Wagga Wagga Local Health Advisory Committee was a finalist in the Innovation category of the 2022 Primary Healthcare Awards.

People & Culture team

MLHD People and Culture team are finalists in the 2022 NSW Health Awards People and Culture category for their project Critical Workforce Agility in Rural Healthcare.

Garth Hungerford

Chair of Wagga Wagga LHAC Garth Hungerford is a finalist in the 2022 NSW Health Awards Volunteer of the Year category.



To watch the Chief Executive update from the 2022 MLHD Annual Public Meeting visit:

<https://youtu.be/hEeEeUI11eg>

THANK YOU

We are proud of our achievements and acknowledge the contribution and compassion shown by our staff, volunteers and community advocates as they continue to enrich the lives of our patients, consumers, residents and communities.

We share our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributes to providing healthcare across our region.

Jill Ludford
Chief Executive



ABOVE: At the LHAC Forum held recently in Finley - meeting and talking with the LHACs about what's important to them in their townships.



A word from The Chair

Dr Tom Douch Board Chair

12 months ago, we were in the depths of dealing with the COVID pandemic and recovering from the disastrous effects of a prolonged drought and then unprecedented bushfires. We were also starting to ponder how we might live with COVID.

2022 has been a challenging year as COVID has lingered and now we are challenged in the form of a possible third wave of COVID, the floods, and the inevitable post flood legacy most notably mosquitoes and the threat they pose.

The run of disasters has been unrelenting and has resulted in a massive impact on our workforce. People have been absent due to illness, have worked long hours, have stood in for absent colleagues, have returned from leave and in some cases from retirement, and the fatigue within our workforce is evident, widely reported and acknowledged by all. And yet, wherever I go there remains considerable optimism and spirit within MLHD which has served our communities so well as we have moved through the difficulties of 2022. Frankly, I am in awe of our staff and am at a loss as to how to convey the deep gratitude that is so well deserved – perhaps the answer is to do as much as we can to restore our workforce.

Yes, MLHD is challenged, as is every LHD across Australia, particularly those in rural and remote regions. But we have not just sat back and bemoaned our workforce challenges, rather there has been a quiet, determined and growing campaign to ease our problems through a variety of measures

such as wider more vigorous recruiting, revitalized and improved on-boarding and other initiatives including the NSW incentives. Results are starting to emerge, and they are good, for example we have improved our nursing shortage by about 30% in less than 12 months. But we have some way to go yet before I, the Board, the CE and the Executive feel we have reached a satisfactory situation – there is more work to be done and it is being done.

Workforce disruption due to COVID has markedly affected clinical operations particularly surgery with our waiting lists growing quickly, however plans and funding are now in place, and I am optimistic that the delivery of surgery will pick up over the next 12 months and waiting lists will lower as a result.

I am of the view that a system that scrambles to respond to challenges is not a weak system but rather is showing its resilience, its adaptability and its flexibility and the MLHD, through its staff and volunteers, has revealed these characteristics over the past few years. We should not be blind to the challenges and difficulties we confront, but we should nevertheless be proud of what we have managed to achieve through 2022 – we have maintained effective health care delivery to our communities.

We are heading towards a state election in 2023 – in the hurly burly of political campaigning various claims will be made about our health system. As Chair I welcome informed criticism and commentary based

on facts, the truth and good analysis. I will not accept scurrilous commentary and innuendo that derides our staff, our volunteers or which seeks political gain from the misfortune suffered by an ill patient who come to us seeking treatment.

My time as Chair is coming to an end after 18 months, it is a legislative requirement and reflects previous time spent on the MLHD Board, so it is important that I acknowledge the many people who make MLHD a quality high functioning health delivery organisation.

I must acknowledge the superb leadership of our CE Jill Ludford who is very well known across the community and who, rightly, is widely respected. She is ably supported by a committed and very capable executive who often work quietly in the background putting substance to the many activities MLHD must undertake.

I would like to thank our frontline clinical staff who have performed so magnificently over the past few years as we have faced crisis after crisis through drought, bushfires, COVID and flood – frankly it humbles me when I think of the service and sacrifice that has occurred so that services to our community can be maintained.

I would like to thank our wider team – as I have toured around various facilities within MLHD it is clear to see the invaluable role played by our cleaners, our office staff, security officers, transport workers, cooks – all manner of occupations and skills - all working to the common goal of providing the best healthcare we possibly can.



Passionate about Hand Hygiene!



With Jill Reyment, Director Clinical Governance

It is important that I pay tribute to our volunteers, our LHACs, the hospital auxiliaries and the multitude of others who give their time freely to support our health system. Our LHD relies on highly skilled clinicians and support staff but also relies on close interaction with our communities through our volunteers. They are vital, valued and I urge them to continue their good work.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the other members of the MLHD Board for their support to me as chair and for their dedication in undertaking the job of the Board. We have worked hard to develop the Board and, I am confident the Board is in a strong position to continue its function in the New Year.

Where possible please take leave at some point over the Christmas holiday period, recharge yourselves, enjoy your families and take time to prepare yourselves for 2023.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Tom Douch
MLHD Chair



To watch the Board Chair's address from the 2022 MLHD Annual Public Meeting visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCx11Z44jKE>



Above: Out and about visiting facilities with the Chief Executive - here in Holbrook



Presenting the Aboriginal Health team awards.

One of the highlights of the year at the 2022 MLHD Excellence Awards.



Kindness Works Here - Celebrating with staff at the Wagga Wagga District Office.

A SPOTLIGHT ON

ALLIED HEALTH

We often are asked "What is Allied Health?"

So we thought we'd highlight some of the key professions in this important area of health...

ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Allied health professionals provide essential care for people of all ages including children, older people, people with chronic illnesses or mental ill-health, and those experiencing disability.

Allied health professionals work with people to identify and assess issues and provide treatment and to support acquisition of skills, recovery and reablement. In many cases allied health interventions can reduce or remove the need for medical interventions. The allied health sector is extremely diverse with significant variation across and within professions.

Allied Health services available in MLHD include:

- > **Audiologist**
- > **Art Therapist**
- > **Counsellor**
- > **Dietitian**
- > **Diversional Therapist**
- > **Exercise Physiologist**
- > **Genetics Counsellor**
- > **Music Therapist**
- > **Nuclear Medical Technology**
- > **Occupational Therapist**
- > **Orthoptist**
- > **Orthotist/Prosthetist**
- > **Pharmacist**
- > **Physiotherapist**
- > **Play Therapist**
- > **Podiatrist**
- > **Psychologist**
- > **Radiation therapist**
- > **Radiography**
- > **Sexual Assault Worker**
- > **Social Worker**
- > **Speech Pathologist**
- > **Welfare Officer**



DIETITIAN

Dietitians provide professional support to help coach and educate consumers and answer your questions relating to food, diet, weight and healthy living.

Dietitians are experts in food and nutrition. They provide guidance about how to appropriately manage diets and nutrition for people who may be affected by health conditions such as diabetes, overweight and obesity, cancer, heart disease, renal disease, gastro-intestinal diseases and food allergies. A dietitian can help people maintain their health and reduce their risk of developing chronic disease.



PHYSIOTHERAPY

Physiotherapy use methods such as exercise to treat injuries and disease.

Physios can help you to recover more quickly from injury or surgery, prevent future injuries and improve your mobility and health.



PHARMACY

Hospital pharmacists play an integral role ensuring patients receive high quality medicine management, providing essential services including: medicine reconciliation, clinical review, patient counselling and efficient supply.

