

# WE ARE

Issue 6 | SUMMER 2023 | FREE

# Southern

Excellence in Care

Conversations  
on the highway



**In this issue:**

Cultural burn prepares hospital site  
Renal network celebrates tenth anniversary



Southern NSW  
Local Health District

# Do you travel long distances for specialised healthcare?



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



To find out if you are eligible



## Ask

your social worker  
or healthcare team



## Call

1800 478 227

or



## Visit

[iptaas.health.nsw.gov.au](http://iptaas.health.nsw.gov.au)



### Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme - IPTAAS

Scan the QR code to learn more.

# Working in the hospital

**Cooma Hospital Occupational Therapist Milly Crawford shares what her day looks like as a rural sole practitioner.**

“Every day is very different. Generally, I start my day on the ward meeting with the multi-disciplinary team discussing inpatients and referrals for Occupational Therapy (OT). I work on the ward most of the morning which could involve completing functional assessments for discharge planning, equipment trials, upper limb therapy, cognitive assessments, organising home visits, providing education to families and staff or establishing occupation focused goals with rehab patients.

After that, I take time to complete admin tasks and plan for my afternoon, which usually involves home visits with my community clients.

I could be travelling to a client’s home a couple streets away or (more often than not) their farmhouse 45 minutes south, past the shearing shed on the right, over two cattle grids before the green tractor with no service and, of course, shut the gate. While most of my referrals are for home modification requests, sometimes these visits can involve assistive aid prescription, visual retraining post stroke, personal care assessments, wheelchair scripting or provided training to care staff.

Returning to the office, I generally complete reports and reflect on my clients’ intervention plans writing a list of actions I need to complete for the following day.

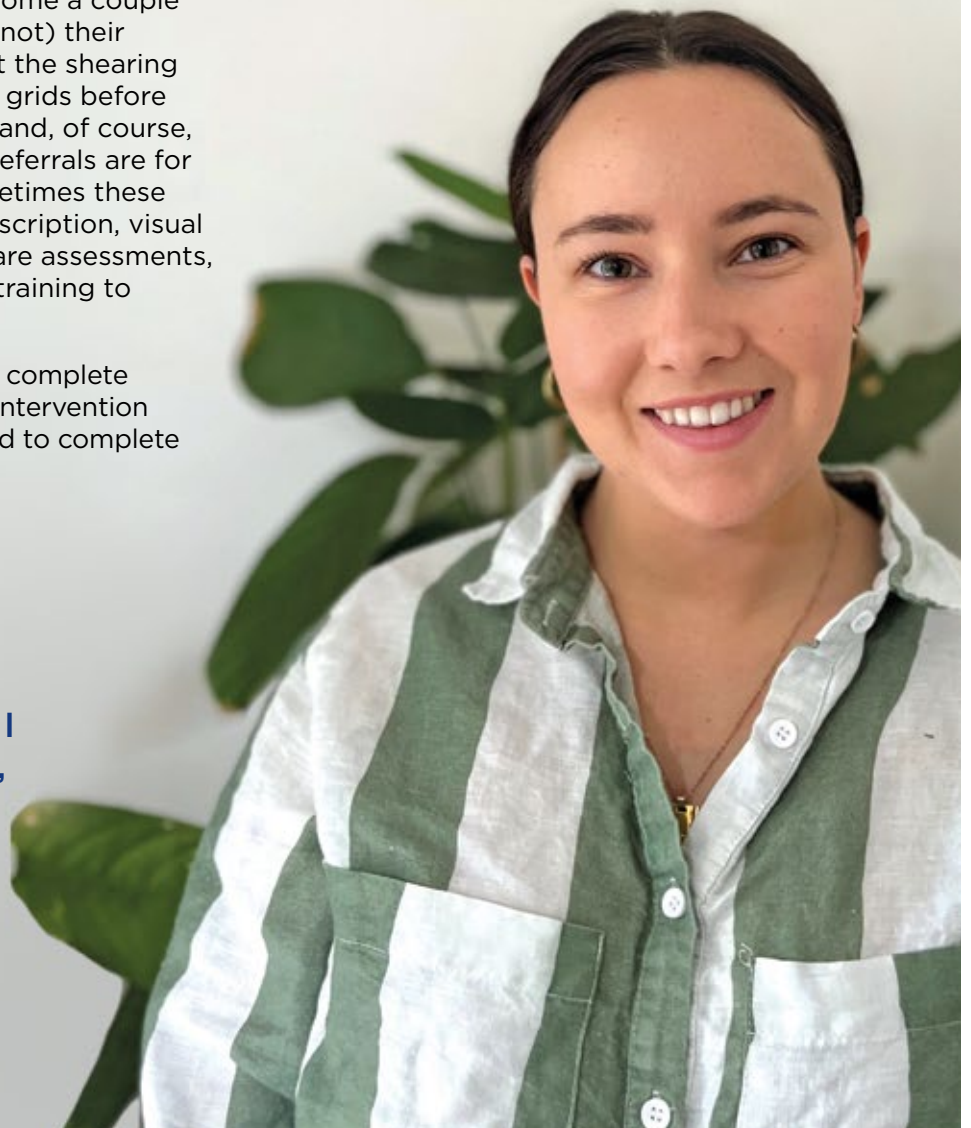
Working as an OT in a rural inpatient/outpatient setting enables me to have such an extensive scope of practice not limited to a particular field of service or speciality. Seeing a range of different patients is what I enjoy most in this setting, so every day is very different as a rural sole practitioner OT.

