

WE ARE

Issue 2 | Summer 2022 | FREE

Southern

NEWS FROM SOUTHERN NSW LHD

Excellence in Care



In this issue:

Care and Kindness Charter launched
Our COVID-19 responders
Aboriginal workforce increase



Health
Southern NSW
Local Health District

Get to know Southern NSW Local Health District


Our Story



Our Future
A recognised leader in rural healthcare



Our Purpose
To improve the wellbeing of the community we serve



Our Values
Collaboration, Openness, Respect, Empowerment

Our people are at the heart of what we do. We are committed to building a strong, vibrant culture that demonstrates our values in action. Our values underpin how we care for our patients, staff and the community every day.



Collaboration



Openness



Respect



Empowerment

Elevate - Together as One

Elevate describes the way we work together at Southern NSW Local Health District. It signifies our passion and responsibility to ensure that we focus on lifting our people and performance to provide the high level of support and care that our staff, patients and community deserve.

The Elevate logo colours remind us of the geographical diversity within our region as we provide services in our communities reaching from the mountains to the sea. From sunny beaches and picturesque tablelands to Mt Kosciusko's snowy mountain peaks, our network of facilities and services joined together to ensure we are delivering high quality, consumer-centred services.

We have a long history of providing excellent, safe care for our people and have worked tirelessly to overcome tragedy and disruption in our region. As we continue to engage our people, support recovery and improve outcomes, the arrow in the Elevate logo reminds us to also focus on the future with clarity, purpose and direction.



'Together as one' is our mantra to be united in providing high quality, safe care to support our communities to lead healthy lives. We depend on the engagement of our nearly 4,000 staff, doctors and volunteers as we strive towards greater alignment of goals, consistency of values in action, together with systems and processes that elevate our performance and outcomes. We are diverse, geographically spread and provide a vast array of services across many sites, however, we join together as Southern NSW Local Health District with a shared passion that enables us to provide services that meet the needs of those we support.

'Together as one' we are building an organisation where our patients, consumers, our people and community can see and feel the difference in how we provide care and support.

To learn more about Southern NSW Local Health District and its future direction, read Strategy 2026 at bit.ly/SNSWLHDStrategy2026

Helping in the hospital



Over 200 volunteers support Southern's health facilities. From making coffees in the cafes to assisting people in aged care facilities, our volunteers are an integral part of the healthcare we provide.



Auxiliary members, Penny Daniel and Glenda Arton, volunteering in the Queenbeyan Hospital cafe.

Volunteers bring warmth, compassion and support to many patients and visitors, and they are greatly valued by our staff. Each year, Southern recruits volunteers to assist in a variety of programs in the Local Health District. You can read more about our volunteer programs on pages 18-19.

We Are Southern newsletter

Stay up to date with what's happening at your Local Health District by subscribing to the *We Are Southern* newsletter. Released early each month, the newsletter will let you know what's on and what's new at Southern. Content will include staff profiles, behind-the-scenes stories, new developments and community engagement opportunities.

The newsletter will also let you know when each quarterly issue of *We Are Southern* magazine is ready to view online.

If you haven't already subscribed, visit bit.ly/wearesouthern to sign up for free! Or scan the QR code on this page.

To provide feedback about *We Are Southern* email snswhd-media@health.nsw.gov.au



Editorial

WE ARE
Southern
Excellence in Care



Message from our Chief Executive

Happy new year to our wonderful staff, volunteers, patients, consumers, community members and holiday visitors.

I know the festive season was a difficult time for many, but I hope you managed to enjoy some restorative time with family and friends.

I want to acknowledge with pride and gratitude, the resilience, capability and commitment of our staff. Many of them missed out on planned leave or holidays so they could support COVID-19 testing, vaccination, virtual care and community outreach.

Despite the challenges of the past few years there are many silver linings and positive lessons to take us forward into 2022. Here are some of the ways Southern has shone and grown throughout the pandemic:

Growth of virtual care

As you will read more about on pages 14-15, our teams created virtual COVID-19 wards to care for people in the comfort of their own homes. Virtual care will continue to be expanded as an option for people to receive quality care without having to spend long periods in hospital.

New and strengthened partnerships

Southern has worked closely with community groups, councils, charities, police, emergency services, schools and childcare centres to coordinate many elements of the COVID-19 response. These strengthened partnerships are already leading to new joint projects.

Flexibility and adaptability

Change has been the only certainty over the past two years. Our facilities have continuously updated systems, processes and messaging to adapt at every stage of the pandemic.

