

2019-2020

Annual Report



Healthy
NORTH COAST

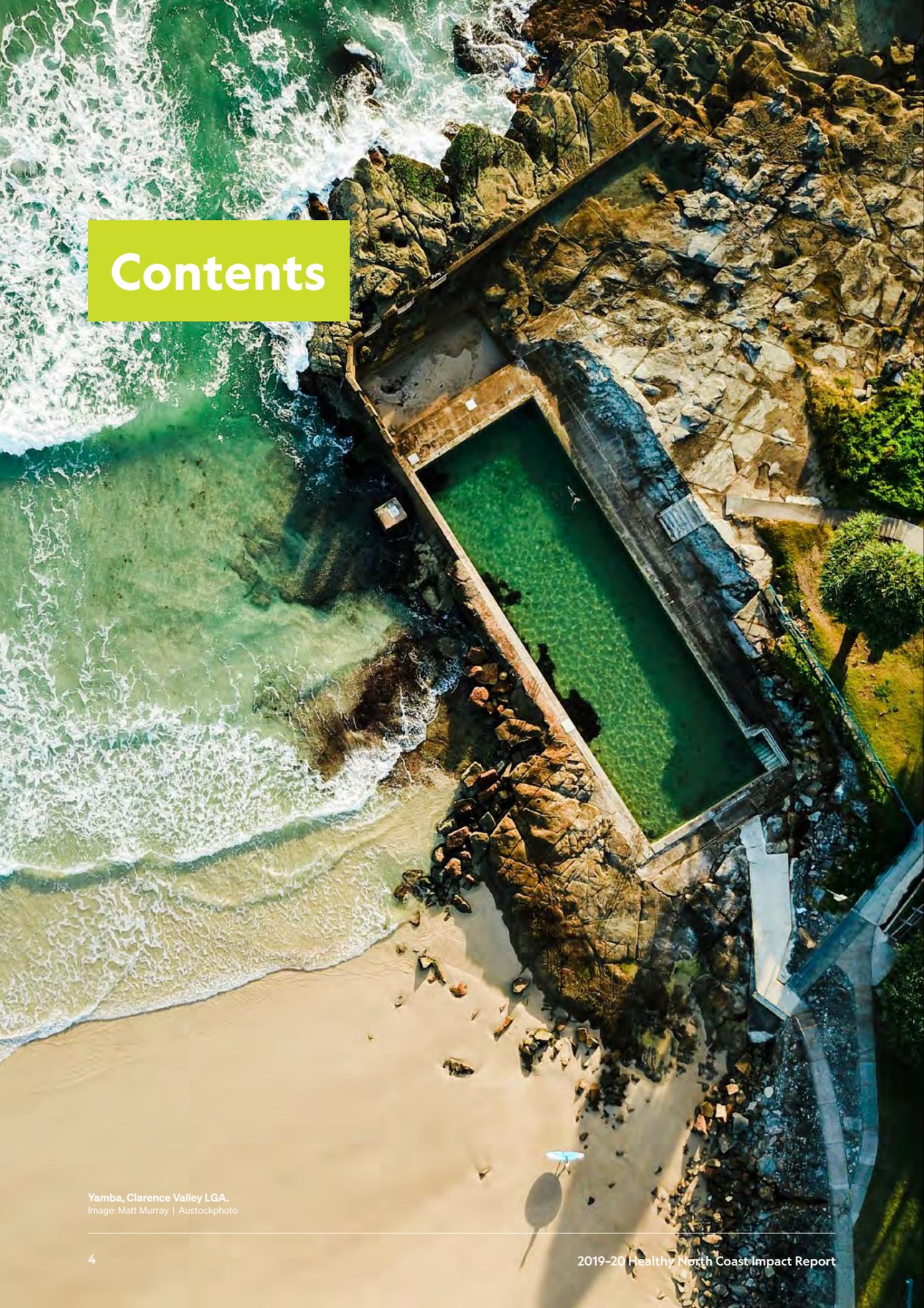
phn
NORTH COAST
An Australian Government Initiative



Healthy North Coast acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands across our region, which includes the Githabul, Bundjalung, Yaegl, Gumbayngirr, Dunghutti and Birpai nations. We pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise these lands were never ceded and acknowledge the continuation of culture and connection to land, sky and sea.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and honour the rich diversity of the world's oldest living culture.



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CEO report

JULIE STURGESS

Devastating bushfires swept through a wide swath of the Australian continent in the summer of 2019–20 and many of our communities were severely impacted. Just when we thought we had weathered the firestorm, along came COVID-19. What a year!

Both events were unprecedented not only in our local history, but in our nation's history. We can only begin to guess what the long-term consequences might be as the pandemic continues.

Certainly, thousands of our community members have been affected by one or the other of these significant events. Even though we have been blessed to have escaped the COVID-19 lockdowns and community transmission we have seen across much of Australia to date, the future remains uncertain, and people are on high alert.

The silver lining has been the clear demonstration of the remarkable and important contribution Healthy North Coast, along with other PHNs, has been able to make by assisting emergency responses and general practices to support the health and safety of our communities.

This has required us to be agile in our responses, collaborative and innovative. We have had to mobilise very quickly and shift organisational focus and priorities at short notice as a very fluid situation evolved. All of this happened as we transitioned, by necessity, to becoming a fully online remote workforce.

I am justifiably proud that our staff and senior executives were able to work together to quickly develop a comprehensive pandemic response and they have my thanks and gratitude. Our teams worked with local health services, providing them with ongoing assistance to help ensure our North Coast communities remained safe and healthy.

We worked tirelessly to support general practice, and primary care more broadly, to enable a well-coordinated and effective COVID-19 response. We also led the management of outbreaks in residential aged care facilities.

Another top priority for Healthy North Coast was responding to the Australian Government's request for us to support the opening of GP-led respiratory clinics across the region from Port Macquarie to Tweed Heads.

The impact of the bushfires and the pandemic cannot be underestimated on the mental health of our communities, and I want to mention the important work undertaken this year through our participation in the National Suicide Prevention Trial.

During this year, the 5 trial sites have been able to adjust their region-specific suicide prevention plans to be more responsive to the needs of the community. This includes increasing frontline and gatekeeper training and tailored help-seeking messaging, to reach impacted community members and people living in more isolated and remote areas. The trials are ongoing until June 2022 and an evaluation report with recommendations will be available in December 2021.

For all its challenges, the pandemic also provided great opportunities for change and improvement.

It became the catalyst to accelerate improvements to healthcare that have been discussed for many years, such as telehealth (for which we provided GP training and support for a video call platform), coordinated care pathways, pandemic responses and better care integration across acute and primary care.

These improvements are strongly aligned to our strategic objectives and are well reflected in both the organisational restructure and rebranding we undertook this year.

The organisational restructure could not have been completed at a better time. It was undertaken to ensure we would be dynamic and responsive, able to quickly adapt to emerging priorities and a rapidly evolving health environment — and it was our foundation stone as we navigated (and continue to navigate) the pandemic. (See page 16)

By streamlining, digitising and automating our processes and protocols, we were able to maximise the resources available for dealing with the consequences of COVID-19 across our footprint.

During this year, we also set out to reconnect with our communities through a new look for our organisation. We wanted to showcase our commitment to continuing to develop a truly connected, person-centred community that is led by our own community members. We hope you love the upgrade as much as we do and that it helps to give more insight into who we are, what we do and what we stand for. (See page 24)

One of the things we stand for is strengthening our commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their health. To demonstrate this, we recruited a new executive position, the Deputy Director, Aboriginal Health. Soon after, the portfolio expanded to include 4 identified Aboriginal Health Coordinator roles across the region and a new Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing portfolio. In an organisational first, all these positions were filled by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. (See page 39)

This year, we also affirmed our commitment to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and agencies through planning the development of our upcoming Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). (See page 58)

Among other important projects that should not be overlooked in this tumultuous year are the launch of the North Coast Collective and the early implementation of the system dynamics modelling framework. (See pages 32 and 46)

Both these projects will help drive health reform and optimise health outcomes across the region with their focus on empowering communities to identify what is important to them. They will help us understand the complex and dynamic factors influencing a person's health over a lifetime, and to make evidence-based decisions on how we spend our health budget.

I warmly encourage you to read about these and our other exciting projects elsewhere in this report.

Finally, my report would not be complete if I didn't pay special tribute to all our board members, who bring such a diversity of experience and knowledge to the governance of Healthy North Coast. Thank you all!

Chair report

DR TIM FRANCIS

What a year it has been. I would like to start by acknowledging all of the people who gave of themselves over the past 12 months to care for our communities, be that fighting fires, manning respiratory clinics, enforcing social distancing or coordinating responses.

The last year has shown (like no other in my memory) just how important it is for our communities to own their own health outcomes. We have learnt the importance of social connection, simple hygiene, respecting personal space and working together to protect our most vulnerable.

We have challenged our beliefs around how we can work, how we can deliver quality medical care and how it can be funded.

We have also seen the impact of persistent isolation, unrelenting trauma, uncertainty, unemployment and inadequate social security. And we will continue to deal with those impacts for years to come.

Healthy North Coast enjoyed an exceptional year of delivering support and championing change within our health system. We were able to support a coordinated approach to bushfires regionally as well as contributing to statewide and national response planning around natural disasters and pandemic.

We provided resources, leveraging HealthPathways and Clinical Council meetings to assist with dissemination of information to primary care around the emerging COVID-19 epidemic, keeping people informed of the coordinated State and Commonwealth response and in turn feeding back the observations and concerns of our local clinicians and service providers.

We assisted in the rollout of telehealth services through arrangements with software providers and by supporting additional coverage in community black spots.

Healthy North Coast worked with the local health districts to support and establish crisis plans for our residential aged care providers, increasing the understanding and cooperation between the Commonwealth-funded primary and aged care and State-funded health care sectors in our region.

During 2019–20 we witnessed the delivery of a Productivity Commission report which identifies increased investment in complex systems modelling and collaborative commissioning — driven locally by Healthy North Coast — as key investments to improve mental health outcomes for our communities on a national level.

The overwhelming cost to the community of mental illness necessitates a change in our approach to spending in this area. While by definition no model is perfect, the North Coast Collective aims to bring evidence to the efficient spending of increasingly limited health funding, the goal being to provide the best possible outcomes for the available funding.

We have seen progress towards defining a similar model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, which will be owned by that community rather than forced upon them.

We have also progressed the North Coast Collective through the untiring commitment of our CEO, who has not been afraid to challenge the status quo and ask, 'If we keep doing things the same way, why should our community expect better outcomes?'

I am proud to say we have seen some decommissioning of programs which were not delivering quality outcomes for our communities, allowing reinvestment of those funds through codesign and commissioning. Being prepared to decommission is a key cultural change required for the sustainability of our health system.

We have also seen a renewed engagement with primary care clinicians through resuming one of our key roles under our PHN contract in workforce development. Particularly, we are seeing new faces around the table, bringing different perspectives, different experiences and new passion for caring for our communities.

As a board, it is impossible to ignore the importance of considering environmental risk and impact as part of our everyday activities, particularly when we are working towards a system supporting high quality health outcomes for our communities. We must do all we can in this regard and, as has been pointed out by former High Court judge and Royal Commissioner Kenneth Hayne, this is not just ethical or moral, but also a legal obligation of directors. Healthy North Coast is committed to fulfilling its environmental duty.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the many individuals, carers, clinicians and community organisations who give so generously of their time to maintain and support our health system. Without their ongoing dedication to quality care and better outcomes for our communities, it is difficult to envisage any progress in this area. We look forward to making their task simpler and the system more efficient as our work progresses over the next year.

