



# Annual Report

2020 | 2021



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

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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## OUR STRATEGIC VISION

### Healthy people in North Coast communities

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#### OUR STRATEGIC MISSION

To build a person-centred health system in which each member of the North Coast community, especially those with the greatest need, receives care that is integrated, high quality and easy to access. Our commitment to closing the gap and reducing health inequity for Aboriginal people and communities is paramount to each of our objectives and outcomes.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Following the devastating bushfires of 2019-2020, the resilience and resolve of our community was again tested in 2020-21 as we faced the increasing challenges of a global pandemic and widespread flooding affecting much of the Mid North Coast in March 2021.

In such circumstances, primary health care plays a critical role in meeting individuals' health needs and in difficult times, this is where a collective effort is vital. Healthy North Coast continued to work closely with our valued partners - our local health districts (LHDs), our dedicated and passionate GP leaders and pharmacy staff, our Aboriginal medical services and a diverse range of trusted allied health professionals – to put our residents' health and wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.

## DRIVING REGIONAL COLLABORATION

More broadly, throughout 2020-21, Healthy North Coast also pushed forward with our 10-year plan for a cross-sectoral approach to optimise population health in the region. We strengthened ties with the NSW Government agencies of Health, Family and Community Services, Education, Police and Emergency Services, Justice, Aboriginal Affairs NSW and the Aboriginal Community-Controlled sector.

Rather than working in isolation, our North Coast Collective program drives joined-up responses across these agencies to positively impact and influence key determinants of health and disease, such as income, education, living and working conditions, housing, food security, safety, and social integration.

These partnerships clearly define the role of primary health care and underpin a more strategic and regional approach to commissioning. Our joint efforts with other local health districts, government agencies and not-for-profit boards in the region will yield an improved return on investment in health outcomes and address a range of socio-economic disadvantages across the North Coast footprint.

## BOARD DIVERSITY AND RENEWAL

In terms of the Board's composition, in 2020-21, we renewed and refreshed our strategic capability and perspective, welcoming five new members with four retiring.

My sincere thanks to retiring Board Chair Tim Francis and retiring Board members Scott Monaghan and Naree Hancock for their many years of service.

I also welcome our new members:

- Graeme Innes, lawyer and former Human Rights and Disability Commissioner
- Caroline Hong, dentist and former CEO of the Australian Dental Association
- Kerry Stubbs, Deputy Chancellor Western Sydney University and former CEO of Northcott, one of Australia's largest disability services organisations
- Sam Hardjono, accountant and Chair, Audit and Risk, Red Cross Australia, and
- Rebecca Bell, occupational therapist and senior executive, Medibank.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Ongoing governance changes include establishing a Community Advisory Council and Aboriginal Advisory Council, and our new-look Clinical Council. Thank you to these individuals for the benefit of their clinical advice and for bringing a consumer perspective to our programs.

## BUILDING CAPABILITY IN 2022

Looking forward, Healthy North Coast's program of work will increasingly be informed by better data-driven and digital health initiatives. Already we're seeing improvements through our Mental Health system dynamics modelling, innovative mental health initiatives, and our developing Healthy Ageing Strategy. This allows us to advocate for better primary health care for our community at a national level.

There remains much room for improvement in the health of our Aboriginal people, and this will continue to be a focus as we shape our future strategies.

There's no doubt COVID-19 and its impact will be with us for some time. We're learning to live with COVID and manage it in the community to minimise the risk to our most vulnerable populations.

## THANK YOU TO OUR PRIMARY CARE PROFESSIONALS AND HEALTHY NORTH COAST STAFF

My heartfelt thanks to our dedicated GPs, pharmacy staff and Aboriginal medical service staff, along with many other primary health care providers who have worked tirelessly to ensure our community is safe from the worst of COVID-19.

I want to pay tribute to the staff of Healthy North Coast. Despite the challenges of remote working, teams have gone above and beyond to support our primary care frontline, remaining agile and innovative in their service delivery responses.

Finally, I want to thank our Chief Executive Officer, Julie Sturgess, and the Executive team for their leadership throughout these unique circumstances and their ongoing commitment to the best possible health outcomes for the North Coast community.

**Dr Adrian Gilliland**  
Chair  
Healthy North Coast





## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The 2020-21 year was a singularly challenging time for our North Coast community. Already dealing with the devastation of the bushfires and flooding of the 2020 summer and spring, our region then faced a health crisis of immense proportion – the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Seemingly overnight, Healthy North Coast shifted priorities and operational focus, as did many other businesses, services, communities and families, to contend with new risks, restrictions and demands. As we travelled the path from novel and disruptive to the normalcy of living with COVID-19, the pressure on our frontline primary health care providers and Healthy North Coast staff was significant.

### ADAPTIVE RESPONSES TO CRISIS

Healthy North Coast took the opportunity to expand and adapt our services in response to this dramatically changed environment in relation to COVID-19 and other regional primary health care challenges.

Throughout the COVID-19 public health crisis, Healthy North Coast's key role was to coordinate, provide information and enhance a targeted pandemic response to support GPs, pharmacies, Aboriginal medical services, residential aged care services, disability residential services and other vulnerable communities. Coordinating distribution and delivery of COVID-19 vaccinations and driving community confidence in and uptake of the vaccine were key priorities, as were mental health and health responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We facilitated the advancement and widespread acceptance of telehealth across the North Coast community, particularly in the area of mental health, where the impacts of COVID-related isolation, restrictions, anxiety and uncertainty hit many people hard.

We launched an online Primary Care Impact resource, acknowledging the importance of ongoing quality improvement for our primary health professionals, particularly in an environment of rapidly changing health directives. We continued to build on these resources for COVID-19 and other primary health initiatives.

We invested in timely and targeted communication initiatives and campaigns for our primary health care professionals and the general public, building confidence in Healthy North Coast as a trusted source of truth for COVID-19 information and health messaging.

We also established the Healthy Communities Directorate to better connect communities in our region through place-based and community development programs. Under this banner, a Disaster Resilience Team was created to lead whole-of-organisation disaster and emergency efforts, such as responses to bushfires and floods, from prevention through to recovery.

### PLANNING FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Healthy North Coast also broadened and strengthened our partnerships outside the standard health system to contribute to greater regional health outcomes. Our continued support for and involvement with the Centre for Healthcare Knowledge and Innovation ensures key agencies for health, social care, education and employment are at the table to make important decisions and coordinate cross-agency initiatives that impact regional health outcomes.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Healthy North Coast was proud to pilot and roll out a national digital health provider directory during the year, designed to improve efficiencies for health professionals and ensure critical patient information can be delivered through digitally connected health systems. Digital health is a key component of future healthcare and it is important to embrace innovative models and get them right now for the future.