Kindness and compassion

Our Care and Kindness Charter, detailed on pages 20-21, launched in 2021 to guide our interactions with patients, carers, families and our work colleagues. It reminds us to prioritise respect and compassion for each other, no matter how busy or stressed we feel.

Margaret Bennett

MARGARET BENNETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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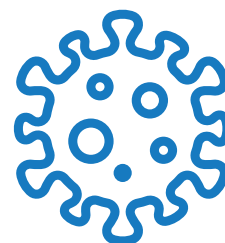
Workforce boost

Access to Aboriginal mental health services is set to increase this year.

On the cover

Physiotherapist Peter Morrison at work in the rehabilitation gym at Queanbeyan Hospital.

I have COVID-19, what should I do?



Don't worry. Rising case numbers across NSW means that many of us will contract COVID-19. The good news is that most fully vaccinated people under 65 years of age will experience COVID-19 as a few days of mild illness or even no symptoms at all.

Most symptoms can be managed with:

bed rest



regular paracetamol and ibuprofen to relieve pain and fevers



throat lozenges for a sore throat



keeping hydrated with regular sips of water



Continue to take any medications you have been prescribed as usual. If you are unsure about continuing to take your current medication or treatment, or have any concerns about your health, call your doctor.

Please contact your GP or call the **NSW Health COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line on 1800 960 933** if you are pregnant, or if you have a chronic condition including:

- severe, chronic or complex medical conditions (including cardiac, respiratory, renal or neurodevelopmental)
- immunocompromised (weakened immune system), including if you are on chemotherapy, have had a transplant or are on other medications that affect your immune system
- diabetes
- obesity
- severe mental illness.

There are effective treatments available for people at risk of severe disease from COVID-19. If you need other clinical support call the **NSW Health COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line on 1800 960 933**.

If you develop severe symptoms (particularly severe headache or dizziness, shortness of breath, chest pressure or pain) you should call Triple Zero (000) and tell the ambulance staff that you have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

What do I need to do?

You and your household contacts must isolate at home

You must self-isolate at home for 7 days from the date you got tested, even if you are fully vaccinated. Self-isolation means staying in your home or accommodation and remaining separated from others. Your household contacts must also self-isolate for 7 days. You can only leave self-isolation after 7 days if you do not have a sore throat, runny nose, cough or shortness of breath. You will receive an SMS from NSW Health after 7 days, but you do not have to wait for this SMS to leave self-isolation if it has been 7 days since you were tested. For example, if you were tested at 10am on Tuesday, you can leave isolation at 10am on the following Tuesday if you do not have any of these symptoms.

Tell your social contacts that you have tested positive

Testing positive to COVID-19 means that you may have spread COVID-19 to others. You may have been infectious from two days before you developed symptoms, or two days before you tested positive if you did not have symptoms.

You should tell any social contacts that you spent time with while infectious that you have tested positive. This includes friends and other people you have met socially, such as friends you had dinner with, people you met up with at a pub, club or social function, friends or family who visited your home.

Hospital highlights

Launch of Eurobodalla Regional Hospital masterplan

The masterplan for the new \$260 million Eurobodalla Regional Hospital at Moruya was revealed at a site visit by the NSW Premier Dominic Perrottet and Member for Bega Andrew Constance MP in December.

'We've listened to the community, experts in health planning and our clinical and allied health staff. They want this new hospital to grow with the residents of the Eurobodalla and that's what my government is delivering,' Mr Perrottet said.

The Eurobodalla Regional Hospital will be built to accommodate a Level 4 health facility.

The hospital will feature the latest technology and models of care. This will include an improved Emergency Department capacity, specialist consultation rooms, an expansion of medical imaging including a second x-ray machine and MRI, as well as other amenities including space for staff education and training.

The masterplan and early designs have been prepared in collaboration with clinicians, operational staff, local Aboriginal community representatives and community members.

The site acquisition process is proceeding, and early and enabling works are expected to start in 2022.

Construction of a facility of this size generally takes between two to three years to complete and is expected to open to patients in 2025.

The new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital will include:

- ✔ An Emergency Department
- ✔ An eight bed Intensive Care Unit (ICU) /Close Observation Unit (COU)
- ✔ Increased capacity for chemotherapy treatments
- ✔ Surgical and operating theatres
- ✔ Expanded medical imaging, including MRI and additional X-ray
- ✔ Ambulatory care for community outpatient services
- ✔ Paediatric and maternity services - including inpatient beds
- ✔ Flexible mental health beds associated with the medical inpatient unit
- ✔ Enhanced education and training facilities.