Our region

Young people in Baryugil working with Desert Pea Media as part of the Break It Down North Coast program.
Image: Renee Saxby



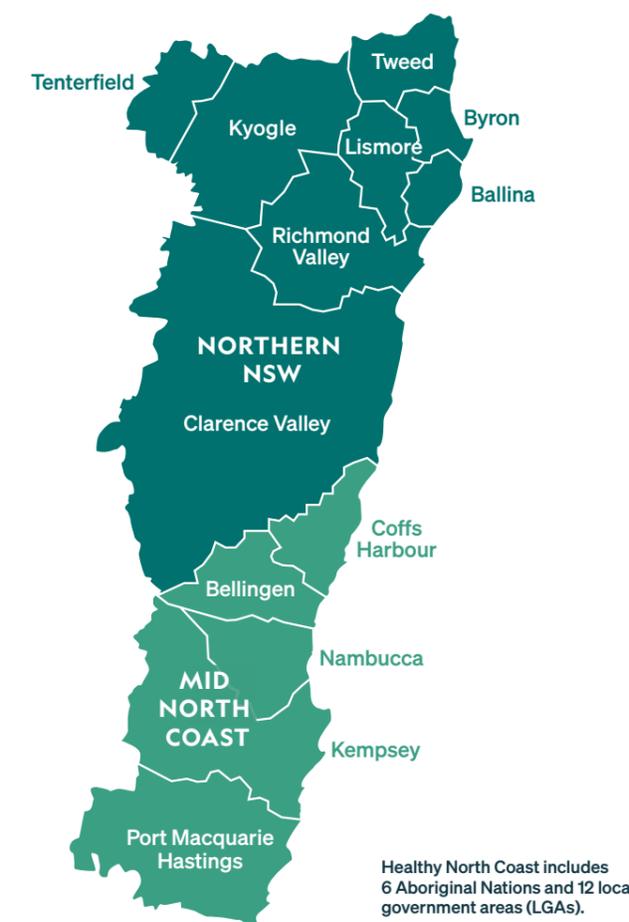
Our region spans an area of approximately 36,000 square kilometres, extending from the Queensland border in the north to the Camden Haven region beyond Port Macquarie in the south. Along its eastern boundary is the coast, and to the west is the New England Tableland escarpment.

With a population of 516,000, the North Coast is rapidly growing with an ageing population.

Our region has a high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population with more than 25,044 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the North Coast, representing 4.8 per cent of the population. Demographically, the region is home to a range of communities that are hard to reach due to lack of transport, social disadvantage, ageing, geographic isolation and cultural background. The population

experiences a considerable number of social and emotional challenges that negatively impact on people's social and emotional wellbeing.

The region is comprised of 12 local government areas (LGAs), 4 federal and 7 state electoral divisions, 6 Aboriginal Nations and 13 local Aboriginal land councils (LALCs). It aligns with 2 Local Health Districts — the Northern NSW Local Health District and the Mid North Coast Local Health District.



Healthy North Coast includes 6 Aboriginal Nations and 12 local government areas (LGAs).



IN DEPTH

Bushfire response

Recovery and resilience.
Image: Nathan Rott | NPR



Disaster response supports communities through bushfires

One of the biggest challenges Australia faced in 2019-20 was bushfires ravaging parts of our nation.

Locally, as in most affected areas, the fires followed a long period of drought and unseasonably hot weather.

Many people commented on the incredible ferocity and intensity of the fires. In nature and scale they were unprecedented. In some locations, even rainforests burned.

The bushfire crisis triggered a strong coordinated regional response from Healthy North Coast.

Northern NSW was one of the first regions to be affected. The bushfires hit the Richmond Valley west of Casino and the areas around Drake, Tabulam and Woodenbong east of Tenterfield in September 2019. Over the following months, new fires were being reported along the coast and inland.

The fires tragically claimed several lives and destroyed properties. Healthy North Coast recognised early the need to coordinate efforts with our health system partners. We launched an immediate response, most notably coordinating access to GPs, respiratory distress support, pharmacy and medication access. Additional mental health support was mobilised to help with loss and grief in the community.

Partnerships are key during times of crisis

Healthy North Coast worked closely with the Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts (LHDs), as well as national agencies via the Health Emergency Operations Centre team, to establish a health response framework. We also collaborated closely with local councils, social services and non-government organisations. This collective approach helped everyone involved to truly understand the immediate needs of our community and to match efforts accordingly.

Mental health services stepped up

It is well recognised that a person’s health and wellbeing is impacted by their social situation. During the bushfires, many people’s principal concerns were about accommodation and supplies, feed for their stock and lost fencing.

A key component of our response to the bushfires involved working with and coordinating mental health nurses, psychologists and social workers to deliver a range of mental health trauma support services.

Mental health professionals attended evacuation centres, offered extra counselling sessions and delivered assertive outreach across the region. Information sheets and wallet-size cards with mental health support details were produced and made available through evacuation centres and other sites across our region.

A paid Google Ads campaign to promote the PHN-funded Connect to Wellbeing service was also launched, connecting local residents to the right mental health services and information. Bushfire-related keywords were used to help target those most in need.

General practice and Aboriginal medical service extended hours

A key initiative of Healthy North Coast’s bushfire response was to set up an online primary care service directory with general practice, Aboriginal medical service and pharmacy opening hour changes.

Through the General Practice Extended Hours Initiative, funding was offered to practices servicing bushfire-affected areas to encourage them to stay open for extended hours and on weekends. This initiative helped to reduce demand on evacuation centres and hospital emergency departments.

Some practices also took the initiative to notify at-risk patients on days when air quality was particularly poor.

The road to recovery

Following the bushfires, we witnessed the next phase of the recovery process. Two or 3 months after a climatic disaster is when people start to experience grief, anger and anxiety. We know this can be a long journey for those who have been affected, directly or indirectly, by the fires.

Our aim is to be directed by our communities regarding their needs and to design supports accordingly.

Federal Government funding enabled Healthy North Coast and our LHD partners to provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach to recovery. Additionally, the Government provided grants through the PHN Program to enable affected communities to develop their own resilience activities.

We also put mechanisms in place to support our funded mental health services to respond to people’s mental health recovery needs. This included providing trauma debriefing and recovery training to a range of organisations, businesses and community groups.



The road to recovery.
Image: BlazeAid

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH...

Healthy North Coast turned a cancelled conference into an opportunity to feed more than 200 firefighters and volunteers in Coffs Harbour. Tabitha Hobbins, North Coast Regional Administration Coordinator at the NSW Rural Fire Service, said that the food delivery came at just the right time. ‘A number of fires have already joined up and more are expected to join in the coming days. We’re all very appreciative.’

Healthy North Coast received 25 expressions of interest from mental health nurses, psychologists and social workers offering a range of services such as attending the evacuation centres, accepting extra sessions and assertive outreach.

Healthy North Coast assisted the Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) to run bushfire recovery workshops for its workers and their families. FCNSW’s Rooding and Plantations Manager for the North Coast, Craig Busby, said the fire season had placed huge demands on workers — both indoor and outdoor. ‘There’s stuff that came out of the workshop that just resonates for me, that I’ll take home and talk to my family about,’ Mr Busby said. ‘You come to a training day and you leave with a life skill.’

Healthy North Coast received more than 6,100 webpage views to bushfire-related content on hnc.org.au

IN DEPTH

COVID-19 response



Safeguarding our community against COVID-19

The North Coast's primary health care workforce, health care professionals, practice staff and our commissioned service providers have been at the forefront of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Facing the challenge

Healthy North Coast worked hand in hand with our local general practitioners, pharmacists, allied health providers, aged care facilities, practice nurses and staff, and pathology centres during these times.

The resilience shown by our frontline health workforce, particularly in rural and regional communities, is inspiring.

From the outset, Healthy North Coast has been at the forefront of regional efforts to confront and control the COVID-19 pandemic.

To ensure there was a coordinated response to COVID-19, Healthy North Coast worked collaboratively with the Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts, primary healthcare providers and the community, providing local support for coronavirus preparedness.

As the extent of the pandemic became clear and the risk to the community crystallised, our efforts to provide relevant and timely information and primary care engagement support gathered pace. These efforts have been focused around our engagement with general practice as well as allied health professionals including pharmacies, Aboriginal medical services, mental health and alcohol and other drugs providers, and residential and community aged care facilities.



COVID-19-related activities

Healthy North Coast undertook a range of activities to combat COVID-19, including:

- Developing localised patient HealthPathways to help treating GPs — specifically around notifiable diseases and pandemic respiratory illness
- Publishing the latest advice from national and state authorities on patient epidemiological and clinical criteria
- Providing 'what to do' information relating to testing and isolation
- Distributing free P2 and surgical masks for practice staff use
- Promoting Royal Australian College of General Practitioners information-sharing webinars and FAQ resources
- Creating patient information materials such as waiting room posters
- Promoting the adoption of telehealth to GPs and the community

COVID-19 testing and GP-led respiratory clinics

Healthy North Coast was tasked with helping to establish Australian Government-funded, GP-led respiratory clinics throughout the region.

After undertaking health service analysis to determine preferred sites, 7 free clinics were established throughout the region. These were

located at Murwillumbah, Ballina, Casino, Yamba, Nambucca Heads, Kempsey and Wauchope, all identified areas of high need.

Part of this support included promoting availability through media releases, social media and community-focused eNewsletters.

The GP-led respiratory clinics complemented NSW Health's COVID-19 clinics.

Introducing telehealth and ePrescribing

During 2019–20, there was an accelerated move to the provision of telehealth services. Healthy North Coast procured a video call platform and supported more than 100 services to create free accounts. We also provided introductory information and 'how-to' training resources.

Similarly, we worked closely with GPs and pharmacists to support the fast-tracking of ePrescribing, providing educational resources that could be downloaded to help make the transition seamless and encourage its uptake.

Communications the key

Our COVID-19 communications included daily updates of our dedicated COVID-19 webpage with news, webinars and new resources.

COVID-19 response

Highlighting the community's need for reliable, trustworthy and up-to-date information, our webpage views between March and April 2020 jumped to 50,386, a 143% increase on the corresponding period in 2019.

Social media was regularly updated with news, information and advice. Primary healthcare-focused messaging was promoted and distributed through traditional media.

As part of our strategic approach, we developed and distributed daily special edition email content to more than 5,800 primary healthcare professionals, and various downloadable resources for service providers.

An example of these resources was a series of posters to display at local tourism offices, hotels, motels, caravan parks, and youth and backpacker hostels, encouraging testing for COVID-19.

Reaching out with targeted video content

Healthy North Coast produced a range of localised COVID-19 health and safety videos targeted towards:

- Local GP Q&As
- Aboriginal community
- Mental health service providers
- Aged care service providers
- Flu vaccination clinics

One video featuring Aboriginal Health Coordinator Djaan Jarrett received more than 72,000 views and was shared more than 800 times. Another video with local GP Dr Tony Lembke answering questions and dispelling myths had more than 62,000 views.

Developing an Aboriginal health framework

Our Aboriginal Health Team developed a response framework for COVID-19 to support Aboriginal communities. This consisted of preparing and

distributing culturally safe education, resources and associated materials.