We increased our focus on systems dynamics modelling – the groundwork of which was done in 2020 – to deliver healthy ageing modelling and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health modelling. Our goal is to build on these successes and integrate modelling used in areas such as climate change, where there are multiple interacting factors, into health planning.

As CEO, I continued to be involved in the PHN CEO Network to contribute to the national PHN agenda and drive local improvements for the North Coast. This is an important forum whereby we can boost better understanding of our region's health profile and signal the areas where we need more assistance or funding.

## THANK YOU, NORTH COAST

As the impacts of the pandemic rippled through our community in 2020-21, the critical role of primary

care and public health programs has never been more evident. It is only through a strong frontline response that we can hope to minimise the impacts of COVID-19 on our precious health resources in the hospital sector.

My sincere thanks to our GPs and clinic staff, who formed the backbone of the regional response to COVID-19; our pharmacies and Aboriginal medical services staff; those working in residential aged care or disability care facilities to keep our vulnerable community members safe from the worst of the virus, and all other primary care providers.

Thank you to our region's mental health specialists and their staff who found themselves overwhelmed with the demand for support, as social isolation, uncertainty and disruption punctured everyone's lives, particularly those already dealing with mental health challenges.

Thank you also to our commissioned service providers who remained committed to delivering on their service arrangements and providing targeted health care programs.

Thank you to the residents of our beautiful region, who stepped up and responded with solidarity to keep each other safe.

I remain indebted to the Healthy North Coast team, for their ongoing professionalism and commitment, as evidenced by an almost seamless adaptation to work-from-home arrangements. It is testament to the dedication of our staff that productivity was maintained with minimal interruption to our core business. I appreciate that many staff were also dealing with other challenges, such as home-schooling children, caring for older family members or the financial impacts of the economic shutdown due to COVID-19.

Though unexpected, this transition to online working has transformed our capacity to cope during difficult times, boosting flexibility and setting us on a new trajectory for building a productive work environment. Similar to many other organisations, we will never go back to the old ways of working.

Finally, my sincere thanks to our Board for their ongoing support, engagement and guidance, as we navigate these challenges together.

**Julie Sturgess**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Healthy North Coast



# YEAR IN REVIEW

The many achievements of Healthy North Coast during 2020-21 contributed to our vision of building a person-centred health system where everyone receives care that is coordinated, high-quality and easy to access.

Our efforts to improve health outcomes for people living on the North Coast are particularly directed to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in our community.



**\$37 million**

in funding for local programs and services

**287**



local service contracts being managed

**650**



face-to-face and virtual general practice support visits



**59**

health workforce learning and development initiatives held

**1,000**



users of the Mid and North Coast HealthPathways website each week

**97,585**

visitors to Healthy North Coast website



**311,814** page views

**498,056**



people reached through Facebook campaigns (41% increase on 2019-20)

Responding to COVID-19, we provided to general practices, Aboriginal medical services, GP-led respiratory clinics and allied health:



**100,750** surgical masks



**4,740** P2 masks



**6,770** gowns

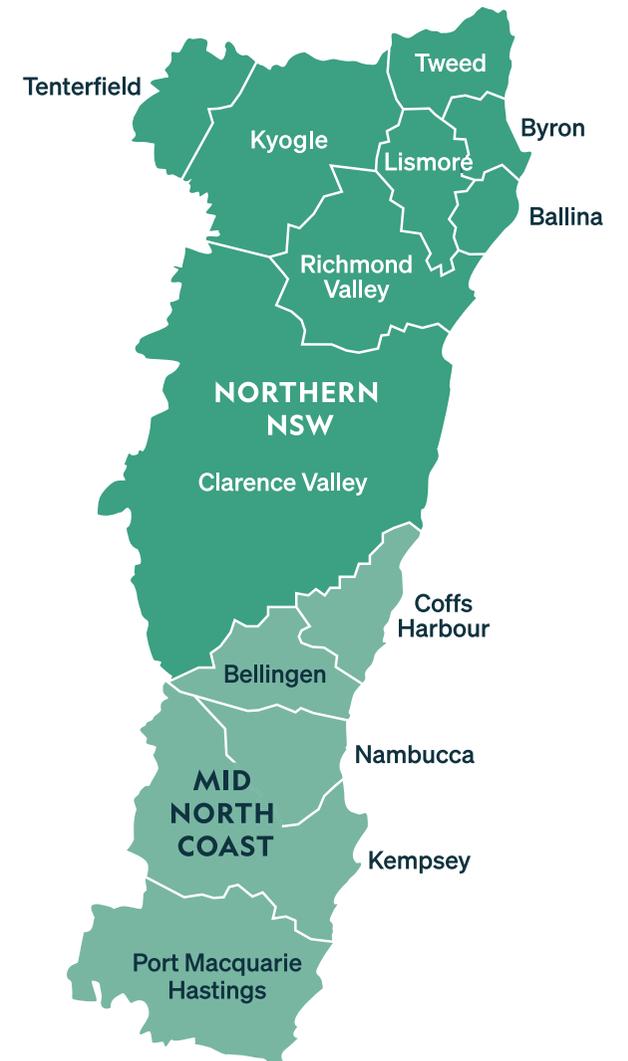
26,000 branded re-usable cloth masks were distributed directly to local community members.

# OUR REGION

We are proud to be living and working in this beautiful and diverse region of New South Wales and are honoured to support our community's health and wellbeing.

The North Coast spans an area of approximately 33,000 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.

Our region comprises 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.



32,767 SQ. KILOMETRES | 533,940 PEOPLE | 6 ABORIGINAL NATIONS | 12 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS | 2 LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICTS

With nearly 534,000 residents, the North Coast region is rapidly growing, though many of our communities face considerable challenges due to social disadvantage, ageing, geographic isolation and cultural background.

Nearly a quarter of our residents are over 65 years, while more than 25,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people call this region home.



**19%** population aged under 15 years



**25%** population aged 65 years and over



**6%** identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (NSW 3.4%)



**7%** need assistance with self-care, mobility and communication (NSW 5.4%)



**20%** born overseas (NSW 34.5%)

We work with and deliver programs through our incredible network of dedicated primary health care professionals, who also live and work in the region, serving and supporting their community.