Pictured (L to R): Craig Brown, Cara Young (Close Observation Unit Nurse Unit Manager), Kathryn Lyons (Site Manager/Director of Nursing and Midwifery), Meegan Connors (General Manager Coastal Network).

Close Observation Unit opens at Moruya Hospital

People with complex medical or surgical needs across the Eurobodalla will benefit from the new Close Observation Unit (COU) that opened at Moruya Hospital in December.

The COU opened with four treatment spaces but will expand to seven in 2022. It will improve the capacity for clinical response and support new models of care in preparation for the planned Intensive Care Unit at the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital.

Early designs of the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital Development, artist impression.



More information about how stakeholders and community members can get involved in the project is available at www.eurobodallahs.health.nsw.gov.au

Vaccinations for children

Southern started providing COVID-19 vaccinations for children aged 5-11 on Monday 10 January when the age group became eligible in Australia.

More than 1100 doses were administered at our clinics in the first week.



Children aged 5-11 are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations.

The paediatric Pfizer vaccine was approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for use in children aged 5-11 years following careful evaluation of data that showed it is safe and effective. Even though COVID-19 in children is often milder than in adults, there's strong evidence to support vaccinating children, including:

- Vaccines give the immune system a helping hand. By vaccinating your child, you're helping to protect them from serious illness from COVID-19 and possible long-term effects.
- Vaccination also helps to protect friends, family and the community, including vulnerable people of all ages, by helping to reduce transmission.
- Vaccination helps reduce disruption to school and learning.

Southern encourages parents to book a vaccination appointment for their child as soon as possible. Each of its three clinics in Bega, Goulburn and Queanbeyan operate special paediatric days for ages 5-11. In Bega, the days are Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The days in Goulburn are Thursday and Saturday, and in Queanbeyan the days are Tuesday and Saturday.

After their vaccination, children will receive a Super Brave certificate and sticker.

To book at one of these clinics, a GP clinic or pharmacy near you, visit covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/

Booster interval reduced

On Friday 21 January, the interval between receiving a primary course (two doses) of COVID-19 vaccinations and the booster dose was reduced to three months at NSW Health clinics.

If you're due for the booster vaccination, visit the Vaccine Clinic Finder at covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/booking/ to make an appointment at a NSW Health clinic near you.

Southern will also operate walk-in clinics throughout the Local Health District on various dates and times. For up to date details visit: bit.ly/Southernvaccine



Southern recognised at New Year's Eve celebrations

Cooma Hospital's Deputy Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Jo Caldwell, was featured in a 'thank you health workers' light show on the Sydney Harbour Bridge as part of the New Year's Eve fireworks display.

While amazed to see her photo projected on to the Harbour Bridge pylon, Jo was quick to praise her colleagues in all departments at Cooma Hospital. Jo says we couldn't have got through the last year without all of the wonderful people working together behind the scenes.



Jo Caldwell's image seen projected on Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Mental health review and action plan

Following a detailed, independent review of Southern NSW Local Health District's non-acute mental health services, the District can confirm all 18 recommendations have been accepted and an action plan developed to further improve mental health care.

The report noted the District's focus and commitment to providing high quality, safe, accessible and contemporary non-acute mental health services, while also making the following recommendations:

- Enhance the Lived Experience Workforce
- Improve drug and alcohol services and support
- Improve accessibility of information for mental health consumers, families and carers
- Raise the profile of inpatient non-acute mental health services

The independent, expert panel included a psychiatrist, a mental health director of nursing and a person with lived experience of mental illness. The review process included inspections of the District's facilities; interviews with staff, consumers, families and carers; review of District documentation; submissions from community members and stakeholders; and a review of current literature and best practice models of care.

With the recommendations being accepted in full, the District has prepared its formal response, which includes a range of actions to be implemented within the next 12 months, notably:

- No change to bed numbers at Goulburn's Ron Hemmings Unit (non-acute inpatient unit)
- Employment of six additional Lived Experience positions across the District
- Employment of three new Aboriginal mental health clinicians in Goulburn, Eurobodalla and Bega
- Development of a new and improved District-wide model of care for non-acute mental health services
- Expansion of virtual care infrastructure and teams across the District

This issue of *We Are Southern* magazine features an article about Southern's recruitment of Aboriginal mental health clinicians on pages 16-17.

Southern NSW Local Health District is excited to be hosting the 2022 Aboriginal Mental Health & Wellbeing Forum.