Aboriginal Health Coordinators carried out community visits to disseminate educational resources, information and personal protective equipment, and to gather feedback from communities on their needs.

As part of our support, we worked with Telstra to procure mobile and wireless connectivity in 9 remote Aboriginal communities, collaborating with Aboriginal medical services and local Aboriginal land councils to ensure communities had access to telehealth services.

Supporting preparedness in aged care facilities

In recognition of the potential for significant impact in residential aged care, Healthy North Coast provided daily support to residential and community aged care providers through virtual meetings and email networks. This helped to support these facilities with pandemic planning and preparedness in the event of an outbreak.

We also provided daily support to mental health and alcohol and other drugs providers, including assistance to move towards telehealth consultations.



Our strategic goals

Enhance our relevance to the region

Understand the health needs in our communities

Strengthen the health workforce, general practices and the health care neighbourhood

Collaborate across health and social services for community wellbeing

Promote health equity through strategic investment

Build the organisation's sustainability

STRATEGIC GOAL

Enhance our relevance to the region





A new look for Healthy North Coast — the people behind North Coast PHN

In 2020, we set out to reconnect with our communities through a new look for our organisation, Healthy North Coast, and to promote the great work being done through our North Coast PHN program.

Why? We wanted to better reflect our commitment to being a person-centred organisation and to better represent the communities we are working in, and for, across our region.

Championing a connected community

In developing our refreshed identity, we sought to create a unique voice to represent our region. We wanted to clarify for the broader community who we are and what we do. What we wanted most to share about ourselves was that we are committed to championing a connected community by being both community-centric and community-led.

To enhance our image and logo, we have embraced the colours, textures, landscapes and people of our region to create a visual affinity with the community we serve.

Our stories of success and positive impact are our community's stories — it is through their voice that our work is celebrated and recognised for the improvements we make to people's health.



Enhance our relevance to the region

Healthy North Coast's brand positioning — we are:

Human

Providing an essential professional service — but with empathy, warmth, humility and good humour

Inclusive

Healthy North Coast belongs to us all — regardless of domicile, wealth, health, race and culture

Accessible

We are of the community — we care and we listen

Relevant

By telling genuine stories from and of the community, we gain the trust and confidence of the community

Collaborative

Working within and beyond the sector to champion social connection and a healthier community

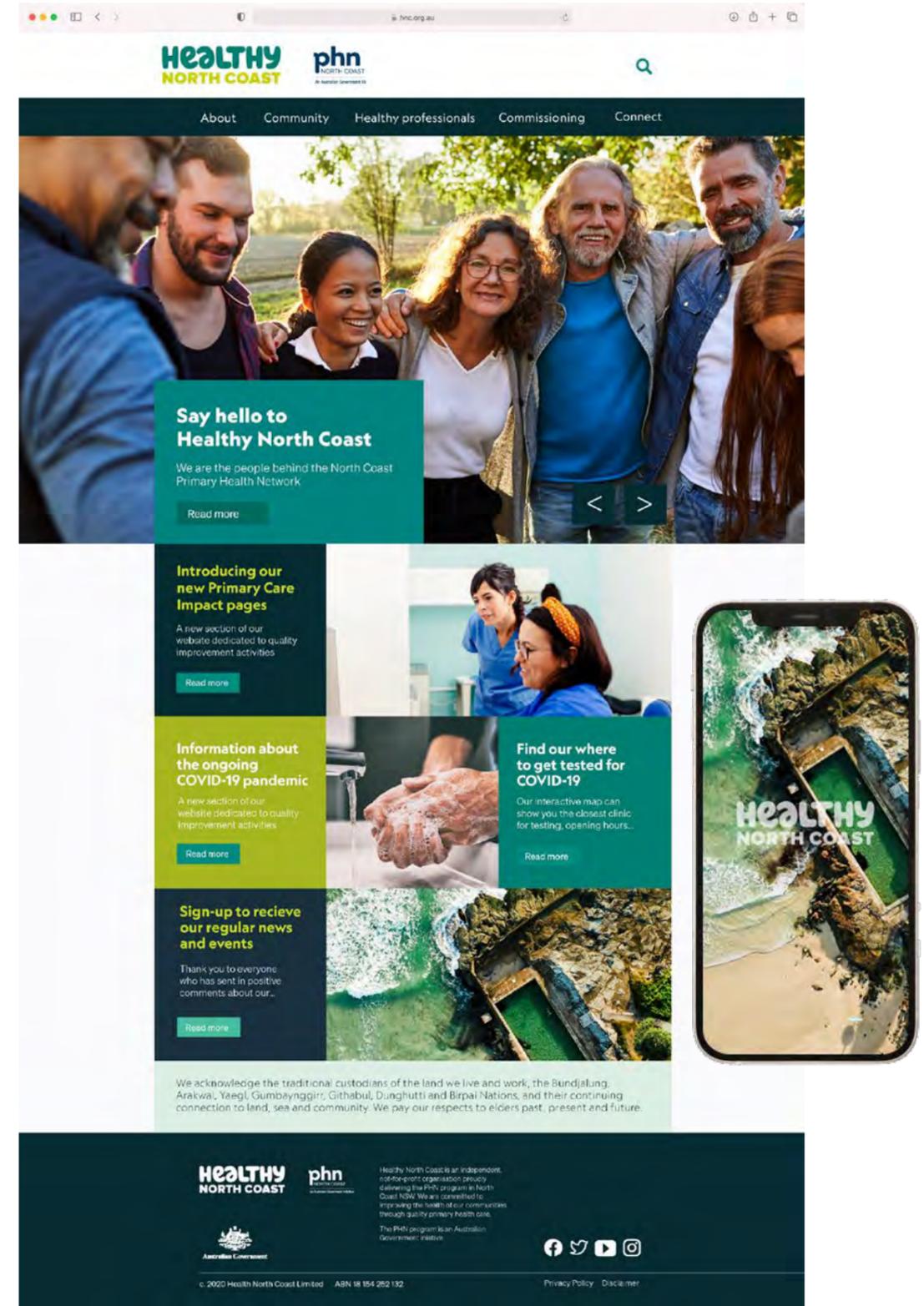
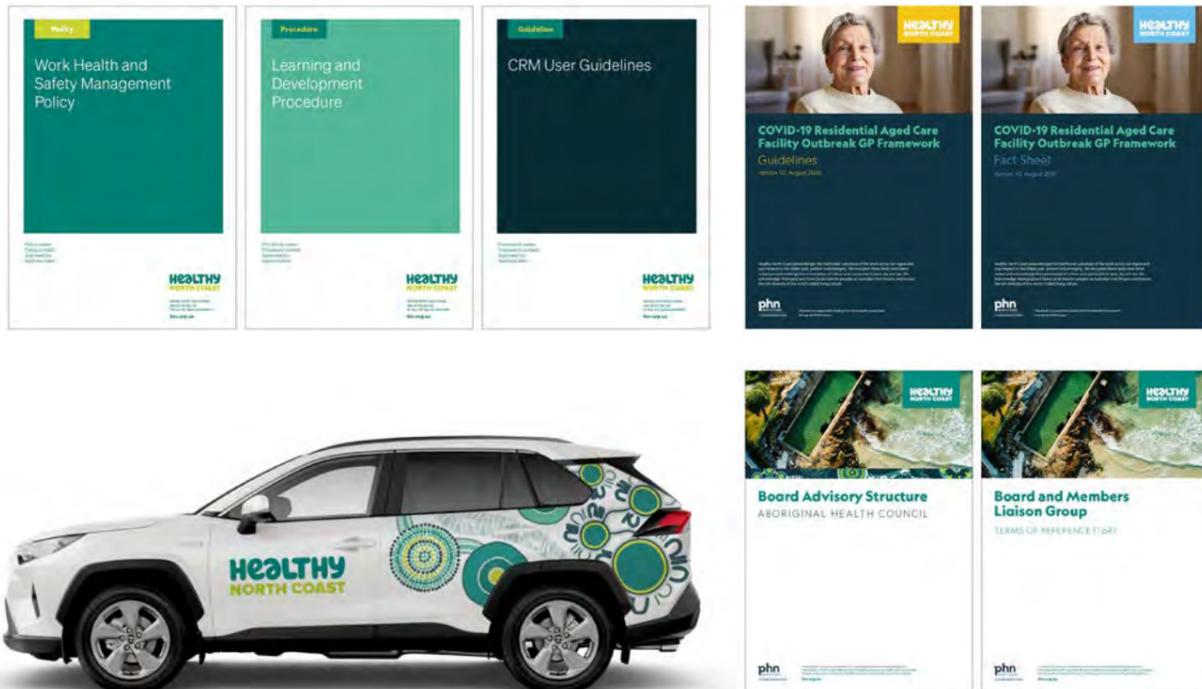


Our new identity reflects the diverse landscapes and communities of our region

Healthy North Coast's identity refers to the people and landscapes of the communities we serve – framed by the idea of a connected community.



- 1
Sunset Red
- 2
Sunset Orange
- 3
Sunrise Yellow
- 4
Sea Lime
- 5
Deep Sea Green
- 6
Rock Shelf Grey
- 7
Shallows Green
- 8
Sky Blue
- 9
Ocean Blue



Connect To Wellbeing – helping people find the support they need

Healthy North Coast is proud to have launched Connect to Wellbeing North Coast with community-based service provider Neami National in March 2020.

Connect to Wellbeing offers a single point of contact for people on the NSW North Coast who are looking for service information or to connect with mental health, alcohol and other drugs services.

Healthy North Coast commissioned Connect to Wellbeing and is providing \$1.23 million of funding over 3 years.

In the past, it was often difficult for people to find the right information when looking for services — either for themselves or others.

Connect to Wellbeing provides a single point of contact for consumers, carers, GPs, allied health professionals, and other agencies who need to access or refer people to mental health and alcohol and other drugs services across the North Coast.

It also offers people information about the National Disability Insurance Scheme and how to find support.

This partnership between Healthy North Coast and Neami National helps to ensure that people get access to the services that are most ideally matched to their needs.

Connect to Wellbeing North Coast is currently assisting around 1,000 people each month to access mental health and alcohol and other drugs services across the region.

The program focuses on the needs of the consumer. It ensures people have access to the right service at the right time and makes it easier for people to move between programs as their needs change.

Having a local service information provider proved particularly useful during the 2019 bushfires and the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Community members unfamiliar with accessing appropriate services were able to find the support they needed to help manage their situational distress. At times, Connect to Wellbeing offered extended service hours to meet that need.

The Connect to Wellbeing team is based in Coffs Harbour and provides services for people from Port Macquarie to Tweed Heads. The service is free and available to community members, health professionals and community services.

Learn more about [Connect to Wellbeing](#).

Supporting our health workforce and communities through quality communications

Our commitment to providing quality information, support and resources continued throughout 2019–20.

Timely communications during both the summer bushfire crises and the evolving COVID-19 pandemic were critical in supporting our region this year. We saw strong engagement from both our workforce and our communities, as well as our broader networks.

Bushfire support

'I just wanted to pass on my thanks for your great work delivering the resource below and the ABC local radio interviews about the PHN response to the bushfires. I have heard on my social and professional networks that they have been really well received.'

Dr Sarah Mollard

COVID-19 pandemic

'In an environment where there is so much information, BY FAR Healthy North Coast's website is the most comprehensive and navigable information resource I have been able to find. And the practitioner newsletter updates are invaluable.'