There are so many rewarding aspects of being an OT. Things don’t always go in ours or the client’s favour but when things do go right that’s what is most rewarding – seeing a client thrive and the impact our service can make to a person’s life is what makes all the perseverance and problem-solving worth it.”



**Seeing a range of different patients is what I enjoy most in this setting, so every day is very different as a rural sole practitioner OT.”**

*Occupational Therapist Milly Crawford works from Cooma Hospital.*





## Message from our Chief Executive

**As the year winds to a close, it's a chance for reflection and celebration of our achievements of the Southern team during 2022, and a valuable opportunity for me to recognise and thank all our staff and partner agencies for their commitment and support.**

In 2022, we again rose to the challenge, and we proved to be both robust and extremely flexible in the face of change. Both the number of patients we treat and the level of illness we see continues to rise, yet I never cease to be amazed by what our service delivers. At our recent Annual Public Meeting in Queanbeyan, we launched our annual Year in Review, featuring stories about how we are transforming our care.

It was a privilege in September to attend the cultural burn at the site of the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital. Work on the site will begin in earnest in 2023, and the new facility will assist us in our vision to deliver patient-centred health services closer to home. Our people are at the heart of what we do, so as the facility takes shape, we remain focused on strengthening our relationships and systems ahead of the transition.

This holiday period will see many of our services open as usual. Staff will be working around the clock delivering babies, tending to the ill, managing emergencies, feeding our patients and maintaining our facilities. For all those working over the holidays, we are truly grateful for your dedication.

I want to thank Southern's staff, Visiting Medical Officers and volunteers for the hard work and commitment they have shown over the past year. Our combined strength is what makes us successful as an organisation.

I wish you all a joyful and restful holiday season.

*Margaret Bennett*

**MARGARET BENNETT**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Take a  
look at our  
Year in Review



### Created by

Southern NSW  
Local Health District  
Media and Communications  
Department

### Writers

Emma Woolley  
Benjamin Hodgson  
Kyal Dorsett  
Renata Sheehan  
Vanessa Barratt

### Contributors

Brooke Boland  
Chelsea Maxwell  
Kate Goulding

### Designer

Ji Min  
Energy Design Studio  
ji@energydesign.com.au

### Advertising and editorial enquiries

If you'd like to contribute a story to *We Are Southern* magazine or pitch a story idea, please get in touch at [snswhd-media@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:snswhd-media@health.nsw.gov.au)

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Southern NSW  
Local Health District



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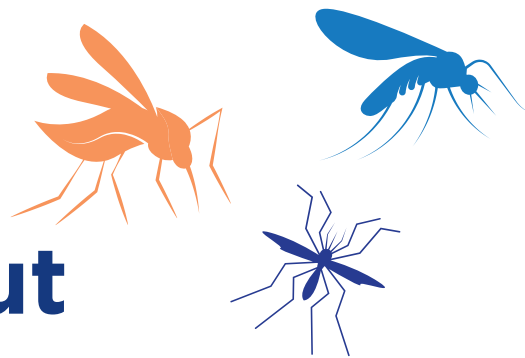
### Cultural burn spiritually rejuvenates land

Ceremonial land cleansing prepares the site of Eurobodalla Regional Hospital.