The two-day event will be held at Narooma Golf Club, 17-18 May 2022. The chosen theme for 2022 is 'From Little Things Big Things Grow', which celebrates the expansion of the Aboriginal mental health and social and emotional wellbeing workforce. It also acknowledges the innovation, collaboration and partnerships that promote recovery in mental health, as well as social and emotional wellbeing. For more information email kimberley.green@health.nsw.gov.au

Big welcome to Graduate Nurses



Southern recently welcomed this year's Graduate Nurses after many started working across the Local Health District on Monday 17 January.

This year, the District recruited 73 GradStart Registered Nurses and seven MidStart Nurses to work in local communities across Southern NSW, including Goulburn, Eurobodalla, Bega, Queanbeyan and Cooma.

GradStart is the recruitment process for Graduate Nurses and Midwives to join NSW

Health Local Health Districts and Specialty Networks health facilities.

MidStart is an annual state-wide recruitment process for registered nurses who want to be employed as midwifery students in NSW public hospitals while studying a Graduate Diploma in Midwifery.



Graduate Nurses who recently started working at Goulburn Base Hospital.



Graduate Nurses pictured at South East Regional Hospital, Bega.



Southern's Nurse Manager Leadership, Development and Culture, Judy Ryall, welcomes Graduate Nurses working in the Eurobodalla region.

Rural research placements

Southern employees Lola Erinle and Erin Evans have been offered places in the Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) 2022 Rural Research Program.

The Rural Research Capacity Building Program plays a significant part in developing and supporting rural health staff and contributing to rural health research in NSW.

Lola is the Coordinator of the Family and Carer Mental Health Program in Southern, and her research project will explore the question of 'Are there differences or similarities in the understanding of the meaning of collaboration in care delivery between clinicians and carers?' The research will look at how both acute and recovery services (that are organised around an individual treatment model), can agree on a definition of collaboration and recognition of the lived experience of carers.

Erin, who is a Bushfire Recovery Mental Health Clinician, will look into what non-Aboriginal people (support workers and health workers) can learn from engaging Aboriginal ideas of healing in disaster planning, response and recovery spaces. The research will be able to inform the development of resources to assist recovery workers and organisations in supporting Aboriginal people affected by disasters.

Obstetrics Medical Lead appointed

Specialist Obstetrician, Dr Andy Woods, has commenced as Southern's District Medical Lead for Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Andy is also the Medical Lead in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle, and the Maternity Stream Lead for the Women's Health and Maternity Network in Hunter New England.

Andy's main clinical interest is in high risk obstetric care. He is heavily involved in Clinical Governance with a particular interest in the various patient safety and quality processes that are part of effective clinical governance systems. His main research interest is in diabetes and endocrine disorders in pregnancy.



*Obstetrics and Gynaecology
Medical Lead Andy Woods.*



**Andy's
main clinical
interest is
in high risk
obstetric
care."**

Batemans Bay HealthOne

The Batemans Bay community will benefit from a new \$20 million HealthOne facility as part of the NSW Government's record investment of \$500 million to ensure that more health services and infrastructure are delivered to rural and regional NSW.

Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard, said Batemans Bay HealthOne has been undergoing planning for the past six months, and will be a one-stop, unique model of integrated care for the community.

The model brings together Commonwealth-funded general practice and state-funded primary and community healthcare services, including dental, pharmacy and allied health professionals, to create a healthcare hub in one convenient location.

'HealthOnes are particularly beneficial for people who have complex health needs, and are a proven successful model that bridges the gap between private providers and Commonwealth and State delivered health services,' Mr Hazzard said.

The new \$20 million HealthOne at Batemans Bay complements the NSW Government's \$260 million investment in a new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital which will be built at Moruya.



Skyan and her son create craft activities to deliver to children during the COVID-19 lockdown.

“

I knew I had to do something. The families needed to engage with each other.”

Children in the online playgroup enjoyed a variety of activities during lockdown.

Playing on in lockdown



As soon as the COVID-19 lockdown hit Southern NSW last August, Aboriginal Health Worker, Skyan Fernando, was ready to help parents and children in Queanbeyan.

For many years, Skyan has been involved in assisting families and children at the Bogong Boori's, a playgroup where under 5s and their parents can come together to share culture and stories every Monday morning at the Queanbeyan South Public School.

When the COVID-19 lockdown hit in mid 2021, the playgroup was put on hold, and Skyan realised that families were suffering emotionally and socially.

'Two mothers threatened self-harm because they weren't coping,' Skyan says.

'I knew I had to do something. The families needed to engage with each other.'