General practitioner

'I really wait to see what comes out in the e-blasts, because it's so clear and simple and I know it's accurate. They've been a life-saver.'

General practice staff

COVID-19 resources

'Your resources are excellent and we would love to reproduce the fantastic patient triage flowchart with our branding, with your permission of course.'

NSW PHN organisation

Video production

'I have shown some staff, the interim CEO, and the Chair (your video) this morning and they think it's terrific. We all can't wait to see the final

productions. Once again thank you very much guys for everything. It is greatly appreciated.'

Local AMS

Rising to the occasion

In the 12 months between July 2019 and June 2020, our website traffic increased by 37% with more than 330,000 webpage views, with a clear traffic spike at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

Website visitors downloaded 25,924 files or resources, with the top 4 being:

- COVID-19 poster A (638)
- 2018 Health Needs Assessment — general population report (604)
- COVID-19 poster B (467)
- COVID-19 patient triage flowchart (460)

Website visitors clicked on 23,608 links to other sites or resources, with the top 4 being:

- manc.healthpathways.org.au (2,718)
- health.nsw.gov.au (2,444)
- health.gov.au (1,296)
- mbsonline.gov.au (830)

Our practitioner newsletters outperformed industry benchmarks with an average 26% open rate and 6% click through.

People joined us on social media with more than 3,400 new followers (combined Facebook and LinkedIn).

We also promoted more than 500 professional health workforce events across our region.

STRATEGIC GOAL

Understand the health needs in our communities





System dynamics modelling: better decisions lead to better health outcomes

Better data means better evidence-based decisions — and that’s where system dynamics modelling comes in.

An interactive computer simulation decision-support tool was developed by Healthy North Coast in 2018–19. The tool provides us with the capability to understand in detail the most significant features that determine the way in which certain health outcomes are achieved in our community. It allows users to ask ‘what if’ questions to better understand which combinations of interventions are likely to deliver the most cost-effective outcomes.

System dynamics modelling was initially built for Healthy North Coast’s mental health and alcohol and other drugs (MHAOD) portfolio. It has since been expanded to healthy ageing and Aboriginal health and emotional wellbeing.

As the first focus area of the North Coast Collective (see page 46), the MHAOD portfolio has benefitted from the implementation of system dynamics modelling.

Despite the regional local health districts and Healthy North Coast collectively spending more than \$200 million per annum, this region has more adverse outcomes for those with mental health and addiction issues than state averages.

The current approach to the management of MHAOD within our region is unsustainable. Using the available budget in a similar way to the past is unlikely to deliver better outcomes. We must therefore deliver better value for the funds, and other resources.

We must understand, measure and manage the factors that most significantly contribute to the improvements we want, and the costs incurred.

Historically, interventions in the healthcare system have focused on changing a single outcome, with little or no understanding of the complex cause-and-effect relationships in existence, or the impacts

of these changes. Further, the system, whether we intervene or not, is in a constant state of flux and changes with time — sometimes rapidly.

When changes are made, either by us or others, there is a lag between the time any change occurs and the time that we seek to measure it. Traditional modelling fails to capture this.

Working with service providers, carers and those with lived experience, the Sax Institute developed a system dynamics model that enables a better understanding of the ecosystem that produces MHAOD outcomes. This model simulates how different determinants of health (healthcare and social) interact to produce MHAOD outcomes.

Modelling forecasts show the expected effectiveness of individual interventions on a number of different outcome measurements, one of which is the number of mental health emergency department (ED) presentations. The most effective response is social connectedness, which, when applied in isolation, enables a reduction in forecast ED presentations of 22%. The least effective intervention, with a forecast reduction in ED presentations of 1%, is post-discharge peer support.

Analysis using system dynamics modelling shows us that the most prudent and efficient means

of influencing MHAOD outcomes is through a combined investment in 3 specific interventions, teamed with 2 social determinants.

The 3 specific interventions are social connectedness; technology enabled coordinated care; and post-attempt assertive aftercare. The 2 social determinants are reduction in childhood adversity; and increase in employment.

This combination is predicted to result in a reduction of self-harm hospitalisations of 28% and a reduction in suicide deaths of 29%.

System dynamics modelling tells us that the forecast improvements in MHAOD will come through investing in these priority areas.

Healthy Towns evaluation highlights community-led approach

Healthy Towns is a place-based approach to improving health outcomes. The program works closely with communities to identify local needs and implement solutions to improve health and wellbeing.

The objectives of Healthy Towns are to:

- Build community connectedness to support health and wellbeing
- Strengthen integration and coordination of health and community services
- Identify and address service gaps.

Six towns participated in Healthy Towns in 2019–20: Casino, Evans Head, Maclean, Woolgoolga, South West Rocks and Lake Cathie.

Following an extensive needs assessment and co-design process, community action plans were launched in each community in 2019. The action plans will see more than 50 community-led initiatives and 5 commissioned services delivered across the 6 communities.

Healthy Towns evaluation

In 2019, Healthy North Coast engaged an independent evaluation partner to evaluate the Healthy Towns program model. The evaluation found that communities embraced the opportunity to identify local needs and design local solutions. Participants felt that their input shaped the program and that the initiatives addressed their local needs. Communities expressed a sense of ownership over the program and built new social connections as a result of their participation.

What's next?

The Healthy Towns program has added to our understanding of the ways community-led approaches optimise health outcomes, build social connections and address the social determinants of health. Healthy North Coast will continue to expand the Healthy Towns approach as we partner with our communities to build health, wellbeing and resilience following the 2019–20 bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn more about [Healthy Towns](#).

KEY FINDINGS

Community participation and engagement

- 98% of participants said it was easy to get involved
- 94% said they felt it was easy to speak up and participate honestly
- 92% said they felt listened to

Healthy Towns initiatives

- 80% of participants said they felt their input shaped the initiatives that were designed through Healthy Towns
- 82% said they felt that the initiatives implemented by Healthy Towns were relevant to the needs of their community

New connections

- 65% of participants said they made new personal connections as a result of participating in Healthy Towns
- 57% said they made new professional connections as a result of participating in the program
- 71% thought these new connections would continue into the future
- 57% said they now know about services in their town that they weren't aware of before

Program outcomes

- 72% of participants said they're more involved in community activities as a result of participating in Healthy Towns
- 70% said it's easier to find information about health services
- 80% said they feel like part of their community

Showcasing our quality improvement activities in commissioning

Contract management system, Folio

The Commissioning Directorate has redeveloped the contracts management system in our Folio software platform. We developed a framework for structuring this rebuild by drawing out the levels of decision making and the constraints of the previous commissioning system and practice. This ensures it aligns with best practice processes and to meet future outcomes-based commissioning expectations and the Department of Health reporting requirements.

Quality improvement

The legacy version of Folio had 13 separate contract templates, each of which contained 119 fields to populate when developing a single contract, with only 3 fields made mandatory for staff to complete.

We undertook a quality improvement project to remedy this. As a key element of streamlining the commissioning process, we condensed the contract templates into a single all-purpose template. This better aligns to our Procurement Manual and equitable, outcomes-based commissioning.

In addition to these contract management system gains, the changes we made allow for far greater version control of the template and its appendices. They also improve data collection and will create a more sustainable system that sets up the organisation for internal and external contract portfolio reporting.

Credentialling

We conducted a full audit of credentialling across all commissioned services and developed a new procedure. Roles and responsibilities have been more clearly outlined to ensure accountability.

Risk management

We built a new risk management structure in Folio for operational and strategic risks.

Guidance documents

As part of our improvement process, we designed new guidance documents to support staff education and reflect the enhanced new contract system and processes. These included:

- Procurement Plan Fields in Folio
- Opening Tender Mandatory Requirements
- Panel Evaluation Scoring
- Procurement Contract Award

Recruitment of a procurement and quality lead

During the year, a specific role was created to monitor compliance with the Procurement Policy and Procurement Manual and improve procurement processes. The role has resulted in the improved monitoring of procurement plans and procurement processes and the creation of new guidance documents to support and operationalise the Procurement Manual.

Recruitment of commissioning leads

Recruitment to resource the establishment of a contracts team has assisted in greater line of sight of contract compliance. We designed position descriptions for these roles to assist our directorate's key leads to:

- develop procurement plans
- assist in the development of tender documentation and provider correspondence
- monitor organisational adherence to procurement processes
- undertake end-of-contract assessments based on provider reports to inform future procurement processes

Change management and workforce development

In 2019-20, the Commissioning Team attended outcomes commissioning training to support each team member's contribution to leading best practise across Healthy North Coast. The Commissioning Team also delivered an education session to introduce improvements to the wider business.

STRATEGIC GOAL

**Strengthen the health workforce,
general practices and the
health care neighbourhood**





Image: Gabe Pierce | Unsplash

Primary Care Impact never looked better

Dynamic, concise, resourced, interactive and social – that’s how Healthy North Coast chose to deliver its new Primary Care Impact initiative.

Designed and implemented to make quality improvement and health system reform more relevant and accessible, the new-look Primary Care Impact webpages were launched in May 2020.

Showcasing 26 quality improvement topics and projects, as well as quality improvement tips for success, the website was welcomed by general practice throughout our region.

More than 10% of practices engaged on the site in the first month, primarily with COVID-19 related activities.

Primary Care Impact proved to be the ideal vehicle for addressing the dual challenges of COVID-19 infection control, and influenza immunisation, during the first wave of the pandemic, using a quality improvement framework.

The practices also welcomed our 10 quality improvement activities focused on the Commonwealth’s Practice Incentives Program (PIP) Quality Improvement (QI) Incentive.

Early indications were that our ambitious aim to house and promote key resources and improvement ideas in an engaging and accessible format — in one central place — struck a chord with general practice.

Not only did primary care impact provide accessible and relevant quality improvement, it also provided a

social space for practices to share their achievements with peers.

Practices responded positively to sharing their PDSA cycles across the region. The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle is shorthand for testing a change — by planning it, trying it, observing the results, and acting on what is learned. This is the scientific method used for action-oriented learning.

Two PDSAs were shared and published in June: one on improving influenza immunisation to high-risk groups, and the other on increasing cervical screening through the introduction of a nurse-led cervical screening clinic. The PDSAs had been downloaded a dozen times by the end of the month.

Practices also responded positively to the opportunity for in-house quality improvement workshops on more difficult quality improvement topics.

An early adopter of the in-house workshop approach praised the result: ‘Thank you so much, that’s made such a difference already. I haven’t seen my staff this motivated... ever. I have been trying to implement chronic disease systems management protocols for three years.’

Learn more about [Primary Care Impact](#).



Primary Health and Aboriginal Health Coordinators – new teams and a new approach

Strong relationships are at the heart of delivering better health outcomes for our community.

In 2020, Healthy North Coast employed 2 new teams of senior staff to strengthen our relationships with primary care providers, Aboriginal medical services, social services and community.

Eight Primary Health Coordinators and 4 Aboriginal Health Coordinators commenced in April 2020. Each team member supports a designated geographic area and has their finger on the pulse of their local community. Primary Health Coordinators and Aboriginal Health Coordinators are the first point of contact for external stakeholders with Healthy North Coast. They facilitate communication between Healthy North Coast and our local communities and provide support to plan and deliver local initiatives.