#### ***On the cover***

*Mental Health Consumer Advocate Beate Zanner*

# Watch out, mosquitoes about



Mosquitoes aren't just a nuisance – they can carry serious diseases.



The risk of mosquito-borne diseases is increasing in NSW due to the warm, wet weather forecast. This summer, it's important to take extra steps to protect yourself and your family by keeping mosquitoes away.

Mosquitoes can transmit serious diseases that are spread to humans through mosquito bites. A number of mosquito-borne diseases have been identified in NSW, most recently Japanese encephalitis (JE).

JE is a rare but serious disease caused by the Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) that is spread to humans by infected mosquitoes. Humans and animals are not able to pass JEV to other humans.

JEV is the only vaccine-preventable mosquito-borne disease in NSW. Most mosquito-borne diseases found in NSW don't have vaccines, so it is important to protect yourself against mosquito bites.

Protect yourself and your family:

- use insect repellent. The best mosquito repellents have diethyltoluamide (DEET), picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus
- wear long, loose fitting and light-coloured clothing when outside
- wear covered shoes
- do not spend lots of time outside at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active
- cover all windows, doors, vents, and other entrances with insect screens
- remove any containers that hold water where mosquitoes may breed
- use insecticide sprays, vapour dispensing units (inside), and mosquito coils (outdoors) to clear rooms and repel mosquitoes from an area
- use mosquito nets or screens

If we all take these small steps, we can help make sure that all of us and our community stay safe. The latest information can be found at [health.nsw.gov.au/mosquitoes](http://health.nsw.gov.au/mosquitoes)

## Vaccination now available to those living in Goulburn-Mulwaree LGA

NSW Health has expanded free access to Japanese encephalitis (JE) vaccination to residents living in affected regional areas to protect those most at risk. To check your eligibility, visit [health.nsw.gov.au/jevaccine](http://health.nsw.gov.au/jevaccine)



# Local flora showcased at Goulburn Hospital



**The walls of the \$165 million Goulburn Hospital and Health Service redevelopment have been brought to life, with the winning entries of a community photography competition on display.**

Entries were received from across the Goulburn area, with the artworks providing an important connection with nature, selected from Wattle, Boronia, Eucalyptus, Blue Bell and Lilac categories.

Chair of the Goulburn Arts Working Group John Gale said the competition encouraged the community to submit photos of local flora and was an opportunity to showcase the talents of the region.

“The winning entries feature as part of large-scale artworks at staff stations and lift walls, supporting wayfinding around the hospital and adding bursts of colour, while also acknowledging Traditional Owner’s use of local flora in bush therapies for recuperation and healing,” Mr Gale said.

Competition winner Renee Andrews from Dalton said it was great to see the flora photos brightening up the hospital corridors.

“I especially love that the photos have been taken of our local flora. These photos will help remind locals of their own natural environment when they are visiting the hospital,” Ms Andrews said.

Goulburn Base Hospital security officer Angus Robards, who won for his lilac and wattle photos, said the staff and the community appreciate the way the photos add colour and light around the hospital.

“It’s so nice for the people who work here and the people who visit because they have a bit of nature to look out on and it makes people feel relaxed,” Mr Robards said.

The Arts in Health Program is being delivered by Health Infrastructure in partnership with Local Health Districts, artists, and communities as part of NSW Health’s record \$11.9 billion capital works program to 2025-26.

*Photography competition winners Mick Irvine, Angus Robards and Renee Andrews*



# New elective surgery guide



*General Manager Corporate Services & Projects Sarah Galton & Executive Director Operations Fiona Renshaw with the new surgery guides.*

## Navigating your surgery journey just became easier with the release of two new guide booklets.

Elective surgery involves a necessary operation to treat a disease or injury that may not be critically urgent. The “Elective Surgery Guide - Southern NSW Hospitals” provides a listing of surgical procedures at the hospitals in our region.

The guide can help you to have a conversation with your medical team about the location of your surgery, including what options may be available close to home.