Skyan is Southern's sole Aboriginal Health Worker for Queanbeyan, which has an Aboriginal population of 2,107 (2018 Census data), and after being in the role for eight years at Queanbeyan Health Service, she is well-known in the community.

At the start of the lockdown in August, Skyan delivered art and craft packs to local families to help keep children entertained at home. She then started an online playgroup called Yurwan Mura ('Strong Pathway') using social media. The virtual activities and Zoom sessions were an antidote to many families' social isolation.

Yurwan Mura started with 11 families and grew to a network of 24 families, including babies and teenagers. The group started on social media but evolved to include group text messages and printed handouts, depending on each family's preference.



Southern's Aboriginal Health Program Manager, Shirlena Gallagher, says Skyan is a strong advocate for the Queanbeyan community.

'What she did for her community has been amazing,' she says.

Skyan posted new activities and challenges for the group every day including bingo, treasure hunts, rock painting, cross stitching and musical games. Families could earn points for participation and prizes were awarded at the end of each week.

'I gave them a prize - either a vase I had painted or a toaster, things they could use in their homes,' Skyan says.

Skyan says she consulted with families and Aboriginal community members before setting up the playgroup and she used self-reflection to develop ideas for the activities and challenges.

'I thought back to when I was a mum at home, not working, feeling bored, and what I would've wanted to be doing with my children when they were young,' Skyan says.

'And I asked families what they would like to be doing with their children. I received funding from Southern's Population Health and from Aboriginal Affairs, which helped me to buy materials for the activities.'



Aboriginal Health Worker Skyan Fernando.

When asked how the families reacted to the playgroup, Skyan replied: 'Oh my God, if we missed a day, I heard about it from families!'

Skyan says the playgroup is still thriving and more Aboriginal families in Queanbeyan are welcome to join. However, she is hopeful she can secure a venue to bring the families together face to face each week now that lockdown is finished.

'A secure venue with storage space would be ideal,' she says.

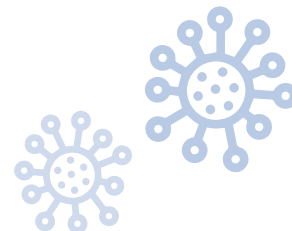
'If I can find a venue and funding for the hiring fees, I will create a space for Aboriginal families to visit where we can feel safe and have somewhere culturally appropriate we can meet.'

'That would mean a lot to me.'

If you'd like to get involved in the playgroup, contact Skyan Fernando on 0467 780 353 or email: skyan.fernando@health.nsw.gov.au

Scan the QR code to see Skyan star in the We Are Southern video

Behind the scenes of a global pandemic



Working on the frontline of a global pandemic was not something Melissa Mudie, Marie Callan, Kym Bush, Lara Preston, Richard Ofiabodhe or Rebecca Armstrong planned for.

Many extraordinary Southern team members have taken on new roles, spent time away from home and worked long hours to meet the unexpected demands of COVID-19.

While most of Australia was working from home, home-schooling or learning to use video conferencing, these are some of the special people who have been working behind the scenes as part of the Southern NSW COVID-19 response team.



Kym Bush (left) and Kirsten Webber



Lara Preston (left) and Brooke Grieve

Kym Bush

Being part of Southern's roll-out of COVID-19 vaccinations has been a daunting but rewarding experience for Immunisation Coordinator Kym Bush.

Permanent and mobile vaccination clinics were set up across the District's 45,000 square kilometre footprint in March 2021. Kym and the Southern vaccination team, along with the primary health network, have been flat out vaccinating ever since. Kym says the enormous effort was truly worth it.

Southern NSW was recognised in NSW parliament in late 2021 for having one of the highest vaccination rates in the state (and the world!).

“Being part of a global mass vaccination program is a career highlight. I am most proud of the team's work in remote areas and vulnerable communities. Our Aboriginal vaccination rates are some of the highest in Australia.”

Marie Callan

Marie Callan has taken on many different roles as part of her nursing career at Southern, with an emphasis on training, patient experience, safety and quality. Her broad experience and can-do attitude made her a perfect candidate for a secondment to the Public Health Response Branch, the headquarters for the Sydney COVID-19 outbreak response.

Marie moved to Sydney for an intense two months, working with a team of contact tracers from across NSW. Travel restrictions, and a fear of bringing COVID-19 to her hometown of Braidwood, meant that Marie didn't get to see her family at all while posted in Sydney.

Lara Preston

Lara's 'day job' is Executive Assistant in the Finance and Performance team. When COVID-19 cases started to rise in August 2021, Lara answered a call out for helpers to take care packages and food supplies to isolating and vulnerable families in the Queanbeyan area. Resilience NSW and Southern supplied more than 150 boxes across Southern NSW.

