

WE ARE

Issue 4 | Winter 2022 | FREE

Southern

Excellence in Care

Quality
Award
winners

In this issue:
National Volunteers Week
Reducing seclusion and restraint



Southern NSW
Local Health District

Taking care of your teeth and mouth



The Oral Health Service at Southern NSW Local Health District offers free dental care for NSW residents aged under 18, as well as NSW residents aged over 18 who are eligible for Medicare and have one of the following Australian Government concession cards:

- Health care card
- Pensioner Concession Card
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

Online registration now available

It's easy to get in touch with the service and make an appointment. Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/SNSW-OralHealth and enter your details in the Request a Call Back form. Once submitted, our operators will aim to contact you within 30 minutes if within business hours (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4.15pm) or by 9am the next day.



You can also contact the Oral Health Contact Centre to request an appointment. Call 1800 450 046

Oral Health Services in SNSWLHD

Bega – South East Regional Hospital, Cooma Hospital and Health Service, Goulburn Community Health, Moruya – Eurobodalla Health Service, Pambula Health Service, Queanbeyan Hospital and Health Service, Yass District Hospital.

*For all contact with our service, you will require a current Medicare card, and for adults a valid Centrelink concession card.



Marina Kinred, Kim Pietrini (Manager), Lara Van Der Weiden and Theresa Fife are part of the Oral Health Contact Centre team assisting clients with registrations and bookings.

Visiting the hospital



Yass-based mother of two Lee McCauley drives over an hour to Queanbeyan's Community Oral Health Clinic because she knows she can rely on the team to provide the absolute best care for her daughter, Shea.

'It's hard enough being a mum of a very shy kid, it's very hard to get her to do things. I like Queanbeyan dental. Every time we go, it's positive! We've never had a bad experience. I don't mind the drive at all.'

Lee said Shea gets anxious visiting the dentist, but the team in the Oral Health Clinic have always made her comfortable.

During one of Lee's visits to the clinic she was grateful for the staff's compassion. When she had arrived, she discovered her appointment was not until the following week.

She was about to make the long journey back to Yass when the Oral Health team pulled together and arranged to fit Shea in, so she could get the treatment she needed.



Shea visiting the Oral Health Clinic in Queanbeyan Hospital. Her mum Lee says she always has a positive experience at the clinic.



'The way the staff treated us, there was no aggression or frustration. It was my mistake, but there was no attitude. They were positive and uplifting. Everybody needs more of that,' Lee said.

'Although Shea was still anxious about the visit, the entire team went above and beyond to make her comfortable.'

Lee said she was allowed to sit in the chair with Shea while the dentist treated her.

Lee's story is one example of how Southern's staff continue to demonstrate absolute commitment to positive patient experiences. Every day we strive to provide our patients with high quality healthcare and compassion.

“ Although Shea was still anxious about the visit, the entire team went above and beyond to make her comfortable.”



Message from our Chief Executive

This celebratory winter edition of *We Are Southern* goes live on 22 June, the same day we announce the winners of Southern's Quality Awards for 2022.

Throughout this issue you will meet some of our Quality Award winners. They will share stories about their work and the ways their commitment to "excellence in care" improves the health and wellbeing of our Southern NSW communities.

Our annual Quality Awards recognise a diverse array of talented and dedicated employees and volunteers working in every corner of the Southern NSW Local Health District.

Ninety outstanding individuals and teams were nominated for one of 14 categories. A full list of winners and nominees is included on pages 14 and 15.

Every nomination outlines the ways a staff member, volunteer or team exemplifies the NSW Health CORE values of collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment.

Southern's Quality Awards demonstrate the many ways our people work together to achieve goals and improve levels of service. The 2022 Awards pay special tribute to those who have continued to excel, innovate and care throughout another challenging year for health workers.

MARGARET BENNETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Southern NSW
Local Health District



Moruya United Hospital Auxiliary members at a National Volunteers Week celebration in Moruya.

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Southern Onscreen

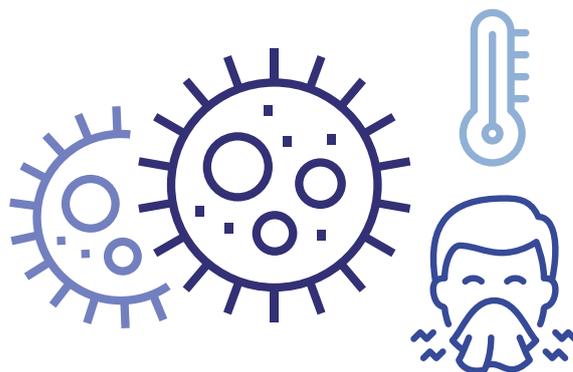
Watch Southern shine on screen.

On the cover

Alice McKellar is the Acting Director of Pharmacy and is part of Southern's COVID-19 Vaccination team that won a Quality Award this year.

A wintry mix of COVID and influenza

With winter here, it's important to remember the risk of catching viral illnesses is higher. But you can reduce the risk.



Flu is already circulating in NSW for the first time in two years and is coinciding with continuing COVID-19 cases. Both flu and COVID-19 can cause serious illness and death, especially for those with underlying health conditions.

By continuing to take actions to stay COVID safe, such as washing hands, staying home if unwell, and staying up to date with vaccinations, we can reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 or the flu.

Flu vaccination

During June 2022, the flu vaccine is free for all NSW residents over the age of 6 months to boost their immunity for the winter season.

It is always free for people aged 65 years and over, children aged 6 months to under 5 years old, Aboriginal people, pregnant women, and people at higher risk of serious illness from flu.

Contact your GP, pharmacist, or Aboriginal Medical Service to book an appointment for the flu vaccination. You can also receive the COVID-19 vaccination during the same appointment.