A second guide assists you to prepare for a surgical procedure. The “What You Need to Know About Your Surgery Journey” guide includes information on what to expect when you arrive at hospital, and care advice once you return home.

The guides are available through the Southern website ([snswhd.nsw.gov.au](https://snswhd.nsw.gov.au)), at local hospitals, GPs and Southern’s surgical admission offices.

# Director of Public Health retires

**Tracey Oakman, Director of Public Health for Southern and Murrumbidgee Local Health Districts, retired from her role in October, after 35 years of service to NSW Health, 19 of those in public health.**

Tracey was a strong and steady leader through every phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than a decade ago, even before swine flu had swept the globe, Tracey became passionate about educating the general public about the possibility of health pandemics in our lifetime.

Tracey decided to write a book – a piece of fiction titled ‘The Pandemic Plan’. And while it was published under the genre of “science fiction and fantasy”, Tracey’s foray into fiction has clearly proven prophetic.

To quote Tracey’s own words from a recent interview:

“I love public health because I believe it is the underlying foundation for keeping people healthy and safe, and that crosses all socioeconomic boundaries.

It helps the poor, the rich, the able and people who are disadvantaged. We provide the foundations that enable people to then look after their personal health.

That is my passion.”

*Director Integrated Care & Allied Health Lou Fox, Director Public Health Tracey Oakman & NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant at a recent presentation to celebrate Tracey’s service.*





# New guidelines launched



In NSW, nausea and vomiting is experienced by 65,000 women, and a further 1,045 women experience the most severe form of Hyperemesis Gravidarum.”



*Clinical Midwifery Consultant Claudia Stevenson.*

**Hyperemesis Gravidarum is an extreme form of nausea and vomiting experienced during pregnancy that can cause emotional, psychological, physical, and financial distress for pregnant women and their families. In NSW, nausea and vomiting is experienced by 65,000 pregnant women, and a further 1,045 women experience the most severe form of Hyperemesis Gravidarum.**

“A lot of people referred to Hyperemesis Gravidarum as morning sickness, and for centuries it’s been dismissed. Hyperemesis Gravidarum is a recognised disease in pregnancy,” explained Claudia Stevenson, Clinical Midwifery Consultant and Hyperemesis Gravidarum Project Lead at Southern.

NSW Health has now launched a new clinical care guideline that provide evidenced-based guidance to support the diagnosis and management of nausea and vomiting and

Hyperemesis Gravidarum. “Up until now, there’s been no state-wide guideline to provide consistency for care amongst clinicians or for women to know what to do,” said Claudia.

The guidelines introduce a new tool known as the Pregnancy-Unique Quantification of Emesis or PUQE-14 scoring index. This tool helps people assess the severity of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy by asking three simple questions about their nausea and vomiting in the last 24 hours.

“This tool is not just for diagnosis as to the patient’s classification of symptoms, it’s also used for monitoring and assessment of the effectiveness of the treatment that we’re providing women,” said Claudia.

The new guidelines also encourage better integration of hospital, community, and primary care providers.

“GPs, private health providers and hospital staff caring for pregnant women are encouraged to use the guidelines and refer patients early-on to local maternity service providers, as well as the Hospital in the Home program for patients who require early care of their symptoms. Those with severe symptoms can present to emergency. The aim is to provide the right care, in the right place, at the right time.”

# Cardiac rehabilitation helps heal hearts

**The Cardiac Rehabilitation Program is held weekly at Pambula Hospital. The program offers education and exercise for patients who have experienced a cardiac event, such as a heart attack or heart operations, or those with a higher risk including people who have diabetes.**

“Patients who are referred to our program have a choice. They can either have just an individual assessment with our exercise physiologist and the nurse, and get a home exercise program to follow, or we encourage them to come to our exercise course,” said Uta Conway, Cardiac Rehabilitation Coordinator at Pambula Community Health.

The exercise course runs over eight weeks, with one session each week at Pambula Hospital’s outpatient gym. Blood pressure is taken before and after exercise and guest speakers are invited to talk on relevant topics from oral health care to nutrition.

Uta stressed the importance of building up to moderate intensity exercise after a heart event. “Most people or their families might think, ‘Oh, it’s best not to do anything in case it triggers another heart attack.’ But really if you don’t exercise, it leaves you more prone to a problem,” she said. “We are here to help people feel comfortable and much more confident in being able to manage their conditions.”