“It was great to be able to help where we could. Many families got caught out with COVID-19 or as close contacts, with no time to go shopping for food. People really appreciated our home delivery service.”



Richard Ofiabodhe (left)
and Lisa Clarkson

Richard Ofiabodhe

Richard started with Southern in late 2021, joining the Public Health team as a Surveillance Officer for infectious diseases. Richard's team is based in Goulburn and has been working around the clock, seven days per week. They work as part of the NSW-wide team, conducting surveillance activities for COVID-19 cases, including the management of outbreaks in high priority venues such as aged care facilities, childcare centres and community housing. Surveillance involves responding to disease notifications and being a disease detective at the same time.

“The Public Health Unit has played a fundamental role reducing the impact of COVID-19 on our communities. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of this great team and this important work.”



Melissa Mudie

Melissa Mudie works out of Pambula Community Health as the District's Transitional Nurse Practitioner for Cancer Services. COVID-19 created new jobs for Melissa in July 2021, as a Virtual Care Clinician and the Virtual Enhanced Covid Care (VECC) Manager for Southern NSW. Not afraid of a challenge, Melissa helped Southern create the first 'virtual wards' for COVID-19 positive patients isolating in their own homes. Patients are provided with home monitoring kits that include equipment for video consultations, blood pressure checks and blood oxygen monitoring. Clinicians from across the District were recruited to provide regular check-ups and reassurance to patients on the virtual COVID-19 ward.

“I am so proud of what we have achieved as a team at such short notice. Many of us have continued to work in both our COVID-19 and regular jobs, ensuring continuity and quality of care despite the significant increase in workload and demand.”



Rebecca Armstrong

COVID-19 took Rebecca Armstrong's career on a sudden change of direction in the early stages of the pandemic. Rebecca had been working as a Clinical Nurse Consultant when it became obvious that new communication channels were needed to provide the community with COVID-19 advice and information. The Southern COVID-19 Triage Hotline (1800 318 248) took its first phone call in March 2020 and the service fielded more than 30,000 calls in the first year. The team grew from one to 16 hotline staff in a matter of weeks. Rebecca and her team are the definition of 'front line', talking to sick and worried people around the clock, every day of the week. They help people get access to vaccinations, testing, test results and medical intervention, if necessary.



“Working in the Response Branch was demanding at times, but it was also rewarding. I formed many close friendships working with others who were also living away from home.” - Marie Callan

Cultural connections in care

Southern's District Coordinator of Aboriginal Mental Health is looking forward to a significant enhancement to the Aboriginal mental health workforce.



Kimberley Green (right) welcomes the boost to Southern's Aboriginal mental health workforce.

At the start of 2020, Kimberley Green was the sole Aboriginal mental health worker in Southern. By the end of this year there will be 13 Aboriginal-identified mental health positions in the District.

'A larger Aboriginal mental health workforce means more Aboriginal consumers can connect with someone who understands their cultural needs,' Kimberley says.

The new positions will help to break down barriers for Aboriginal people who may have been hesitant about accessing government services.

'The COVID-19 lockdown had a big impact on many Aboriginal people, especially when services moved to telehealth models,' Kimberley says.

'It will make a huge difference for consumers to have more access to Aboriginal-identified workers. Aboriginal mental health staff will assist Aboriginal consumers to have a positive journey through the service.'

Based in Goulburn, Kimberley consults with Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs teams across the Local Health District. She says it's a big job, ensuring Aboriginal people who come into Southern's services are getting culturally competent care and the right referral pathways.

“ A larger Aboriginal mental health workforce means more Aboriginal consumers can connect with someone who understands their cultural needs.”

‘To go from one Aboriginal-identified position to 13 in clinical and non-clinical roles is amazing,’ she says.

Last year, two Aboriginal mental health trainees were recruited to support communities while completing a Bachelor of Health Science (Mental Health). Two more trainees will soon be based in the Eurobodalla. Other Aboriginal-identified positions that have been recruited since 2020 are the Aboriginal Family and Carer Peer Worker and the Aboriginal Farmgate Support Worker.

Aboriginal Mental Health Clinicians will be recruited to work in clinical roles in Bega, Eurobodalla, Queanbeyan and Goulburn this year.

‘The clinicians will be based in our Community Mental Health centres and will provide in-reach liaison and support into the Mental Health Inpatient units,’ Kimberley says.