Hospital pharmacists provide drug information and advice to health professionals and the community as well as contributing to and conducting clinical trials of new or improved treatments.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (OT)

OT's provide professional help to people of all ages assisting them to complete everyday activities with increased ease, independence and safety.

They can work with people who have physical, cognitive, mental, developmental, social or emotional challenges and disabilities.

MEET OUR PEOPLE: ALLIED HEALTH

Haval Ibrahim Physiotherapist Corowa Hospital

Haval Ibrahim recently moved to Corowa to accept a position as a Physiotherapist at the Corowa Hospital.

Haval was so committed to starting at the Corowa Hospital he initially resided in the local caravan park with his family until his rental property was available.

“It was a bit of an adventure for us and a unique way to get a feel for the town,” said Haval.

“The town of Corowa is small and homely. Everyone is friendly and has been extremely hospitable.”

“I don’t have to drive very far to explore, and the surrounding towns are just as picturesque and friendly,” said Haval.

Haval’s role as Physiotherapist involves assessing, monitoring and treating patients who have been admitted to the hospital, residential aged care, as well as community outpatients.

“My new role is fast-paced and has enabled me to further develop my skills and hone my craft, because the patients I see and the help they need is so diverse.”

Haval loves to help others and see them progress and improve.

“My patients are very friendly and always down for a chat, even in the bad times when they are not feeling their best,” Haval said.

“I am looking forward to becoming the best clinician I can be. I hope that I can be an asset to the hospital and town.”



SONOGRAPHY

A sonographer performs specialised diagnostic examinations using high frequency ultrasound (sonography). People may require ultrasound scans for a range of conditions from pregnancy to more complex health conditions as prescribed by their health practitioner.



SPEECH THERAPY

Speech pathologists study, diagnose and treat communication disorders, including difficulties with speaking, listening, understanding language, reading, writing, social skills, stuttering and using voice.

They work with people who have difficulty communicating because of developmental delays, stroke, brain injuries, learning disability, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, dementia and hearing loss, as well as other problems that can affect speech and language. People who experience difficulties swallowing food and drink safely can also be helped by a speech pathologist.



Megan Holt Allied Health Assistant

Megan is an Allied Health Assistant at the Corowa Hospital.

Megan’s role involves seeing inpatients and outpatients, as well as residents in the nursing home.

“I am passionate about helping people maintain and improve their health, wellbeing and independence,” Megan said.

“I love being part of the Allied Health team and enjoy the opportunity to utilise and expand on the skills and knowledge I gained while training.”

Originally from Beechworth and now residing in Albury, Megan loves the beautiful scenery around Corowa and how welcoming all the residents and staff have been since her arrival this year.

“We feel very welcome and the community has really embraced us with open arms. Even our family Labrador named Leo, who we all love to spoil rotten,” Megan said.

Lara Ovenden Trainee Allied Health Assistant

Lara Ovenden is currently studying her HSC at the Corowa High School while also completing her AHA course with Murrumbidgee Local Health District.

“It has been a really great opportunity to get a feel for what the role looks like and has inspired me to take my studies further,” Lara said.

“I have learnt so much already and find the team to be so generous with their time and knowledge.”

“Allied Health Assistants really do get to be involved in such a wide range of work, and no two days are the same. My favourite part is being able to help people and to have the time to actually have a chat,” Lara said.

“Having such a great career opportunity in my town is so encouraging and important, because all my friends and family are here.”

MEET OUR PEOPLE: ALLIED HEALTH STARS



Nadine Quarisa
Physiotherapist, Griffith Base Hospital

Born and bred in Griffith, Nadine enjoys time with her family and friends and never-ending supply of great cuisine.

"I must admit I love being spoilt with a weekly Sunday night feast at Nonna's!"

Nadine is a Level 3 Physiotherapist providing inpatient care across ICU, Surgical, emergency and rehab.

She also assists with outpatient care and the supervision of new graduate physiotherapists and students.

Nadine loves the variety in her work and being able to utilise a wide range of her knowledge and skills.

"Every day is different which keeps work interesting and engaging, assessing everything from newborns to older people including stroke rehabilitation," Nadine said.

"It's easy to create rapport with patients- most are pleasantly surprised to find out I am local and are very grateful for the services we provide. It keeps a smile on your face."

Prevention is a big part of Nadine's role, with her work involving the facilitation of classes for the people in her community.

"I currently run the falls prevention exercise and education program at Griffith Base Hospital which comprises clients mostly over the age of 65.

"I am very passionate about aged care and the importance of social interaction, and it is very rewarding to see patients often meet up outside of group settings and develop permanent friendships; I feel very privileged to have had a small role in facilitating this.

Nadine is proud to have helped facilitate the expansion of the telehealth burns services with Concord Burns unit to include allied health.

She is also facilitating participation in an important research project to reduce the burden of lower back pain.

Nadine feels that working in regional facilities has enabled her increased autonomy and responsibilities, resulting in faster and more efficient career progression as opposed to our city counterparts.

"I encourage people to study and stay here- there is just so much regional areas can offer!"



Ellyn Bicknell
Dietitian

Ellyn is an Accredited Practising Dietitian working in the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital and Gundagai MPS, covering outpatient, inpatient and residential care referrals.

Ellyn commenced her career with MLHD in 2019.

"I was newly graduated, and had just relocated to Tumut, and found my team to be extremely supportive. It was a great entry point to health providing me with a diverse

range of experiences to broaden my skills," said Ellyn.

Ellyn has since been involved in the Critical Care ward, supporting the nutritional requirements of patients affected by COVID-19 related illness.

She has also supported the Renal Dialysis Team, covered the Sole Practitioner Dietitian role at Cootamundra and Gundagai as well as also supporting the Covid in the Home service.

"I've had so much opportunity to upskill and deliver tailored quality care during very unsure times over these past few years," said Ellyn.

Ellyn has immersed herself into many regional communities in MLHD to include caring for patients in Tumut, Gundagai, Batlow and Tumbarumba.

She feels this has allowed her to fully appreciate the impacts some feel in accessing services in remote and regional areas.

"We have incredible diversity and many cultures here. I learn so much from my patients and the communities that I support.

"The conversations we share are so important, because they bring a greater understanding about some of the barriers that the people in regional areas and communities face," said Ellyn.

"People are generous in sharing their life stories and they always amaze me," said Ellyn.

Ellyn's love for good health and nutrition has guided her life choices and desire to move to a small community like Tumut.

"I love nature and the Tumut area where I am surrounded by incredible parks, rivers, dams and places to explore.

"I am a keen vegetable and edible flower gardener with a passion for climate action through encouraging awareness and exploration.

"I have been grateful to be a part of the local growers and makers co-operative increasing the accessibility of locally grown food through a central hub" said Ellyn.

Ellyn has assisted in the research and publication of two papers looking at the Environmental Impact of Food Consumption in Australia and New Zealand.

"I encourage people to explore a diverse range of foods, how they grow, and how people and the ecosystem interact with each other.

It is these respectful interactions that drive Ellen.

"There is a wonderful sense of community in a small town like Tumut, we foster the support and development of community initiatives and small businesses.

"We take care of our environment and our town. And we especially take care of each other."

Carolyn Seidel
Radiographer and Sonographer
Corowa Hospital

Carolyn Seidel has over 30 years' experience as a Radiographer /Sonographer and has worked for Corowa Health Service for seven years.