COVID-19 vaccination

Evidence from overseas shows that over time, protection from a COVID-19 vaccine begins to decrease, and the risk of COVID-19 infection increases. By having a COVID-19 booster dose, you remind your immune system what to do if you come into contact with the virus.

If you've already had COVID-19, you can still catch the virus again, so it's important to stay up to date with your vaccinations to keep your immunity strong.

To book an appointment near you, visit: bit.ly/vaxbookings

Winter booster

An additional COVID-19 booster dose (or winter booster) is recommended for those at higher risk of serious illness. You are eligible for a winter booster if you are: aged 65 years or over, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person aged 50 years or over, a resident of an aged care or disability care facility, aged 16 years or over and severely immunocompromised.

For more information visit: bit.ly/covid-winterbooster



Emergency Department celebration

The Crookwell community has a new Emergency Department at Crookwell District Hospital to be proud of.



Left: Member for Goulburn and Minister for Local Government Wendy Tuckerman (centre) officially opened the Crookwell Emergency Department on 21 April.

Below: Crookwell doctor, Ramaswamy Thangavelu, with Site Manager Debbie Hay and Wendy Tuckerman MP, was recognised during the Emergency Department opening for his 45-years' service to the hospital.

Crookwell Hospital's new Emergency Department (ED) was officially opened in late April by Member for Goulburn and Minister for Local Government, Wendy Tuckerman. The new ED is part of the hospital's \$2.5 million refurbishment project, which included an upgraded Wellness Centre, improved records storage area and office fit outs.

Southern's Executive Director Operations Fiona Renshaw also attended the opening and said patients, visitors and staff will benefit from a range of new and improved public and clinical facilities.

The upgrades include:

- a new reception area and improved public and ambulance access
- larger waiting and medication rooms
- more public bathrooms
- increased acute treatment space capacity
- medical equipment upgrades, including ECG machines, defibrillator and a transport ventilator.

Minister Tuckerman congratulated the refurbishment team for overcoming the challenges of COVID-19 to deliver an improved health facility to the Crookwell community.



'Well done to the Crookwell Hospital staff team for persevering with the building works while managing the local COVID-19 response and the interruptions caused by lockdowns and supply chain issues,' Mrs Tuckerman said.

The Crookwell ED is part of the NSW Government's record \$10.8 billion investment in health infrastructure over four years to 2024-25, with nearly a third of the capital allocation in this financial year going towards regional and rural health facilities.

“ Well done to the Crookwell Hospital staff team for persevering with the building works while managing the local COVID-19 response and the interruptions caused by lockdowns and supply chain issues.”



Eurobodalla-based women's dance group, Djaadjawan Dancers, perform at the forum in Narooma.

Collaboration and connection

Southern recently hosted the annual NSW Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum in partnership with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW.

More than 150 Aboriginal mental health professionals met at the Narooma Golf Club on 17 and 18 May 2022 to collaborate, connect and share knowledge.

The conference theme was 'From Little Things, Big Things Grow', an acknowledgment and celebration of the expansion of the Aboriginal Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing workforce across the state.

Keynote speakers were Jeff Amatto, founder of *More Cultural Rehabs, Less Jails*, and Darryl Gardiner, owner and founder of *Rolling with the Punches*.

Kimberley Green, Southern's Aboriginal Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs District Coordinator and proud descendant of the Dharawal and Yuin Nations, said the forum was an opportunity to hear from passionate people about their programs, projects and experiences in the field of Aboriginal mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.

'We showcased amazing and innovative work and inspired others to transform the care and services they provide,' Ms Green said.



Aboriginal Health Worker Tina Kelly and Rural Counsellor Julie Irwin at the mental health forum.



Midwifery team members Claudia Stevenson, Amanda Gear and Hannah Bird react to their win at the NSW Health Awards.



Joe Stewart and Jo Donovan were part of the team nominated for Excellence in Aboriginal Health.

NSW Health Awards winner

Maternity Services from Southern won the Patient Safety First category at the recent 23rd NSW Health Awards for their 'Keeping pregnant women safe and close to home' project.

The NSW Health Awards recognise innovative and sustainable health programs that benefit the NSW community.

Maternity Services were commended for their implementation of quantitative fetal fibronectin (fFN) testing. The testing can predict the likelihood of a woman giving birth within seven days of testing. Knowing whether preterm labour is likely helps guide decisions for care and may avoid hospital admission.

Within the first four months of the project, 79% of the women who would usually be transferred to a tertiary hospital were able to be cared for locally, close to home and their family.

Southern also had two finalists in the NSW Health Awards, including an Aboriginal Health project, 'Seeing country recover through the eyes of the Yuin people' for the Excellence in Aboriginal Health Award, and Bega-based volunteer Rhonda Crowe for the Volunteer of the Year Award.



Volunteer Rhonda Crowe, pictured with Southern's Director of Clinical Governance Alison Broadbent, was a finalist in the NSW Health Awards.



Southern's winners

Scan the QR codes to watch Southern's winner and finalists talk about their projects.

Medical Oncologist joins Southern

Cancer Services at Southern has welcomed its first Medical Oncology Staff Specialist, Dr Katherine Francis, who will complement existing Visiting Specialists so more patients can attend their consults closer to home.

Katherine is a Medical Oncologist and will be based at South East Regional Hospital in Bega.

After growing up in Coffs Harbour, Katherine moved to Sydney to complete a medical degree at University of Sydney. She also completed specialist training at St George Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital and The Royal Hospital for Women.

Katherine also has a degree in electrical engineering from the University of New South Wales.

As well as being a Medical Oncologist, Katherine works for the Australia and New Zealand Gynaecological Oncology Trials Group as their research fellow. In this role, she helps set up new clinical trials, run existing clinical trials, and publish the results of completed trials, all with the goal of improving the care of women with cancer. Katherine is also involved with the breast cancer trials group and the thoracic oncology group of Australia.