*Registered Nurse Rebecca O’Duibhir,  
Clinical Nurse Specialist Uta Conway and Exercise Physiologist Abbey Dalton.*



# Supporting Goulburn families



**Tresillian in Southern is a Family Care Centre supporting families in the Goulburn and surrounding areas with breast feeding, sleep and settling, parenting support and maternal mental health issues.**

“We can come to them in their home, they can come and visit us in our own premises, or we can do it by video conferencing if that’s more convenient,” explained Kerry Ennis, Nurse Unit Manager at Tresillian in Southern, Goulburn.

The Goulburn service began in February with only one Early Childhood Nurse on staff. Since then, the service has grown and now has two full-time staff to meet demand.

“Where this service differs from normal early childhood service is that we have longer appointments, so we can spend a longer block of time with the mother, which just helps us to find out what it is that’s going on for the family, and what the mother wants for us to help support her with,” said Kerry.

The service works with families who have children aged 0-3 years of age and is an adjunct to Southern’s Child & Family Health Services. The Goulburn service is one of several Tresillian services in Southern NSW LHD.

*Nurse Unit Manager Kerry Ennis.*



# Welcome back Tim Keun

**Tim Keun previously completed his nurse practitioner masters at Queanbeyan and was acting Deputy Director of nursing at the hospital in 2020. After graduation, Tim went on to work at ACT Health. But he wasn't gone for long.**

Tim has now returned to Southern as the new Nurse Practitioner in Queanbeyan Hospital, bringing his experience in ED to Southern's growing Nurse Practitioner workforce.

"The ED [at Queanbeyan] is a really special place to me," said Tim.

"The team is wonderful, supportive, and friendly. It's definitely a team that's trying to serve the community in providing high quality care. That's why I was keen to come back, because those values align really closely with my own."

Kassandra Packwood, Site Manager and Director of Nursing and Midwifery at Queanbeyan said she is excited to welcome Tim as the new Nurse Practitioner at ED.

"This is a skilled, autonomous practitioner in Emergency that will help us serve our community better, and is a showcase of the scope of nursing," she said.



*Emergency Nurse Practitioner Tim Keun.*



## Launch of Alcohol and Other Drug Service Charter



*Clinical Director Alcohol & Other Drugs Dr Tony Gill, District Manager Alcohol & Other Drugs Tash Lutz and District Director Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Damien Eggleton.*

**Southern's Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) service have launched a Service Charter, outlining the rights of people who use our alcohol and other drug treatment services.**

The charter is the first of its kind for AOD services in NSW and outlines 13 promises that Alcohol and Other Drugs staff make to each other and consumers. It has been developed in consultation with service managers, clinicians and peer workers.

During a gathering of the District's AOD teams in Bungendore, District Director for Mental Health and Alcohol & Other Drugs Damien Eggleton recognised the teams' achievements and officially launched the Charter.

The Service Charter is on display in all of Southern's AOD facilities.

# The insider guide to social work



**Social workers are allied health professionals who help people who are in crisis and need support. We asked the Monaro Network social work team more about their role, and how the service can help you.**

Social workers are trained at university in human behaviour, families, social justice and human rights. They must meet certain professional standards and are accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). Some social workers have additional training in mental health issues. These are called Accredited Mental Health Social Workers (AMHSW).

Social workers can be employed across a range of teams such as hospital social work, child protection, youth justice, mental health, and disability support. Not everyone working in these roles can call themselves a social worker.

*Ravira Dzimba leads the social work department in the Monaro Network.*



**Social workers can be employed across a range of teams such as hospital social work, child protection, youth justice, mental health, and disability support.”**

*The Monaro Network  
Social Work team.*



### **We can help you make difficult decisions**

We can help you to understand a new diagnosis or help you and your care team to identify any risks or concerns. We can provide you with motivational counselling to make changes or link to you with support services. If required, we can advocate for you to have equitable access to services.

### **We can help you face life's challenges**

Social workers usually see people when they are facing some sort of crisis, such as family violence, homelessness or mental ill health. We only become involved where patients and families have asked for support for themselves or someone else. Social workers and the person requiring support then form a working relationship to work together on the issues identified.