The goal of this approach is to streamline our relationships so that our partners have a single point of contact with Healthy North Coast. Our aim is to continually increase the level of engagement, trust and satisfaction of our stakeholders. This in turn will enhance our ability to commission meaningful, regionally tailored initiatives supported by strong partnerships.

Primary Health Coordinators are the key contact for general practice in their area. The team delivers the Primary Care Impact program and identifies opportunities for projects, partnerships and collaboration. In their first 3 months, the team has

been instrumental in supporting our organisational response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the key contact for allied health, pharmacies and residential aged care providers, Primary Health Coordinators have also facilitated increased engagement with these groups during 2020.

Aboriginal Health Coordinators are our relationship managers for Aboriginal medical services, other Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The team has expertise in Aboriginal health and cultural safety. Aboriginal Health Coordinators facilitate communication between Healthy North Coast and Aboriginal communities, delivering a range of programs and projects to improve health outcomes.





Almost 2,000 attendances at our continuing professional development events

Healthy North Coast commissioned North Coast GP Training (NCGPT) to deliver our continuing professional development (CPD) education program in 2019-20.

NCGPT delivered 40 educational events across the year with 1,954 attendances.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, NCGPT rapidly transitioned from delivering face-to-face events to live virtual events via webinar. NCGPT worked with our clinical societies and nursing networks to begin the transition to online events, receiving very positive feedback.

A popular event was hosted by the Coffs Harbour Clinical Society in March 2020 on the topic 'Managing the Oedematous Limb in the Community'. This event was one of the last face-to-face events offered in the region, as COVID-19 was beginning to impact CPD events.

For this event, local hosts Anne Fowler and Dr Adrian Gilliland both joined by Zoom from self-isolation. Feedback from this event was exceptional, with 97% of evaluations saying the event was of a 'high standard'.

The prolonged bushfire period also highlighted a potential program risk related to moving staff safely around the region. NCGPT commenced the development of a procedure to guide decisions about supporting or cancelling events due to natural disasters/emergencies. NCGPT also recruited local casual event assistants based in the high bushfire risk areas of Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie to mitigate this challenge.

Overall, the evaluation feedback by those who attended our events across the year indicated a high level of satisfaction. Nurses represented the largest professional group in attendance at events (approx. 56%) followed by allied health (approx. 16%), GPs and registrars (approx. 14%), medical specialists (approx. 2%), service managers (approx. 1%) and practice administrators (approx. 1%).

Event evaluations showed that about 90% of attendees found the education programs of a 'high standard' and 82% of those said their learning expectations had been 'entirely met'. There was an average of about 47 participants at each event.

Clinical societies were supported in the Tweed, Lismore, Ballina/Byron, Casino, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie areas. Nurse networks were also supported in the Tweed, Northern Rivers, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie areas.



HealthPathways experiences big increase in users

HealthPathways, a Mid and North Coast NSW online health information portal, saw a significant increase in use in 2019-20.

HealthPathways offers clinicians information to make the right decisions, together with patients, at the point of care. It also ensures patients are referred to local services in the most appropriate and efficient way.

In 2019-20's rapidly changing environment, clinicians used HealthPathways to access the most up-to-date and easy-to-use health information and advice.

As the threat of a global COVID-19 pandemic loomed in early January, the HealthPathways community began its contingency planning. In early March 2020, work focused exclusively on the fast-evolving situation and a COVID-19 core response group was tasked with developing new COVID-19 guidance for general practice teams.

Regionally, in 2019-20 there was a 33% increase in the number of individual users accessing the Mid and North Coast HealthPathways site, compared to the previous year.

Over the same period, there was a 23% increase in the number of pages viewed per session, and a near 47% jump in the amount of time that users were active on the site.

Nine new pathways were developed as a direct response to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the top 10 pathways used, 6 were COVID-19 related. The top 10 pathways accessed in 2019-20 were:

1. COVID-19 Assessment and Management
2. Antenatal Care - Routine
3. COVID-19 Information
4. COVID-19 Recent Changes
5. COVID-19 Practice Preparation
6. First Presentation Antenatal Blood and Urine Tests
7. COVID-19 Initial Assessment and Management
8. COVID-19 Impact on Local Services
9. Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)
10. Hypertension

To assist health professionals dealing with the ramifications of the 2019-20 bushfires and floods in our footprint, we also localised the following pathways:

Disaster Management – Mental Health

This pathway was developed for patients presenting with mental health issues arising from disasters or adverse weather events. It includes assessment and support advice and links to services for bereavement, grief and loss, financial assistance, mental health support, alcohol and other drugs, and domestic and family violence.

Disaster Management – General Practice Response

This pathway was developed for use by general practices during a disaster or adverse weather event. It details how the local primary care response is coordinated and provides advice for GPs deployed to an evacuation or recovery centre. There is patient management information related to chronic disease, effects of bushfire smoke exposure, heat related illness, access to patient records, vaccine storage, preventative care, and medication safety.

In 2019-20, 26 new clinical pathways were developed, taking the total number of pathways to 554. A further 92 pathways were reviewed, with 86 being updated. HealthPathways workgroups were established for paediatrics, antenatal, mental health, diabetes and COVID-19.

During the year, we also developed an approach to evaluate HealthPathways. The evaluation, scheduled to take place in 2021, will determine the overall value of the program and what aspects of HealthPathways are most effective in supporting the quadruple aim of:

- improved quality, safety, and experience of care for patients
- improved experience of care for health professionals
- health and equity for all populations
- best value for health system resource

Learn more about [HealthPathways](#).



Northern NSW Service Registration Assistant project

Healthy North Coast is proud to have been a contributing partner to the successful Northern NSW Service Registration Assistant (SRA) proof of concept project in 2019–20.

The Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) is developing the SRA platform, which is designed for healthcare providers to update information about their services, and their practitioners, in a single online database.

By doing this, they are able to make sure their up-to-date service contact information is shared with key contacts such as their local health district, secure messaging vendors, pathology, and the National Health Services Directory. This helps to reduce administrative burden and also improves data quality and optimises information flow between healthcare providers.

The project was delivered in partnership with ADHA and the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD).

Existing relationships developed through the My Health Record expansion and other Healthy North Coast programs were leveraged to engage, educate and support Northern NSW healthcare organisations in adopting and embedding the SRA into their business.

Healthy North Coast's role was to deliver targeted communications and provide registration support to Northern NSW clinicians. Our teams were responsible for driving awareness and uptake of the solution, along with technical and troubleshooting advice.

We also co-designed the participant survey and feedback mechanisms that were key to informing the evaluation.

The success of the project was in part attributable to the strong primary healthcare relationships we hold, and the trust that practice staff have developed with our teams. Also critical to success were the integrated partnerships between Healthy North Coast, ADHA and NNSWLHD throughout the project.

By the end of June 2020, we had successfully registered 52 organisations — 48 general practices, one Aboriginal medical service and 3 allied health organisations.

The reported benefits have been encouraging. NNSWLHD reported that 45 healthcare services (general practices) had linked to the NNSWLHD, publishing more than 250 individual practitioner records as a result of this engagement.

This led to an increase in the successful delivery of communications, such as discharge summaries, from the LHD to general practices. In June 2020, NNSWLHD reported that according to data from participating practices in the 12 months prior to the SRA, 456 discharge summaries could not be delivered because of missing or inaccurate data in either the practice or GP contact records. That's 456 patient episodes where safe transfer of care was made more difficult.

The final survey, which was designed to capture the experience and feedback of registered organisations, received 27 responses, with 62% of respondents stating the SRA had shown benefit to their practice.

More than 73% of respondents reported being 'likely' or 'very likely' to recommend the SRA to others.

We are proud of the positive feedback we have received about this project. Dean McKay, Manager of Paxton Partners feedback was:

"We have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work with Healthy North Coast and believe that their organisation's focus on quality and value has been demonstrated very clearly through our experience working alongside them. They have fostered an open and collaborative environment"

Learn more about [Digital Health](#).

Pandemic accelerates uptake of telehealth

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen the welcome adoption of digital health initiatives, by both health practitioners and the general community.

The crisis called for innovative digital solutions to meet community health needs, and the wide uptake of telehealth has been seen across the globe.

With the launch of the temporary COVID-19 MBS items, Northern NSW and Mid North Coast practitioners started to offer phone and video consultations to help support social distancing by enabling some patients to access care from their home — particularly where they were considered at risk of COVID-19.

Healthy North Coast acted quickly to support GPs to introduce video appointments in their clinics using the Commonwealth's healthdirect video platform, providing account setup support, personal training and resources.

During 2019–20, we helped 148 health care providers from Port Macquarie to Tweed Valley and the New England Tableland to access and use the healthdirect video platform.

They included general practitioners, Aboriginal medical services, mental health providers and specialists. These health practitioners provided 6,240 consultations via the healthdirect platform to 30 June 2020.

Northside Health Clinic in Coffs Harbour was one of the early adopters. Practice manager Karen Jackson said, 'The patient feedback has been universally positive.

'We found that the healthdirect platform took us only a few days to set up and was relatively easy to arrange through the Healthy North Coast Digital Health Team.'

Clinic owner Dr Rosie Ross said, 'Our doctors feel confident in using the system as it is a secure platform for conducting patient consultations. A big plus is that it is very user friendly. Understandably, some patients initially showed reluctance to engage with the technology, but once they started using the system, we received highly positive feedback.'

Healthy North Coast undertook a survey to better understand community attitudes towards telehealth and found that residents across the region resoundingly supported it.

Out of 288 respondents aged over 25, almost 80% said they had been 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their telehealth experience. Findings showed:

- 62.2% 'very satisfied' and 17% 'satisfied'
- 62.8% 'very likely' to use telehealth again after the pandemic
- 85% of clinics surveyed were offering video or phone consultations by April 2020

For survey participant Naomi, 2020 was 'a fantastic year for medical technology'. Telehealth was a big part of that.

'I really hope telehealth appointments stay so that patients can have regular access to this service,' she said.

Naomi was pleased to be able to attend virtual appointments with her mother, aged 75, during a period of ill health and hospitalisation. 'I've been able to sit in on a lot of my mother's consults in Brisbane, including when she was in hospital,' she said.

'Because I was on the North Coast and she was in Brisbane, and the border was closed, I wasn't able to physically be with her during her hospitalisation and recovery period.

'Telehealth was invaluable as a way of attending medical appointments with her and connecting with the doctors when they did their medical rounds.

'Mum doesn't have any other support person, so without telehealth, I don't know how we would have managed. It was just fantastic!'

Learn more about [Digital Health](#).

STRATEGIC GOAL

Collaborate across health and social services for community wellbeing





North Coast Collective showcases benefits of collaboration

The North Coast Collective is an innovative collaboration that aims to optimise health outcomes and lead health reform in our region.

Launched in 2018, the collective is a partnership between Healthy North Coast, the Mid North Coast Local Health District, and the Northern NSW Local Health District.

The rationale behind the formation of the North Coast Collective stems from the fact that the local healthcare system is under increasing pressure and tough decisions need to be made to ensure finite health budgets are used to produce the best possible health outcomes.

Population forecasts for our region — which stretches from Tweed Heads to Port Macquarie and the New England Tableland — combined with global trends, indicate that the demand for healthcare services will continue to grow exponentially.

While this growth in demand for healthcare services shows no signs of slowing, the funding available to service demand is under increasing pressure.

Meeting the needs of the population in the region over the short, medium and long-term requires a collaborative approach that utilises constrained resources while delivering appropriate and equitable health outcomes.