Currently, Katherine is completing a PhD researching the toxicity of cancer treatments and working to develop methods to better measure treatment side effects.

Katherine is looking forward to enjoying the natural beauty of the NSW South Coast, and the local oysters. In her down-time, she likes to bushwalk, swim and paint.

Dr Katherine Francis is the new Medical Oncologist at South East Regional Hospital, Bega.



Lauren Hogan will be supporting people living with Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson disease support

People living with Parkinson's disease in the Goulburn region now have the support of Parkinson's Specialist Nurse Lauren Hogan who is trained and experienced in the care of people with the neurodegenerative condition.

Southern team members were honoured to join Parkinson's NSW and Wendy Tuckerman MP to launch the new position in May.

Lauren Hogan is a Goulburn local who has spent 13 years working at Goulburn Base Hospital – nine of which have been as a Registered Nurse. Her most recent role was Clinical Nurse Educator on the surgical ward. She has experience in nursing, assessment and planning for Parkinson's patients, reduction in falls causing serious injury, working in multidisciplinary teams, and infection control.

Lauren spoke about her commitment to Parkinson's patients and her new role saying, 'One thing I know for certain about Parkinson's is that each person's journey is unique. I feel very thankful to be invited to share that journey with each and every one of you... and to hopefully make a difference in that journey... for the better.'

Southern's General Manager of the Tablelands Network, Brian Bonham, said specialised neurological nurses are proven to have many benefits for people living with Parkinson's and their families.

'The placement of a nurse assists with the high rates of depression and anxiety associated with Parkinson's,' he said.

'Carers and family members also notice significant improvements in their own wellbeing, with reduced levels of depression. Hospital stays can also be reduced through the intervention of a specialist nurse.'

Parkinson's NSW, in partnership with Local Health Districts in NSW, currently co-manages neurological nurse positions in five regional areas - Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Shoalhaven, Tweed and Goulburn. A sixth position is also based at Hornsby Kuring-gai Hospital in Sydney.

About Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's is a progressive, degenerative condition of the central nervous system. Nerve cell damage in the brain causes dopamine levels to drop, leading to the symptoms of Parkinson's.

Parkinson's symptoms include tremors, slow movement, stiffness, and loss of balance. Also fatigue, apathy, depression, disturbed sleep, loss of sense of smell, and issues with speech and swallowing. Symptoms can be managed with medication, exercise and other forms of therapy and support. However, as yet there is no cure.

Reflections on a career in health promotion



Lorraine Dubois (right) with Tai Chi for Arthritis participant Lucy Bowerman and retired volunteer Dorothy Bilbow.

Southern's Manager of Population Health, Lorraine Dubois, is retiring from a 27-year career that began with addressing HIV and AIDS discrimination.

One of the early projects Lorraine worked on when she joined Southern in 1995 was a public health response of a different kind to COVID-19 - HIV/AIDS, which was the major infectious epidemic of the late 20th Century.

As a Sexual Health Counsellor in the late 90s, Lorraine's work included addressing discrimination of HIV and AIDS by sharing with the community the panels from the Australian AIDS Memorial Quilt. Each panel told a story of someone who died from HIV, many were aged in their 20s and 30s.

'Young men were dying quite early and quite unnecessarily,' Lorraine said. 'There was a big need to use health promotion approaches to curb discrimination. The health promotion work that I did was really quite provocative.'

Each World Aids Day, the panels would be displayed in Cooma, offering the community an opportunity to learn about the human side of the epidemic.

Lorraine said children would come along to the park and participate in a ceremony of unfolding the AIDS Memorial Quilt.

Another piece of early work Lorraine developed was the 'Little Black Book', a straightforward sexual health resource for young people on the ski fields. The resource is still produced each ski season and has been replicated in other NSW communities.

'I was particularly fortunate in the roles that I had because I had good mentoring. And I've had great managers,' Lorraine said.

Lorraine said a current board member of Southern, Narelle Davis, was one of her key mentors who showed her how appreciation and value from leadership brought out the best in employees.

Throughout her career, Lorraine said one of the major changes she saw was how women in the workplace have come to be more supported.

After retiring, Lorraine will move to Victoria to be closer to family and the Melbourne arts scene.

Reducing seclusion and restraint

Southern's mental health inpatient units are celebrating record low incidents of seclusion and restraint, Benjamin Hodgson writes.

Kim Cochrane, Clinical Nurse Consultant for the Reduction of Seclusion and Restraint, has been leading Southern's efforts to reduce seclusion and restraint practices in mental health inpatient wards and Emergency Departments (EDs).

She says that early intervention and effective de-escalation are key tools to reduce the use of seclusion and restraint across Southern.

What is seclusion and restraint?

The use of these practices is mostly confined to Southern's mental health inpatient units and some EDs.

Seclusion is the confinement of a person alone in an area where free exit is prohibited. Physical restraint is the restriction of a person's freedom of movement by the application of a 'hands on' approach from staff.

Seclusion and restraint are used only as a last resort intervention to prevent harm to a consumer or others. There is a District-wide focus on reducing and, where possible, eliminating their use.

Seclusion and restraint are viewed as inhumane and archaic, and there is no evidence to indicate that they have any therapeutic benefit. In fact, Kim says they can be traumatising for everyone involved.

'It is a failure of our service if we need to seclude or restrain someone. It usually means we haven't picked up on something sooner,' she says.

'Consumers, many of whom have a trauma background, come to us for help and leave with a sense of mistrust and further trauma. It damages their relationship with the health service.

'All our staff know it's important to reduce the use of these practices. They know how it feels to restrain someone, it's horrendous.'

What other options are available?