### **We can help link you with support services**

Social workers provide counselling to individuals and groups, information and links to other support services. We will help you get the help you need, such as emergency accommodation, financial support, and health or legal services. We will help coordinate the different support providers, advocate for you, and help you to navigate the healthcare system.

### **We work to help families stay together**

One myth about social work is that we take children away from their families. Social workers do work as part of child protective services and teams, and are often responsible for assessing the risk of harm, however the primary aim of social work is to support families who are experiencing difficulties to stay together where it is safe to do so.

### **We work all over Southern**

You can find us in hospitals, community health centres, mental health services, and alcohol and other drugs services. To access Southern's social work service, phone Community Health Central Intake on **1800 999 880**.



**We will help coordinate the different support providers, advocate for you, and help you to navigate the healthcare system.”**

# Renal network celebrates tenth anniversary



**When the bushfires hit in 2019 it impacted the lives of many patients receiving medical treatment in our region.**

In Moruya, the dialysis centre had to close suddenly, but because the ACT/SNSWLHD Renal Network had long been established, patients were able to continue treatment in Canberra.

“We had to air lift the patients to Canberra. However, because of the Network we were able to manage the whole thing, including having a nurse from Moruya support the patients in Canberra,” explained Dr Girish Talaulikar, Medical Lead of Renal Medicine at Southern.

“The clunkiness of interjurisdiction care provision was essentially minimised or erased.”

The Renal Network is now entering its tenth year and continues to offer a range of services for patients with various stages of renal impairment across ACT and Southern NSW. Renal Services for residents in Southern NSW are provided under a Renal Agreement between Canberra Hospital and the Local Health District.

Dr Talaulikar describes the network as a scaffold that creates opportunities for new models of care, particularly around virtual care, which is so important for the region. It encourages education and collaboration between nurses and allied health professionals beyond the South Coast of NSW, forging

*Our renal units are staffed by trained renal nurses.*



**It's a basic human right to have access to high quality tertiary health care. And we have followed that in its spirit."**

new alliances that improve terms of care for transplant patients and increase the region's ability to deal with complex surgical issues.

"I'm very proud that most patients who require renal care in Southern are able to get renal care in Southern. They don't have to travel anywhere to get access to tertiary care. It has been particularly rewarding to provide care to patients who need it the most and who can afford it the least," Dr Talaulikar said.

"We are privileged to serve the community. We serve the community best when we take healthcare to their doors, so they are not disadvantaged. It's a basic human right to have access to high quality tertiary health care. And we have followed that in its spirit."

The ACT/SNSWLHD Renal Network came from an agreement between Southern and ACT Health.

"With the Renal Network we have melted the borders, and that is key to providing seamless care. Over 100 people work in the Network with three different employers, we have Canberra Health Services, Southern, and then a private dialysis provider, Baxter Health Care. All three operate under the same governance because they all serve the same community," said Dr Talaulikar.

"We gain more when we work together and not against each other," he added.

*We have renal units located across Southern offering dialysis to people with end stage kidney disease.*



# Cultural burn spiritually rejuvenates land

**A ceremonial land cleansing was held on 8 September 2022 on the site of the new \$260 million Eurobodalla Regional Hospital Development, as part of an ancient Aboriginal tradition used to regenerate Country and prepare the land as a safe and welcoming place.**

Led by Aboriginal Elders and knowledge holders on Yuin Country, the event included a traditional smoking ceremony and cultural burn and was the first to be carried out on a NSW hospital project site.

Yuin Elder Uncle Bunja Smith said cultural burning is an ancient fire practice which has been used by Aboriginal people for over 60,000 years.

“For millennia Aboriginal people managed the land through cultural burning - it was one of our

farming and land management practices to care for Country and will help to restore the land to create a healthy foundation from which the new hospital can grow,” Uncle Bunja said.

“Cleansing the land is an integral part of our connection with Country to restore and rejuvenate the land spiritually, and today’s ceremony signifies that this hospital will be a healthy and safe place where the whole community can come to be healed.”

*A ceremonial land cleansing regenerated Country and prepared the land as a safe and welcoming place.*





The event included a Smoking Ceremony and ceremonial dances by local South Coast cultural practitioners from Muladha Gamara.