The North Coast Collective approach is unique and hopes to lead health reform through:

1. A collaborative approach to improving health outcomes

This shared approach involves joint planning and priority setting, shared resourcing, and commitment to pursuing the best return on investment for health outcomes. This demonstrates commitment from members (and their boards) to deliver an unprecedented level of transparency and cooperation to achieve system reform.

2. Use of analytical decision support tools

Using system dynamics modelling, an interactive computer simulation decision-support tool, to assist in health service planning. System dynamics modelling is underpinned by expert data modelling and insight, bringing together a variety of evidence sources. This includes research, expert and local knowledge, practice experience, and data, in order to map and quantify complex problems, while considering competing views, data systems and geographical variations. The tool assists decision-makers to decide where to best target investments for improved outcomes, and with what intensity, so that limited resources can be optimised and locally tailored strategies can be theoretically proven before implementation.

See our separate story on system dynamics modelling on page 32.

3. A regional approach to commissioning

The agreed vision for the North Coast Collective is to transition over time from a somewhat disjointed approach to service commissioning and delivery, to a dedicated regional commissioning model.

This approach will involve a staged implementation. The first stage will see members working towards shared investment data and commissioning priorities, however still commissioning individually. The second stage will involve a seamless approach to regional commissioning.

4. Participatory design

The North Coast Collective actively engages with consumers, carers and service providers. Central to the approach is the use of participatory design, which is based on the premise that 'the people destined to use the system play a critical role in designing it'.

Key state and Commonwealth directions that the North Coast Collective is in alignment with:

- the National Health Reform Agreement requirement for Primary Health Networks and Local Health Districts to develop collaborative and joint ways of working into the future
- the NSW Joint Statement by Primary Health Networks and Local Health Districts, which clearly articulates a plan to enable them to work together
- recommendations from the Productivity Commission into Mental Health that comprehensive regional approaches are a priority to improve outcomes.



Taking local action – North Coast National Suicide Prevention Trial

Finding what works best for suicide prevention is at the heart of the Australian Government's National Suicide Prevention Trial. In 2019-20 Healthy North Coast was proud to contribute to this important goal.

The trials are led by PHNs and aim to improve the current evidence of effective suicide prevention strategies at a local level for at-risk population groups.

As one of the 12 trial sites across Australia, we funded 5 community-based organisations to plan and design localised suicide-prevention activities, and to recruit local project coordinators to help collaborate and implement at a community level. This initiative is funded until June 2021.

Five sites — Tweed/Byron, Lismore, Clarence, Bellingen and Kempsey

Each trial site works collaboratively with participation from representatives of local organisations, community groups and community members, all forming a local steering committee or collaborative. Using data from our local health needs assessment and the Black Dog Institute, the sites have developed an action plan and implemented targeted activities in their community that support mental health and wellbeing and reduces the risk of suicide in the community.

Local suicide prevention action plans

The North Coast trial adopted the [Lifespan Model](#) to guide our work. The Lifespan Model is a comprehensive systems approach to suicide prevention. It comprises 9 evidence-informed strategies and a community-led implementation and service delivery approach.

The information provided through the [Black Dog Institute's Suicide Data Analysis Reports](#) has also helped to guide the development of our suicide prevention action plans.

Some highlights from the year include:

Tweed/Byron – coordinated through The Family Centre

The Tweed/Byron site developed a comprehensive local information kit to provide crisis and support information to people undertaking suicide prevention training.

With more than 160 participants completing the online Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training, the organising committee thought of an innovative way to follow up with the participants and connect them with others in the community by holding a village hall meeting.

Lismore – coordinated through Lifeline Direct

The Lismore site delivered a wide range of targeted training across the community, including Advanced Training in Suicide Prevention, safeTALK, ASIST and YAM.

The Lismore Collaborative co-designed a suicide aftercare support group with ACON and StandBy Support After Suicide to connect with people from the LGBTIQ+ community. A new group — Outrageous Loss, Outrageous Courage — has been well-received by the community.

Clarence Valley – coordinated through New School of Arts Inc.

Extensive suicide prevention and mental health training was delivered across the Clarence Valley. The Access Grant Project was a big success, with a range of smaller communities engaged to inform the region's needs.

Six young people undertook the Batyr Lived Experience Speaker Training through local schools and the project coordinator supported the development of a lived experience network with guidelines, actions and outcomes.

Bellingen Shire – coordinated through Neighbourhood Centres of Bellingen Shire Inc.

Help-seeking resources and links to online QPR training were designed and distributed via a letterbox drop and promoted on social media and local newspapers.

The resources included phone helplines to ensure people affected by the catastrophic North Coast bushfires could reach out for support. The project coordinator received positive feedback from people in the community.

Kempsey Shire – coordinated through Macleay Vocational Workplace Learning Centre

Kempsey focused on engagement strategies to assess the needs of the local community including a youth regional short film festival.

The steering committee members and community joined Leilani Darwin from Black Dog Institute for a yarn about suicide prevention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The session was helpful to inform future strategy and activity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Immunisation

To improve vaccine coverage across our footprint, Healthy North Coast worked in collaboration with the North Coast Public Health Unit, general practices and Aboriginal medical services to develop and implement the North Coast NSW Immunisation Action Plan 2019–2021.

Over the 12-month period, our achievements included delivering several education events across the PHN footprint, such as:

- supporting general practice with vaccine cold chain management
- immunisation recommendations during pregnancy
- managing measles presentations.

A total of 265 participants attended events. Most participants were nurses (90%), followed by GPs/registrars (5%), practice administrators (2%), service managers (2%) and allied health professionals (1%).

Events were very well received, with 92% of participants reporting their learning outcomes were entirely met and 85% rating their experience of the event as excellent or good.

We also led the coordination of access to influenza vaccines for residential aged care facilities (RACFs) in line with the national legislative requirements for RACF staff, visitors and residents to be vaccinated by 1 May 2020.

This involved consulting with facility managers, conducting a survey to determine the number of vaccines needed in each facility, providing a commissioned pharmaceutical supplier with survey data, supporting service managers to order vaccines

and following up with facilities to ensure they received and administered vaccines.

All eligible RACF staff and residents were vaccinated by the due date. We received positive feedback from many facilities, including one who commented ‘Many thanks for all your support, it is greatly appreciated.’

Another important achievement was assisting general practices to undertake a quality improvement activity to increase the rate of influenza immunisation for high-risk patients. This involved providing access to intensive practice support through specialist coaching, quality improvement templates and training for Pen CS. Using this approach, one general practice reported an increase in influenza vaccinations for patients over 65 by 18%.



Improving health literacy in our region

The Northern NSW Health Literacy Project is recognised as a leader in health literacy.

This year, we continued to work with health professionals to improve the way we deliver health information and showcase our work at state level.

The Northern NSW Health Literacy Project is a collaboration between Healthy North Coast and the Northern NSW Local Health District. The project aims to ensure that consumers have access to health information that is easy to understand and act upon. Health literacy is important because it shapes people’s health, safety and quality of care.

Our program has been recognised as a state leader in health literacy. In December 2019, we presented a showcase of our work at the NSW Health Literacy Initiative workshop coordinated by the NSW Mental Health Commission. We also worked with NSW Health to support the development of the NSW Health Literacy Framework, which highlights our local approach to education and consumer resources.

Throughout the year, the Health Literacy Team worked with Healthy North Coast staff, health professionals and consumers to:

Make health information easier for our community to understand

- Build health literacy principles into projects, programs and commissioned services

- Review 180 consumer resources including print, social media and videos
- Deliver 50 health literacy workshops to 370 health professionals and 65 health consumers

A highlight of the year was working with a consumer advocate, Rob, to record his experience of taking charge of his health when faced with a cancer diagnosis.

Healthy North Coast produced a video in which Rob talked about the benefits of using reliable health information to inform his questions, discussing treatment options with health professionals, taking support people to appointments, and keeping his own notes.

This video now inspires other community members when shown at community workshops and events. It is a real-life example of how empowering consumers to be more health literate impacts their health experience and outcomes.

The [Northern NSW Health Literacy website](#) provides health literacy information and tools for health professionals and the community, as well as hosting a range of locally designed resources.





Bringing health reform ideas and action together through innovation

Knowledge and innovation thrive here, birthing ideas and action plans that bring about positive health reform.

Of course, we are talking about the Centre for Healthcare, Knowledge and Innovation, a place to exchange ideas, develop local intelligence around new technologies and participate in ‘think tanks’ to help shape the future of health and social care in our region and beyond.

The Centre provides many opportunities for cross-sector networking and brings local leadership together to drive reform and impact the social determinants of health. It also disseminates best national/international practice and research to elevate local approaches to health prevention.

The Centre is a partnership that brings clinical research and tertiary education together with health, social and community care providers. All partners work together to help break down silos and create a cohesive environment in which knowledge and innovation can thrive. Partners share human and financial resources to provide opportunities for cross-sector networking. By teaming local leadership together, the Centre aims to drive reform and impact the social and cultural determinants of health. The Centre disseminates best national/international practice and research to elevate local approaches to health prevention, leadership, change management and improvement science. Being inclusive is one of the principles that drives engagement.

Centre for Healthcare, Knowledge and Innovation partners include:

Healthy North Coast
 NNSW Local Health District
 MNC Local Health District
 Southern Cross University
 University Centre for Rural Health
 North Coast Allied Health Association
 Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation
 NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation
 CHES Connect
 Social Futures

During 2019–20, our activities included:

- *Social Determinants of Health Webcast Series*, which saw more than 2,000 participants explore the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age
- *Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare Symposium*, which explored big data, AI disruptors and enablers and ethical AI. One hundred clinicians attended
- *Activism Against Ageism*, a dinner encouraging the health workforce to think differently about growing older. Sixty healthcare providers attended
- *A Celebration of Regional Aboriginal Wellbeing Partnerships*, a 2-day conference exploring a large range of North Coast poster presentations that

successfully respond to the cultural determinants of health, with 153 healthcare providers attending

- A monthly newsletter highlighting innovative healthcare news – 5,445 subscribers
- The sharing of resources through an online knowledge library – more than 900 resources downloaded
- A catering donation that fed more than 100 Rural Fire Service volunteers following the postponement of an aged care conference in Coffs Harbour

We received especially positive feedback about our event *A Celebration of Regional Aboriginal Wellbeing Partnerships*.

Dave Kapeen, Aboriginal Transport Development Officer at Tweed, Byron, Ballina Community Transport and his colleague, Monique Pollock, attended. Dave’s feedback was:

I would like to let everyone know that Monique and I enjoyed all parts of the gathering and hearing about the Deadly programs that Healthy North Coast and other service providers support. The presenters were great, the facilitator was TOO DEADLY. The gathering gave us the opportunity to speak to services about how transport and access impact on their services, so thanks for providing the

opportunity to achieve this. Monique and I will be regulars at your events.

Also attending this event was Pauline Nolan, Drug and Alcohol Nurse at Justice Health NSW.

We would like to say thank you thank you thank you! This was a fantastic experience, a wonderful, exciting, uplifting and inspiring two days. And what treats – the beautiful spiritual dancing – the smoking ceremony – the amazing Kutcha himself – beautiful venue and a delight of likeminded people. What a lucky and grateful lot we are. You managed it all brilliantly and there is a lot to reflect on.