She is a qualified general and vascular sonographer with 20 years cardiac experience and has worked right across our region including facilities at Albury, Wodonga, Wagga Wagga and Corowa.

Carolyn has worked in larger hospitals throughout her career but prefers living and working in regional areas.

"My husband and I have lived here for the past 22 years, raising three teenage children and we have enjoyed becoming active members in our community," Carolyn said.

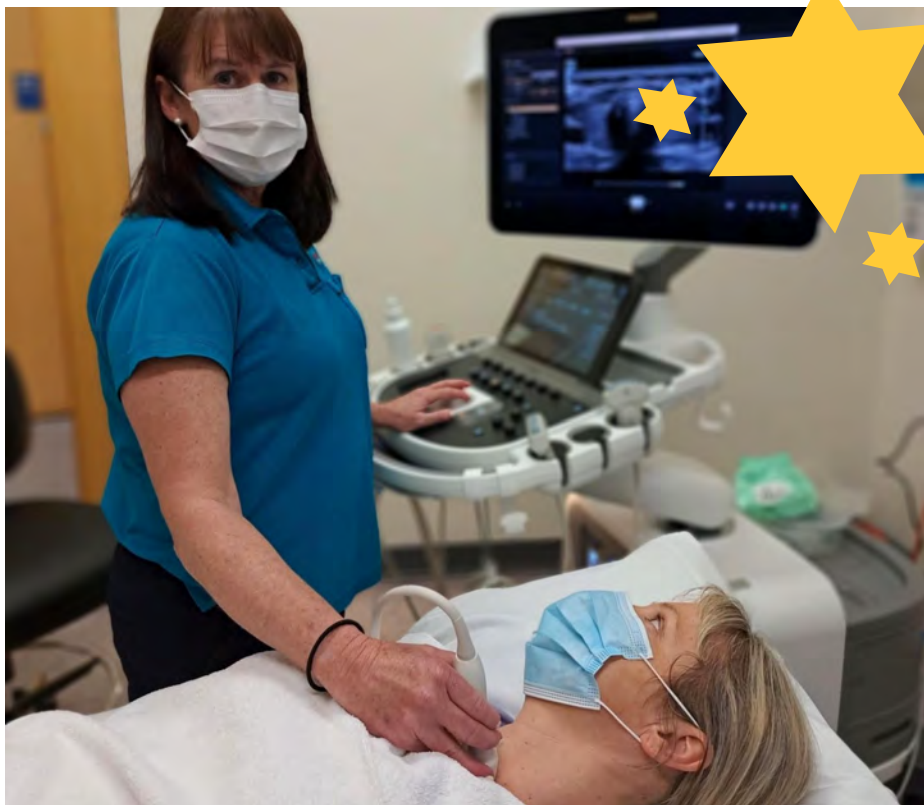
Sport plays a huge part of their family life, and Carolyn enjoys contributing to her town in as many ways as possible.

"We are members of the Rand Walbundrie Walla Football Club, Walbundrie Show Society, Walbundrie Tennis Club, Walbundrie Show Society and board members of the Walbundrie Co-Op.

"I love working at Corowa Health Service because we are all so connected to our community. Being involved in providing the best patient care to the people in my town is so important to me," Carolyn said.

"There is always so much to do and so many people to chat with. We really are a great big family here."

Carolyn is proud of the teamwork and outcomes that the dedicated staff at Corowa Hospital deliver.



"I think that Corowa Health Service provides an extremely high standard of patient care and I feel happy to be a part of the team here.

"My colleagues are supportive, and we all collaborate to deliver the best outcomes for our patients. It is a great atmosphere to work within," Carolyn said.

Carolyn is passionate about providing a high standard of care for the wellbeing of her patients and is excited to see the recent installation of the brand new ultrasound machine at Corowa Hospital.

"This new high end ultrasound machine

provides us with the highest level of scanning capabilities. It all means we are able to deliver better patient diagnosis and outcomes for the people in our community.

"Patients no longer need to travel to larger facilities to access high quality equipment. We are lucky to have it here in Corowa without any out of pocket expense to the public," Carolyn said.

X-Ray is also available for no out of pocket expense to the community at the Corowa Hospital.



Adele Baker
Occupational Therapist (OT)
Temora Health Service

Adele provides inpatient and community occupational therapy support across Temora, West Wyalong and Lake Cargelligo.

"I love the range of places I see and people I get to meet along the way. It is rewarding to see that the recommendations I make to support clients with daily living activities actually make real and positive impacts to their lives," Adele said.

Adele's role involves equipment prescription and home modifications.

"It is often the simple strategies that are most satisfying to recommend, when the client says "Ah, that's such a good idea!"

Adele is one of our newer staff members at MLHD and has previous experience working within the NDIS and occupational rehabilitation sectors.

Adele loves her work at MLHD and the opportunities that comes from working within a wider team.

"It is wonderful to openly collaborate and to draw on each other's expertise for maximal client outcomes."

"I did not fully appreciate until now how close-knit the communities can be in regional areas. It is such a strength when you see people in the community looking out for each other," Adele said.

"Little things are so easy to weave into my routine now. I now enjoy cycling the short distance to work, although this has made me learn to check the rain forecast a bit more often!"

Melinda Hewitt
Paediatric Speech Pathologist
Wagga Wagga Base Hospital

Mel is involved in the assessment and treatment of children from birth up to around 10 years of age, including difficulty with things like feeding or swallowing, or communication.

“I am passionate about helping children improve their speech sounds, voice skills and language. It is an essential part of development and socialisation and enables them to participate in daily life easily,” Mel said.

Mel loves the families she works with, because they are absolutely committed in helping their children meet their goals and improve their skills.

Mel has worked with MLHD for 18 years and feels like many colleagues are lifelong friends.

“Many people have come and gone over the years, but we feel like a family and work is so rewarding,” Mel said.

Mel has seen the Speech team transition to the new health services hub, which she feels has been an important step in connecting the wider health team to what is happening in the acute setting.

“The outcomes and consistency of care really benefited by having us all so close together,

we are dealing with multiple services, as we’re better able to coordinate their care now we’re housed centrally. This is especially important for our children who are having difficulty swallowing.

Mel loves her community in Wagga and encourages people from metropolitan areas to consider a move to regional cities like Wagga.

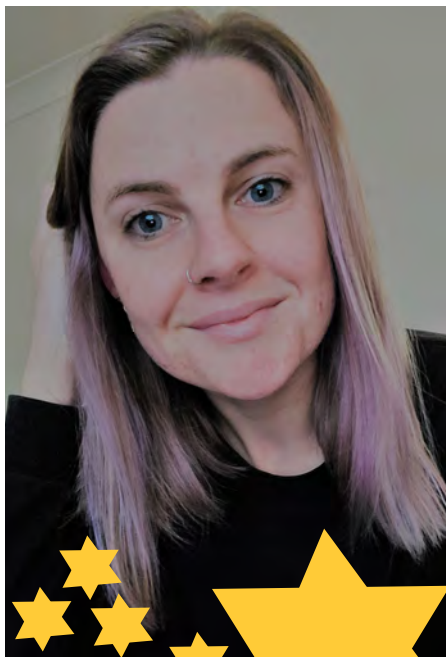
“Wagga is such a fun town, there’s so many great things here that makes working and raising a family such a joy.

I love my favourite (two) coffee shops, and the combination of the cycling tracks out at Pomi, and the new park down at the river means there’s never a dull moment for our family with three little kids,” Mel said.

Mel coordinates student placements for the MLHD Speech department and enjoys teaching and providing extra clinical support to the undergraduate and masters students.