- 178 general practices
- 874 general practitioners
- 8 Aboriginal medical services
- 497 nurses in general practice
- 2,763 primary care nurses and midwives
- 3,520 allied health professionals

## OUR ORGANISATION

Healthy North Coast is fortunate to employ people who contribute both to the vision and goals of the organisation, as well as making a positive impact on our internal culture through a commitment to our organisational values.

Our organisational culture is founded upon our region's stunning natural beauty, enviable lifestyle and active and vibrant community spirit. Our staff bring passion, commitment, integrity and expertise to their roles, with a strong core of health care professionals in our ranks.



**95** people employed as at June 30, 2021



**50** full-time



**31** part-time



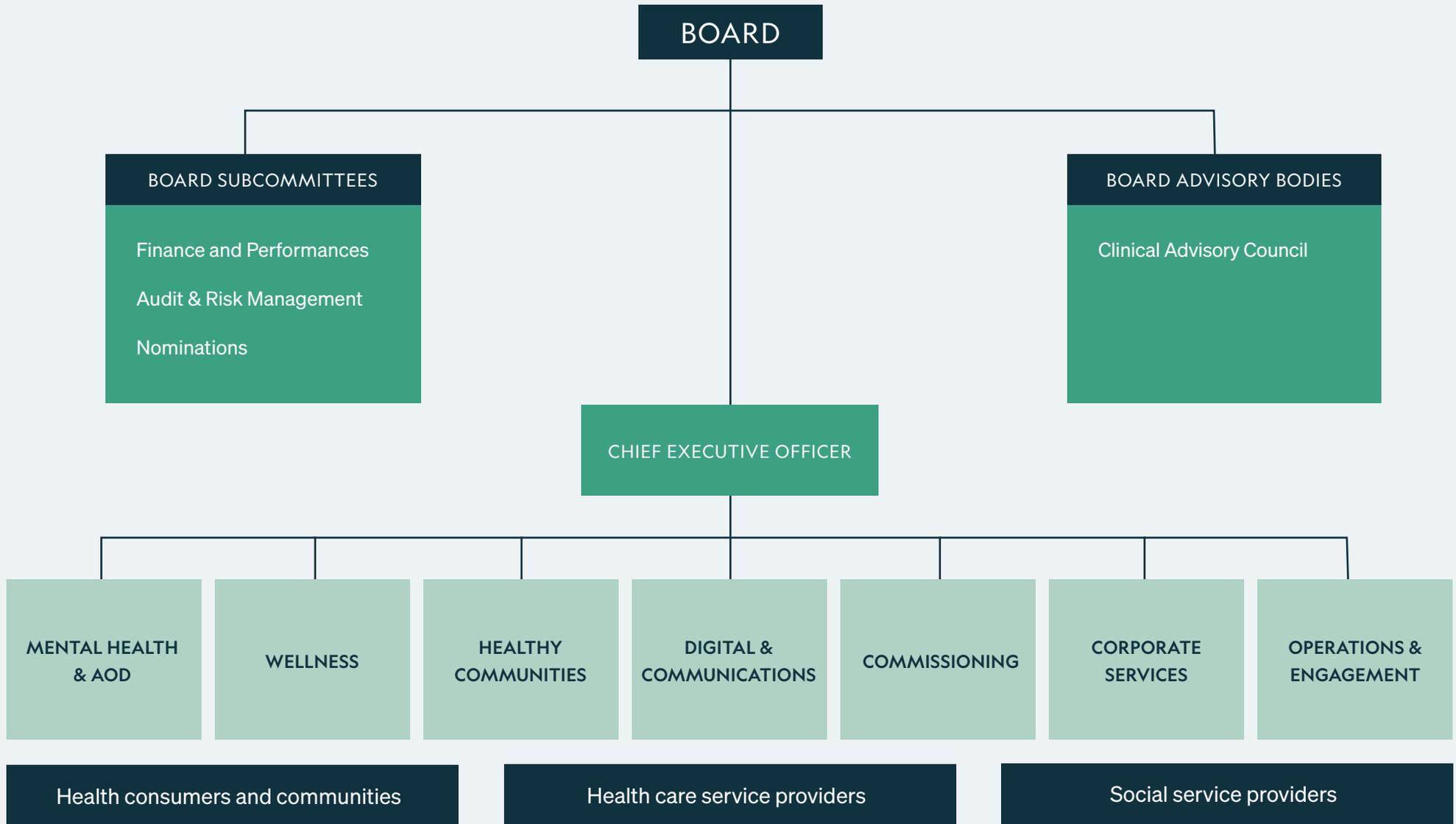
**14** casual



**22** employees recruited in 2020-21

# GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

AS AT 30 JUNE 2021



Healthy North Coast has seven directorates that contribute to delivering our strategic objectives. Our directorates are guided by the Office of the Chief Executive, which drives and oversees the strategic objectives of the organisation and ensures delivery of our operational plans.

## MENTAL HEALTH, ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Delivering on a shared vision, purpose and action for significant reform in mental health and services planning by working with key partners and developing effective relationships and networks and subject matter expertise.

## WELLNESS

Works to improve health outcomes across the region through strategic commissioning and health improvement in key areas such as Aboriginal health, chronic disease, healthy living and ageing and population health amongst others.

## OPERATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Delivering comprehensive stakeholder engagement and implementation support to ensure local context, needs and opportunities are integrated to improve health outcomes.

## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Connecting communities in the region through place-based and community development programs, disaster management and climate adaptation. Working alongside the Community Advisory Council and collaborating with all levels of government, industry, non-government and community organisations to improve community outcomes.

## COMMISSIONING

Streamlining and connecting commissioning in procurement, contracts, planning, project management, data analytics and workforce development across the region to develop and implement health services to meet community needs.

## CORPORATE SERVICES

Providing high-level quality support service to enable Healthy North Coast to deliver on strategic and operational objectives. A key focus is on automating and simplifying processes to support roles.

## DIGITAL AND COMMUNICATIONS

Providing in-house cross-functional services across communications, public relations, digital health and information technology to promote the organisation's brand, work and services to the wider community, health care professionals and stakeholders.

## Our Values



RESPECT



INTEGRITY



COLLABORATION



INNOVATION



RESULTS DRIVEN



HAVE FUN



## DELIVERING THE PHN PROGRAM ON THE NORTH COAST

Healthy North Coast is one of 31 local, independent primary health networks (PHNs) across Australia, designed to benefit the health of local communities and provide them with better access to improved primary healthcare services.