A key part in shifting away from these practices involves educating inpatient staff on the harmful impacts and giving them practical alternative tools.

This work is underpinned by the Six Core Strategies for Reducing Seclusion and Restraint and the Safewards Model. There is a strong focus on the use of diversion strategies, such as the use of sensory modulation to help people effectively regulate their emotions.

'Throughout the District there is work being done to take more of a holistic, trauma-informed approach to mental health care. I've been lucky to work closely with staff who are motivated and passionate about making change,' Kim says.

'There are a lot of staff who have bought in fully - they want to give it a go! People want things to change. They want to do things better. This means we are able to go in the right direction.'

Unrestrained hope for the future

South East Regional Hospital's inpatient unit in Bega has set Southern's record of 341 days without the use of seclusion, and Chisholm Ross Centre in Goulburn reached 145 days.

Kim and her team are excited to continue their work and are focussing on bridging the gap between mental health services and ED staff. They are looking to better understand the ED space and how to support staff when mental health presentations occur.

'We don't come to work to cause harm, we come to give the best care possible. That's why we do what we do, and using these restrictive practices goes directly against that. It is damaging to people.'

The seclusion and restraint project won the People and Culture Award at Southern's 2022 Quality Awards.

“

Seclusion and restraint are used only as a last resort intervention to prevent harm to a consumer or others. There is a District-wide focus on reducing and, where possible, eliminating their use.”



Kimberley Cochrane leads the project in reducing the use of restraint and seclusion practices in Southern's mental health inpatient units and Emergency Departments.

High achievers

Southern's annual Quality Awards recognise and celebrate the commitment and innovation of staff to improve the care provided across our District.

Each year, Southern's staff members are encouraged to nominate their colleagues for team or individual awards. This year, the winners were announced at the Quality Awards ceremony held on 22 June at Narooma Golf Club. Congratulations to all our winners and nominees.

Quality Awards 2022



Immunisation Coordinator Kym Bush (left) and Acting Director of Pharmacy Alice McKellar were part of the COVID-19 Vaccination program awarded the Keeping People Healthy Award.

Team Awards

Delivering Integrated Care

Recognises initiatives that support NSW Health's vision for a sustainable health system that delivers outcomes that matter to patients, is personalised, invests in wellness, and is digitally enabled.

Winner

Oral Health goes virtual- A paediatric specialist model of care

Nominees

- The Oral Health Contact Centre - reducing the wait.
- Outreach Fracture Clinic.
- SERH Theatre efficiencies and waitlist reduction.
- Developing culture of excellence in clinical documentation.
- Patient transport cardiac monitoring and escalating and notifying of deteriorating patient.
- Clinical redesign to optimise theatre efficiencies at SERH.

Excellence in Aboriginal Healthcare

Recognises exceptional healthcare delivery through strong partnerships across NSW Health and external agencies.

Winner

Going above and beyond during a global pandemic

Nominee

Yuin coastal interagency project.



Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Services

Recognises the innovation in improving the quality and safety of mental health patient care.

Winner
Virtual Care for Clozapine consumers

Nominees
COVID education for Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs (MHAOD) consumers.
Distress tolerance pilot program - a MHAOD and Headspace collaboration.

Health Research and Innovation Award

Recognises research that is innovative and positively informs health decisions.

Winner
Providing medical imaging services that are greener, leaner and safer for our patients

Nominee
A meta-analysis of the efficiency of peri-tonsillar infiltration of tramadol administered with analgesia in the control of post tonsillectomy pain.

Keeping People Healthy

Recognises projects and programs that promote good health and improve the overall health and wellbeing of the community.

Winner
COVID-19 Vaccination program

Nominees
COVID-19 tried to make us fall but we are still standing.
Paediatric clinics at South East Regional Health Service.
Consumer COVID vaccination action MHAOD inpatient services.
Aboriginal health chronic disease management program - Aunty Jeans.

Patient Safety First

Recognises projects that show a commitment to putting patient safety first every day.

Winner
Resource specific approaches to perioperative opioid stewardship in rural hospitals

Nominees
Southern NSW Local Health District's Anaesthetic Educational Day.
Integration of two pharmacy departments into one.
SAER Triage - the first 24 hours.
Leadership in operational services - week day clinical operations huddles in the Bega Valley.

People and Culture

Recognises positive practices and interactions in the workplace that improve health outcomes of Southern's consumers.

Winner
Reducing the use of seclusion and restraint in mental health inpatient services

Nominees
Make it electronic - SNSWLHD Learning Pathways Program.
COVID-19 scenarios for mental health inpatient units.
Introduction of inaugural clinical pharmacist into the Emergency Department in South East Regional Hospital.
Southern's Festival of Inclusion 2022.
SWAT (Staff Wellbeing and training).
Workers Compensation, Injury Management Unit, Recovery @ Work Team - Reinvigorating - Efficiency enhancements leading to significant savings for SNSWLHD.
Look listen feel, reducing restrictive practice in five declared mental health facility emergency departments.
Team transformation to better patient care.



Kimberley Cochrane leads the Reducing restrictive practices in mental health inpatient services project, which won the People and Culture Award.

Transforming Patient Experience

Recognises the projects or programs that promote collaboration between the patient and the healthcare team to improve health.

Winner
Virtual Enhanced COVID-19 Care

Nominees
Co-designed peer STOC model of care development.
Creation of family friendly spaces in mental health inpatient units.
SERH Telestroke implementation at South East Regional Hospital.
My rehab, my journey.



The team of Clinical Nurse and Midwifery Specialists (CNMS) at Queenbeyan Hospital won the Chief Executive Award.

Individual Awards

Collaborative Staff Member

Recognises employees who have made an exceptional contribution to the community through collaboration.