An Aboriginal Mental Health Care Navigator and an Aboriginal Peer Worker will be recruited this year as part of the NSW Government’s \$21 million

investment in the Aboriginal mental health and suicide prevention workforce across the state. The investment is part of the NSW Government \$131 million mental health recovery package.


The Care Navigator will help Aboriginal people and their families to find and connect with services.

‘The Peer Worker is a new role in Southern,’ Kimberley says.

‘An Aboriginal Peer Worker is an identified-person with lived experience of mental health or drug and alcohol issues. They will provide culturally sensitive peer support for mental health service consumers and can provide links to other services, including Aboriginal community services and non-government organisations.

‘Aboriginal consumers may feel more comfortable to sit down and have a yarn with a Peer Worker than they would with a traditional clinician.’

If you, or someone you know, needs mental health support, call our Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511. Immediate help is available by calling the Mental Health Line or visiting an Emergency Department.




Robert 'Butch' Young is a Farmgate Counsellor supporting Aboriginal people in rural areas of Southern NSW.

Volunteering at Southern

Southern has a dedicated team of volunteers working alongside clinicians and support services staff. We welcome more volunteers to join us in 2022.



Rhonda Crowe was the 2021 Volunteer of the Year at Southern.

The caring and lively presence of volunteers in hospitals and health facilities enhances the patient, carer, client, visitor and staff experience.

For our volunteers, their work provides them with a sense of achievement and purpose as they give back to their community and make a difference to the health and wellbeing of others.

Volunteering has broad social benefits such as building trust and interaction between community members and meeting other like-minded people to create new friendships.

Southern has many volunteer programs across its health sites and community-based services, catering to a variety of interests and skills.

We offer a range of programs that are designed to support our teams, and no clinical skills are required.



For our volunteers their work provides them with a sense of achievement and purpose as they give back to their community and make a difference to the health and wellbeing of others.

Our volunteer programs include:

- Dementia and Delirium Care Program – provides emotional support and practical assistance to vulnerable patients with dementia and delirium.
- Pink Ladies and Gentlemen – provides reading and activity materials, as well as support patients while in care.
- Spiritual and Pastoral Care - provides social and emotional support to patients, carers and staff.
- Patient Support Program – supports patients in cancer care (oncology), renal dialysis, physiotherapy, Emergency Department, fracture clinic, mental health, day surgery, cardiac rehabilitation, palliative care, and in the Wellness Centre (Crookwell).
- Customer Care Pack Support Program – puts together patient stay packs.
- Children’s Play Program
- The Breakfast Club – assists patients with breakfast meal times.
- Rehabilitation Activity Program – activities with patients recovering in rehabilitation wards.
- Rotary Book Exchange Program – a free book exchange program based at Goulburn Hospital.
- Patient Transport for Health
- Tai Chi
- Emergency Patient Toiletries & Clothing Program – puts together toiletries and clothing packs for patients.
- Gardening Program – helps beautify our green spaces used by patients, staff and the community.
- Hospital Guide Desk
- Hospital Street Library - a free book program based at South East Regional Hospital.
- Palliative Care Home Support Program – community-based social support for clients and their carers.

All volunteers are provided with support and training to undertake their roles.

We recruit in March, June and September each year and require a minimum 12-month commitment from our volunteers who need to be 18 years and over and be double vaccinated against COVID-19.

As part of the recruitment process, all volunteers will take part in health screening and police checks as per NSW Health Policy.

If you’d like to volunteer at Southern, or to get further information, contact our volunteer services team at SNSWLHD-Volunteers@health.nsw.gov.au or call 0477 322 107.

Information is available on our website at: www.snswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/get-involved

Come join us, take on a challenge and have some fun!

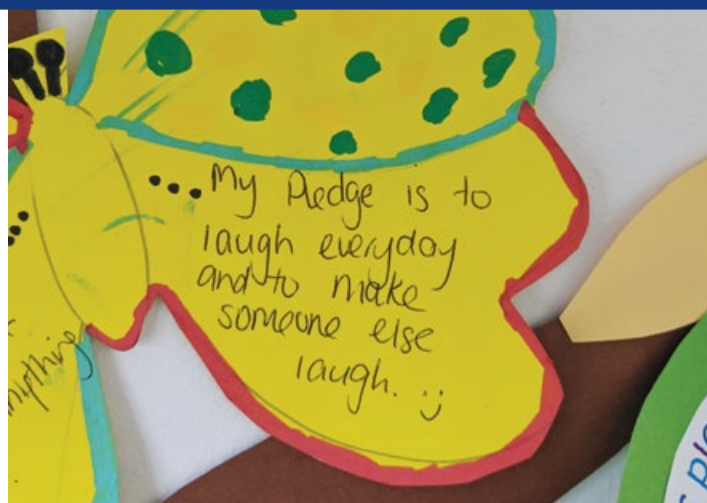


Volunteer Lorraine Symington supports a patient at a rehabilitation session in South East Regional Hospital.