The new hospital's design is being guided by local Aboriginal knowledge to build connections with Country including the use of Dhurga language to support wayfinding around the hospital campus and the inclusion of a Meeting Place.

The Eurobodalla cultural burn was performed ahead of work commencing on-site later this year, by a team led by local Aboriginal cultural burn practitioner Andrew White, from the Batemans Bay Local Aboriginal Land Council who has been conducting cultural burns in the Eurobodalla and surrounding region for more than 10 years.

The Eurobodalla Regional Hospital will support core clinical services to be delivered at a role delineation Level Four and will provide more health services than are currently available at both the Moruya and Batemans Bay hospitals combined, as well as an overall boost to bed capacity.



*A cultural practitioner from Muladha Gamara performs the Smoking Ceremony.*

**Scan to watch the video.**



*Yuin Elder Uncle Bunja Smith said cultural burning is an ancient fire practice which has been used by Aboriginal people for over 60,000 years.*



# Demystifying access to mental health services

Southern's Mental Health Access Team works around the clock to connect people with the right mental health care.



The Access Team experts have everything needed to connect you with supports that are local and accessible.”

The Access Team (formerly known as Triage Emergency Care Support — TECS) is often the first point of contact for anyone looking for mental health support in Southern NSW.

The team, staffed with mental health clinicians, are on-hand to discuss your concerns and determine if you need ongoing mental health care. They can provide information about available options such as counsellors, therapists, and public mental health services or hospitals. They also provide information about local support groups, partner organisations, mental health care plans via your GP, and resources for families and carers.

Tracy, who manages the team, says that anyone can call at any time.

“Essentially, we are a 24/7 mental health phone line service. We have a “no wrong door” approach. You might want help talking to your GP about a mental health plan, or you have concerns about a family member and are looking for information and support,” she says.

The Access Team experts have everything needed to connect you with supports that are local and accessible.

Contacting the team is simple: dial the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511.

The number is for anyone in NSW, but callers are redirected to local teams. You’ll connect with someone who knows the area. They’ll talk with you about your mental health and the supports you may be looking for. They know the local community and will provide you with options for care which may include local mental health teams, or other health providers including your GP.

“We’re really familiar with the local services available and the waiting times to access services. We have close relationships with our community teams and inpatient colleagues. We know the system and know how to navigate it, and we can guide you to the right place,” says Tracy.

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health, don’t hesitate to reach out to the Southern NSW Local Health District Mental Health Access Team. These dedicated mental health professionals are here to help.

**Call anytime on 1800 011 511.**



**Scan to watch Tracy talk about the service.**

# Conversations on the highway



**Goulburn's Sue Macey says that Southern's Transport for Health service has been a life-saver.**



Diagnosed with bowel cancer earlier this year, she was referred to the Canberra Region Cancer Centre for radiation therapy and surgery.

After the loss of her husband, Sue moved into Goulburn from Marulan, and no longer felt confident driving. Sue was referred to Transport for Health by Southern's Oncology service following her diagnosis to help her access treatment options in Canberra.

Every weekday for five weeks, volunteer drivers from the Transport for Health service picked Sue up from her home and drove her along the Federal Highway to Canberra for radiation therapy treatment. It's a common journey for patients from Goulburn with a cancer diagnosis.

Sue particularly enjoyed the camaraderie of the drivers on the long drives to Canberra.

"I've met some absolutely wonderful drivers," said Sue. "They are kind and helped me by talking about their experiences, so I didn't feel alone."

The conversations in the car are also the highlight of each trip for Volunteer Patient Driver Steve Chapman.

"I have learnt so much from the patients I have driven. I am in awe of their remarkable journeys through life and what they hold dear," said Steve. "They are courageous, undaunted, worried, sometimes anxious, engaging, delightful, and all are greatly appreciative of the service."



She makes each patient and driver feel as if nothing is too much trouble, plus she is always exceptionally organised.”



*Transport for Health Support Officer Leanne Backhouse.*

“Discussions involve a wide range of varied topics including medical procedures, life-stories, family and family history, social issues, changes in society and much more,” continued Steve.

“However, sometimes our patients will just want to sit quietly in the car and reflectively look at the scenery. Other times they may only want to listen to music. Those who have undertaken chemotherapy or radiation may want to quietly doze.”