Other attendees spoke to the connections they made over the 2 days, the diverse backgrounds in attendance, and the comfortable way the conference brought both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together to talk about how we can successfully address the cultural determinants of health in systems planning — connection to land and country, spirituality and ancestors, family, kinship and community, and mind and body.

Learn more about [The Centre for Healthcare, Knowledge and Innovation](#).

STRATEGIC GOAL

Promote health equity through strategic investment

Aunty Glenda Macphail with young people in Baryugil working with Desert Pea Media as part of the *Break It Down North Coast* program.
Image: Renee Saxby



Image: Gary Adler

Integrated Team Care program improving Aboriginal health outcomes

Integrated Team Care (ITC) aims to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic disease through better access to care coordination, multidisciplinary care, and support for self-management.

Healthy North Coast provides ITC funding to 11 commissioned service providers across the region, including Aboriginal medical services, and 3 providers supporting clients who attend mainstream general practices.

In 2019, in consultation with service providers, we moved to an equity-based model to guide and support ITC funding distribution across our region.

The Aboriginal medical services we fund are:

- Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation – Richmond Valley/Clarence Valley
- Bulgarr Ngaru – Bugalwena GP (Tweed Heads)
- Rekindling the Spirit Health Service (Jullums)
- Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service
- Galambila Aboriginal Corporation
- Werin Aboriginal Corporation

- Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service
- Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service – Daarimba Maarra

The mainstream ITC providers are:

- Rekindling the Spirit – LGA areas Ballina, Byron, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed
- Bawrunga Coffs GP Super Clinic – LGA areas Coffs Harbour, Nambucca Heads and Bellingen
- Werin – Port Macquarie – Hastings, Kempsey and surrounding areas

The funding allocation to each service supports the employment of care coordinators and outreach workers to manage ITC in those services. The allocation also helps with the purchase of medical aids, transport and specialist services.

Promote health equity through strategic investment

ITC funds are also put toward the employment of 4 Aboriginal Health Coordinators (AHCs) across the Healthy North Coast region. These coordinators support the commissioned services delivering ITC to clients with chronic disease.

Our AHCs are based at Tweed Heads, Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. As part of their role, they have regular contact with the ITC providers in their area.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 lockdowns have limited the team's ability to meet face-to-face with providers, affecting some follow up actions that were scheduled before their commencement in early 2020.

ITC makes a real difference for Healthy North Coast's Aboriginal clients. These are people who have complex chronic disease and who need assistance to ensure they follow their care plan and can access the multidisciplinary support they need to limit the progression of their chronic disease.

Some of the areas where Healthy North Coast supports ITC providers are through:

- specialist services including billing issues and how to negotiate lower costs
- Medicare billing and how to minimise out of pocket expenses with specialist and allied health
- helping to access transport for clients, particularly those who need regular transport for dialysis
- dealing with queries regarding use of supplementary services funding for exceptional circumstances
- reporting of ITC activities and financial acquittals
- referral processes between mainstream GP practices and the ITC provider
- developing support materials and strategies to inform mainstream GPs on how to refer into the ITC program
- providing cultural safety training for GP practices — this was planned but delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions

- discussing with service providers how to evaluate the ITC program and support the process
- working collaboratively with Integrated Aboriginal Chronic Care nurses and with the ITC service providers to ensure any client with chronic disease has support via the local health district as well as the AMS and private sector

In addition to the direct work Aboriginal Health Coordinators do with the ITC providers, they also work closely with Aboriginal medical services to provide practice support on issues such as personal protective equipment for COVID, continuing professional development and quality improvement.

There is also collaboration with local health districts on projects that affect the Healthy North Coast Aboriginal community, and direct work with Aboriginal medical services and other community organisations such as Social Futures on initiatives to help improve the health of Aboriginal people.

In particular, we have supported telehealth to assist patient access to healthcare during the COVID-19 restrictions.



Art on Bundjalung Market on Widjabul/Wiyabul Bundjalung country, in Lismore.
Image: Kate Holmes

Planning for reconciliation

Reconciliation Australia has conditionally endorsed Healthy North Coast's draft Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), paving the way for the RAP's finalisation and implementation.

In welcoming Healthy North Coast's submission, Reconciliation Australia said more than 1,000 corporate, government and not-for-profit organisations across Australia had formally committed to reconciliation through the RAP program.

The RAP program provides a framework for organisations to advance reconciliation within their spheres of influence — both internally and within the communities in which they operate.

RAPs also:

- provide a guide for organisations to support the national reconciliation movement
- provide practical actions to contribute to reconciliation
- support organisations to develop respectful relationships and create meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- are endorsed by and answerable to Reconciliation Australia

Healthy North Coast's provisional RAP is a roadmap to establishing an innovative approach to driving reconciliation through business activities, services and programs.

We will develop mutually beneficial relationships

with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, embracing the journey with open hearts and minds, growing from the challenges and building on successes.

Our reconciliation vision is to work towards a better future together, consisting of historical truth telling, trusting and reciprocal relationships, and equitable outcomes.

To celebrate National Reconciliation Week 2020, Healthy North Coast staff produced [this video](#).

I love it!! Congratulations on your video & I believe that PHN North Coast are Reconciliation Champions that other workplaces & non-Aboriginal community individuals can follow by way of your experiences, knowledge & connections. From little things BIG THINGS GROW.



Promote health equity through strategic investment



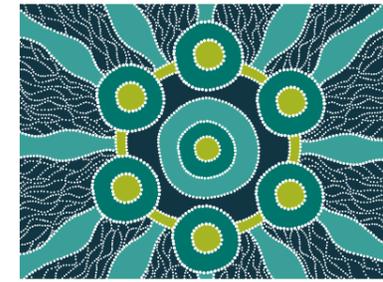
Bundjalung



Dunghutti



Githabul



Birpai



Gumbayngirr



Yaegl

Illustrations: Christine Slabb

Aboriginal artworks help to tell our new brand story

In mid-2019, Healthy North Coast commenced a rebranding project (see page 26). Our objective was to develop a new identity to redefine our organisation as a leader in the evolving landscape of Australian healthcare.

One of our key priorities was to include Aboriginal artworks from across our region in our rebrand, reflecting the strong and critical connection to culture that our region has. These artworks will be showcased within our different office spaces, will feature on our fleet of vehicles, and will be a key element of our future communications materials.

In consultation with local Aboriginal land councils, community-controlled organisations and communities, we called for expressions of interest from artists who wanted to showcase their work.

In response, Healthy North Coast received a range of incredible artworks from across the region. We invested \$7,000 to procure these works, which can now be seen across the region.

As part of the process, Healthy North Coast partnered with Bundjalung-Yugambah graphic designer Christine Slabb to digitise the original artworks to enable application across our branding needs.

This enabled the striking prints to be presented on stationery, car wraps, glass panelling in our office spaces, for general marketing purposes and in our website designs.

We're proud to be associated with these unique artworks, which help us to communicate authentic values and stories from within our communities.





Image: Gary Adler

Investing in our Aboriginal Health Team

In June 2019, Healthy North Coast recruited to a new executive position, Deputy Director Aboriginal Health.

On commencement of this new role, key priorities identified included reviewing the existing structure of the Aboriginal Health Team at Healthy North Coast.

In consultation with staff and stakeholders, a comprehensive review and restructure was undertaken. In September 2019 a new structure was endorsed, which included 4 identified Aboriginal Health Coordinator roles across the region.

These roles were recruited to and commenced between January and March 2020. In April 2020, a fifth role was developed and recruited to lead the organisational Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing portfolio in collaboration with the Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Team.

The appointments to these roles have increased engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal organisations and communities.

This increase in engagement will enable Healthy North Coast to better meet our objectives around improving health equity and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the North Coast.

The team's responsibilities include community engagement and consultation, needs assessment and planning, program development, creating and maintaining linkages with other sectors and supporting commissioned programs and services.



Commissioning Directorate reviews systems and processes

In 2019–20, Healthy North Coast's Commissioning Directorate undertook a review of all commissioning systems and processes as part of our role.

This led to the redevelopment of our procurement and contracting processes to ensure our commissioned services have a strong focus on equity, cultural safety, outcomes and value for money.

It also resulted in the employment of a service planner to improve the quality of the evidence base upon which we prioritise our investments. This is occurring through better:

- planning
- comprehensive analysis of performance data
- evaluation of existing activities
- assessment of need across the North Coast

Procurement and contracting templates

We refreshed the Standard Terms and Conditions document with our legal team and designed a new contracts framework under a Service Order Agreement approach. In our Folio software platform, we also developed new and improved Procurement Plan, Variation Request and Commissioned Services templates to replace the range of old templates.

The *NSQHS Standards User guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health*, and the Quadruple Aim, were used as guiding documents for the Health Equity section of Folio.

We also built a Grant Agreement template and process for the Bushfire Recovery Community Grants. Approval workflows were refined across all of the above templates. Our focus has increased on evidence-based rationales for decision making, outcomes-focused activities, cultural safety and equity for all our strategic investments.

Education workforce development

One of our highlights was the coordination of an international speaker, Dr Michael McAfee, who spoke about equity, collective impact and leadership. There was broad engagement and uptake across the sector for this leadership series.



STRATEGIC GOAL

Build the organisation's sustainability



Organisational restructure delivers value

To remain dynamic and responsive, Healthy North Coast completed an organisational restructure supporting the delivery of our strategic objectives. This ensured we remained able to quickly adapt to emerging priorities and a rapidly evolving health environment.

In moving to a new structure, Healthy North Coast focused on building a workforce structure and system to enable us to continue to deliver our vision of better health for people living on the North Coast.

We achieved this by streamlining, digitising and automating our processes and protocols. This maximised the resources available for achieving our strategic goals.

The organisational restructure delivered a strong staffing profile with a focus on organisational culture and quality demonstrated by:

- redirecting resourcing into service planning, needs assessment and commissioning
- partnering with external information technology support and moving to cloud-based platforms that enabled the organisation to work virtually through the COVID-19 pandemic
- benchmarking of our staff culture which saw staff engagement lift from 36% to 62% since the previous survey 2 years ago — this meant staff culture went from reaction to success
- being independently assessed and certified as having established, documented and implemented a quality management system complying with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015
- instigating an operational reporting framework using 'Power BI' technology to monitor deliverables that allow reporting back to the Healthy North Coast Board

- implementing a range of technology solutions to automate processes including corporate travel, employee self-service for HR and payroll, financial business intelligence, and electronic fleet booking
- establishing a facilities master plan focusing on the upgrading of offices and the motor vehicle fleet
- revamping financial management with the utilisation of business intelligence to support directorate financial reporting and performance management

Section Header

We met the world standard in quality management systems

Healthy North Coast achieved organisation-wide ISO 9001:2015 certification in June 2020.

Pleasingly, this strongly and formally demonstrates our commitment to consistency, continual improvement and customer satisfaction.

ISO 9001 is the world's most widely recognised quality management system (QMS) standard. It specifies the requirements for organisations to demonstrate their ability to consistently provide goods and services that meet the needs of customers and enhance customer satisfaction, while meeting statutory and regulatory requirements.

We are one of the few Primary Health Networks to achieve ISO 9001:2015 certification, meeting all requirements. This achievement is a testament to the robust systems and processes we have in place to enable quality outcomes for communities through initiatives aligned to our strategic goals.