PHNs are funded by the Australian Government and use a commissioning approach to procure medical and healthcare service based on local needs and priorities.

Our key objectives include:

- **Access and outcomes** – improving health outcomes and addressing health inequities
- **Quality** – improving the quality of primary health care
- **Integration** – improving patient experience and outcomes
- **Value** – delivering better value through operational capacity efficiencies and striving for excellence through strong governance.

## IN DEPTH

### COVID-19

#### PRIMARY CARE HAS BEEN CRITICAL IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

The team at Healthy North Coast was proud to continue our support of primary care providers and our communities as the COVID-19 pandemic extended throughout 2020-21.

Building on the strength of our efforts in 2019-20, once again our primary care providers dug deep to respond to the changing nature of the pandemic response. We especially thank our local general practices, GP-led respiratory clinics, Aboriginal medical services (AMSs), pharmacies, residential aged care facilities and allied health professionals for their inspirational efforts. We acknowledge the resilience shown by all our frontline health workers, within and beyond our region.

Working alongside our health system partners — the Mid North Coast and Northern NSW Local Health Districts and Ambulance NSW — we continued to strengthen local relationships to enable a well-coordinated and effective COVID-19 response and successful vaccination program.



## 2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS:

- 5 new localised COVID-19 HealthPathways to assist treating GPs
- 3 local COVID-19 response frameworks developed:
  - Aboriginal communities
  - GP Residential Aged Care Facility outbreak
  - GP management of adults with mild illness
- 8 Primary Care Impact COVID-19 quality improvement initiatives developed
- 112,260 items of PPE distributed to protect primary health care providers
- 120+ general practices, AMSs and GP-led respiratory clinics supported to join the vaccination program
- 286 primary care staff attended or viewed 6 immunisation education webinars
- Monthly general practice vaccination provider forums established
- 1,000+ community members participated in a COVID-19 vaccine online consultation
- 1,600 primary health care workers <60 years supported to access vaccinations (in partnership with GPs and LHDs)
- 78 RACFs and 110 community aged care providers participating in fortnightly forums
- 1,000+ pieces of correspondence to GPs, general practice respiratory clinics and Aboriginal medical services per month
- 6,379 newsletter subscribers receiving weekly COVID-19 updates
- 504 mentions generated in COVID-19-related stories in local media, including TV, print and radio

‘The clients really like the masks, and it also opens up a space for conversation around getting vaccinated.’

**Coordinator of a Lismore needle and syringe program**

26,000 branded re-usable cloth masks were distributed directly to local community members, including 2,500 Aboriginal print cloth masks. Among recipients were people at pop-up vaccination hubs and vulnerable populations, including those sleeping rough, refugee and newly arrived migrant communities, and people with disabilities, their carers and networks.





## IN DEPTH

### **Building resilience and social connection**

Primary health is critical in supporting a community to respond and recover from natural disasters. In establishing a new 'Healthy Communities' directorate in 2020-21, our aim is to ensure that the North Coast community is prepared, resilient, connected and has high levels of wellbeing, so that our region is better equipped to meet future challenges – social, economic, health and environmental.

## 2020/21 HIGHLIGHTS:

### Primary care support during the floods

During the March 2021 floods, every local government area in our region except Ballina was declared a natural disaster. On the Mid North Coast, 400 homes were destroyed and more than 2,000 properties classified as inundated or temporarily uninhabitable.

Healthy North Coast provided primary health support, mental health support, coordination and primary care liaison to the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) as part of the health response.

We supported flood-affected communities:

- provided a list of pharmacy contacts to the EOC to help with urgent prescriptions
- established a 24/7 GP telehealth service that included ePrescribing services
- activated the 'We are Open' program to fund GPs to open for extended hours, with more than 300 consults facilitated under this program during the floods
- arranged access to a trauma care clinical psychologist for the State Emergency Service workforce in the evacuation centre
- promoted 'Connect to Wellbeing' care navigation service:
  - Healthy Minds, providing up to 10 face-to-face psychology consults
  - telepsychology, up to 10 free telephone, tablet, or computer psychologist consults

- developed and disseminated communication materials and information to community, stakeholders, EOC and recovery agencies via website, flyers and social media
- facilitated links between Mid North Coast local health district and Australian Department of Health to promote access to respite care and provide additional support for frail older people
- commenced engagement in local and regional recovery committees, health and wellbeing subcommittees and drafting an organisational health and wellbeing recovery action plan.

### Grants aid communities' bushfire recovery

Many North Coast residents affected by the 2019-20 bushfires have benefited from grassroots funding made available for community-focused health and wellbeing initiatives.

Grants of up to \$10,000 were provided to successful applicants under the Australian Government's 'Supporting Communities in Recovery' initiative.

The grants were intended to boost community spirit, promote social cohesion, foster resilience and aid the recovery of towns and villages affected by the bushfires, as well as help individuals' emotional healing.

Regionally, more than 40 successful applicants took advantage of the program's two funding rounds.

Among the wide range of activities organised were:

- OzGreen's environmental leadership program for young people in the Bellingen Shire – Youth Leading The World
- Bowra's Big Bash, a fundraising community event at Bowraville with musical entertainment, rides and stalls
- the Clarence Valley Camp Oven Festival at Nymboida
- Mad Proppa's 'ReVibe' – three days of creative music workshops at Wauchope, and
- Container of Dreams – a workshop series on tiny house building for people in the Kyogle, Clarence, Tenterfield, Tabulam, Drake, Pretty Gully and Ewingar areas, designed to empower participants and instil the confidence needed to rebuild their own lives.

### Establishment of the Disaster Resilience Team

Following extensive regional flooding this year, and the bushfires and floods of previous years, Healthy Communities established a Disaster Resilience Team to facilitate a coordinated approach to emergency management. The team's role includes planning, preparation, response and recovery from natural disasters.

Visit [www.hnc.org.au/disaster-management](http://www.hnc.org.au/disaster-management)

## STRATEGIC GOAL 1

### **Deliver better health outcomes through leadership and collaboration**

Acknowledging the importance of leadership and collaboration, we deliver better health outcomes and champion social connection and healthier communities. Working with health and social services across the region, we are increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of our local services.



## PREDICTIVE MODELLING GUIDES BETTER MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

In response to the challenge that the burden of mental illness poses to the region, Healthy North Coast initiated the establishment of the North Coast Collective in 2019, designed to introduce a rigorous and unique approach to regional commissioning.