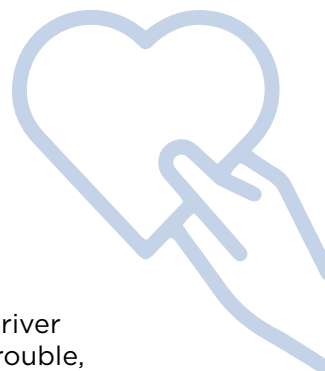
Sue said, like herself, the drivers are often retired people, with lived experience of cancer or chronic health conditions. Sue said she is grateful for the empathy and kindness they showed her when she became unwell during radiation therapy.

Sue also singled out Transport for Health Support Officer Leanne Backhouse as instrumental in helping her feel at ease using the service, a sentiment echoed by Steve.

“She makes each patient and driver feel as if nothing is too much trouble, plus she is always exceptionally organised,” he said.

Sue plans to continue to use the service as she prepares for surgery to further treat her cancer and is reflective about her cancer journey.

“Without the service, I don’t know what I would have done.”



# Sleigh your health and wellbeing goals this festive season



**As social events begin to ramp up with majority focused on food and drink, Health Promotion Officer Chelsea Maxwell offers some tips to help you navigate the festive season with minimum fuss.**

Before I share some tips and tricks to make the Christmas season a little easier to navigate let's get one thing straight: the festive season is spread over a few weeks and indulging for a couple of days isn't going to ruin all the hard work you've put in to being healthy and active over the past 12 months. It will however add a whole new level of Christmas cheer to your life.

## **Freedom**

It is the time to give yourself freedom, let go of your strict food rules you might usually follow during your normal work week. This is a special time to cherish with loved ones, there is no time to be classifying foods as good or bad. Let yourself enjoy all the food you want to eat. This is the time to eat whatever you want, whenever you want, all in moderation.



## Identify your hunger cues

We can all be guilty of eating when we are bored or emotional, perhaps even when we are thirsty. Before you decided to get another helping of Christmas lunch or a cheeky extra slice of pudding, think to yourself is my tummy rumbling? Am I actually hungry or do I just need something to drink? Does my tummy feel empty? Identifying hunger cues will help you not overeat and avoid the afternoon sluggish, bloated feeling.

## New year, new me

I'm sure we are all familiar with the saying new year, new me and many of us may use it as an excuse to pile on extra food to our plate. Although the new year is just around the corner and a great time to start some new habits and have a complete health reset you need to let go of this mentality and instead focus on everything in moderation. Eating in moderation will help you enjoy all the food in front of you without overeating and will help stay healthy and maintain a healthy weight throughout the Christmas season.

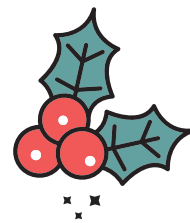
## Don't skip meals

Skipping meals during this time may seem like a good idea to help lower your calorie intake for the day however skipping meals, especially breakfast, may end up increasing our overall calorie intake as we give in to hunger later in the day.

Eating a small breakfast before Christmas lunch will not only help you eat less at lunch and avoid hunger eating, it will also kick start your metabolism, boost your energy level and aids in weight management.

## Keep up your healthy habits

Don't forget to keep up with your regular exercise. Whether you usually go on a daily walk, attend a spin class or do yoga keeping these habits up over Christmas will help with digestion, metabolism and energy levels. It is also important to prioritise getting enough sleep each night to help with stress levels and allow your body and mind to rest and reset for the next big day.



The Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service is a free service from NSW Health that provides you with the support you need to reach your own healthy lifestyle goals. Starting your Get Healthy journey is easy.

- Call 1300 806 258, Mon-Fri / 8am-8pm
- Register online [www.gethealthynsw.com.au](http://www.gethealthynsw.com.au)
- Ask your GP or Health Professional for a referral



**get healthy**  
Information & Coaching Service

# Mental health for our mob

It can be hard to know what support is out there.



**Want to have a yarn with someone?**

**Here are three options:**



Call the NSW Mental Health Line 1800 011 511  
for advice and information



Chat with your GP or healthcare provider.  
They will guide you in the right direction.



Visit a nearby Community Mental Health Centre.  
Scan the QR code to find the nearest one.