“It’s lots of extra work but so rewarding. I just love to see a student graduate and then see them become a colleague,” Mel said.

“Knowing that somewhere along the journey, I have helped facilitate someone’s love for our Speech Pathology profession and a passion for regional health is a highlight in my career.”



Claire Green
Allied Health Assistants (AHA)

Claire is an AHA working mostly with the Physio team at the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital.

You can spot Claire in most areas of the hospital, including the inpatient wards, Rehab/GEM wards, outpatient clinics and groups including Hydrotherapy, Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab as well as the Joint Group.

Claire also helps to coordinate MLHD’s school-based trainees who are completing their Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance as part of their HSC.

Claire loves the wide range of work that she does, and especially her team.

“The variety of every day is one of my favourite things- no two days are the same,” Claire said.

“I’ve been lucky enough to have many opportunities to learn new skills and be exposed to almost every part of the hospital environment.

“The culture in our team is also really amazing! We all work so well together, and everyone has each other’s back.

“It really makes the hard days easier knowing we can all lean on each other.”

Claire thinks that the scope of services provided by Allied Health Assistants is an asset to our region and allows patients to stay closer to home.

“We deliver an exceptionally high-level of care and treatment that our patients need. It is very beneficial to them because we can rally to provide an individualised program and I feel really grateful to play even a very small part in someone’s journey, especially during what can be a very trying time,” said Claire.

Claire relocated to Wagga from Victoria five years ago and is amazed by the sense of community pride in the city.

“I feel like a local now and have been told about many of the hidden treasures in the area, which has made exploring on the weekends really enjoyable,” Claire said.

Claire is looking forward to diversifying her skills and will soon be completing more studies that will enable her to take on a greater teaching role of the AHA course with TAFE.

Claire is also in training to run her first half marathon on the Gold Coast next year!

Good luck Claire! You are already a winner in our eyes!

Catherine Stockil
Social Worker
Wagga Wagga Health
Services Hub

Catherine Stockil has worn many hats and many names over the 13 years she has worked for MLHD, including social work roles within the stroke unit, general acute wards, and palliative care, palliative care volunteer manager and more recently renal services.

Based in the Wagga Wagga Health Services Hub, Cat covers the East Sector of the District, providing a service to the Wagga Wagga and Tumut Renal Units surrounding towns.

As the MLHD Senior Renal Social Worker, Cat offers social support services for clients with kidney disease including those receiving dialysis and those managing chronic kidney disease.

She also provides clinical supervision and support to MLHD Social Workers, including the West Sector Renal Social Worker and the Renal Supportive Care Social Worker.

Cat enjoys the diversity of her role and the opportunity to support people in regional towns.

"I am lucky to work across so many locations and settings, and the range of social work interventions I offer can vary from practical welfare support and information to counselling, to end of life discussions," Cat said.

"I love that I get to know my clients and their families over a longer period while working with them as they manage their illness.

"I feel privileged to work alongside them to help them meet their goals. Together we can make a difference to manage their kidney disease journey and to improve their quality of life.

Cat feels that the positive and collaborative approach that her team and MLHD have in clinical interventions is making a real impact in the health outcomes for people living in regional areas when managing their kidney disease.



"Our collaborative approach involves so many teams and clinicians and puts each person's needs and wishes at the centre of our interventions.

"We are continually encouraging and supporting each other to improve our clinical practice and service delivery to ensure we achieve the best possible experience and outcomes for the client.

Cat thinks that working and living in a regional area like Wagga, is underrated by many who are still stuck in the hustle of busy city life.

"Wagga is the perfect blend of country and city. It has all the major services and activities but still has the benefits of a more rural lifestyle.

"I walk to work every day and don't have to worry about city traffic and losing hours in every day.

"If you are looking for a tree change that still gives you amazing job satisfaction and opportunity, you should definitely look into it! ■



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2022 MLHD Allied Health Awards

Congratulations to all the winners of our MLHD Allied Health Professionals Awards for their achievements.



Allied Health Professional Award

Kylie Stein
District Coordinator
Aged Care Service

Kylie is a well-respected colleague within the Aged Care and Allied Health realms. She is passionate about improving the health and wellbeing of older people who reside in residential aged care, with a special focus on those who are living with dementia.

Kylie has been actively involved in promoting dementia friendly environments; strategies to minimise dementia-related behavioural change with non-pharmacological approaches and continually emphasises the importance of meaningful activities that are resident focused and evidence based.

Congratulations to all our local winners.

These exceptional staff have also had their nominations submitted to the Ministry of Health for the opportunity to win the state level at the Excellence in Allied Health Awards.



Allied Health Educator Award

Elizabeth (Liz) McRae
Social Worker Aged Care Service

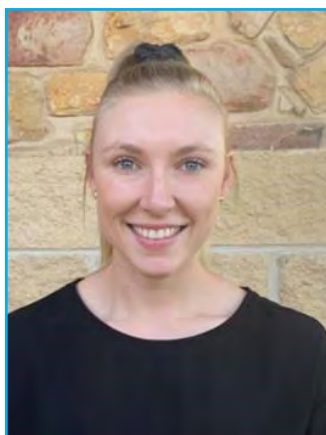
Liz is a valuable member of the aged care services team where she supports her colleagues and peers as well the aged population to achieve goals and results. Liz is always approachable and provides valuable advice. She cares for the people she sees and is passionate about making a difference in the lives of the people she meets. Liz currently works very closely with the Aged Care CNC's. Quite often they do combined visits to our clients as a lot of our clients are becoming more complex. Liz's number one priority for our community clients is Elder Abuse. Liz has established really strong working relationships with community stakeholders such as our local Police, service providers, local council & NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunal.

Allied Health Leader Award

Claudia Germantse Pharmacist, Outreach

Claudia has shown great leadership of the MLHD Outreach Pharmacy Team over the last 12 months. Claudia has displayed great initiative in times of staff shortages and management vacancies.

Claudia has stepped up in times of need, filled gaps in management, led staff and made initiatives to provide clinical service and pharmacy cover. Claudia is dedicated to supporting her colleagues. She uses her experience, empathy and positive attitude to elevate those around her. She is a wonderful mentor, and colleagues often come to her for support and guidance.



Early Career Allied Health Professional Award

Georgia Van Lieshout
Dietitian, Deniliquin Health Service

Georgia has joined the team at Deniliquin as a sole clinician working to provide services in hospital and community settings. In the high demand service, she has demonstrated an amazing work ethic and commitment to her role. This has resulted in a significant reduction in wait times for clients, increased access to outreach sites and improved health outcomes. Georgia is a conscientious worker who consistently applies the CORE values of NSW Health.

Allied Health Assistant/Technician Award

Rachael Murdoch, Allied Health Assistant
Older Persons Mental Health Inpatient Unit Wagga Wagga

Rachael embodies a positive can do attitude which in return has improved the team's culture and has left a positive impact on consumers recovery journey.

Rachael's compassion for consumers is seen in many forms such as organising group and 1:1 activities, running exercise and dance classes and many therapy based engagements such as assessments and interventions requested by the team. Rachael is a great advocate for her elderly consumers and their families and will go above and beyond to ensure consumers are receiving the most out of their admission.



A FOND FAREWELL



Allied Health Researcher Award

Dr Shannon Pike Occupational Therapist, Ambulatory Rehabilitation Service Wagga Wagga

Dr Shannon Pike is an Occupational Therapist who is dedicated and passionate about improving patient and clinician experience in the field of rehabilitation via research. Shannon has contributed to the available evidence for clinicians including being awarded with her PhD in 2021. Shannon has participated in many conferences to further clinician knowledge and translation of evidence into clinical practice.