The North Coast Collective promotes a cross-sector approach to addressing the region's health needs through strong partnerships and shared investments and provides a regional framework for change.

In partnership with the Sydney University Brain and Mind Institute, Healthy North Coast, as the lead organisation for the North Coast Collective, undertook significant research into the level of mental health need within the region and investments that will have the greatest possible influence on the region's health.

Through a participatory process, the Sydney University Mind and Brain Institute developed a system dynamics model (SDM) to determine where to target evidence-based investments that optimise outcomes for addressing mental health and alcohol and other drug (MHAOD) issues.

This model included a MHAOD and suicide-prevention decision support tool, which was used to inform future service commissioning decisions and optimise available resources.

The decision support tool allowed us to test multiple investment scenarios, and a combination of three service components was found to have the greatest possible positive impact on the region's mental health burden:

- suicide aftercare services
- services that increase social connection
- technology-enabled coordinated care.

## DEVELOPING A STRATEGY TO SUPPORT HEALTHY LIVING AND AGEING

We are working with North Coast Collective to support older people in our region. Our needs assessment shows a clear need to develop a regional Healthy Living and Ageing Strategy to enrich the community, optimise funding, integrate services and promote health equity.

### **System dynamic modelling will help us age well in the future**

Following the success of the North Coast Collective's SDM for addressing mental health and alcohol and other drug issues, a second SDM will provide a blueprint for new investment in services and approaches to ageing.

The first workshop, part of Healthy North Coast's Healthy Living and Ageing Strategy, was held in Coffs Harbour in June 2021.

The workshop was an opportunity for consumers, clinicians, and service providers to give their insights into the ageing process and get more people in the community to age well.

The modelling, facilitated by the Sax Institute, will draw on ideas obtained from the workshops, supplemented with additional data.

A diverse group of participants attended the workshop, including retirees, older people living alone, GPs, nurses and representatives from ageing services and local government.

Participants highlighted the importance of social supports and reducing isolation for older people. The need for high-quality ageing services was also a common theme.

Projections indicate that 30% of the North Coast population will be aged over 65 within a decade. Maintaining the quality of life of this group is key to a sustainable approach to ageing.

The Healthy Living and Ageing Strategy will emphasise disease prevention and living well. It aims to reduce the chronic disease burden of older people.

The Strategy will drive future investment into ageing services and initiatives. A reference group with supporting partner organisations and subject matter experts will assist with the Strategy's development, expected to be completed in early 2022.

## NORTH COAST COLLECTIVE ENTERS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

The North Coast Collective partnered with the NSW Department of Education in 2020-21 as part of our cross-sectoral, 'systems' approach to optimising regional population health outcomes.

Central to the North Coast Collective approach is regional commissioning, underpinned by shared investment, joint planning/priority setting, shared resourcing, and a commitment to pursuing the best return on investment for health outcomes.

The benefits of the North Coast Collective's partnership with the NSW Department of Education will include better-targeted investment and will not be limited to health outcomes alone.

More broadly, it will also contribute to improved productivity at work, home and school, education attainment, social engagement, reduced violence and crime, and enhanced quality of life.

The evidence shows that health is largely created and maintained in other settings – in the home, schools, workplace and neighbourhoods.

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

The North Coast Collective will continue to seek partnerships outside the health care sector to achieve optimal population health and wellness.



## CENTRE FOR HEALTHCARE KNOWLEDGE & INNOVATION



**6** webinars



**1** virtual conference



**2,270**  
attendees in total



**1,640**  
new subscribers to  
eNewsletter

### EVENTS

#### Lunchtime Leadership with Dr Michael McAfee - 4-part webinar series

Delivered in November 2020, the series supported both veteran and aspiring health equity leaders seeking to transform public health. It attracted 816 registrations from more than 264 different organisations.

Healthy North Coast CEO Julie Sturgess and guest speaker Dr Michael McAfee combined to present the series and lead the discussion on building leadership capability for collective impact.

Dr McAfee is the President and CEO of PolicyLink. He is one of the world's most sought-after speakers on racial equity and community and organisational development.

The series aimed to provide an understanding of how to:

- build collaborative leadership capacity and make the case for how your work contributes to desired outcomes for population health
- use the privilege of your seat to lead with courage, let go as a leader and sit comfortably in discomfort
- enact policies and systems reforms that build up communities and call communities to step into their greatness

- create measurable improvements and gather evidence for highlighting achievements and results
- deploy, unleash and generate resources to shift the dial on common challenges
- embed equity in planning and implementation and prioritise authentic community engagement, and
- make contributions and use radical imagination to plug into the bigger picture.

'Wow. What a powerful session. These webinars are AMAZING!'

'Michael has the ability to connect with the one thing we all want in our lives - Relationship. This doesn't just feel like a Webinar on Leadership for collective impact, it feels like a webinar on Love and Respect = Relationship - and I LOVE IT!'

'These Friday sessions are the pick-me-up I needed. Michael talks with such honesty and his practical examples make me believe that anything is possible!'

### Cultural Determinants of Health webinar series

The Cultural Determinants of Health (CDoH) webcast series explored a holistic definition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health as encompassing the whole community's wellbeing.

Professor Kerry Arabena facilitated the series, and each webinar invited a panel of leaders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health to discuss topics including:

- cultural directions in CDoH theory
- pathways and mechanisms through which CDoH can influence health and wellbeing
- measures that assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in acquiring, reclaiming, and/or managing land, natural resources, and waters to enhance social, cultural, spiritual, economic, and environmental wellbeing.

'Strong authoritative, experienced voices, children at the centre of discussions. Feeling like we are on the precipice of a tipping point of cultural awareness and change, especially the experience of change in acceptance and uptake of Indigenous curriculum.'

'OMG - it was bloody brilliant!'

'I really enjoyed listening to what is happening in different areas in Australia in terms of looking after country and what it means to the panellists.'

### Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare Symposium

The Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare one-day online symposium attracted 487 registrations and participants had the chance to explore 3 key themes:

- AI in the new world (post-COVID)
- Research (what we know and what we need to know);
- Next steps (what's required to maximise AI opportunities in health).

Southern Cross University led the symposium, with the Centre for Healthcare Knowledge & Innovation taking a supportive role. Twelve speakers, including 2 keynote speakers, presented on the day, and 12 research papers were submitted.