Care and Kindness Charter launched



Southern launched its Care and Kindness Charter on World Kindness Day (13 November) to highlight Southern's commitment to providing kindness and compassion in every interaction with patients, carers, families and colleagues.



Southern's Care and Kindness Charter is a clear statement about the must-have behaviours that guide the way we do things at Southern. It also encourages Southern staff to reflect on the critical importance of care and kindness to themselves, colleagues and patients.

The Charter contains four overarching commitments to ensure people show care and kindness in everything they do. The commitments are:

1. **Consistently providing person-centred care**
2. **Showing kindness and respect every day**
3. **Advocating for patients**
4. **Demonstrating accountability and integrity**

The Charter details behaviours that exemplify each commitment including 'being role models for care and kindness through words and actions', 'supporting colleagues in challenging situations', and 'taking a genuine interest in the wellbeing of patients and colleagues'.

Southern's Manager of Patient Experience, Terence Joe, says when staff are feeling good about themselves, it helps to create a better experience for patients.

“ It also encourages Southern staff to reflect on the critical importance of care and kindness to themselves, colleagues and patients.”

Kindness means...
 Be kind whenever possible
 it is always possible.

'We know that when patients are in hospital, they're observing. They're hearing and seeing what's happening around them. When they see people who are happy in their work environment and are working in harmony, it helps to create a positive environment and a better experience, for both patients and the staff.'

Other behaviours from the Charter include:

- being available, and listening attentively, to show our patients and colleagues that we value them
- respecting the different cultural backgrounds and experiences of patients and colleagues
- treating others as if they were a member of our own family or community
- actively promoting a culture of caring and kindness in our teams.

To see the charter in full, visit:
bit.ly/careandkindnesscharter



Southern welcomes feedback from its patients and consumers about their experience at Southern. If you'd like to share your experience, email SNSWLHD-ConsumerFeedback@health.nsw.gov.au

Active ageing



Being active is important for everyone, especially as we get older, Southern's Active Ageing Health Promotion Officer Rhonda Haire writes.



Physical activity can help reduce the risk of developing dementia, among many other benefits.

So why do I need to be physically active you ask? Basically, it is because you will be better for it. There are many benefits, which are well documented, and it doesn't really take too much effort to see those benefits.

They include reducing the risks—and managing—chronic disease; boosting oxygen in the brain and reducing the risk of developing dementia; reducing risks of falling or developing osteoporosis; improving recovery from illness; and enhancing physical function. Plus, being physically active can make you feel really good.

What can I do to get started?

There is a program available for adults who are aged 60 years and above, which helps people change their lifestyle to improve health.

Healthy and Active for Life is a 10 week program that helps participants learn how to make small, sustainable changes in their lifestyle. The topics include healthy eating and physical activity, and best of all, no prior knowledge or exercise experience is required. Plus, the program is free.

Each week, participants are provided with a health topic to learn. A phone coach rings to see how each person is going. There is also an exercise program to follow, and if you have any questions, concerns, or want to share your successes, your phone coach is right there with you.

To get involved in Healthy and Active for Life visit:
www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au/home/healthy-and-active-for-life-online





Oat, banana and blueberry smoothie

Serves 6

Prep time:
Five minutes

Ingredients

½ cup whole rolled oats
2 ripe bananas
½ cup frozen blueberries
1 cup reduced fat milk
1 cup reduced fat natural yoghurt

Instructions

Blend all ingredients together until smooth. Serve immediately.

Chef's Note

Top with fresh fruit and seeds to serve.



Tell us what you think

We'd love to get your feedback about *We Are Southern* magazine. You can write to the Media and Communications Department to let us know what type of stories you'd like to read in the magazine and monthly newsletter. You can also let us know what health information you'd like Southern NSW Local Health District to share to keep you informed.

Get in touch at snswhd-media@health.nsw.gov.au



Health
Southern NSW
Local Health District

COME WORK AT SOUTHERN

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
AVAILABLE IN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

A career in nursing or midwifery at Southern offers so many opportunities to develop new skills while living in a beautiful region of New South Wales

TO VIEW CURRENT VACANCIES VISIT
WWW.SNSWLHD.HEALTH.NSW.GOV.AU/CAREERS