Over the past year, Healthy North Coast has focused on several key areas including:

- strengthening organisational culture
- ensuring our QMS documentation is relevant and applicable to Healthy North Coast's business, accessible when and as needed, and compliant with relevant standards and legislative requirements
- embedding risk-based thinking into the organisation
- strengthening Healthy North Coast's feedback process
- streamlining commissioning processes ensuring a consistent quality of processes and services
- strengthening Healthy North Coast's data governance
- streamlining systems and processes across the organisation in line with best practice and compliance obligations

Our quality management system drives continual improvement in meeting our strategic goals, always ensuring that our communities are at the centre of our work.

Adopting transformative IT and cyber security solutions

Installing a high level of cyber security to keep staff and organisational data safe was a strong focus for Healthy North Coast in 2019–20.

We invested in new technology that ensured our information communication technology (ICT) met the highest security, privacy and industry standards.

This ICT refresh enabled us to become a fully mobile workforce, empowering us to be out in our communities more, with the peace of mind of having a multi-layer security stack protecting our users and data.

As data custodians, it was extremely important to us that Healthy North Coast ensure our cyber security provides a first class, best practice solution.

Our rigorous security framework ensures high-level threat protection, prevents malicious system access, and utilises advance identity management protocols to deliver authorised access based on user profiles. This provides our organisation and staff with the confidence

to be fully mobile, working from either the office, home, or out in the communities we are servicing.

Having completed our refresh by early 2020, when COVID-19 restrictions first took place it meant we were able to adapt to socially distanced working arrangements quickly and with little to no interruption to normal workflows.

We already had all the technology, privacy and security systems in place to enable us to shift to a remote worker platform almost overnight, while still delivering the highest standard of work.

Our ICT transformation has meant that Healthy North Coast now has superior flexibility and capacity to continue supporting our communities.

Commissioned services

In 2019-20, Healthy North Coast has managed 250 contracts worth more than 65 million dollars*

As deliverers of the North Coast PHN Program, our core function is to commission local health services that drive better health outcomes for our region.

Commissioning is a complex process. It involves the assessment and understanding of our population's health needs and the planning of services to meet those needs.

Decisions need to be made to prioritise services within budget limitations. Service monitoring is critical to ensuring we are making a positive difference through the services we have procured.

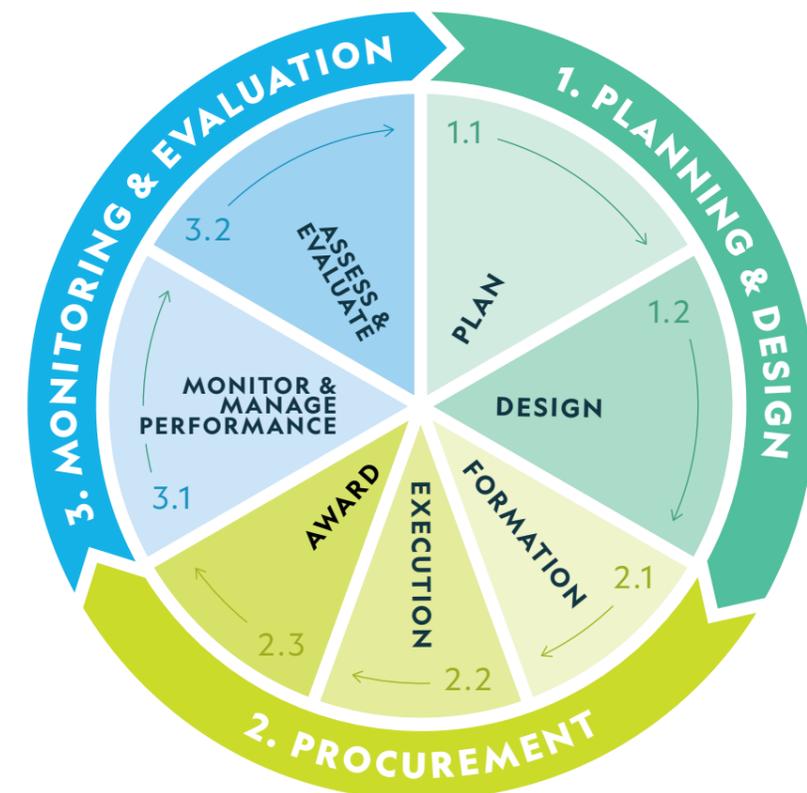
Healthy North Coast is committed to having a strong community voice throughout the commissioning cycle – from early stages of service planning and co-design, to monitoring patient-reported outcome and experience measures.

Collaborative efforts with our contracted service delivery partners have helped to achieve increased efficiency and effectiveness of our local health services. Together, we can continue to support communities at risk of poor health outcomes and improve coordination of care to ensure we are delivering the right care in the right place at the right time.

Healthy North Coast's commissioning activity is delivered in line with the funding streams identified by the Australian Government:

- Primary mental health
- Drug and alcohol treatment
- Aboriginal health and wellbeing
- After hours
- Core flexible

*Total contract value includes contracts running over multiple years.



Financial Summary 2019/2020

Summarised statement of profit and loss and other comprehensive income

	2020	2019
	\$000's	\$000's
Revenue		
Grants received	38,494	31,165
Other income	1,099	1,834
Total revenue	39,593	32,999
Expenditure		
Commissioned and client support services	28,381	20,584
Employee expenses	6,756	7,740
Operational expenses	1,594	3,518
Office expenses	1,660	688
Depreciation and amortization expense	540	146
Interest on lease liability	60	0
Total expenses	38,991	32,676
Operating surplus	602	323
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income	602	323

Summarised statement of financial position

	2020	2019
	\$000's	\$000's
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	13,812	19,394
Financial assets	14,000	8,000
Trade and other receivables	725	1,085
Other assets	151	62
Total current assets	28,688	28,541
Property plant and equipment	244	257
Other assets	176	109
Right of use assets	1,745	0
Total non-current assets	2,165	366
Total assets	30,853	28,907
Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	8,926	9,441
Other liabilities	13,922	13,818
Lease liabilities	489	0
Provisions	514	548
Total current liabilities	23,851	23,807
Lease liabilities	1,424	0
Provisions	123	226
Total non-current liabilities	1,547	226
Total liabilities	25,398	24,033
Net assets	5,455	4,874
Equity		
Retained earnings	5,455	4,874
Total equity	5,455	4,874

Who we are

Executive

Julie Sturgess
CEO

Glen James
Executive Director,
Mental Health and AOD

Monika Wheeler
Executive Director,
Wellness

Tony Hendry
Director,
Corporate Services

Claudine Tule
Director,
Commissioning

Steve Mann
Director,
Integration MNC

Sarah Robin
A/Director,
Healthy Communities

Samara Finlayson
A/Director,
Digital Health and Marketing

Marni Tuala
Deputy Director,
Aboriginal Health

Board

Dr Tim Francis
Chair

Dr Adrian Gilliland
Deputy Chair

Warren Grimshaw

Naree Hancock

Dr Caroline Hong

Scott Monaghan

Dr John Moran

Dr Joanna Sutherland

Clinical Councils

Hastings Macleay

Dr Roshan Abraham
Durri Aboriginal Corporation
Medical Service

Dr Jenny Beange
Lake Innes Medical and
Dental Centre

Associate Prof Graeme Browne
University of Newcastle —
Port Macquarie

Mr Laurie Clay
Werin Aboriginal Medical Centre

Ms Rebecca Donoghue
Hastings Physio and Health

Dr Claudia Long
Werin Aboriginal Medical Centre

Dr Sarah Mollard
Five Star Medical Centre

Mr Shane Moore
Flynn's Beach Pharmacy

Dr Fares Samara
Durri Aboriginal Corporation
Medical Service

Dr Murray Schofield
Greenmeadows Medical

Dr Sharon Sykes
Westside Medical Centre

Mr Guy Terkelsen
Hastings Sports Injury and
Physiotherapy Centre

Mid North Coast

Dr Kate Amos
Ethical Dental

Dr Alira Bayndrian
Coastal Clinical Psychology

Mr Chris Braithwaite
Galambila Aboriginal Health
Service

Dr Ashlea Broomfield
Sawtell Medical Centre

Ms Ann Fowler
Coffs Harbour Community Health

Dr Tim Francis
Urunga Medical Centre

Dr Adrian Gilliland
Coffs Medical Centre

Mr David Goodwin
Hoys Allied Health & Wellness —
Coffs Harbour

Mr Aaron Hardaker
Mid North Coast Physiotherapy &
Sports Injury Clinic — Woolgoolga

Dr Gull Herzberg
Bellingen Healing Centre

Dr Nicola Holmes
Coffs Medical Centre

Dr Dubravka Jankovic
Baringa Bindarray Clinic

Ms Tanya Maloney
Terry White Chemist —
Coffs Harbour

Dr Katherine McInroy
Galambila Aboriginal Health Service

Dr Basia Radlinska
Headspace — Coffs Harbour

Dr Rosie Ross
Northside Health

Dr Jay Ruthnam
Park Beach Family Practice

Dr Ashish Sinha
CHC Medical

Dr Verity Stoker
Australian Psychology &
Wellness Centre

Dr Renee Strazzari
Genhealth Women's Health Centre

Dr Joanna Sutherland
Coffs Harbour Community Health

Dr Vaibhav Tyagi
Coffs Geriatrics

Ms Jenny Zirkler
Nambucca Valley Care Ltd

Northern NSW

Prof James Bennett-Levy
University Centre for Rural Health

Dr Andrew Binns
Goonellabah Medical Centre

Dr Diane Blanckensee
Tweed Health for
Everyone Superclinic

Dr Paul Davies
Headspace — Tweed Heads

Dr Natalie Edmiston
Lismore Sexual Health Service

Dr Dan Ewald
Lennox Head Medical Centre

Ms Melissa Gannon
Priceline Pharmacy Ballina Central

Ms Donna Gibson
Alstonville Clinic

Dr David Guest
Goonellabah Medical Centre

Dr Tien Khoo
Lismore Base Hospital

Mr Michael Laurie
Aagal Yaluuwi Creations

Dr Tony Lembke
Alstonville Clinic

Dr Brett Lynam
Healthwise Medical Centre

Ms Deborah McPherson
North Coast GP Training

Ms Susan Mills
Northern New South Wales Local
Health District — Lismore

Ms Jean-Mari Mouton
Healthwise Medical Centre

Ms Lynne Ridgway
Northern Rivers Chiropractic Ballina

Dr Nina Robertson
Keen Street Clinic

Dr Grant Rogers
ehealth NSW

Mr David Shaw
Rightfoot Podiatry & Footwear —
Pottsville

Dr Peter Silberberg
Lennox Head Medical Centre

Mr Michael Sonnenfeld
Bailey Nelson

Dr Marion Tait
Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal
Corporation Richmond Valley

Ms Hanna Thomas
Hanna Thomas Consulting

Ms Casandra Tibika
Casandra Tibika Speech Pathology

Dr David Townend
Lismore Base Hospital

Ms Sharyn White
North Coast GP Training

Dr Katherine Willis-Sullivan
Lismore Base Hospital



Port Macquarie, Hastings LGA.
Image: Elena Emmy | Unsplash

HEALTHY
NORTH COAST

phn
NORTH COAST
An Australian Government Initiative

Healthy North Coast is an independent, not-for-profit organisation proudly delivering the PHN Program in North Coast NSW. We are committed to improving the health of our communities through quality primary health care. The PHN Program is an Australian Government initiative.

hnc.org.au