'It was great to get an understanding of what is happening in the space of AI. We need to collaborate and innovate and what we do today will ultimately shape tomorrow and beyond. We need more conversations like these.'

'It was great to hear from the different range of speakers and to understand how we can start to adopt the capabilities of AI into the practice of medicine.'



## NATIONAL GENERAL PRACTICE DATA SHOWS HOW NORTH COAST MEASURES UP

The 2020-21 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare national report brings together de-identified data collated by primary health networks from general practices across 10 Quality Improvement Measures (QIMs).

1. Proportion of regular clients with diabetes with an HbA1c result recorded in their GP record within the previous 12 months, all ages
2. Proportion of regular clients with a smoking status record and result in their GP record, 15 years age and over
3. Proportion of regular clients with height and weight recorded in their GP record and a derived BMI result, 15 years age and over
4. Proportion of regular clients aged 65 years and over with an influenza immunisation status recorded in their GP record within the previous 15 months, 65 years age and over
5. Proportion of regular clients with diabetes with an influenza immunisation status recorded in their GP record within the previous 15 months, all ages
6. Proportion of regular clients with COPD with an influenza immunisation status recorded in their GP record within the previous 15 months, 15 years age and over
7. Proportion of regular clients with an alcohol consumption status recorded in their GP record, 15 years age and over
8. Proportion of regular clients with a record of the necessary risk factors in their GP record for CVD risk assessment, 45-74 years age
9. Proportion of regular female clients with an up-to-date cervical screening test record in their GP record within the previous 5 years, 25-74 years age
10. Proportion of regular clients with diabetes with blood pressure recorded in their GP record within the previous 6 months, all ages

With over 158 million visits to GPs each year, this information is key to understanding and improving health and wellbeing of Australians.

**Data source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Practice Incentives Program Quality Improvement Measures.**

QIMs	National	North Coast	
<b>Diabetes status recorded<sup>1</sup></b>			
Type 1	59.0	68.5	▲
Type 2	73.4	77.8	▲
Undefined	66.3	68.7	▲
<b>Smoking status<sup>2</sup></b>			
Recorded	66.1	73.4	▲
Current smoker	14.7	15.6	▲
Ex smoker	22.4	31.8	▲
Never smoked	62.9	52.6	▼
<b>Height, weight, BMI<sup>3</sup></b>			
Height and weight recorded	23.6	27.9	▲
BMI underweight	2.0	2.4	▲
BMI healthy	25.8	26.5	▲
BMI overweight	32.5	33.2	▲
BMI obese	39.8	37.9	▼
<b>Influenza immunisation status recorded for patients:</b>			
65 years and over <sup>4</sup>	64.2	63.0	▼
With diabetes <sup>5</sup>	58.2	62.4	▲
With COPD <sup>6</sup>	66.8	66.4	▼
<b>Alcohol consumption recorded<sup>7</sup></b>	56.2	65.6	▲
<b>CVD risk factors recorded<sup>8</sup></b>	48.5	55.9	▲
<b>Current cervical test screening results recorded<sup>9</sup></b>	37.4	43.6	▲
<b>Blood pressure for patients with diabetes recorded<sup>10</sup></b>	58.7	63.0	▲

## SUPPORTING A DIGITALLY ENABLED REGION

Better use of data and technology is helping people live healthier lives with greater control and better access to essential health information.

Thanks to interactive technology, patient journeys are being revolutionised, putting consumers at the heart of their care. International experts are leveraging technology to gain fresh insight into the patient experience.

In 2020-21, Healthy North Coast's commitment to supporting a digitally enabled region included:

- support for service providers around telehealth and its adoption, including new account creation and level 1 training for healthdirect's videocall platform
- partnering with Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD) and general practices to deliver the hospital admission and discharge notifications pilot, which became a winning initiative at the 2021 MNCLHD Innovation Awards
- engaging with prescribers and dispensers to provide information around the rollout and adoption of electronic prescribing — an Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) initiative
- scoping, designing and developing a local online Mental Health Practitioner Directory
- partnering with the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD) to raise awareness of their pilot to increase the use of primary care eReferrals to NNSWLHD Lismore Pain and Speciality Outpatient clinics
- engaging with North Coast specialists around My Health Record registration and use
- promoting Australian Digital Health Agency and other digital health webinars and training via Healthy North Coast's website, newsletters and socials
- contributing to planning for the national scale-up of the Provider Connect Australia platform (formerly Service Registration Assistant)
- supporting identified Aboriginal communities to improve/establish connectivity infrastructure and IT equipment to enable access to virtual health services and resources, including the supply of iHealth devices
- promoting the importance of maintaining staff contact information with the LHDs to optimise the successful deliveries of hospital discharge summaries to a patient's nominated GP
- promoting the availability of pathology eOrders as an integrated option for a number of pathology labs via clinical information systems
- promoting the National Cancer Screening Register's integrated online Healthcare Provider Portal to increase interaction with the national register.

## TRANSPORT SCOPING PROJECT LOOKS AT WAYS TO IMPROVE ABORIGINAL HEALTH

Healthy North Coast's Aboriginal Health Team carried out a scoping project to better understand the transport options available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing health care across the North Coast NSW footprint.

The project identified transport options, gaps in services in different areas and looked at what worked well and what could be improved.

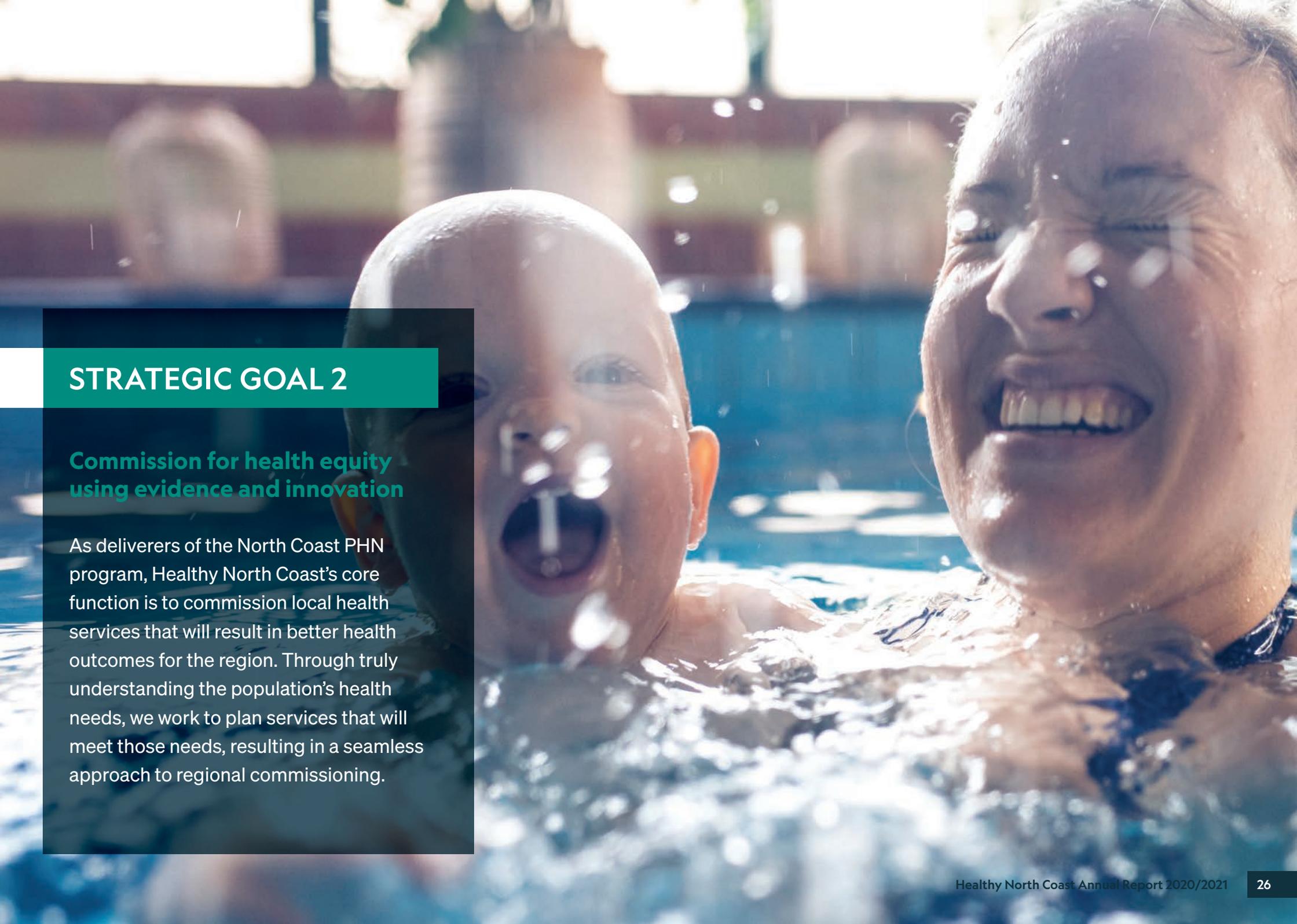
It resulted from a 2018 needs assessment that identified more than a quarter of the region's Aboriginal people had difficulty accessing GPs, specialists and allied health providers due to limited public transport and distance issues.

The needs assessment found transport was a key priority to addressing barriers to health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Transport Scoping Project's recommendations included:

- increasing the number of transport options available to Aboriginal communities across the North Coast that are culturally safe, cost-effective and accessible for the Aboriginal community
- investigating using an Aboriginal organisation as a pilot site to assist with the transport gaps in the Port Macquarie and Wauchope area
- investigating transport solutions for Bellbrook with the Local Aboriginal Land Council and community to develop a plan/solution
- investigating funding enhancements for Aboriginal medical services who do not have transport services within their service, based on the identified need
- incorporating the identified needs and recommendations from this report to establish provisions for transport brokerage within the Integrated Team Care model
- seeking funding opportunities and cost-effective solutions to enhance transport services for Aboriginal people and communities
- working towards a solution for renal dialysis clients with transport barriers
- implementing the No Way Home project into hospitals across the region if funding can be sourced.



A close-up photograph of a woman and a baby splashing in a swimming pool. The woman on the right is smiling broadly, her eyes squinted, with water droplets on her face. The baby on the left has its mouth wide open, also splashing. The background is a blurred outdoor pool setting with a wooden fence and trees.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 2

### Commission for health equity using evidence and innovation

As deliverers of the North Coast PHN program, Healthy North Coast's core function is to commission local health services that will result in better health outcomes for the region. Through truly understanding the population's health needs, we work to plan services that will meet those needs, resulting in a seamless approach to regional commissioning.

## 287 CONTRACTS WERE ACTIVE DURING FY20/21

7

7 after hours (various)

10

alcohol and other drugs

36

community grants

115

Healthy Minds program

11

Integrated Team Care (ITC) program

10

headspace and wait time

1

1 suicide prevention lead site

17

mental health nurses

14

flexible funding (various)

28

mental health other (various)

8

psychosocial

11

new CX agreements (various)

3

MOUs (various)

12

other (various)

13

rural health outreach

## Mental health commissioning highlights

At Healthy North Coast, we're committed to implementing significant local health reform as an Australian Government-selected lead site for PHN-led reform in mental health care. We continue to align our work with their Review of Mental Health Programs and Services.

### ACCOUNTABLE MENTAL HEALTH INVESTMENT

In 2020-21, Healthy North Coast delivered available funding of approximately \$17 million to commissioned evidence-based mental health, drug and alcohol, and suicide prevention services for the North Coast community.

Across the portfolio, more than 100,000 instances of service were delivered to around 10,000 community members by more than 300 practitioners.

The introduction of social distancing protocols to combat the spread of COVID-19 saw broad uptake of telehealth service delivery options, with approximately 40% of all services delivered via telehealth.

Sessions delivered on the phone made up most of the telehealth sessions, followed by video-conferencing and other internet-based options.

A direct focus on meeting the needs of Aboriginal community members within a tailored, culturally safe environment saw additional investments in social and emotional wellbeing services.

Healthy North Coast monitored service delivery via ongoing consultation with providers and the review of outcome and activity data submitted by providers every quarter or entered daily into data management systems.

### REDESIGNING EXISTING SERVICES

In 2020-21, as part of a staggered implementation, Healthy North Coast identified and worked with a number of commissioned service providers delivering youth, alcohol and other drug and mental health nursing services. The aim was to redesign their programs to align with the shared decision-making outputs.

Healthy North Coast undertook a participatory design process across 22 contracts to:

- understand and define the issue
- develop potential solutions
- test and refine.

Our co-design process included:

- engagement with existing service providers and stakeholders
- engagement with people with lived experience
- pre-reading documents for workshop participants
- focus groups with lived experience participants before the co-design workshops
- five co-design workshops delivered online with breakout rooms and interactive apps.

Interventions were selected based on outcomes of the co-design process, with contract variations issued to commissioned services.

## SUICIDE AFTERCARE SERVICES

Healthy North Coast committed nearly \$500,000 in funding to the Way Back Support Service in 2020-21.

The Way Back is an assertive outreach suicide aftercare service staffed by trained support coordinators and supported by a mental health clinician. The service provides up to 3 months of practical psychosocial support to people experiencing a suicidal crisis or who have attempted suicide.

In 2020-21, 3,714 occasions of service were delivered to 259 community members, predominantly referred from Tweed and Lismore hospitals. Around 12% of those community members identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and there was an equal split of men and women accessing the service.

The main service types provided by the Way Back Service were psychosocial support (86%), clinical care coordination (6.5%) and assessment (4.38). 66% of the occasions of service were provided over the phone, with most of the remaining sessions provided face-to-face.

Community members accessing The Way Back Service were predominantly assessed at first measurement as experiencing very high levels of psychological distress. Significant reductions were seen following treatment.

Healthy North Coast also commissioned additional suicide aftercare services for people living in Bellingen and Kempsey shires during the year. Delivered through Care Connect, the commissioned program provides up to 3 months of flexible therapeutic and non-clinical assertive aftercare and case management, stepped care referrals and support planning for people at risk of suicide.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES

2,290 clients received commissioned psychological therapies in 2020-21.

## NORTH COAST SUICIDE PREVENTION TRIAL CONTINUES ACROSS 5 SITES

During 2020-21, Healthy North Coast continued its role as the lead agency for the North Coast National Suicide Prevention Trial.

The project is part of the Australian Government's national trial across 12 Australian regions. It aims to:

- better integrate and connect the suicide prevention system at the local level
- develop local solutions to reduce suicides in regions with higher-than-average rates
- improve the evidence base to help us develop future responses to suicide prevention in Australia.

The 5 North Coast sites participating in the trial are Tweed/Byron, Lismore, Clarence Valley, Bellingen and Kempsey.

The trial has delivered a range of strategies. The most successful has been the gatekeeper strategy and frontline training offered throughout the sites, with targeted approaches to upskill people who work or live with at-risk groups in the community.

Community engagement campaigns have also been successful, enhancing participation in activities and events and helping us to learn from the community about what matters most.



The Black Dog Institute's Suicide Prevention Team provided support, resources and guidance during the trial.

Using data from our local health needs assessment and the Black Dog Institute, each North Coast site developed an action plan and implemented targeted activities in their community to support mental health and wellbeing and reduce the risk of suicide.

In Lismore, Lifeline Direct coordinated the delivery of a wide range of targeted training across the community, including Advanced Training in Suicide Prevention, safeTALK, AISIST (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Intervention Training program), and suicide prevention training for pharmacists and participants in the school-based Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM).

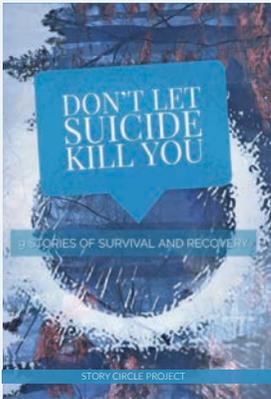
The Lismore Collaborative co-designed a suicide aftercare support group with ACON and StandBy Support After Suicide to connect with people from the LGBTIQ+ community. A new group, Living Spaces, was well-received by the community.

In Kempsey, the site focused on engagement strategies to assess the local community's needs, including a regional youth short film festival.

The Kempsey site delivered a range of gatekeeper training throughout the trial, including AISIST, Mental Health First Aid, and safeTALK. Fifty-nine local lived experience network members were key contributors to activities implemented across the community.

## CASE STUDY STORY CIRCLE PROJECT

One Lismore Suicide Prevention Collaborative member wanted to reduce stigma and normalise conversations about suicide. A group of writers and the project team came together to deliver a beautifully put-together book that includes 9 stories of survival and recovery entitled *Don't Let Suicide Kill You*. The book has been made available for frontline workers and community members.



## HEADSPACE CENTRES HELPING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Healthy North Coast invested around \$5.5 million in the region's headspace centres in 2020-21.

The centres are located in Tweed Heads, Lismore, Grafton, Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie, with a sixth site to be established in Kempsey.

headspace provides tailored and holistic services, including integrated mental health, alcohol and other drugs, primary health and vocational support services. These are often complemented by facilitating social opportunities for young people aged 12-25 who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges.

In 2020-21, the 5 active headspace centres provided holistic services to more than 3,000 young people and delivered more than 15,000 occasions of service.

Averaged across the region's centres, 54% of young people receiving services experienced a significant improvement in their mental state, and 86% of service users reported a high level of satisfaction with the service.

headspace's service framework puts young people and their families at the centre of care. It ensures the delivery of accessible, appropriate, and integrated services by a consortium of aligned providers.

## CASE STUDY

### ACHIEVING ENGAGEMENT WITH DISENGAGED YOUNG PEOPLE

#### **Commissioned mental health services for Ballina and Byron youth - The Family Centre**

Bree (not her real name) is a 14-year-old Aboriginal young person whose natural mother contacted Ballina's The Family Centre to access support for herself and her daughter.

Bree engaged with The Family Centre's service at Ballina High School and regularly saw The Family Centre's youth and family worker at the high school and in the community.

Bree presented with alcohol and other drugs and mental health challenges and, at the time, was seeing a community health alcohol and other drugs specialist.

She had been receiving support for a number of months and, during this time, recognised that school was challenging.

Bree was referred by the school to Connect, a support program for young people struggling to remain in school. Mental health support was provided, including support for Bree and her natural mother during an episode where she presented at the local hospital emergency department (ED).

Mental health support continued post ED, as the hospital did not make referrals, and Bree refused to attend her GP to access a mental health support plan.

Bree was supported to explore both TAFE and paid work options and secured part-time employment. She ceased alcohol and drug use and continued to access support from The Family Centre.

The Family Centre continues to collaborate successfully with school staff and others to support young people to increase school attendance and/or alternative pathways.

## SERVICES FOR YOUTH EXPANDED

Healthy North Coast commissioned additional services through our youth expansion program for young people aged 10-21 with mild to moderate mental health support needs and living outside regional centres.

Local organisations EACH, GenHealth, Social Futures, Samaritans and The Family Centre delivered expansion services to communities across our region, including Wauchope, