

MURRUMBIDGEE

ISSUE 20 SPRING 2022

MATTERS

MAGAZINE



THE BEST OF
BOTH WORLDS

why nurses are
choosing country
careers

FEATURE:
2022 MLHD
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS



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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 20th issue of Murrumbidgee Matters Magazine.

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

Publication costs are subsidised by income generated from advertising.

FRONT COVER

Elissa Drew, Enrolled Nurse from Cootamundra combines her love for a farming lifestyle with a clever clinical career.

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OUR VISION

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



One could be forgiven for assuming that a nurse seeking out a career in a regional hospital might be looking for a quieter life.

But speaking to Elissa Drew, you quickly understand that she is a pocket rocket of busy-ness ready to take off.

Elissa began her study to be an Enrolled Nurse in 2018 to supplement her other super busy lifestyle as a farmer, wife and mother to six children coupled with all the extracurricular sporting activities that kiddies require.

"We farm sheep, crops and do a bit of shearing and just love the farming lifestyle with our family," Elissa said.

"But when seasons are tough, I wanted to have my own thing to fall back on. Nursing just felt like it would be the only thing that would be interesting and exciting enough to inspire me to spend time away from the farm and my family."

Raised in Eurongilly, Cootamundra was her closest regional centre and the focus of her schooling and shopping expeditions growing up.



Elissa has always known her roots are at home in the country and that she wanted to be part of a more personal journey for people who require medical assistance.

"I went to high school in Cootamundra and I have always loved the town," Elissa said.

"When I began my study as an Enrolled Nurse at TAFE, a family member along with a nursing friend encouraged me to apply for work casually at Cootamundra Hospital.

"When I had my children, I was able to compare my experience as a patient in a larger hospital, to how it feels to be a patient in our smaller hospital at home, and I just knew I wanted to be part of that more personal approach.

"When I decided that nursing was for me, I knew then and there that I would want to be a part of the team at Cootamundra Hospital to continue the same kind of care I experienced having my babies there.

"It can be full on, which is what I love, but the support of an amazingly knowledgeable medical team and nurses who keep cool and calm amongst any chaos is just inspiring.

"To be part of a driven team, and to experience all the adrenaline of life as a nurse in an acute setting, really is what it is all about for me.

"I am in awe of the medical team and the nurses at Cootamundra Hospital.

"They inspire me by the way they can competently assess a patient, in situations when things are crazy, and just deal with it.

"The opportunities to grow, learn and shine in a smaller hospital like Coota are always there, and the team is dedicated to not only their patients but each other."

Elissa laughs when she explains that she is the one standing behind the registered nurse driving them mad wanting to know all the ins and outs of everything and always asking "so what would you like me to do now?"

A self-confessed sponge, craving information, Elissa is now studying to become a Registered Nurse.

"People encourage me to complete my degree and apply for post grad studies in larger metro hospitals. While there is merit in broadening one's horizons, I just know I will be keen to get back here once I am done.

"I know I am a busy person and people often say things like they don't know how I have time to do it all, however, I feel I am lucky to live in this amazing country where I can raise a family, work a farm and study to be a nurse at the same time," Elissa said

"Being part of this wonderful regional community and the support, we give each other in these smaller towns is what also makes nursing an amazing experience for me." ■

PHOTOS: ABOVE: Elissa loves the variety she gets from working in a busy Emergency Department at Cootamundra Hospital.

LEFT: Elissa graduated in 2018 as an Enrolled Nurse - pictured with Cootamundra Facility Manager Jocelyn Piper.



2022 MLHD Excellence Awards

150 staff and guests from Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) applauded award winners of the 2022 MLHD Excellence Awards. The Excellence Awards recognised the outstanding contribution of health professionals and volunteers from across the region.

“Today we acknowledge and celebrate our special award winners who represent the 3,800 staff from across the district who work hard every day to make a difference to lives of people in our region,” MLHD Board Chair Dr Tom Douch said.

“These exceptional people have created and continue to uphold the values of excellence, innovation and collaboration which help improve the lives of people in our care.”

Winners were announced in 12 award categories. The evening culminated in the presentation of the Chief Executive’s Choice Award and the Board Chair’s Choice Award.

Associate Professor John Preddy was awarded for Excellence and Leadership in Research, and the Wagga Wagga Local Health Advisory Committee (LHAC) took out the Volunteer of the Year Award.

“Volunteers make a significant contribution across our District,” Acting Chief Executive Carla Bailey said. “We look upon our volunteers as an extension to our staffing family. Our volunteers offer their time and effort year round in service to others.”

“Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to the Wagga Wagga LHAC in recognition of their great work in bringing a very important issue to the fore and addressing it in a most practical way.”

The Wagga Wagga LHAC worked on a project to develop silicone wristbands which was targeted at supporting mental health and wellbeing in school aged children following a serious spike in youth suicide in the Riverina.

The Chief Executive Award was presented to the Arts in Health Multipurpose Service (MPS) Pilot Project. The project is an innovative program which provides aged care residents at three facilities with access to professional and quality arts engagement experiences.

“This project has touched the hearts and minds of our staff, our patients, our residents and our broader community, and has the potential to truly integrate health beyond the walls of our hospitals and aged care residences, to truly impact on everyone in our community,” Ms Bailey said.

The Board Chair Award was presented to Mitch Woods, Nurse Unit Manager on behalf of the Wagga Wagga Renal Unit. The renal team use a collaborative approach to supporting patients to ensure a seamless experience and best health outcomes for each individual patient, and were recognised for working above and beyond their scope to bring successful outcome to an adolescent patient. ■

ENRICHING CONSUMER EXPERIENCE AWARD

Sponsored by Pegasus Health Group

This award is presented in recognition of an individual, team or service nominated for listening and responding to the needs of our consumers through consumer focused care and experience.



Award winner Spencer McGill and sponsor Michael Cummins from Pegasus Health Group

Spencer McGill Consumer Peer Worker – MyStep to Mental Wellbeing

Deniliquin’s Consumer Peer Support Worker Spencer McGill was awarded the Enriching Consumer Experience Award. Spencer was nominated by his team leader and MyStep to Mental Wellbeing Manager Amy Salmon.

“As a Consumer Peer Worker, Spencer uses his lived experience of mental illness to empower and build the resilience of the people he works with,” Ms Salmon said.

“Spencer shares his own experiences of mental health and recovery with others, breaking down stigma and instilling hope. He has led the formation of the Peer Worker role within MyStep to Mental Wellbeing and empowers his colleagues to ensure the consumers experience is central to the care provided.”

“Spencer advocates passionately for all consumers within the program and makes the consumer experience a positive one,” Acting Chief Executive Carla Bailey said.

“He embodies the goals and values of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District and is a valued member of the Mental Health team.”



PATIENT SAFETY FIRST AWARD

This award is presented in recognition of demonstrated commitment to continual improvement and an unyielding focus on safety; particularly caring for patients, consumers, residents and/or communities.

COVID Model of Care

The Emergency Department team at WWBH under the direction of Dr Syeda Begum worked collaboratively and swiftly to

implement a quality improvement initiative to ensure safer patient care.

The COVID Model of Care streamlined care for both admitted and discharged patients, successfully preventing the further spread and outbreak of COVID-19 for patients, carers and staff.

Photo above: the team from Wagga Wagga Base Hospital Emergency Department collect the Patient Safety First Award



RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE AWARD

Sponsored by Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network

This award is presented to an individual, team or service in recognition of demonstrated innovation in the face of adversity and recent challenges and responded urgently to the needs of the community in the wake of devastating natural disasters and global pandemic.

Population Health Infectious Diseases team

The infectious diseases team spearheaded the District’s COVID-19 pandemic response.

The team transitioned to a seven day roster, providing up to date advice about restrictions, testing, isolation and vaccination to name a few.

Frequently required to develop solutions on the run, the team maintained professionalism, excelling in maintaining a positive work environment throughout several locations.

Focussing on working collaboratively to update systems, training and advice for cases and contacts was challenging however the team remained resilient, calm and persevered at the front line of the crisis.



Photo above: the team from the Child and Family Health Nursing Services accept the Keeping People Healthy Award from sponsor Rashid Hashmi (UNSW)

KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY AWARD

Sponsored by University of NSW

This award is presented in recognition of an initiative that promotes good health through awareness of healthy choices, preventing and addressing poor health, and works to improve the overall health and wellbeing of the community.

Child and Family Health Nursing Services

Child and Family Health Nursing Services developed and implemented a model of care incorporating virtual consultations into their routine practices. This approach has led to consumers having an alternate way

of engagement with clinicians and services especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the development of the new model, the team shared ideas, contributed constructively to the process, were transparent and open to new approaches and confident in expanding the new model after feedback and success.

The team is committed to being transparent and open; they were empowered to discuss barriers, brainstorm ideas and strategies for improvement including the use of an interpreter during a virtual consultation.



MLHD Board Director Adrian Lindner presents Patrina Marsden with the Value Based Care Award on behalf of the Renal Support Care team.

VALUE BASED CARE AWARD

This award is presented in recognition of an initiative that support NSW Health's vision for a sustainable health system that delivers outcomes that matter to patients; care that is tailored to people's needs and is digitally enabled.

Renal Support Care Team

The Renal Support Care Team are leading the way with embracing change. Led by Patrina Marsden, Nurse Practitioner, the team have had some big wins over the past year.

Rural Renal Nursing can present challenges and this team have successfully navigated changing environments over the past few years by drawing on their support for each other and implementing innovative ways of working.

The team successfully implemented telehealth with clients, specialists and GP's alike and have adopted patient reported measures, which provides feedback on experiences and outcomes and used this feedback to create a community outreach guide for clients including a treatment plan, client goals and medication review. Clients refer to this guide and contact clinicians for any further questions or if they require assistance.

EXCEPTIONAL ABORIGINAL HEALTHCARE AWARD

This award is presented in recognition of an individual, team or service delivering exceptional healthcare through strong partnerships that value and foster respect with Aboriginal consumers and communities and providing culturally safe and responsive care.

Amy Byrom, Targeted Early Intervention Coordinator, Aboriginal Health

Amy showed amazing leadership in the COVID space. Amy led the response of the Aboriginal Health team while also was managing her substantive role.

She developed a process and made sure she was working with everyone to ensure that no Aboriginal person was left struggling.



She is described by her nominator as a powerhouse, making sure no one was lost on the way.

THANKS TO OUR JUDGES

We'd like to extend a huge thank you to all the judges who scrutinised the 70 plus nominations we received this year across 12 categories.

The judging panels were charged with reviewing each of the nominations in their category and selecting the winners and finalists against the criteria.

Panels consisted of:

- MLHD Director (Convenor)
- MLHD Board member
- Sponsor
- Consumer representative

Thank you to all for your time and commitment to celebrating excellence!

Interested in joining our team?

Find your next job here: <https://www.mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/careers>

COLLABORATIVE STAFF MEMBER AWARD

This award is presented in recognition of exemplary work and outstanding leadership from an individual, recognition of a staff member who have made an exceptional contribution through effective collaboration to the NSW health system.

Anna-Maree Bloomfield Community Nurse (RN), Community Care Wagga Wagga

Anna-Maree collaborates on a daily basis with her colleagues in the community nursing team, her clients in the wound clinic, the Wound Specialist team and other members of the multi-disciplinary team to ensure holistic care to her clients. Outside of her direct nursing role, she has collaborated with Clinical Governance in putting together an in-service on mask wearing, and with People and Culture in raising awareness of the challenges faced by staff and clients with hearing and language difficulties.



District Director of Nursing and Midwifery Christine Stephens presents Anna-Maree Bloomfield with the Nurse or Midwife of the Year Award

NURSE OR MIDWIFE OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award recognises an AIN – EN – RN – or Midwife who has made an outstanding contribution in providing and coordinating safe, quality and compassionate patient care and consistently displaying values of commitment, compassion, resilience, professionalism and collaboration.

This award is about recognising an outstanding nurse leader. It may someone who is a quiet achiever and goes about their day to day business without fuss, or it may be someone whose actions have made a significant contribution to Nursing and Midwifery or even an outstanding clinician.

A nurse Leader is someone who exemplifies what it is to be a professional nurse by upholding the professional standards, motivating and providing support to others

and always being focused on the outcomes for patients and consumers.

Anna-Maree Bloomfield Community Nurse (RN), Wagga Wagga Community Care

Anna-Maree was born profoundly deaf. A cochlear implant and some brilliant lip reading skills enable her to overcome what would prove to be an insurmountable barrier for some. Not only does Anna-Maree provide consistently excellent holistic patient care in her role day-to-day, she is always seeking ways to improve systems and help her colleagues. Anna-Maree is a strong, positive advocate for all those with hearing loss, deafness and language barriers.

EXCEPTIONAL RURAL HEALTHCARE AWARD

Sponsored by the Riverina Rural Training Hub

This award is presented in recognition of an individual or team nominated by a consumer/s when exceptional rural healthcare was experienced:

- care that enriched and enhanced the consumers experience within our care
- care that improved health outcomes that mattered to the consumer.

The finalists in this category were all nominated by consumers who were impacted by the care they received. This is testimony to the work being done by these amazing staff members in our organisation.

Katherine Donoghue Care Coordinator, Cootamundra

Katherine is an Occupational Therapist (OT) based at Health One Cootamundra, working in a clinical role and a care coordination role in the Integrated Care team.

Katherine goes to extraordinary lengths to ensure she provides a holistic person-centred service that has a profoundly positive impact on each consumer.

Katherine listens, innovates and is persistent with her approach to care. Her work resulted in significant reduction in emergency department presentations and hospitalisations for consumers whilst having a massive impact on improved quality of life.



Community Care Manager Mid Battye accepts the Exceptional Rural Healthcare Award on behalf of Katherine Donoghue. Pictured with sponsor Riverina Rural Training Hub's Fran Trench



The Wagga Wagga Community Mental Health team accept the Our Workforce at its Best Award. Pictured with sponsor from Three Rivers University of Regional Health Karen O'Donnell

OUR WORKFORCE AT ITS BEST AWARD

Sponsored by Three Rivers Department of Rural Health.

This award is presented in recognition of a team or service who showcases MLHD's workforce at its best, one that has high levels of engagement, strong relational dispersed leadership and role modelling of the NSW Health CORE values and Public Sector values, collaboration, excellent customer focus and stakeholder management, leadership.

Wagga Wagga Community Mental Health team

The Wagga Wagga Community Mental Health team provide mental health and drug and alcohol services to clients who are acutely suicidal, psychotic or otherwise mentally unwell in the community. The team works with one of the most difficult but vulnerable cohorts and continue to provide dedicated service, advocacy and empowerment.

The team regularly go above and beyond their roles to deliver the best service, providing assessment, case management, short term psychotherapy, psychiatric reviews and run the clozapine clinic for clients across the lifespan. They actively seek and act upon client feedback to continually improve service delivery.



Associate Professor John Preddy, Clinical Director, Paediatric Department, Wagga Wagga Base Hospital was awarded the Excellence in Leadership in Research award sponsored by the Agency for Clinical Innovation.

EXCELLENCE AND LEADERSHIP IN RESEARCH AWARD

Sponsored by the Agency for Clinical Innovation

**Associate Professor John Preddy
Clinical Director, Paediatric Department,
Wagga Wagga Base Hospital**

John is the Clinical Director of the Paediatric Department and Supervisor, advanced and postgraduate paediatric training at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. An Associate Professor in Paediatrics at the University of New South Wales Rural Medical School in Wagga Wagga (and previously Head of Campus), John is also a VMO Paediatrician at Calvary Riverina and the Riverina Medical and Dental Aboriginal Corporation, whilst maintaining a busy private practice.

John's membership and leadership of committees as varied as the Paediatric Safety and Quality Network Committee of the Clinical Excellence Commission; NSW Health Expert Working Groups; the Perinatal Committee at Wagga Base Hospital; the Riverina Specialist Recruitment and Retention Committee; and as Co-Chair of the NSW Regional Paediatricians group, lead to his influence at all levels, from policy to the direct clinical care of our children.

An active clinician-researcher, John collaborates with colleagues all over Australia on major studies aiming to produce the evidence to underpin excellent care in remote, rural and regional NSW, with the recurrent themes of:

- equity of access and delivery of quality and evidence-based paediatric care
- use of telehealth in decision-making, and for specialist consultation, in general practice
- development and implementation of evidence-based policy
- management of paediatric respiratory disease.

The importance of this research is reflected in significant funding received from the NSW Ministry of Health, the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Medical Research Futures Fund.

Most recently, in March this year, a partnership between the University of Melbourne, Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network, Western Victoria Primary Health Network, and Murrumbidgee Local Health District, with John as the MLHD Principal Investigator, received \$2.9M for a project, Strengthening Care for Rural Children, to increase the capacity of the existing rural GP workforce to assess and effectively manage paediatric conditions, with the aim to improve rural paediatric health.



Carla Bailey presents the Chief Executive's Choice Award to Kate Roberts on behalf of the Arts in Health project team

CHIEF EXECUTIVE CHOICE

Arts in Health Project

The Arts in Health Multipurpose Service (MPS) Pilot Project which is being piloted at three sites: Culcairn, Tumbarumba and Murrumburrah-Harden, received the Chief Executive's Choice Award.

The project is an innovative program which provides aged care residents at three facilities access to professional and quality arts engagement experiences.

"This project has touched the hearts and minds of our staff, our patients, our residents and our broader community, and has the potential to truly integrate health beyond the walls of our hospitals and aged care residences, to truly impact on everyone in our community," Carla Bailey Acting Chief Executive said.

The project is a collaboration between Murrumbidgee Local Health District, the Art Gallery of NSW and Health Infrastructure.

The program supports non-pharmacological approaches within residential aged care settings. Research indicates engagement with the arts for those living with dementia, stimulates brain function resulting in improved speech, which is important for communication with families, staff and residents to engage with each other. This has positive benefits on many of the behavioural impacts of a dementia diagnosis.

Importantly, the program's social and cultural approach provides a meaningful way for aged care residents to connect with others, particularly during periods of isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Innovative approaches that maintain communication and relationships are vital to ensure ongoing connection with communities.

FOR MORE VISIT <https://youtu.be/UXu9rfjzvl>



Acting Chief Executive Carla Bailey presents the Volunteer of the Year Award to Garth Hungerford and Leanne Horne on behalf of the Wagga Wagga LHAC

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award is presented in recognition of an individual who acts as a role model for volunteering in NSW Health, provides excellence support and engage with, patients, consumers, residents, carers, and families.

Volunteering is defined as activities taking place for the benefit of community and the volunteer, and is conducted of the volunteers own free will for no financial payment in designated volunteer positions.

Volunteers make a significant contribution to the Australian economy and its diverse community by building social and welfare networks that strengthen community life.

In Murrumbidgee Local Health District, there are thousands of volunteers who contribute daily to the efficiency of our hospitals and through their many varied projects.

"We look upon our volunteers as an extension to our staffing family," Carla Bailey Acting Chief Executive said. "Without these volunteers it would not be possible for us to provide the level of service to our patients that we do. Our volunteers offer their time and effort year round in service to others.

"Our volunteers are from all walks of life and participate in all manner of activities at our hospitals and health services," Ms Bailey said.

"Volunteers might be corporate volunteers – helping with wayfinding at our larger hospitals sites, trolley ladies, they may be Hospital Auxiliary members raising funds for those added luxury items for extra comforts for staff and patients."

"We have Physical Activity Leaders who lead such activities as Tai Chi, aqua aerobics or gentle exercise."

"And we have our Local Health Advisory Committees – or LHACs. Volunteers who are a voice for health in their communities, who represent the views, concerns and needs of people in their community.

"Our LHAC members contribute in many positive ways to improve the experience for our patients, and in support of carers, families and staff. We rely on their commitment, skills, time and energy in helping us to provide the best quality care and services to people in our region."

The Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to the Wagga Wagga LHAC for the great work they did in bringing a very important issue to the fore, and addressing it in a most practical way.

Wagga Wagga LHAC

The Wagga Wagga LHAC worked on a project which was targeted at supporting mental health and wellbeing in school aged children following a serious spike in youth suicide in the Riverina.

In collaboration with the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital Executive, Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network, Headspace and local schools the LHAC designed and developed a silicone wrist band with a QR Code which takes the user to the Head to Health website.

The LHAC worked with local schools to distribute the bands to children in Year 7 and Year 8 initially. Approximately 5,000 wristbands have been distributed to date.

The bands were produced in a variety of colours including the Aboriginal flag colours, they are bright and colourful and the QR Code directs them straight to the website where they can find useful information.

They are now being rolled out across the district.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

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SILVER EVENT AND AWARD SPONSORS



EVENT CONTRIBUTOR



TEMORA
The Friendly Shire



Dr Thomas Douch presents the Board Chair's Award to Anoop Kaippusheril on behalf of the Wagga Wagga Renal Unit

BOARD CHAIR CHOICE AWARD

Wagga Wagga Renal Unit

Since May 2021, Wagga Wagga Renal Unit led by Mitch Woods have supported a 14 year old Aboriginal boy. This was made possible after successful application for adolescent maintenance dialysis by exception, to bring the child back to country and his family with an integrated care approach.

In January 2022 the client was transferred to Royal Children's Hospital – Randwick for a kidney transplant. After a slow recovery he was discharged home from Sydney in March 2022.

The service was provided in collaborative approach and included Randwick's primary paediatric nephrologist, the local VMO nephrologist, local Paediatrician, Murrumbidgee Local Health District Aboriginal Health Services, Paediatric team and Wagga Wagga Renal Unit.

If this service was not provided in Wagga Wagga, the adolescent and his grandmother would have been separated from his siblings for extended periods, impacting not only the child but the extended family and community. The collaboration of all the teams to ensure this outcome within a 12 month period was truly exceptional.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR FINALISTS

Enriching Consumer Experience

- Sarah McLaughlin, Clinical Team Leader and Occupational Therapist, South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service
- Ricky Tasker, Nurse Unit Manager, Orthopaedic Ward, Wagga Wagga Base Hospital

Value Based Healthcare Award

- Rebecca Johnson, Oncology Clinical Nurse Consultant
- Oral Health Services, MLHD

Exceptional Aboriginal Healthcare

- Wagga Wagga Renal Unit
- Clinical Education and Training Unit (Peter Fernando and Charmaine Marshall)

Patient Safety First Award

- Kathleen Grady, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Infection Prevention & Control, Wagga Wagga Base Hospital
- Cassandra Dodge, Pharmacy Assistant, Young Health Service

Keeping People Healthy Award

- Helen Minogue, Registered Nurse, Holbrook Hospital
- Child and Family Health Nursing Services

Recovery and Resilience Award

- Catherine McCaig, Nurse Unit Manager, Ambulatory Care, Wagga Wagga Base Hospital
- Rebuilding Registrar Resilience, Dr Mandy Kaur

Collaborative Staff Member of the Year

- Sarah Grant, Patient Experience Officer, Griffith Base Hospital
- Katrina Walsh, Facility Manager, Tumut Hospital

Nurse or Midwife of the Year award

- Sherin George, Clinical Nurse Educator, Griffith Base Hospital
- Ellyse Wilson (RN), Infection Prevention & Control, Griffith Base Hospital

Exceptional Rural Healthcare Award

- Tumbarumba MPS nursing team
- Anna Dunbar, Deputy District Manager Mental Health

Our workforce at its best

- Wagga Wagga Ambulatory Rehabilitation team
- Tom Goubar, Junior Medical Officer, (Director AIM Higher program)



“There were many barriers to overcome, but I was determined, dedicated and committed to ensuring that I provide the best of care in my chosen career. ”



Anna-Maree Bloomfield is recognised for her outstanding work, taking out two awards at the 2022 MLHD Excellence Awards.

STAFF IN FOCUS:

Anna-Maree Bloomfield

Registered Nurse Anna-Maree Bloomfield was born profoundly deaf, but never let this hold her back in her aspirations and long-term goals.

“I initially wore hearing aids, and now wear a cochlear implant, however I have always just gotten on with my life and not let my hearing impairment dictate my choices,” Anna-Maree explained.

“I attended a mainstream school, then left at 16 to complete an administration traineeship. It was not until I met some friends who were also deaf who took me under their wing and taught me to sign, that I really considered myself as having a unique skill set. We are still close friends to this day.

“I did not plan to become a nurse but have always gravitated to helping others both in work and my social life, and my first role in health as an Assistant in Nursing (AIN) for the Deaf and Blind in Sydney really cemented my career in health,” Anna-Maree said.

“I went on to complete my Social Science Degree, then Enrolled Nursing at Western NSW, and eventually Registered Nursing.

“Things have changed so much these days with respect to opportunities for people with disabilities, but back when I studied the onus was on me to continually prove that my deafness was not going to impact on my job or ability to care for my patients.

“There were many barriers to overcome, but I was determined, dedicated and committed to ensuring that I provide the best of care in my chosen career.”

Over the past 20 years, Anna-Maree has worked within a variety of roles for NSW Health, including surgical ward for a large regional hospital as well as community nursing in smaller rural towns including Parkes, Forbes, Deniliquin, Moama and Mathoura, to community nursing within the Wagga area as her current position.

Throughout her career, Anna-Maree has identified gaps and ways she can assist in helping others to communicating effectively with people who suffer from hearing loss and deafness within the community.

“Clients and patients too often suffer with hearing loss or may be deaf and this can be daunting for staff who are trying to explain medical procedures,” Anna-Maree said.

“This can lead to feelings of frustration, fear and confusion for all involved, including family members.”



Anna-Maree feels that her positive attitude, approachability, her lived experience and willingness to help and educate others makes a big difference.

The past two years have posed a significant challenge for Anna-Maree, as she relies on lip-reading to communicate, and mask wearing mandates associated with the COVID-19 pandemic brought a more widespread set of challenges.

“As a nurse who has a profound hearing loss, I really feel I can relate and empathise with people during these challenging times,” Anna-Maree said.

This year Anna-Maree is excited to be working with Murrumbidgee Local Health District to deliver a Webinar this World Hearing Day Thursday 3 March. The Webinar was designed to educate staff to be more mindful of their interactions with consumers that may present with deafness.

“I have a knack to calmly deal with stressful situations, so I feel that this helps others relate to me. I not only advocate for myself, but for many others who are also deaf, hard of hearing and for people who have language barriers,” Anna-Maree said.

“The day I stop educating and raising awareness to others, I know that it is time to move on, and I have done my job.” ■

WANT TO KNOW MORE:

To hear more about Anna-Maree and see her story, visit our YouTube link at: <https://youtu.be/jbNI8NVVczw>



COMMUNITY INVITED TO HAVE THEIR SAY

Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) is calling for the public to have its say with the launch of the 2022 Community Survey.

Community Engagement Manager Setchen Brimson said this is the perfect opportunity for people to provide feedback on how the health service can improve communication.

“Murrumbidgee Local Health District is serious about ensuring feedback received from our local community is acted on and incorporated into the day-to-day operations of the service,” Ms Brimson said.

“This survey will help us to understand how much people know about our services and how we can communicate better with our communities about our services.

“We know that one of the barriers to health is an understanding about what services are available and how to access

them. This survey will help us understand where there are gaps and what areas we need to improve our communications.”

The survey forms part of MLHD’s Community Engagement Strategy which focusses on informing, consulting and engaging with consumers. This is the fourth iteration of the survey, with the first survey conducted in 2014 and further surveys in 2016 and 2020.

“Previous surveys provided invaluable information about the way our communities seek information and their perceptions around availability of services,” Ms Brimson said.

“They have provided a real insight into some easily achievable changes in the way we provide information.”

The 2014 survey results led to the redevelopment of the MLHD website to include more comprehensive information about the services.

The 2016 survey opened the way for social media platforms which are now part of everyday connection for many residents across our region, with over 38,000 followers on the MLHD Facebook page.

Data from previous surveys also revealed correlations between people’s age, sex and location and their level of understanding about services available.

“We will continue to work towards improving the way we go about planning, designing and evaluating our services, and this is another step towards ensuring we get it right,” Ms Brimson said.

The survey is available on the MLHD website and online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MLHD-CS-2022> or scan the QR code to access via your device.

Hard copies will also be available from your nearest MLHD hospital reception.

2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY - NOW OPEN

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

The MLHD 2022 Community Survey gathers information from people across the Murrumbidgee region about their experience with and knowledge of services in hospitals and other healthcare facilities.

This is the perfect opportunity for you to provide feedback on how the health service can improve communication.

The survey is anonymous. Participation in the survey is voluntary and respondents cannot be identified from the information provided in this survey.

CLOSING DATE

This survey will open from 1 September 2022 and close on 30 November 2022.

PURPOSE

The 2022 MLHD Community Survey will:

- measure public awareness about services available locally
- identify gaps in the provision of information
- identify best communication channels to inform, consult and engage with specific communities

TAKE SURVEY NOW!

Go online to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MLHD-CS-2022>



< or scan the QR code to access via your device

Hard copies are also available from your local hospital reception.



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Although the rain and cold remain there is a hint of Spring emerging as the Canola flowers and the first blossoms appear, and we get the occasional day that seems a little warmer. And so with the passing of Winter, we also see the easing of the recent COVID wave and all the challenges that it has thrown MLHD's way. Workforce remains a significant challenge but the onboarding of a historically large number of graduate nurses over the past few months has helped ease our workforce shortage. Despite this the work continues at an almost feverish pace to try and strengthen our workforce and it is pleasing to see progress is starting to be made.

Our surgical lists remain with many overdue cases, however with the workforce appearing to steady and funding available via the recent State Budget, there is a very real prospect of being able to offer many patients the surgery for which they have been patiently waiting. Again this is pleasing as the frustration with wait-times for surgery and surgical list cancellations have been cause for considerable worry and frustration.

I don't want to give the impression that COVID is over, but as we move towards Summer the prospect of some stability and recovery is very much in the realms of possibility and we should feel optimistic.

Moving towards Summer and the end of the year does take us closer to the next State Election scheduled for March 2023. An election is often highly charged particularly for those of us in healthcare because the topic is invariably high on the priority list for political debate. I will leave such debate to the politicians who will try to make various arguments about how good or otherwise our health service might be, and whose supporters might choose to resort to selective use of information to advance their various arguments. All of this can lead healthcare workers and the community to be in some doubt as to the quality of healthcare they provide or receive.

I want there to be no doubt – MLHD is a quality healthcare provider with a dedicated and professional workforce – we achieve stellar outcomes and work hard to provide a level of service which has become a benchmark against which other LHDs in NSW and further afield judge themselves. Sure, there are always ways to improve and the nature of healthcare means there will difficult situations to review and from which to take away lessons for the future. Nevertheless, I am proud to be the Chair of MLHD and proud of all our workforce regardless of their position or role they play.

I also want our communities, and particularly the Local Health Advisory Committees (LHAC) to seek the facts from MLHD should issues arise that



MLHD Board Chair Dr Thomas Douch

cause concern. MLHD is always open to public inquiry and comment that is factual, considered and courteous, and we will seize any opportunity to correct any misrepresentation of the service MLHD provides to the Murrumbidgee community.

Winter has been difficult, the last few years have been a massive challenge, however MLHD has performed very well under the most trying of circumstances. I ask each of you whether working in health or receiving care from health, to be proud of our service, to hold to account those who talk us down, but also to remain insistent on the highest quality of care from MLHD.

Stay Safe

Tom Douch
MLHD Board Chair



Photo: Visiting Holbrook MPS with Chief Executive Jill Ludford as part of the regular schedule of site visits.



From the Chief Executive

Community Engagement

This September we launch our 2022 Community Survey.

Our aim always, is to ensure that our communities have access to the services they need to achieve good health. This survey is designed to find out more about how much our communities know about how to access health services and where they seek reliable information about our services.

The survey also helps us better understand how we can communicate more effectively. This will be the fourth time we have run this survey, meaning we can also compare trends and changes to community perceptions about our services.



Previously results of the survey have improved the quality of information on our website and also helped us make the decision to establish our MLHD Facebook page which now has over 38,000 followers.

You can complete the survey online here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MLHD-CS-2022> or scan the QR code.

Staff pay rise

We were very pleased to see the announcement recently by NSW government of a three per cent pay rise for our staff.

The new two-year policy provides among the highest public sector wages growth in the country with employees offered a three per cent remuneration increase per annum in 2022-23 and 2023-24, with a possible further 0.5 per cent on offer in 2023-24 for employees that make a substantial contribution to productivity enhancing reforms. This provides for remuneration increases of up to 6.5 per cent over two years under the new policy. In addition, a one-off payment of \$3,000 was provided to employees in the NSW Health Service in recognition of their work on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rural Health Workforce Incentives

As many of our readers are aware, we have been experiencing unprecedented workforce shortages across our region. We are not alone, these challenges are being faced on a nation-wide and global scale.

To combat this, we established a critical vacancy taskforce to work on a range of strategies to boost available workforce, including relocation assistance, payment of incentives and interim accommodation for new staff, as well as short term contracts for staff who would like to 'come and try' working in the region.

We are excited to now offer a range of employee incentives to come and work with us in our rural and regional hospitals.

These incentives apply to hard to fill and critical vacancies and include a tailor made package offered to successful applicants. The package is determined according to the location and is between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Incentives include:

- Assistance with accommodation and relocation expenses
- Computer and internet reimbursement
- Relocation benefits
- Return airfare home
- Compassionate travel
- Professional Development
- Additional personal leave and additional base salary

If you know someone who is looking to make a break from their city life, put them in touch with us!

To help make the move to our little slice of heaven, we'll cover relocation and travel expenses, help find housing and get them settled, and help in other handy ways!

Allied Health Staff incentives

The NSW Ministry of Health is currently piloting a four-year comprehensive incentive package focused on the recruitment and retention of allied health professionals to areas of critical need in rural and remote regions.

This package is for early career allied health professionals with a HECS-HELP loan debt and is attached to eligible positions in NSW Health. Positions eligible for the incentive package will be advertised on NSW Health jobs and eligible roles will clearly state this in the advertisement.

What does the incentive package include?

- An incremental annual contribution to an your HECS-HELP loan – paid at the completion of each years' service (totalling \$20,000)
Year one - \$3000
Year two - \$4000
Year three - \$6000
Year four - \$7000
- A rural immersion and familiarisation visit prior to finalising recruitment to ensure your suitability to the proposed rural location.
- An additional five days of annual leave per year.
- An additional six days of continued professional development (CPD) leave per year.
- Cultural responsiveness training.
- Three hours a week of protected CPD, mentoring and clinical supervision.

Ambulance Inquiry

The Inquiry into the impact of ambulance ramping and access block on the operation of hospital emergency departments in New South Wales is currently underway.

Our emergency departments are significantly impacted by emergency presentations, particularly during winter months, and even more so since the arrival of COVID-19. We are finding some patients delay seeking treatment which worsens their potentially preventable illness, thus requiring hospitalisation.

While we await the findings of the Inquiry, I would like to encourage people in our community to seek treatment early, either through your local General Practitioner (GP) or by calling Health Direct on 1800 022 222. This service provides easy access to trusted, quality health information and advice online and over the phone.

Spring Thunderstorm Asthma

As we enter spring and the thunderstorm asthma season, I'd like to remind residents that this is a heightened period of risk for asthma sufferers and people who wheeze and sneeze during Spring.

Thunderstorms cause pollen grains to explode and release fine particles which can be inhaled more deeply into the lungs. If you are prone to asthma or Spring time makes you wheeze and sneeze, visit your GP or respiratory specialist for a lung health assessment. Obtain a current prescription for preventer as well as reliever medication and a written Asthma Action Plan.

If anyone experiences breathing difficulties it is essential to seek medical help immediately. Breathing difficulties can be life threatening. In the event of an asthma emergency dial triple zero (000) immediately.



Recognising Amy Byrom and the Aboriginal Health team for their great work, with Board Chair Dr Tom Douch, and Board Directors Cheryl Penrith and Mary Atkinson



My CE site visit to Henty MPS with our MLHD Board Chair Dr Tom Douch

Congratulations!

I'd like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our winners at the 2022 MLHD Excellence Awards. I'd like to thank everyone who nominated for the awards. Your recognition of our staff and volunteers and the celebration of their achievements reminds us why we are all here - to deliver the best possible health care to people in our region.

Thank you also to our marvellous sponsors, without whom the awards evening would not be as special. Our judging panels had a tough job deciding on the winners and finalists this year too.

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

You will see the full feature with the details of all the award winners in the pages of this magazine.

Jill Ludford
Chief Executive, MLHD



Pam and Terry Brown

TELESTROKE BRINGS WORLD CLASS CARE TO DENILIQUIN

Lives are being saved and outcomes vastly improved thanks to a new model of care for stroke assessment and treatment, now available in Deniliquin.

The NSW Telestroke Service harnesses technology to deliver world class management of stroke patients, giving people in rural health facilities access to expert stroke clinicians, ensuring the best possible outcomes for patients presenting with stroke symptoms.

Pam Brown of Deniliquin has experienced firsthand the power of Telestroke after she suffered a stroke while volunteering at her local op shop.

“I was a normal active person, and within 5 minutes I was not!” Pam said. “I went to work at the shop at 8.30am, as healthy as anything, went to open the shop up at 9.00am and I can’t remember what happened after that.”

An ambulance took Pam to Deniliquin Hospital, one of 23 Hospitals in NSW that are part of the Telestroke network. Pam’s husband Terry met them at the Hospital and cannot speak more highly of the Telestroke Service.

“I’ve been told that with a stroke, if you get at it within three hours you’ve got a chance,” Terry said.

“We had this Professor Butcher, who’s supposed to be the number one guy, basically at the bedside within half an hour! He was there on the screen and they were all talking to each other.”

Professor Ken Butcher, the Medical Director of the NSW Telestroke Service, said Pam was exactly the patient that Telestroke was designed for.

“Previously well, she’s got a little bit of high blood pressure, a little high cholesterol and but has never had a major medical event in her life in her life,” Professor Butcher said.

“Her scan showed she had a blood clot blocking the main artery to the left side of her brain which controls her speech. Her husband was there, I explained what was happening and I suggested we should administer the clot busting therapy.”

Clot busting therapy had never been given for stroke at Deniliquin Emergency Department before. Pam was the first patient.

“The hospital staff had been trained so well through the Telestroke implementation process that we have for our program, they were excellent,” Professor Butcher said.

Since the Telestroke Service was implemented at Deniliquin Hospital 22 patients have been able to access virtual specialist care and three patients have had the clot busting therapy.

Dr Rachel James and Dr Ben James are GP-VMOs at Deniliquin Hospital and are part of the Telestroke team.

“As Rural Generalists and GPs we don’t just see that patient when they come in with their acute stroke, we usually know them. So when they do come in for acute stroke there’s already a little bit more going on,” Dr Rachel James said.

“Being a doctor, there is nothing worse than having someone in your care and you feel that you’re not giving them the best.

“With projects like Telestroke you’re not alone, it’s just that your team is virtual rather than actually standing there. You feel very, very supported and know that you can get advice when you need it, straight away from specialist that’s not just willing to take the call and discuss it with you, but also willing to teach.”

“When they come back from their acute stroke we’re the GPs that take care of them as well. So knowing they got the best care in that acute period of time we know that they are going to have a better outcome as well.”

Dr Ben James said that Telestroke is dissolving the geographical barrier for rural communities, enabling specialist care to start right at the beginning of the patient’s journey.

“We are able to make an assessment in a very quick time frame and be able to get an excellent outcome,” Ben said.

Stroke is a time-critical medical emergency and Dr Ben emphasised the importance of heading straight to hospital or calling an ambulance if they have any sign or stroke.

“We would much rather see people in the early phase when they first recognise they’re not speaking well or their arm is a bit droopy- that’s when I want to see people come in straight away,” Ben said.

According to The Stroke Foundation regional Australians are 19 per cent more likely to have a stroke than their city counterparts, and more likely to die or be left with a serious disability as a result of a stroke because they don’t have access to time critical stroke treatment and specialist care. ■

TO HEAR MORE:

Pam and Terry’s story is available at: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/virtualcare/Pages/telestroke-case-study-pam-and-terry.aspx>



The team in Deniliquin: Telestroke Services coordinator Fiona McKern with Rural Generalists Dr Rachel James and Dr Ben James and Rachelle Austin ED Registered Nurse.



Pam and Terry Brown count themselves lucky after accessing the Telestroke Service in Deniliquin.



Above: GP-VMO Rural Generalist Dr Rachel James



Right: Telestroke Services coordinator Fiona McKern

MEET OUR NEW GRADUATES



Steffanie Horner
West Wyalong Health Service

Murrumbidgee Local Health District welcomed an additional 25 newly graduated Registered Nurses began their careers across 12 sites in August. In 2022 Murrumbidgee Local Health District welcomed graduates in the February and May intakes to total 140 graduates for 2022, the largest number of graduate nurses employed to date.

District Director of Nursing and Midwifery Ms Christine Stephens said the additional graduate nurses will highlight to the state what the MLHD graduate program has to offer. The graduate nurse program will support the existing nursing and midwifery workforce.

“We are pleased to provide additional employment opportunities to so many graduates. We welcome both local and metropolitan graduates to the District.

“For those graduates relocating to MLHD they bring their families and friends to our wonderful regional communities to showcase what the district has to offer,” Ms Stephens said.

“Previous graduates have applauded the learning opportunities that regional facilities across Murrumbidgee Local Health District have offered, and the reward of working as a part of local communities.”

Ms Stephens said the new nurses are supported with a comprehensive education and mentoring program to assist the safe transition from university into the workplace.

“Each nurse is linked with local nursing and midwifery staff, educators and managers to ensure graduates have access to the support needed during their transition to the workplace. We have been able to increase the access to clinical nurse educators to support graduate Registered Nurses across MLHD facilities”.

Throughout their first year, graduates 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. Graduates are aligned to facility cluster groups and can link together via an array of technological applications to share knowledge and experiences. This provides opportunities to ensure access to the educational support and peers.

“2022 has already posed some challenges, and the knowledge and skills these Graduate nurses will be able to offer our regional facilities is welcomed,” Ms Stephens said.

Graduate nurses will begin employment with MLHD in 2022 at the following local hospitals: Boorowa, Corowa, Deniliquin, Finley, Griffith, Harden, Henty, Holbrook, Junee, Tumbarumba, Wagga Wagga, West Wyalong and Young. ■

Steffanie has not lived in a smaller regional town before but sees her Grad Start posting as an amazing opportunity.

“I feel like the teamwork will be better here and the people will make it very comfortable. Sometimes in a bigger hospital it is less personal, and a bit scary as you just don’t know where you are going or who all the people you can ask are,” Steffanie said.

“In a smaller facility like West Wyalong, I feel I will get more input and opportunity to learn hands on, and that the support teams will be really receptive.

“I am really grateful because I think that the skills I learn here will help me to become a really great nurse one day,” Steffanie said.

Steffanie is moving with her children and husband who is a Paramedic, who also now has a job at West Wyalong.

What a double win for the town!

We hope you all enjoy your stay at West Wyalong Steffanie and welcome to the MLHD family!

**Kristen Zanatta
Tumbarumba MPS**

Kristen was not entirely sure what she wanted to do before enrolling in nursing, but always knew her career would need to be centred around people and helping others.

“I suppose nursing was the best fit for me, and as I completed my studies I became more and more convinced I had made the perfect choice,” Kristen said.

Once completing her studies through the University of Wollongong, it was the same gut feeling that led Kristen to the snowy hills of Tumbarumba.

“I knew that I wanted to complete my training in a regional setting so that I could get a really comprehensive and varied experience as a

graduate nurse,” Kristen said.

“People sometimes get stuck in the city and inadvertently limit their experiences to the same ward or area.

“In rural and regional facilities, you can get more exposure to a wider range of things and the educational opportunities to learn in your role are amazing.

“In my first few months at Tumbarumba MPS I been able to work in accident and emergency, general wards and aged care with the most incredibly supportive facility manager, nurse unit manager and teams of nurses and assistants in nursing.

Originally from the mid coastal town of Illawarra, Kristen is happy to swap the sea for the snow.



“It will be my first winter in Tumbarumba, and I am bracing myself, but excited to experience such a beautiful season. I woke up to the snow this morning which was really beautiful.”

Kristen has found the people and township of Tumbarumba to be enchanting.

“The locals are just lovely and welcoming, and there

are lots of activities to join in with a really lovely sense of community spirit here.”

Kristen’s advice to others considering a career in nursing in a regional setting?

“Take the chance! You will not regret the opportunities you will have to grow and learn in a regional facility like Tumbarumba, I really do love it here!”



**Kusum Pun
Young District Hospital**

Kusum is looking forward to meeting her new colleagues and community.

“Thank you so much for this beautiful opportunity, I am very excited,” Kusum said.

“My husband and I have never lived in a smaller town before,

so we are really happy to see how different it is and for a quieter lifestyle and getting to really know the people in the town.

“I know it will be really different, but I expect I am going to love it,” Kusum said.

“Many of my family and cousins are nurses, and I

would sit at the dining table and listen to their stories. That is what inspired me to become a nurse. I can’t wait to really be making a difference in my chosen career.”

Kusum, we welcome you to Young and hope you settle in quickly. We know you are going to love it here!

**Surakshya Amgain
Adelong-Batlow MPS**

Surakshya recently relocated from Sydney to Batlow to commence her GradStart placement with MLHD and could not be happier.

Surakshya has always been fascinated by biology, and in particular what is going on inside our bodies, so nursing was a practical extension of her interests.

“I did not want to be stuck inside a lab, and I really enjoy people, so for me nursing has satisfied my curiosity about people, our health and how our bodies work.

“I recently secured accommodation in Batlow, so have only just moved into the town, but in the interim,

I lived in Adelong and really enjoyed the scenic drive to and from work each day,” Surakshya said.

“It gives me time to just be, to think and unwind and also to get to know the people in another smaller community.

“I have found the people in both towns to be welcoming and very friendly and my team at the Batlow MPS are fantastic, they work so hard for the patients.

“The support I receive here, the sense of teamwork and community is really noticeable.

“I could not have asked for a better community of people and team to learn and grow with,” Surakshya said.

An avid reader and movie buff, Surakshya is enjoying all the extra time she has now that she is in living in a more regional and peaceful area.

“Right now, I am reading ‘Think Like a Monk,’ and it is really complimentary to the beautiful space I am in right now, close to the hills, nature and away from the chaos of the city.

“I am loving my new life in the region, the quieter lifestyle and my partner is a real mountain person, so he is enjoying his visits here on weekends.

“There is so much to look forward to here, and I am excited to be a local for the Batlow Apple Blossom Festival,” Surakshya said.



“I might even consider staying, but we will just have to wait and see how we go this year!

Surakshya we do hope you continue to enjoy your placement at Batlow, and welcome you to the MLHD family with fingers crossed you decide to permanently call the region home.



All roads lead to the Riverina

Tipping their hats: Two soon-to-be graduates of the Riverina Regional Training Hub Abbie Wilesmith and Catherine Hitches

In April this year, Abbie Wilesmith and Catherine Hitches, two final year medical students from The University of Newcastle, travelled from Tamworth (where they are completing their studies) to Temora.

They drove the seven and a half hour trip to participate in the Riverina Regional Training Hub annual Rural Generalist (RG) Workshop and Showcase.

Now these two soon-to-be graduates have their feet firmly set on training in our region.

They broke their journey at Yeoval to grab this classic photo of themselves and the Big Akubra.

Their participation was part of their preparation to apply for internships at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital in 2023.

Both women have connections in the area but have seized every opportunity to learn more about rural training and careers in the region. Both Abbie and Catherine hold Rural Doctors Network (RDN) Cadetships and appreciate the support and opportunities the RDN have

provided during the second half of their medical school years.

Back in 2019 Abbie attended the RDN Rural Health Forum in Sydney with her university rural health club. While running a student workshop that day, she had her first contact with the Riverina Regional Training Hub.

In 2021 at an RDN Cadetship weekend in Albury, Catherine heard Dr. Rachel James and other Rural Generalists talk about their experience, which encouraged an interest in the Riverina Regional Training Hub. Both Abbie and Catherine have connected with the Riverina Regional Training Hub since then, including the 2022 Orange Cadetship weekend and most recently, in Temora at the RG Workshop and Showcase.

Abbie and Catherine were keen to attend the RG Workshop and Showcase to learn more about training in the region. In wonderful synchronicity Dr Rachel James was part of the teaching faculty for the workshop as were other passionate rural generalists including Drs Marion Reeve, Ben James, Maggie Minogue, Vennassa

Wong, Jennifer Smith, Barbara Cameron and Alam Yoosuff. They also met doctors in training from Wagga Wagga Base Hospital and local medical students from the Notre Dame and UNSW Rural clinical schools. All these locals shared their stories of living and working in the area with great honesty and passion, reinforcing Abbie and Catherine's intention to apply to train as junior doctors rurally, preferably in Wagga Wagga.

Excitingly their applications to continue their rural training in Wagga Wagga has been successful!

Both Abbie and Catherine are keen to get involved in community groups and events in Wagga Wagga as they have while in Tamworth.

This year, they have developed a love for pottery at the Tamworth Regional Craft Centre, enjoying the company of and generous encouragement from local ceramicists.

They hope to continue this hobby once they move south. Catherine in particular is looking forward to enjoying the music

scene in Wagga Wagga, as she loves song writing, playing guitar and piano. Abbie enjoys bushwalking and can't wait to get out amongst the trails in Riverina Murrumbidgee!

While both Abbie and Catherine have a keen eye on Rural Generalist training in the Riverina, each are also interested in varying specialties. In the next few years, Catherine hopes to expand her experience in Psychiatry, Emergency Medicine and Paediatrics, while Abbie is keen to get more involved in Anaesthetics and Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

How lucky are we to be welcoming these two in 2023. Their decision has been supported by many people and organisations passionate about improving rural health outcomes. ■



Abbie Wilesmith and Catherine Hitches will arrive in 2023 as graduates from the Riverina Regional Training Hub

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

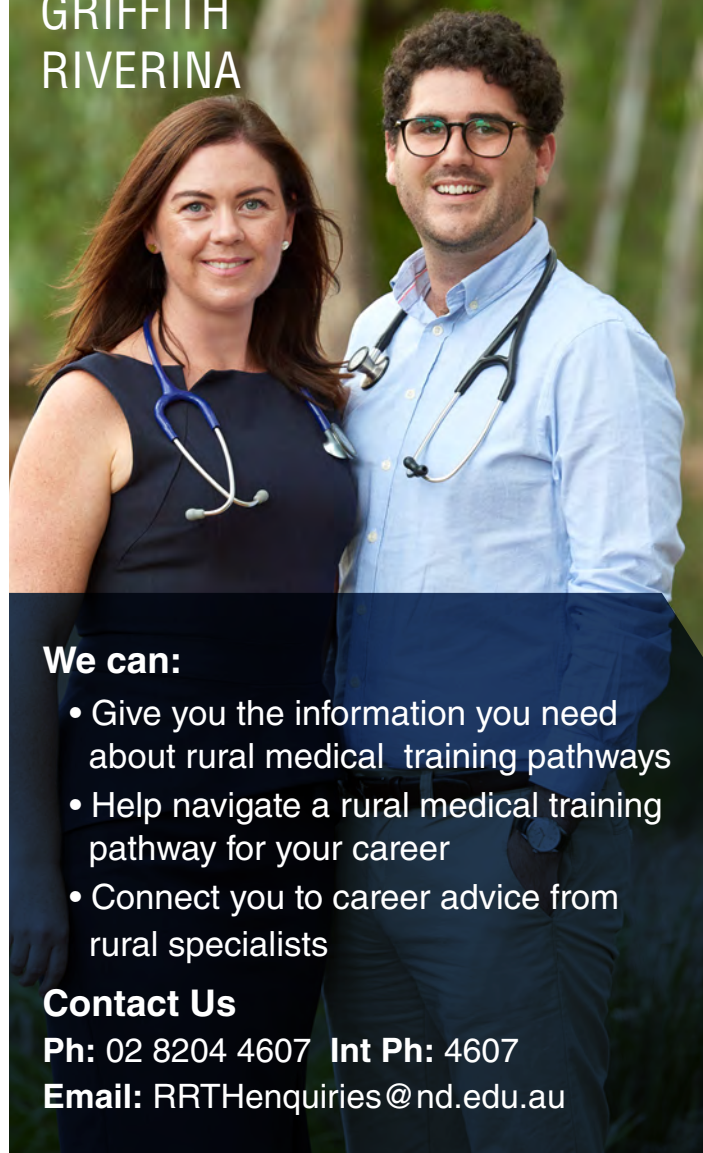
Fran Trench

Executive Officer & Training Support
Riverina Regional Training Hub | Rural Clinical School
Sydney School of Medicine | University of Notre Dame
Australia

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Local Response Group launches new suicide prevention campaign

Four local Murrumbidgee residents have joined with the Murrumbidgee Local Response Group to encourage community members who are in crisis to STOP and pick up the phone as part of a new suicide prevention campaign.

The campaign, featuring a television commercial and social media content, was developed by Murrumbidgee Local Response Group, comprising Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN), Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD), Wellways, NSW Police and NSW Ambulance, and began airing in May.

Murrumbidgee Men's Group co-founder Mr Rhys Cummins, who features in the campaign, said he was thrilled to be a part of this important message.

"The STOP Campaign encourages people who are experiencing suicidal thoughts to pause, take a breath and speak with someone before acting on these thoughts. Picking up the phone is crucial to get the support needed to overcome the tough times."

MPHN Senior Manager System Integration Anita McRae, said the campaign is designed to provide a simple set of steps to address a crisis and provide options to get support.

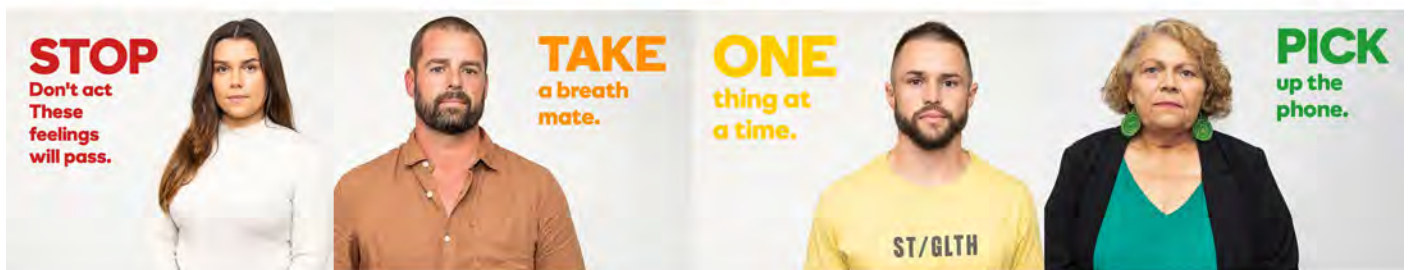
"The Local Response Group recognises the importance of supporting anyone experiencing suicidal crisis.



We know at times the pressures of life can become overwhelming for some people, and this can lead to thoughts of suicide. We need to continue normalising help seeking behaviour and reminding those who may be struggling the importance of connecting with support," Ms McRae said.

If you are experiencing suicidal crisis call Murrumbidgee Accessline on 1800 800 944, Lifeline on 13 11 14, or talk to someone you trust. ■

Struggling with life, Thinking of suicide, feeling Overwhelmed, feel as though things are Pointless?



In an emergency phone 000
Murrumbidgee Accessline 1800 800 944
Lifeline 13 11 14



Scan to visit our website

Applying for salary packaging just got easier

SalaryPackagingPLUS have launched a faster, more efficient salary packaging application process for all Murrumbidgee employees. It's called OnBoardingPLUS.

Now you can apply for salary packaging in seconds using your smart phone. Only your name, phone number, email and payroll number (if available) are required.

For those that aren't quite ready you can request an info pack or book a call from a SalaryPackagingPLUS expert.

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For further salary packaging information call 1300 402 523. Or visit the website at: salarypackagingplus.com.au/nswhealth

Start salary packaging in 3 steps



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2 Submit your details



3 Receive call back to complete application

INTRODUCING



Christine Stephens District Director Nursing & Midwifery

Christine Stephens is a woman who gets things done.

Described by her peers as a transformational leader, she is a highly skilled and qualified nurse, midwife and mental health nurse with over 25 years' experience working in the public health system.

Formally the Director of the COVID Vaccination Program in Sydney for NSW Health, Director of Nursing and Midwifery with Liverpool Hospital as well as Director of Nursing Services with SWSLHD Mental Health Services, Christine is well accustomed to a challenge in difficult times.

"My previous role within NSW Health had seen me invest so much time assisting Murrumbidgee Local Health District throughout the NSW Bushfire response, as well as the Pandemic. I admired MLHD's commitment and can do attitude in continuing to deliver services

to people living in remote and regional areas," Christine said.

"Jill (Ludford) is an exemplary leader, and I really wanted to contribute my knowledge and skills to MLHD, while also having a chance to work with one of the best Chief Executives in NSW Health."

Christine packed up her life and family and made the move to Wagga Wagga earlier this year, in the midst of the pandemic and house finding chaos that we all have become accustomed to.

"I was lucky to find something suitable for my family, but we got a little surprise we were not bargaining on.

"The previous owners were not able to relocate their built-in aquarium, so we found ourselves doing a bit of a crash course in tropical aquarium maintenance and am happy to report that no fish fatalities have occurred on my watch!" Christine said.

Besides maintaining her school of fish, Christine is passionate about the schooling of our nurses, and has been instrumental in facilitating an extra intake of nurse graduates to various facilities right across the district.

"I believe in supporting and developing nurses to rise to the challenge of delivering exceptional care and ensuring they are able to meet the challenges of healthcare delivery into the future," Christine said.

"In 2022 Murrumbidgee Local Health District have welcomed 140 graduates which is the largest number of graduate nurses employed to date. We are proud to be attracting so many people to our towns across the region.

"We receive so much great feedback from graduates about how welcome they feel, how supported they are and with many also bringing their families, it is a wonderful outcome for regional and remote towns.

"One of our nurse graduates at Corowa has recently been a finalist in the NSW Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards, which is very exciting, with another community nurse also nominated for the awards.

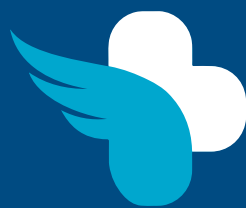
"It just goes to show the high calibre of our graduates and nurses that are working in our towns," Christine said.

"I feel privileged to be a part of that."

Christine is enjoying the quieter lifestyle that Wagga Wagga is offering her, in particular the lack of peak hour gridlocks and paid parking that took up so much of her time when living in Sydney.

"It is so much easier to be out and about in Wagga, visiting other towns and facilities and just doing the doing!

"My tree change has literally been a breath of fresh air, and I am looking forward to further supporting and educating our wonderful nursing and midwifery staff over the upcoming months. ■



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SALES - HIRE - SERVICE

A Beautiful Good-bye

Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) provides palliative care services across the region. The services provide specially trained nurses to assist people to live their life as fully and as comfortably as possible when living with a life-limiting or terminal illness.

For Holbrook wife and mother Tracy, the support and reassurance of the MLHD Palliative Care Team was instrumental in her being able to honour her husband's wishes to die at home in a familiar, respectful and loving safe-space.

Stuart was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer in November 2019, but was not a fan of hospitals and was adamant he wanted to die at home.

"When we received the news, I was not familiar with Palliative Care Services, but Stuart was determined to be discharged and for us to manage his death and symptoms at home," Tracy said. "It was a lot to consider and digest during one of the worst moments of my life."

"I was very fortunate to also have the support of Stuart's sister, who is a nurse and who was able to talk me through Stu's diagnosis and what was in front of us," Tracy said.

"Bronwyn was the first person I called, and she really dropped everything to be with us and support us," said Tracy. "Stu's face lit up when she walked into the room, and it was a beautiful thing."

Initially hesitant to engage the service, Tracy and Bronwyn worried about how they would cope with facilitating Stuart's desire to die at home.

Bronwyn is a Palliative Aged Care Outcomes Program Facilitator in Sydney, however held her own concerns about Stuart remaining at home because she had medical knowledge about what was in front of the family.

"My experience of Palliative Care was in a hospital setting so when Stuart let us know that he wanted to die at home, I remember feeling a little panicked, wondering how on earth we could get that done?" Stuart's sister, Bronwyn said. "I found my lived experiences involved Palliative deaths in hospital and I really could not imagine someone having a good death in the home environment."

"It all happened in the middle of the Pandemic, and we had been offered a hospice room, but when the Palliative Care Nurses came to see us and explain how the service is able to support us at home, to clarify our goals and expectations of care, it really

changed my perspective and alleviated my worry," Bronwyn said.

Tracy engaged MLHD Palliative Care Services and was surprised when familiar faces started to emerge.

"I actually had a connection with a few of the Palliative Care Nurses, I knew them from out and about in my town, they are part of my community, so I had seen them at sports and community events, I found that comforting."

"You worry that you may be inviting strangers into your home during such a stressful time, you want to feel safe, so it is a big leap of faith.

"But the team were so respectful, our whole family including Stuart, his sister Bronwyn, our two sons and I were able to actively participate in the decision-making process, our wishes and Stu's care and death at home."

Tracy feels that Palliative Care Services gave her the information, resources and understanding she needed to make informed choices that respected their wishes.

"Palliative Care involved Stu and I in everything, and they were very good at chatting to him, to us, making it about not just his death, but the life he was living now, the everyday things we were still experiencing, the normality of it, being able to laugh and enjoy living.

"When you have a competent team behind you, guiding you, helping with all the formalities, the processes, and you are able to support your family instead it was a gift because everything was done with dignity," said Tracy.

"Having people beside you like that make it possible, it gives you confidence to do this. It would have broken my heart if Stuart was to die alone in hospital, trying to get there in time.

"Having Stu at home with everything we needed, from medication, to showering, to

“The team were so respectful, our whole family were able to actively participate in the decision-making process, our wishes and Stu's care and death at home.”

equipment, a bed, nothing was an issue, nothing was too hard, the communication, it was extraordinary. It meant I did not have to worry," Tracy said.

"They relieved me of those kinds of burdens, and the impossible task of trying to find out the things I did not know about. Instead, my job was to be wife, friend, lover and the mother I needed to be for Stuart and our family.

“I will always be grateful for the experience and opportunity for us to say goodbye as a family.”

"I was able to honour my vows to my husband to the full extent, for better or worse. I could be there with him, hold his hand and be with him until the end, for his last breath.

"In that way it helped us all to focus on the time we had, make memories and reconnect as a family, because it all happened so quickly- it gave us the gift of time together," Tracy said.

Stuart's sister Bronwyn reflects on some of the moments she was able to share with Stuart, Tracy and her nephews at home in his last weeks of life.

Born in South Africa, they had many stories of their childhood adventures to share and as afternoons became chilly the family settled around a fire, (called a Boma in South Africa), and shared the stories from their childhood with Stuart's children.

"In those final two weeks, my brother was sleeping a lot, so we decided that whatever opportunities we had- we needed to do things that bring memories and quality into Stu's life and story," Bronwyn said.

"Stuart was a very funny man and a consummate storyteller. Right up until his last weekend, we made a point of sitting around the Boma with nibbles and drinks and shared conversations and stories with each other.

"Stu talked of his childhood, his life experiences, things like jackarooing from a helicopter in the Northern Territory and the funny things that happened to him. Some favourite stories were retold and embellished and even now we set him a place with his favourite drink, Guinness, when we sit around the Boma.



Photo: Stuart and Tracy

"I am thankful that in the short time we had left with Stu, we packed in so many memories, so many new rituals that would not have been possible in hospital, memories we can revisit, memories his children can cherish," Bronwyn said.

"I will always be grateful for the experience and opportunity for us to say goodbye as a family and for the support that palliative care services was able to offer us," Bronwyn said.

Reflecting on her last day with her husband, Tracy remembers the little moments that would otherwise have been taken for granted, the ones that usually pass without much

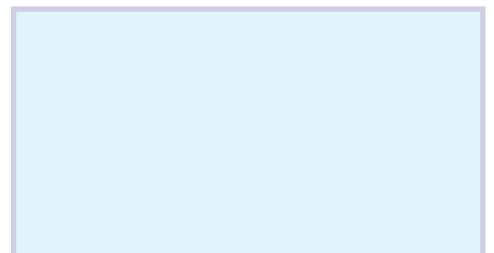
notice. The cup of tea they shared, the way he napped still holding his mug and how he did not spill a drop, the colour of her husband's blue eyes as he talked, the last little jokes they shared when they helped him to the bathroom and her son scooting around the room on the office chair.

"It was all so normal and then after a couple of hours Stuart quietly slipped away," Tracy said.

"I was with him when he took his last breath, I realised I was holding my breath too, and then he was gone. It was peaceful, dignified and beautiful.

"You know the saying that it takes a village to raise a child?

"Well it takes a community to say goodbye, and I got to be with him, to keep my vow, honour and cherish him till his last breath, as his wife. And that was all we wanted." ■





MEET THE TEAM

LEETON MIDWIFERY GROUP PRACTICE

Leeton Midwifery Group Practice (LMGP) offers midwifery-led model of care ensuring birthing mothers have access to positive and safe childbirth choices and continuity of care.

LMGP engages and collaborates with GPs, obstetricians and paediatricians to provide health assessment and care throughout the antenatal, birth and postnatal experience of the woman and her family.

Midwives also provide education, information and support including exercise and nutrition, strategies to enhance the birthing experience and breastfeeding support.

Leeanne Driscoll Registered Nurse and Midwife

Leeanne began her career at Leeton District Hospital in 1991.

Over the past 30 years Leeanne has worked in a variety of rewarding and challenging roles including midwifery, nursing in the general wards, emergency department nursing, acute care, theatre Nursing and Nurse Unit Manager roles.

“I found that during my tenure as a manager, I really missed patient contact, so when we no longer had a full time General Practitioner Obstetrician, I was keen to join the Leeton Midwifery Group Practice model of care,” Leeanne said.

Leeanne is passionate about giving birthing mothers in her community the support and care they need without having to travel to larger facilities such as Wagga Wagga or Griffith Hospitals.

“I wanted to be part of the solution for women’s birthing options for our town and surrounding areas,” Leeanne said.

“I love my town, I was born here at the hospital on the second floor! Thinking about it, I think I have delivered half the people in this town, so I feel very attached and want the best outcomes for the people who live here,” Leeanne said.

“I am thankful to have been able to raise my family in such a wonderful nurturing community,” Leeanne said.

“It worries me that there is a misconception in our area that birthing mothers do not have proper access to maternity services, because they do! We are right here at Leeton Hospital!

“We want to let everyone know about our wonderful service and the options available at your doorstep.

“I believe that the idea many people have around wanting doctors to attend routine births is not sustainable and in fact, doctors often miss the main event!

“Midwives have a specialised set of knowledge and expertise and can offer a very personalised and safe service,” Leeanne said.

The LMGP program essentially allows birthing mothers to not only get to know their team of local specialised midwives throughout the term of their pregnancy, but also enables care to be focused on an individual’s needs.

“Every parenting journey is different, and we are passionate about recognising a women’s rights to determine their birthing choices, pain relief options and post-natal birth care, including after care from the comfort of their home if needed,” Leeanne said.

“High risk pregnancies are more complicated and often require the birthing mother to deliver at either Griffith or Wagga Wagga, however we are able to collaborate with GPs, obstetricians, paediatricians and other specialists and monitor patients in the leadup to their birthing often saving our birthing mothers the inconvenience and expense of travel for routine check-ups.

“Women in high risk pregnancies still get to develop a good relationship with us and find it comforting to have us by their side even if they are not able to birth at our facility. We are still able to support birthing mothers and families during their pregnancy and afterwards.”

“I love midwifery and everything it is about, it gives you the opportunity to work both autonomously and in a highly specialised field, in sometimes challenging environments and adapt to changes quickly. It is extremely rewarding.

“This model of care is not just about the birth, but the entire journey leading up to and afterwards and we are so proud to be able to offer the program to our community.

“We encourage all pregnant women to book with the LMGP, from 16 weeks gestation.

“Certain health issues may prevent some women from birthing with the LMGP, however, antenatal and postnatal care is offered to most women who fit the criteria.

If you’re unsure if this model is suitable for you please check with the LMGP midwives.





Rebecca Quiring Clinical Midwifery Educator

Rebecca began nursing in 2007 and became a midwife just two years later.

“I grew up in Hillston, then moved to Armidale to complete my Bachelor in Nursing in 2007. I qualified in Midwifery in 2009 and spent much of my career working in tertiary hospitals and in the community.”

Rebecca and her family made the decision to relocate to Leeton in 2019.

“We did a bit of research on the town and when I saw that Leeton was operating under a midwifery group practice model it was the deciding factor for us.

“Midwifery led group practice is not a new concept in Australia, with research telling us the continuity of care we deliver really is the gold standard. The model really does give women the best possible outcomes. Babies are less likely to be born premature and mothers are more likely to report a positive birthing experience.

“I really felt it was a great way for me to contribute to something that will have an amazingly positive outcome for the women we care for, their families and the community in and around Leeton.

“Offering a quality, safe midwifery service close to home, is so important for rural women. Women have the opportunity to develop a long-lasting relationship with their midwives throughout their pregnancy, to well after their baby is born, and then again for subsequent pregnancies. This high-quality service is right here in Leeton – so there is no need to travel.

“Being able to maintain ongoing and quality woman centred care service and to be able to offer additional care and support from specialist services from Wagga Wagga, Griffith and Canberra is just so important for regional towns.

“It is the most important thing we do as midwives,” Rebecca said.

Rebecca reflects about her time so far in Leeton and the way she and her family feel so welcomed.

“We have been able to develop some wonderful community connections and the town really has exceeded all my expectations.

“For a smaller community town, it has all the facilities of a larger city with the bonus of feeling like part of something more personal.

“The community spirit in Leeton is amazing. Attending the Sunrice Festival with my family was heart-warming, everyone is so friendly.

“I am proud to work in the Leeton Midwifery Group Practice.”



Beth Herlihy Registered Midwife

Beth first trained as a Naturopath in Byron Bay before making the decision to pivot to midwifery.

“I enjoy the holistic approach to healthcare and had an opportunity to broaden my skills as a direct entry midwife at Lismore Hospital back in 2011.

“Practicing as a naturopath and registered midwife in Bryon Bay for 25 years gave me an opportunity to really decompress from my previous life living and working in Sydney and allowed me the time to really focus on community and the person-centred care you really can deliver as healthcare provider in a smaller town.

“At the completion of my degree in midwifery, I spend my graduate year in midwifery at both the RPA in Sydney, and at Parkes Hospital in the Central West.

“I was meant to stay in Parkes for six months but loved living in a regional area so much I stayed for over five years!”

When the opportunity to apply at Leeton as a midwife in LMGP team became available Beth jumped at the chance.

“I was emotionally ready to assist women in their birthing experience, without a doctor present because as a midwife one is then able to work at our full scope of practice, which is a wonderful thing.”

Beth has been living and working in Leeton since January. We were curious to know how Beth has adjusted to living away from the coast.

“The ocean is over-rated,” Beth laughs, “I am getting to know the people in this gorgeous little community and I just love the palm trees, that’s all the reminder I need of the tropics!

“As a midwife it is just so important to have the opportunity and time available to develop meaningful professional relationships with the women who use our service, and look forward to birthing their babies and offering continuity of care throughout their whole journey.

“Here at the LMGP we have a beautiful midwifery team who have the time to provide the absolute highest level of care. We are all about a cohesive and caring work environment and take pride in our ability to educate and empower women and their families about the choices available to them.

“You would be hard pressed to find a better team anywhere else!”



Shona Kaio Registered Midwife

Shona was initially introduced to Leeton as an agency midwife.

She loved it so much she applied to be a permanent casual midwife in the LMGP team and looks forward to her three monthly posts to her second home.

“I am very happy here, let me tell you that!” Shona said.

Originally a registered midwife in New Zealand, Shona is used to providing individualised care for her patients during the course of their pregnancy and following birth.

“It is my 16th year practicing as a midwife, and I just now feel like I really know my stuff. Midwifery is such a specialised and important role, it is a very specific skill set, and I feel privileged to be part of every woman’s birthing journey.

“My values and skill set are very well placed here because the setting is smaller, the care is one on one, and you have opportunity to really get to know your patients. It is not a tick and flick scenario

“I enjoy providing one to one care, giving that continuity and reassurance to birthing mothers, it is a perfect way to help women who really need it.

“In Leeton the sun shines every day! It is a lovely small community, very friendly and accepting of others.

“My work environment is friendly and supportive and the most rewarding thing about my job is relationships I have built with my peers and the community really makes it feel just like home.

“I feel I now have an extended family here in Leeton and what better way to say thank you than to help offer a service that is safe, midwife led, community based, and women centred.

“We are here for you.” ■

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LIVING WITH PARKINSON'S

Parkinson's Disease (PD) is a movement and mood disorder typically presenting with symptoms such as slowness of movement, muscle rigidity, instability, tremor, depression and anxiety and diagnosis can occur at any age.

With one person every hour of every day diagnosed with Parkinson's, it is important to continue education, research and support for consumers, families and support people who are living with Parkinson's Disease (PD).

Murrumbidgee Local Health District runs Parkinson's support clinics to assist those diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Clinics offer a comprehensive range of services incorporating a multidisciplinary team of clinicians including a Speech Pathologist, Physiotherapist, Social Welfare Worker, Occupational Therapist, Parkinson's Nurse and Aboriginal Health Worker.

Eric was diagnosed with PD in 2017 and recently spoke to us about his personal journey following his diagnosis.

A career Research Agronomist, who has lived in Wagga since the 1990s, Eric has a passion for the land and solving problems around cropping systems and legumes but was really taken aback when a routine trip to an orthopaedic surgeon over a grumpy knee, led to a diagnosis of PD.

"I could have fallen over backwards with shock when the specialist told me he thought I may have Parkinson's, and when the neurologist confirmed the diagnosis, I felt devastated," Eric recalls.

"My only experience of seeing someone with Parkinson's was the media coverage of Mohammad Ali at the Olympics, and I remember that image of this man once larger than life, shaking and looking very unwell.

"I initially thought it was a life sentence and tried to hide what was happening to me."

Eric was referred to MLHD Parkinson's Team and has not looked back.

MURRUMBIDGEE
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He completed the LSVT BIG Physical Therapy Program with MLHD and has found it now is a part of his everyday life.

The program trains people with PD to use their body normally again, as daily living movements tend to be inhibited by the disease.

Initially run four days a week over four weeks, Eric says the program has been invaluable to his progress and ability to live more fully.

"I decided that I needed to stop being sad about my diagnosis and just give it a go, and that really has paid off."

"The thing about this program is it goes for four weeks and the exercises really do become cemented in your brain. I have done other things before like physio, but this program gives you the opportunity to really immerse yourself in it, with support and repetition.

"Even though I have completed it, I still do the exercises most days, without really thinking about it and the girls call me every six months or so to check in with me and see if I need a refresher." Eric says.

"The girls are a bit bossy I think, but that is actually one of the best things, because they insist my movements are big and loud. I can hear them in my head when I am pottering about... "Do it bigger!"

"My advice is to commit to it and be disciplined, because the program helps you take control and trains your brain back into doing tasks the correct way.

With Parkinson's you sometimes shrink your movements and you do not even realise that is what you are doing," Eric said.

Eric maintains a very busy and fulfilling life, including singing in the Wagga City Rugby Choir, learning to play the clarinet, joining a band, swimming and walking to the top of William's Hill a few afternoons a week and maintaining a 10 000 Fitbit daily step average.

"I have not let Parkinson's become who I am and being able to help remove the stigma around it is so important. I have helped my friends understand some of the things I am facing, but we carry on as normal. I no longer feel I have to hide what I am going through, or make it all about who I am," Eric says.

In fact, Eric has managed to complete a 200 page family history book as well as convert his backyard pool into a sustainable vegetable garden oasis amongst all the his other hobbies, and quite frankly we do not know how he does it.

"The MLHD Parkinson's Team have definitely made a difference in my life, helped me feel stronger and more positive, and I have learnt a lot. The secret is to not give up and keep busy, reduce stress and relax. I encourage anyone with Parkinson's to just commit and give it a go."

"Parkinson's is nothing to be ashamed of, and with the right support you can live a happy and busy life." ■

PHOTO GALLERY

Celebrating Excellence: 2022 MLHD Excellence Awards Friday 1 July



PHOTO GALLERY

NAIDOC Week celebrations in the District



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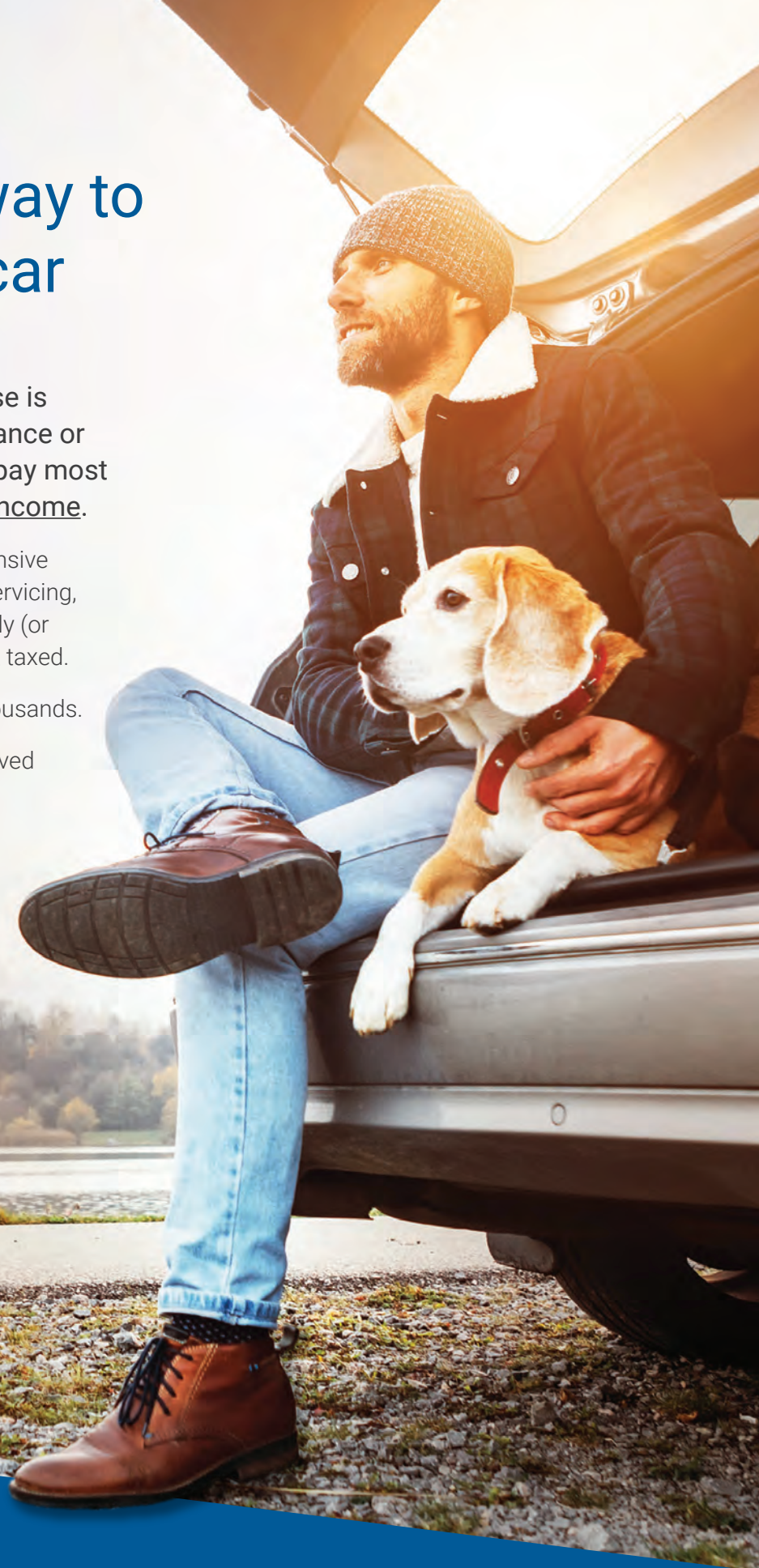
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