Winner
Dr Louise Tuckwell

Nominees

David Dumbrell
Dot Hughes
Luke Blumer
Morgan Holloway
Wendy Pryke
Jennifer Mozina
Jenni Hudson
Kym Bush

Simon Thompson
John Bennett
Warrick Manley
Niccola Follett
Victoria Holland
Alana Matthews

Volunteer of the Year

Recognises an individual's significant contribution to volunteering in Southern.

Winner
Brad Rossiter

Nominees

Danni Koenigkamp
Dianne McGaw
Frances Wilmore
Sue Richards

Emerging Leader

Recognises the significant contributions in leadership and service, including mentoring and other forms of capacity building by an emerging leader in Southern.

Winner
Skyan Fernando

Nominees

Leah Pennay
Kersten Davis
Maree Hatton
Kristy Wilson
Rowena Mitchell
Amanda Sibley
Rhiannon Lang
Emma Turner
Caroline Stewart
Rebecca Reader
Royce Justin
Lewana Warburton
Sherri-Leigh Bayliss

Outstanding Leadership

Recognises excellence in leading people, projects, or teams.

Winner
Kimberley Green

Nominees

Dot Hughes
Leanne Ovington
Rebekah Bowman
Victoria French
Kellie Batten
Jackie Ross
Susan Rowley
Kylie Williams

Care and Kindness

Recognises a staff member who consistently displays care and kindness in all interactions with patients, families, colleagues, and the community.

Winner
Clancy Tucker

Nominees

- Nicole Lenane
- Dani McParland
- Emma Woolley
- Joseph Hanrahan-Newton
- Shayne Abernethy

Patient Safety Hero

Recognises a staff member who works consistently to create a culture of patient safety within their team.

Winner
Emily Laszuk

Nominees

- Shannan Craig
- Rebekah O'Reilly

Other Awards

Chief Executive Award

Queanbeyan Hospital CNMS
"Growing Great Leaders"

Board Chair Award

Oral Health Contact Centre - reducing the wait

Agency for Clinical Innovation Award

Patient transport cardiac monitoring and escalating and notifying of deteriorating patient

Resilience Award

Jennifer Mozina

Elevate Award

Dani McParland and
Simon Thompson



Kim Pietrini manages the Oral Health Contact Centre, which won the Board Chair Award.



Quality Award winners

Meet some of our Quality Award 2022 winners. Each winner will be considered for entry into the state-wide NSW Health Quality Awards.



QUALITY AWARD WINNER

Quality Awards 2022

Margaret Bennett

MARGARET BENNETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Alan Hawke

DR ALLAN HAWKE AC
CHAIR



Southern NSW
Local Health District

elevate
together as one

From the majestic snowy mountains to the glorious southern tablelands and shimmering south coast, Southern NSW Local Health District provides care to more than 200,000 people across 45,000 square kilometres and seven local government areas (LGAs). Southern NSW Local Health District covers the traditional lands of the Gundungurra, Ngambri, Ngarigo, Ngunnawal and Yuin nations.

Collaborative Staff Member of the Year

Dr Louise Tuckwell

Facilitating the conversation between hospitals and GPs is a fundamental part of Dr Louise Tuckwell's role in the Eurobodalla. But getting a group of shift-working doctors together in one room can be a challenge.

She decided to create a podcast, with the goal to record locally relevant content and make it easily accessible. Since starting fifteen months ago, her podcast has had over 3,300 downloads.

Dr Louise's podcast promotes awareness of available services and work practices within the local medical community, which has in turn created positive relationships between GPs and Emergency Department doctors at Moruya Hospital.

'It has a very wide audience,' Dr Louise said.

'Emergency medicine in a rural area is different to that in a metro setting. I thought if I did some podcasts interviewing specialists and other people who work in our local area, the education will be accessible and relevant to a lot of our regional staff.'

The interviews have been widely accessed, even outside the region. 'With the Telestroke service rollout, I interviewed Professor Ken Butcher, I did an episode on snake bites with the head of the snake bite project Professor Isbister, I did episodes with some of our local paediatricians on topics related to babies and children ... There's a whole range of different topics covered,' Dr Louise said.



Dr Louise Tuckwell

Volunteer of the Year



Brad Rossiter OAM

Every Friday, Brad Rossiter OAM can be found at Bridge Plaza in Batemans Bay promoting organ donation and kidney health awareness. He shares his own story with others and listens to their experiences – a skill he first learned on the job as a butcher, he said.

'That's what good butchers do, they talk and talk to people, and they listen.'

Diagnosed with type 1 diabetes as a child, Brad (pictured below with wife Lorae) was later diagnosed with end-stage renal failure and put on dialysis. He became legally blind and had both legs amputated. An organ transplant saved his life.

'I can never say thanks enough,' he said. 'But I know in my heart [volunteering] is one way I'm able to do that.'

Brad founded the Eurobodalla Renal Support Group and Organ Donor Awareness in 2007. South eastern NSW now has the highest number of registered organ donors per capita than anywhere else in Australia thanks to this group's efforts and Brad's advocacy over the last 15 years. 'I'm very proud of that,' Brad said.

Chair of the Eurobodalla Community Representative Committee (CRC), Brad is enthusiastic about promoting health in the community. He is a member of Eurobodalla Health Service Quality and Risk Management Committee as well as the steering committee responsible for overseeing the development of the Clinical Services Plan for Eurobodalla Health Service.

He is also the driving force behind the Eurobodalla Health Expo. 'There's more to health than just the four walls of the hospital,' he said.



Brad Rossiter OAM with his wife Lorae

Emerging Leader



Skyan Fernando

Skyan Fernando

Genuine community engagement and leadership are reflected in Skyan Fernando's actions as Aboriginal Health Worker. At the height of the pandemic, Skyan demonstrated her commitment to helping mob, going door-to-door to offer essential supplies to families who were in isolation, and ensuring they had everything needed.

Skyan quickly became an influential voice in vaccination outreach in Queanbeyan, working to reassure Aboriginal communities. Southern's exceptionally high Aboriginal vaccination rates are a credit to Skyan's commitment to Aboriginal health care and the community's trust in her.

Skyan also saw the impact isolation had on families during lockdown. In response, she found funding to start Yurwan Mura (Strong Pathway), a virtual playgroup for children and parents. Yurwan Mura began with 11 families and grew to a network of over 24 families. 'Everyone was so responsive. I engaged with families I never expected to,' she said.

Her motivation to help other Aboriginal people is deeply personal. 'I'm big on creating opportunities and ensuring that Aboriginal people have a voice at the table. That's where my drive comes from,' she said.

As a strong Aboriginal woman and the eldest of 10 children, she has seen the struggle many Aboriginal people face when it comes to accessing and trusting health services. 'I see the disengagement with services, so always I try to create pathways for Aboriginal people.'

'When I got this job, I was in a position where my voice was important. To have a strong Aboriginal leader [in this position] makes it easier for Aboriginal and Torres Strait community to navigate health services.'

Outstanding Leadership

Kimberley Green

Kimberley Green was a nurse for over a decade before she completed an Aboriginal Mental Health traineeship.

'I moved out of nursing into the traineeship because it was a good opportunity, and I just never left. I enjoy the work. I prefer to sit down and invest time to get to know my consumers. I like that they know they can call, and there's someone at the other end of the phone who can offer them some good solutions or whatever support they need,' Kimberley said.

It's these phone calls, or occasionally a home visit, that can make all the difference, she said. 'Sometimes it's just that one phone call that stops that cascade of crisis that requires more intensive care.'

Always willing to go above and beyond, Kimberley has become a strong advocate for Aboriginal people admitted to Mental Health inpatient units. Her example continues to inspire staff to better support Aboriginal people.

Recently, Kimberley was a key driver behind Southern hosting the 2022 Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum and will soon roll out training for staff to become instructors in Aboriginal Mental Health. She also mentors and supports Aboriginal Mental Health trainees. 'I wouldn't ask anybody to do something I wouldn't do,' she said. 'Sometimes, a trainee will come to me with a situation, and we'll talk through it. We'll then say, so next time, what can we do better, not as individuals but as a service? And we will work towards that.'

Kimberley Green



Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Services Award

Project title: Virtual care for Clozapine consumers

Southern's Clinical Change Team in Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs conducted a new trial recently, offering Clozapine consumers more choice in how they access services. A virtual option was introduced so they can receive care at home. This has reduced the burden and cost of travel, increased consumer independence, and, in some cases, helped consumers retain employment as they no longer needed to attend weekly appointments in person.

Home monitoring had not been used in NSW Health previously for mental health consumers who take Clozapine, but when the opportunity to work with the electronic company Philips arose it became clear that many patients would benefit from the flexibility offered.

Trial participants were given a home monitoring kit and user-friendly tablet to measure their blood pressure, heart rate, body temperature, and weight. Mental health clinicians received this information, which was reviewed by a Medical Officer, and then entered into the consumer's medical record. The tablet also helped with goal setting and care planning and provides

connection to their community case manager or Clozapine assistant through video calls.

The feedback has been very positive, with one consumer saying, 'I feel more in control of my health.'

Project lead Joanne Brown (pictured below) said many consumers who participated in the trial found they had more time to do what they want and less stress. 'It's really about giving them another option,' she said.

'It's going to make such a difference in their lives.'



Joanne Brown

Delivering Integrated Care Award

Oral Health goes virtual - A paediatric specialist model of care

In 2020, a new collaboration between Southern's Oral Health Service and Sydney District Oral Health Service started to roll out. The goal was to connect children to specialist dental care locally (historically a challenge for Southern NSW and Murrumbidgee Local Health Districts) by regularly bringing paediatric specialists from Sydney to Bega. But COVID-19 restrictions soon halted the project.

'Restrictions meant we were only able to provide urgent and emergency care. It also meant specialists weren't allowed to travel down to see us,' said Trolisa Knudsen, Clinical Lead, Oral Health SNSW and MLHD.

The Oral Health Team came together to develop a virtual care model. Working with local dental clinics, patients would present face-to-face, while an Oral Health Professional would conduct a live consultation via MyVC with the specialist joining remotely. 'We use a little camera that goes inside the mouth and shows the specialist all around the mouth. We can take photos or videos if needed,' Trolisa said. 'It works really well.'

'We have saved hundreds of hours in patient travel, and children requiring specialist treatment during the pandemic were assessed in a timely manner and able to access the treatment they required.'

The pivot to digital worked so well that initial consultations continue virtually. 'This means, when the specialists come down, they can do treatment the whole time they are here. It's a much better use of the time they have in our District,' Trolisa said.



Trolisa Knudsen

Strength, support and sacrifice



During National Volunteers Week from 16 to 20 May, our volunteers took centre stage as Southern’s staff thanked them for their strength, support and sacrifice.

Each week, Southern’s volunteers are doing amazing work across the District to help our patients, their families and carers, and staff. We are better together with them. They are special people in our communities, who sacrifice their time to provide compassionate care.

Southern hosted five celebrations during National Volunteers Week in Bega, Moruya, Yass, Queanbeyan and Goulburn to thank our volunteers. Read about some of our volunteers and what motivates them.

Yetty Mitford-Burgess

When a patient is treated in oncology at South East Regional Hospital they often see a familiar face in Yetty Mitford-Burgess, who has volunteered for over five years. Yetty offers the patient water on arrival, followed by a warm drink and homemade cake or slice during treatment.

Yetty, like the others who volunteer during the week, enjoys talking to the patients, and doing small tasks for the nursing staff, allowing them to devote their time to the patient care.

Yetty is passionate about helping others and enjoys a chat.

‘I’m a real people person,’ Yetty said. ‘I just love oncology because we are doing something for patients and helping people.’

Volunteering came naturally when Yetty retired from a long career in nursing, where she collected blood donations. Now, she enjoys seeing the other side of this important service and the difference it can make. ‘When someone has a transfusion, I get quite excited,’ she said.

‘It was lovely collecting blood donations because you knew you were helping somebody. But to now see people in need receiving it at the other end is very special because I know it has been donated and given with love from a donor, and now it is giving life back to somebody. You can literally see them going from very pale to a little bit pinker.’

“ I just love oncology ... we are doing something for patients and helping people.”



Yetty Mitford-Burgess volunteers at South East Regional Hospital in the Oncology department

Barbara Downey

When her husband was diagnosed with Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Barbara Downey found herself in and out of the hospital, traveling regularly to Canberra to access treatment.

To fill her days there, she began “tidying up”, as she calls it, helping her husband and others around the ward. After he passed away over nine years ago, she relocated to Goulburn and soon became a volunteer carer.

Since then, Barb has spent many years volunteering across different departments, including Renal and Oncology. At one time, she collated COPD packs for patients, taking the information sheets home with her and putting each one together with the help of her son.

She understood firsthand how helpful these packs can be. ‘In my husband’s time, we never had that. I never had that,’ Barb said.

Currently, Barb is a guide in the new clinical services building at Goulburn. ‘I’m very proud to be a volunteer, I love it,’ she said.

‘My husband, and my mum and dad up there in heaven would be looking down and saying, “look what Barb is doing.” I never thought I would be doing this, but I am and I’m proud and happy.’

What she loves most is helping others, including both patients and staff. ‘Helping, that is the greatest thing,’ she said.

Profiles written by Brooke Boland



Dianne McGaw is a volunteer at Goulburn Base Hospital and enjoys helping others.

Dianne McGaw

After being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, Dianne McGaw retired early from a career in education. Volunteering at Goulburn Hospital became her way to keep giving back to the community.

Today, she has volunteered at the hospital for over eight years. ‘The staff are wonderful. They make you feel like you’re part of the staff. I’ve found it a really positive environment to work in,’ she said.

Most days, Dianne puts together information packs and organises paperwork for patients coming in the next day.

‘It’s just an easy job, but the nurses say it’s so helpful to have ready to hand out.’

She says she is happy to find “the gaps”, the little jobs that need to be done so nurses can work more efficiently and easily.

‘I know how much I loved volunteers when I worked as a teacher because there’s always something I just didn’t have time for. That is my main motivation, just to do something useful for somebody else. I’ve met so many wonderful people through volunteer work. It gives me something to do and it helps others.’



Barbara is a Hospital Guide Desk volunteer in Goulburn Base Hospital.

National Volunteers Week gallery



Southern staff and patients celebrating our volunteers and saying thank you for their dedication.



Watch Southern online

Click the QR codes to view videos from Southern NSW Local Health District.

We Are Southern

Meet some of our staff and get to know the vision and values that underpin the work we do every day.



Moruya midwife

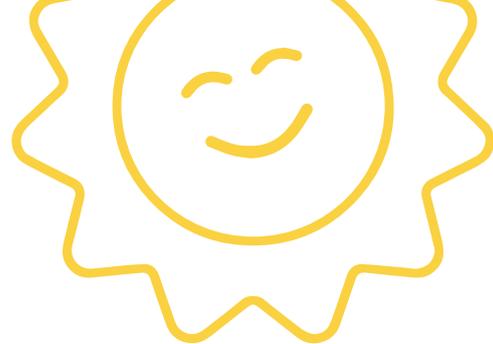
Ashleigh Peterson is a Registered Nurse student midwife at Moruya Hospital. Find out what she loves about working in Moruya Hospital.



100 years of progress

On the International Day of the Midwife, Southern's Director of Midwifery, Bek Bowman, talked about midwives' powerful and profound work.





Vitamin D and the winter chills

In winter the risk of vitamin D deficiency and infections increases. In Australia it is estimated that 1 in 4 adults suffer from some form of vitamin D deficiency. Southern's Health Promotion Officer Chelsea Maxwell explains the importance of vitamin D.

Vitamin D is essential in helping our bodies absorb and retain calcium and phosphorus, which are both crucial for building and maintaining healthy bones, teeth, and muscles. Despite what its name might suggest, vitamin D isn't actually a vitamin.

Vitamins are nutrients that our body can't create and instead we must consume them in our diet. Vitamin D is both a nutrient we can eat and a hormone our body makes. It can be obtained from direct sunlight, diet or supplementation, and its most common form is synthesized in the skin after exposure to ultraviolet B radiation from the sun.

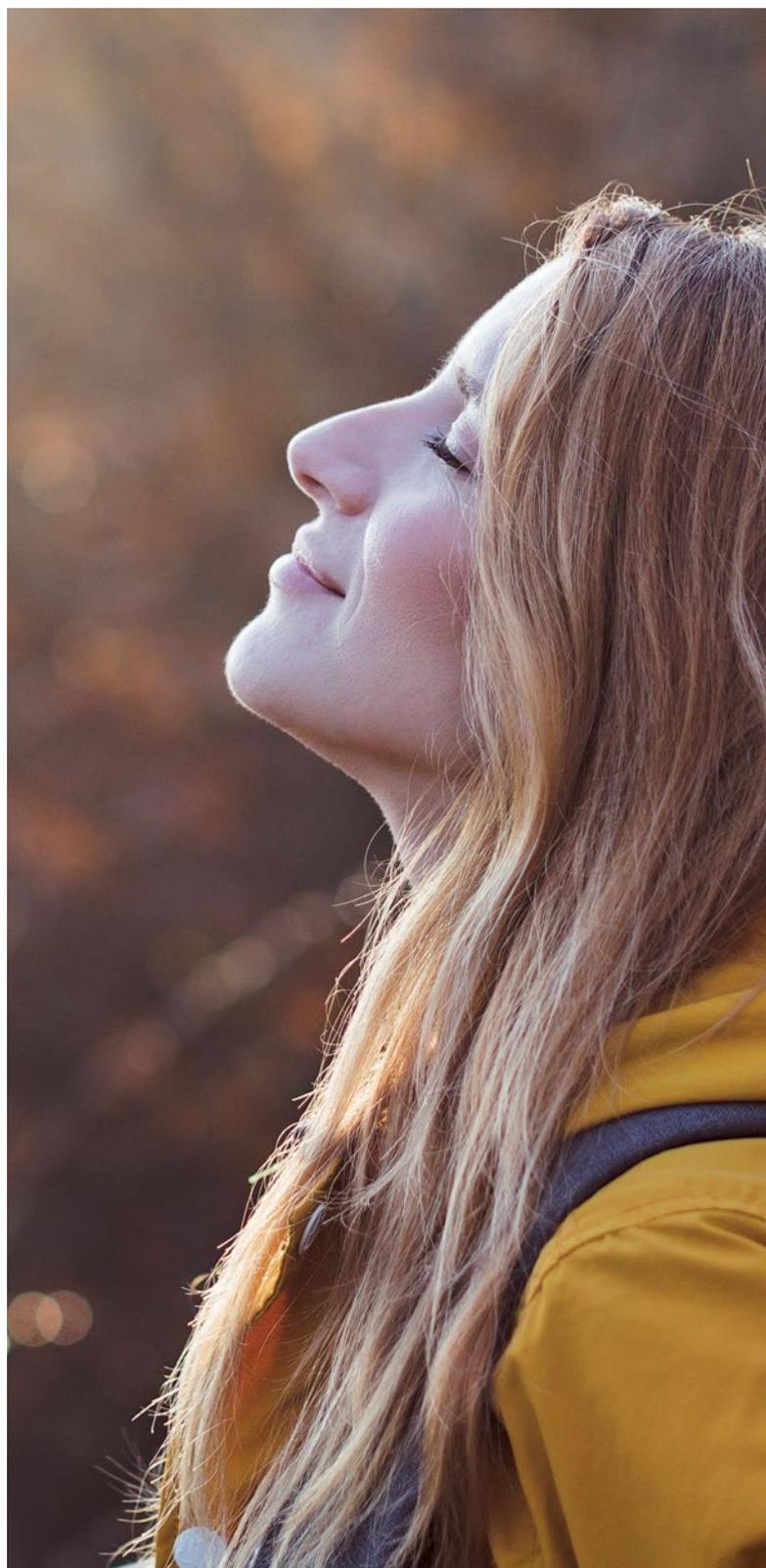
Vitamin D plays a key role in the uptake of calcium in our bones as our bones store 99% of our body's calcium. Being deficient in vitamin D can also lead to being deficient in calcium, which can increase our chances of having fragile and weak bones.

Who is at risk of being vitamin D deficient?

You may be at risk of being vitamin D deficient if you:

- stay mostly indoors for health, work or other reasons
- have naturally darker skin
- cover your body for religious or cultural reasons
- avoid the sun for skin protection or due to a medical reason
- are obese
- have a health condition that affects vitamin D absorption from your diet
- take medicines that cause vitamin D to break down
- were born to a vitamin D deficient mother.

There are ways to increase your vitamin D intake and limit your chances of being vitamin D deficient.



“ The best way to get vitamin D is through sun exposure. In winter you need to expose your skin to the sun for 26-28 minutes either between the hours of 10am to 11am or 2pm to 3pm.”

How much vitamin D should I be getting each day?

Due to vitamin D playing a key role in helping build and maintain healthy and strong bones our consumption levels change with our age. As we age our daily intake of vitamin D needs to increase to help reduce the risk of becoming vitamin D deficient and decrease our chances of suffering from osteoporosis and falls due to reduced bone strength. The recommended daily intake of vitamin D for individuals aged between 0-50 is 5 micrograms (200 IU) per day and for those aged between 51-70 years you need to be getting 10 micrograms (400 IU) per day. If you are 71 or older you need to be getting 15 micrograms (600 IU) per day.

How to get the recommended daily intake?

The best way to get vitamin D is through sun exposure. In winter you need to expose your skin to the sun for 26-28 minutes either between the hours of 10am to 11am or 2pm to 3pm. To ensure the best results you need to expose 15% of skin (this is usually your face, arms and hands) 4 to 6 times a week, depending on your skin colour, with those who have a darker complexion needing a little longer in the sun.

Eggs, mushrooms and fatty fish such as salmon, herring, sardines and canned tuna contain high amounts of vitamin D, and in Australia margarine is fortified with vitamin D, but it is a limited amount. You can also take vitamin D2 and vitamin D3 supplements to get your daily dose. The main difference between the two is how they are made: vitamin D2 is made from plant sources and vitamin D3 is made from animal sources.

The bottom line

Vitamin D deficiencies are common, however getting adequate sun exposure, eating foods rich in vitamin D and taking supplements, if needed, can help you increase your daily intake of vitamin D and decrease your chance of becoming deficient. Remember to get outside in winter for around 30 minutes and expose your skin to the beautiful sunshine.



We Are Southern newsletter



We Are Southern magazine

Have you missed an issue of *We Are Southern* magazine? You can view it online at bit.ly/wearesouthernnews or scan the code.



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Health
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COME WORK AT SOUTHERN

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
AVAILABLE IN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

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

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