Shannon exemplifies the MLHD CORE values in her drive to improve healthcare outcomes for our local and broader community, including empowering clinicians to provide exceptional rural healthcare that is tailored to people's needs. She is particularly passionate about rural healthcare and ensuring patients have access to the best resources available despite the barriers that come with living rurally.

Jeannine Delemare arrived in Wagga Wagga in 1977 and promptly penned a letter to Wagga Wagga Base Hospital to enquire whether there may be any positions for a pharmacist.

A graduate of Sydney University, Jeannine was a welcome addition to the team, and stayed on for 45 years until her retirement in August this year.

Jeannine had made one prior attempt at retiring. However the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine meant pharmacists were needed and she soon received a call.

"While others were putting their travel plans on hold, I was back at work travelling around the beautiful Murrumbidgee region as part of the vaccination outreach teams," said Jeannine.

"I had a lovely time! I met so many people and got to travel all around the District."

Jeannine has seen many changes over the years, but she loves to learn and said the changes kept things fresh.

When she first started at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital Pharmacy it was a supply pharmacy only. Under the leadership of David Kennedy it became a clinical pharmacy.

"This meant that we were more involved with the patients, their medication histories and care," said Jeannine.

Computers were introduced in the 1980's and Jeannine recalls David going to great lengths to encourage the transition.

"He used to hide the prescription books so we were forced to use the computers!"

Jeannine credits eMeds, the electronic medication management system implemented in 2018, as one of the best changes in pharmacy and patient care.

"eMeds is used by doctors, nurses and pharmacists to prescribe, order, check dispense and record the administration of medications. It has really improved patient care and safety," said Jeannine.

When asked what makes a great pharmacist, Jeannine did not hesitate.

"You need compassion and empathy. You thrive in a team environment and have a thirst for knowledge. You need to have that desire to get it right – that 'dog with a bone' attitude to follow it right through. You also need to be suspicious, and have the confidence to question when there is something that might not look right."

Walking around the pharmacy at Wagga Base Hospital, the team environment is evident.

"We are really like a family," said Jeannine. "It can be a hard gig but it's made easier by having a wonderful team who go out of their way to support each other.

"We have a lot of laughs!"

Jeannine became Chief Pharmacist in 2005. Handing over the reins to Cindy Patterson in 2018 was a very proud moment.

"Cindy always had the passion and ambition to become Chief Pharmacist," said Jeannine. "I wouldn't have stayed as long (or come back!) if it hadn't been for her."



"She started with me as an intern in 2004 – so it's been the longest handover in history!"

Cindy said Jeannine would be dearly missed by the team.

"It is more than just her leadership and professionalism – she genuinely cares about everyone. You can go to her for advice about anything," said Cindy.

Retirement for Jeannine will probably include relaxing on her acreage, a bit of volunteer work and spending time with her two daughters, who have both followed her into the medical field.

"My girls grew up around the pharmacy, one is now working in pathology and the other is studying pharmacy," said Jeannine.

Despite having no firm plans she has made one promise to herself.

"I will never be the person who says they don't know how they had time to work!" ■



GENEROUS DONATION

Thank you to the Wagga Wagga Koorinal Rotary Club who have generously donated a new Lumify Vascular Scanner to the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital.

Valued at over \$10,000, the Vascular scanner is a high-quality portable ultrasound device able to perform real-time investigational and interventional procedures at the bedside with ease.

"We are thankful to Rotary for their generous support and donation providing additional resources that assist staff and ultimately improve patient care." Mr Trgetaric said. ■

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NEW MODEL OF CARE TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES

People living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and/or Chronic Heart Failure (CHF) in the Murrumbidgee region are set to benefit from improved access to co-ordinated care in the community with an \$11.7 million investment over three years from the NSW Government.

Minister for Regional Health Bronnie Taylor said Living Well, Your Way will deliver pathways designed to streamline patient care for those living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) and reduce the rate of preventable hospitalisations.

“Murrumbidgee Local Health District has joined with the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network and local clinicians to increase early diagnosis and support for people to better understand and manage their condition on a day-to-day basis, reducing unnecessary admissions to hospital,” Mrs Taylor said.

“The new service uses digital platforms to better link patients from hospital to home, and will trial innovative technologies to support patients to manage their disease.”

Narelle Mills, Acting CEO of the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network, says people living with these chronic diseases have repeatedly been identified as a priority population in the Murrumbidgee’s Health Needs Assessment.

“This program will not only improve the way health services work together to provide care, but also improve outcomes for patients and address barriers to accessing timely care such as travel, wait times and out-of-pocket expenses.”



Murrumbidgee Local Health District Chief Executive, Jill Ludford said Living Well, Your Way connects rural clinicians and services in a one system approach for patients and includes engagement with pharmacies, peak bodies, and community groups.

“By working together we can build on existing services, reduce duplication and address gaps in service delivery,” said Ms Ludford.

Expressions of interest are being sought from the region’s healthcare providers for their involvement in this highly anticipated initiative, which will be delivered as the Living Well, Your Way Care Pathway.

Collaborative Commissioning is one of four programs under NSW Health’s priority to accelerate value-based healthcare, supporting local partnerships to deliver more coordinated, patient centred care in the community. ■

“ We were part of the ASCOT clinical trial at Wagga Base, which was trialling an anti-viral therapy to see if it was effective at reducing severe illness in people with COVID-19. ”

Hamish Patterson, Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist



THE RIGHT DRUG FOR YOUR BUG

If there is anyone who can convince you that microbes are fascinating it's Hamish Patterson.

As the Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, Hamish loves nothing better than figuring out the right drug for your bug.

On finishing school in Cootamundra, Hamish wasn't sure what he wanted to do, so he sought inspiration from his favourite subjects at school and headed to Canberra to study a general Bachelor of Applied Science, leaving his options open.

It was while living in a share house with a Pharmacy student that he found his direction.

"We'd spend hours discussing his assignments – I was hooked," said Hamish.

"I realised I'd always been interested in something as simple as having a headache – you take ibuprofen and it goes away – but if you didn't you'd still have a headache and your day would be ruined.

"I'd think 'how does that work? How does it happen? That's really cool!'

"By extension now I'm like that with every drug – how will it work? Why does it work for you and not for someone else?"

After completing his Pharmacy degree and internship, Hamish returned to the Murrumbidgee in 2017 for a management opportunity as the Deputy Director of Pharmacy with MLHD. He took on the role of Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist at Wagga Base Hospital three years ago.

"Infections and the different antimicrobials we can use to target these fascinate me," said Hamish. "The opportunity to specialise in that as a Pharmacist and to be involved in that aspect of a patient's care is really rewarding.

"We can guide therapy in terms of optimising doses and use dose calculation software to do therapeutic drug monitoring, to make sure we are getting effective use but preventing toxicity and side effects."

The field of antimicrobials and antimicrobial resistance is an emerging field. Ensuring accurate records and validated data enables Hamish to contribute by sharing that data and looking for opportunities to learn more.

"We present our data at a meeting of our peers where we look at our utilisation of antimicrobials, and if there are any trends and anomalies we can look into it further – for example is there an emerging resistant antimicrobial? Are we inadvertently creating resistance by using a certain type of treatment? Or are we perhaps jumping to the big guns first without considering some of the other options?"

Hamish cannot speak more highly of Dr Timothy Gilbey, MLHD's Infectious Disease Specialist.

"Dr Gilbey is such a wealth of knowledge, and so generous with his time," said Hamish. "If you have a question, and you're genuinely curious, he will spend the time to teach you and I really appreciate that."

"If I notice anything in our data that stands out I liaise with Dr Gilbey and we look into it a bit further- for example if we've used a lot of a specific antimicrobial in certain period we can tease it down further in case there's perhaps some resistant organisms that we need to monitor closely."

"There's a big focus on the data and ensuring you have reliable data – you have to have the confidence to challenge other members of the treating team so you need that validated data to back it up.

"At the end of the day what we're trying to find out is 'are we following best practice?' Because the consequence if we aren't is that we end up with more resistant bugs. Then we have to use broader spectrum antimicrobials which may be associated with more side effects and therefore increase length of hospital stay for a patient."

Antibiotic allergies are something that also interests Hamish, particularly penicillin allergies.

"About 10% of the population will have a penicillin allergy on their medical record, but up to 90% of those patients may not in fact have a true allergy. For example they may have self-reported it based on symptoms that may be attributable to the illness rather than the medication, or it may have been some time ago and changes to the way penicillin is manufactured may mean it is no longer current. We're also discovering people don't necessarily hold on to a penicillin allergy forever.

"For our patients in hospital there are real benefits to challenging a reported penicillin allergy (under close medical supervision of course). If we find you could safely receive penicillin it then opens up a whole family of antibiotics that we can use to help get you well as quickly and safely as possible. Penicillins are used and preferred for a range of infections. So that is something I am really looking forward to investigating further and seeing the benefits for our patients."

With his respect for data, and curious nature it is not surprising that Hamish would love to do more research in the future.

"We were part of the ASCOT clinical trial at Wagga Base, which was trialling an anti-viral therapy to see if it was effective at reducing severe illness in people with COVID-19.

"I'd love to be involved in more research in the future. It is really rewarding to know that you're contributing to something that will improve care for patients and potentially reduce the amount of time they spend in hospital."

Hamish was also keen to point out that he is just one part of a greater team.

"It's a really great team to be a part of, Dr Gilbey, my colleagues in pharmacy, the doctors, nurses, pathologists and microbiologists. We're all here to do our part to work out what is happening, and how we can make you well again." ■

MPHN celebrates award winners and finalists in Primary Healthcare Awards

Outstanding achievements in community wellbeing advocacy, health initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and leadership in general practice were recognised at the 2022 MPHN Primary Healthcare Awards on Thursday 3 November.

Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network Board Chair Dr Jodi Culbert acknowledged all eleven finalists and said the quality of each was a testament to the hard work, resilience and dedication.

“Although our awards recognise excellence in primary healthcare and community activity, our finalists also remind us of the incredible diversity, ingenuity and determination of our region and of the people who work hard to make a difference,” Dr Culbert said.

Lake Cargelligo GP Dr Khaled Bardawil was awarded the Outstanding Contribution to Leadership in Primary Healthcare award for 2022. Dr Bardawil has served his local community for the last 15 years and during the COVID-19 pandemic his work led to reducing vaccine hesitancy by de-stigmatising and demystifying information surrounding the COVID vaccines.

“I am deeply honoured to be recognised for this work and would like to thank MPHN as well as my team at Lake Cargelligo Family Practice,” Dr Bardawil said.

A highly commended prize was awarded in this category for the first time to MyStep to Wellbeing manager Amy Salmon.

“I am very proud of my team, and how they have grown in confidence and capacity. I am honoured to be recognised for the work I am leading to improve mental health outcomes for our communities,” Ms Salmon said.

A collection of community driven activities designed for older people was recognised as Community Grant of the Year. Greater Hume Shire Library and Youth Team Leader Susan Kane was pleased to accept the award on behalf of the festival committee.

“We thank MPHN for the support they have provided in the form of this grant and the recognition of the hard work undertaken to create the festival,” Ms Kane said.

Hay Aboriginal Medical Service was the recipient of the 2022 Innovation award and Team Leader Jean Woods was thrilled to acknowledge the hard work of her multi-disciplinary team.

“The program was created to ensure children in the community receive effective health checks and opportunities are available to



support families when more serious health concerns arise,” Ms Woods said.

The Integrated Team Care program delivered by Marathon Health and supporting 270 indigenous people in the Murrumbidgee region was awarded the Promoting Healthy Living Award.

“The ITC program is empowering people to change their lifestyles and manage their health to reduce negative health outcomes,” said Marathon Health Care Coordinator and Indigenous Project Officer Karen Ingram.

The 2022 Primary Healthcare winners and finalists are:

Outstanding Contribution to Leadership in Primary Healthcare

- Winner- Dr Khaled Bardawil, Lake Cargelligo Family Practice
- Highly commended – Amy Salmon, MyStep to Mental Wellbeing
- Finalist – Centacare School Wellbeing Program

Innovation

- Winner – Hay Aboriginal Medical Service
- Finalist – headspace Griffith CreateSpace
- Finalist – Wagga Wagga Local Health Advisory Committee

Promoting Healthy Living

- Winner – Marathon Health ITC program
- Finalist – Active Ageing program
- Finalist – Positive Living Skills

Murrumbidgee Grant of the Year

- Winner – Greater Hume Council Festival of Seniors Week
- Finalist – Lockhart Local Health Advisory Committee





YOUR REWARDING CAREER AWAITS



NURSING & MIDWIFERY SCHOLARSHIPS

Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) is encouraging people in the community to consider a career in nursing or midwifery, with support available through NSW Health cadetship and scholarship programs in 2023.

NSW Health Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Jacqui Cross said school leavers and people considering a career change should think about a rewarding career in nursing or midwifery.

“Nurses and midwives make a significant contribution to the public health system by caring and advocating for patients to ensure they receive the best possible health outcomes,” Ms Cross said.

“We are committed to supporting our nursing and midwifery workforce through a range of cadetship and scholarship programs.”

The Enrolled Nurse Scholarships offer a position in the Diploma of Nursing program, cover course fees and lead to employment as an enrolled nurse in a NSW Health facility, following standard recruitment and registration processes.

The Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Cadetship Program, and Aboriginal Undergraduate and Postgraduate Scholarships provide Aboriginal people the opportunity to receive financial and professional support during their university studies.

Christine Stephens, MLHD Director of Nursing and Midwifery said aspiring nurses and midwives can give back to their local community by choosing a career at NSW Health, with opportunities available in a variety of clinical settings.

“Our nurses are provided with opportunities in a variety of clinical settings to ensure they gain a range of experience and consolidate skills and knowledge developed whilst at university,” Ms Stephens said.

“Previous graduates have loved the learning opportunities provided at our regional facilities, and the reward of working and living in a vibrant and close-knit local community”.

Applications for Enrolled Nurse Scholarships, the Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Cadetship and Aboriginal Scholarships open on 9 January 2023.

The NSW Government announced the largest workforce boost in the nation’s history in the 2022-23 Budget with a \$4.5 billion investment over four years for 10,148 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to hospitals and health services across NSW. ■

For more information:

Enrolled Nurse Scholarships:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/scholarship/Pages/enrolled-nurse-scholarships.aspx>

Aboriginal Nursing & Midwifery Cadetship Program:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/scholarship/Pages/aboriginal-cadetships.aspx>

Aboriginal Undergraduate scholarship:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/scholarship/Pages/aboriginal-undergraduate-scholarships.aspx>

Aboriginal Post Graduate scholarship:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/scholarship/Pages/aboriginal-postgraduate-scholarships.aspx>

ALLIED HEALTH ASSISTANT SCHOLARSHIPS

A PATHWAY TO SUCCESS



Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) would like to congratulate the recipients of the HETI Allied Health Assistant Scholarships for 2022.

The HETI Allied Health Assistant Scholarship Program supports training for Allied Health Assistants (AHAs) and Pharmacy Assistants and Technicians (PATs) seeking to further develop their knowledge and skills. This has provided essential training pathways to numerous recipients across MLHD.

This supports the NSW Health AHA initiative, which aims to expand the utilisation of AHAs across NSW Health.

Kylie Stein, District Coordinator / Allied Health Assistants (AHA), said the program has attracted strong interest over the past few years with

over 52 scholarships awarded to people across a range of services and towns since 2015, including 17 people awarded scholarships in 2022.

“These scholarships provide a wonderful opportunity for new and existing staff to upskill in a positive and supportive work environment, enabling us to deliver high quality allied health services.

“Allied health assistants play a vital role in the support of allied health professionals particularly around the intensity of clinical care, allowing more time for allied health professionals to concentrate on complex tasks and improve clinical outcomes,” Mrs Stein said.

“We have been able to successfully support the recruitment and retention of trainees and clinicians in many regional areas, who are a vital part of the health care team, providing them with financial assistance to complete additional studies,” said Ms Stein.

Participants can flexibly undertake their studies, and able to enrol in all or part the Certificate, depending on their individual requirements.

“We have some wonderful success stories, where staff have used the scholarship to begin their career as an Allied Health Assistant and then gone on complete further studies as an Allied Health professional. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Information regarding the HETI Health Allied Health Assistant Scholarships is available on: www.heti.nsw.gov.au/Placements-Scholarships-Grants/scholarships-and-grants/allied-health-assistant-scholarship-program

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Holiday Checklist

Checklist

In the hustle and bustle of holidays, often the last thing we think about are our medications or first aid supplies.

It doesn't take much time to check, but forgetting them could ruin your holiday.

Remember your doctor could be going on leave and your scripts may run out. With this in mind, here's a handy "Holiday Checklist".

This list of common medications and first aid needs can be used as a reminder for getting your supplies early before the holiday break or to prepare for your trips away from home

- Sun Screen
- Insect Repellent
- Creams for insect bites
- Medications for minor pain (ie: paracetamol)
- Pain relief for children
- Antiseptic wash
- Antiseptic Cream
- Adhesive Dressings
- Bandages
- Triangular bandage
- Asthma Puffer
- Diabetic Medications
- Heart Tablets
- Other prescription drugs
- Ambulance Cover is up to date



FRESH FOR SUMMER

Di's Special Bruschetta

Ingredients

- 2 french baguettes
- 1.5 cups feta cheese -crumbled
- 3/4 cup plain greek yogurt
- 3 tablespoons, divided chopped fresh basil
- 2 clove garlic -minced
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1.5 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano leaves
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 3 large chopped tomatoes -seeds removed
- 1 large cucumber -peeled, seeded, and chopped
- 1/2 large red onion -diced

Instructions

1. Cut the baguettes on a diagonal into 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch slices (makes about 22 slices). Arrange into one layer on a baking sheet. Bake at 175 for 10 mins, turning bread once during cooking.
2. Add the feta, yogurt, garlic, and 1.5 tablespoons of basil to a small bowl and mash together with a fork. Store covered in the refrigerator for up to 8 hours.
3. In a small bowl, add the olive oil, vinegar, oregano, salt, and pepper. Whisk until well combined. Add the tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, and remaining basil. Stir to combine. Store covered in the refrigerator for up to 8 hours.
4. Divide the feta mixture between the bread slices. Spread into a thin layer on the toasted side of the bread. Top with the tomato mixture.
5. Optional: Drizzle Balsamic Glaze (this can be purchased at the supermarket in a bottle) over bruschetta

Notes

Slice the bread, and prepare the feta and tomato mixtures ahead of time for a quick assembly before serving.

Recipe supplied by Di Johnson,
Improvement Systems Manager, Clinical Governance

PHOTO GALLERY



Antimicrobial Awareness Week is a campaign to improve awareness and understanding of that resistance and encourage the best use of medicines among the public and health professionals. Antimicrobial resistance occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines, making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death.



Cootamundra: Nepalese staff at Cootamundra shared their Teej Day (celebration of husband's longevity) with the team. Shradha Shresthra and Meena Sherapunga Pun wore their Kurdhas. Meena, Shradha and some other Nepalese staff from Cootamundra teamed up and prepared a delicious feast for all staff to share.



Tumut: Healthy Kids Bus Stop



Deniliquin: Speech Pathology Week



Narrandera: Morning Tea for Occupational Therapy Week



ABOVE: MLHD is pleased to acknowledge the ongoing partnership with University of New South Wales (UNSW) and the significant role the university plays in pipeline of medical professionals to Wagga Wagga and the Murrumbidgee. Congratulations on the establishment of the new Biomedical Sciences Centre which allows country medical students to be trained for their whole training period - this really does position our region and establish the city of Wagga Wagga as a first choice training option to cultivate and foster medical professionals of the future.



Don Kendell Award recipient Kayla Hill with Jenny Roach from Holbrook.



Aboriginal Health Team Awards presentation



Diabetes Educator Maree Archer at Junee Hospital celebrates World Diabetes Day



RN Del Hill Young staff member of the month October 2022 celebrating 45 years of service to caring for the Young Community.

HOW TO SHARE:
Send your photos and stories
to our news team:
MLHD-news@health.nsw.gov.au





RH22 Medical Students Medical Conference

RURAL INSPIRATION FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

Local rural doctors made a wonderful contribution on Saturday 26 November to the 2022 Rural Health Medical Student conference.

Held in Coogee as part of the NSW Rural Doctors Network (RDN) annual conference, the day allowed students to hear from colleagues ahead of them on their medical training and career pathways. The honesty, compassion and humour with which they shared their stories was inspiring for everyone present. Students heard from rural specialists or specialist trainees not only in general practice but also in psychiatry, emergency medicine, obstetrics, retrieval medicine and basic physician training – demonstrating the breadth of opportunity in regional and rural medicine.

Guided by medical students from the National Rural Health Student Network (NHRSN) and the Australian Medical Association (AMSA) the RDN and NSW Regional Training Hubs (RTH) Network drew together a wonderful group of young rural doctors to tell their stories, often warts and all.

Rural Generalist Trainee

Dr Ariaah Steele Rural Generalist Trainee from Deniliquin charted the experiences that lead her to where she is living and working. A Sydney girl she became involved in rural health in her early days as a medical student at the University of Notre Dame (UNDA). With the RDN she spent time on Outreach programs, spent time in xx on a Bush Bursary and for her last two years of medical school was supported professionally and financially on an RDN Cadetship. Her last year of medicine she spent at UNDA's Rural Clinical School in Ballarat before starting her training as a junior doctor at Wagga Wagga Base

Hospital. During a rotation in Finley she meet a local lad and three years later is close by in Deni, working in both general practice and the local hospital and loving it!

Murrumbidgee's innovative Rural Generalist Training Program. More of Ariaah's story can be listened to at Destination Medicine© <https://www.destinationmedicine.com.au/podcasts/Dr-Ariaah-Steel-A-Rural-Convert>



Now working in Cootamundra Dr Tess Plattfuss is originally from Blighty near Deniliquin. She went to medical school in Queensland and completed her training as a junior doctor in Cairns and Rockhampton. During COVID she realised that she wanted to be closer to her family and has joined the Murrumbidgee Rural Generalist Training Program. Tess was able to share her stories of training and now working, as a GP Obstetrician Gynaecologist. She spends time in the Cootamundra Medical Centre as well as looking after mothers and babies in the Cootamundra Hospital.

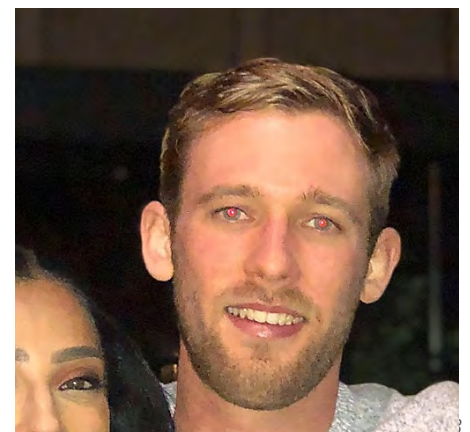


Dr Joel Armstrong who is currently doing a term in Drug and Alcohol Medicine at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney but is based at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital confided some of the challenges of being a first-year doctor but also the highlights so far. Joel also spent

There is a theme emerging here...Joel also spent time training in Deniliquin with Dr Steele and the team there.

Also based currently at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, Dr Marty Ryan who next year heads to Temora to further his training as a rural Generalist, expertly hosted a panel of young rural doctors doing their rural generalist training. He talked about the practical and professional benefits of the Murrumbidgee model of general practice training. Marty is also a member of the Rural Doctors Association

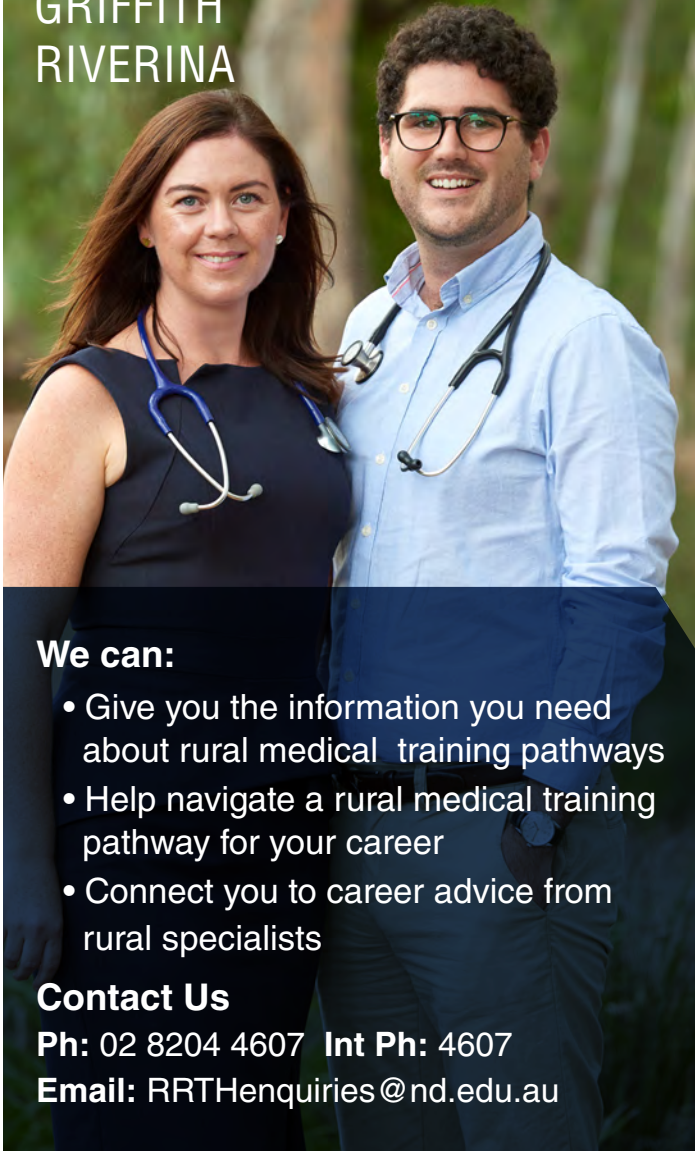
A highlight for the students was a hands-on session with the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The RFDS team included both doctors and flight nurses. For Saturday's exercise they recruited a visiting flight nurse from Alice Springs, an Intensivist working in RPA in Sydney and panellist and emergency doctor Khyarne Biles. The challenge for the students was to apply and share what they had already learned to support a stockman thrown from his motor bike at Innamincka, 664 kilometres from the nearest hospital and an RFDS service. They heard how RFDS distributes Medical Chests to isolated families and communities to aid first responders in similar situations and recognised the importance of supporting whoever is on the ground as well as the patient while they wait for retrieval.



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Sharon Longmore and Carly Silberberg, Nurse Unit Manager, Junee Hospital Carly Silberberg

SHARON LONGMORE'S LONG HISTORY WITH JUNEE MPS

Congratulations to Sharon Longmore, Assistant in Nursing (AIN) at Junee Hospital, who recently celebrated 35 years of service.

Loved by her colleagues and patients alike, Sharon's career with MLHD began as a cleaner, then wards person and eventually as an Assistant in Nursing following the completion of her studies in 2010.

"I started back as a cleaner back in 1987 and just loved the environment. Then we needed wards people, so I did that while I was studying for my AIN's, Sharon said.

"I just love working with the oldies, they are insightful and very funny at times. I enjoy my work and invest quality time with the patients I care for. Sometimes it's the little things that can make the biggest difference," Sharon said.

"I feel fortunate to be working with such a fantastic bunch of people, we all just get on with the doing and make sure our people are well taken care of," Sharon said.

Carly Silberberg, Nurse Manager at Junee Hospital, congratulated Sharon on her special achievement this week.

"35 years in the health service is no easy feat- and Sharon's skills, care and lovely personality really do shine through.

"We thank her for her dedication and contribution to the team, her patients and to MLHD over the past 35 years," Carly said. ■



HATS OFF FOR GENEROUS DONATION

West Wyalong Hospital Auxiliary was the lucky recipient of \$2000 last week, following the annual Melbourne Cup Gala Event hosted by Victoria racing, Bland Shire and Evolution Mining.

The community event was held to celebrate the Melbourne Cup visit to the town prior to the big race.

“The gold in the Melbourne Cup was mined here at West Wyalong, so we have a special attachment to the November’s big race, and we like to participate in a celebration of our own,” said Louise McCabe, president for the West Wyalong Hospital.

“We are grateful to Bland Shire and Evolution Mining for hosting the event and supporting us to support our community, Ms McCabe said.

Kylie Holland, Facility Manager of West Wyalong Hospital is excited the Hospital Auxiliary is to receive such a generous donation.

“Events such as this makes such a significant difference to our patients, consumers, clients and the community at large, and this generous donation helps to improve the comfort and experience of community members who access our services,” said Ms Holland.



Three charities benefited from the night including the West Wyalong Hospital Auxiliary, Can Assist and Country Hope which benefits our consumers in the community.

The gala dinner was supported by Victoria racing, Evolution Mining and Bland shire people in the community with a fabulous. ■

Pictured: Members of the West Wyalong Hospital Auxiliary at the Gala Event



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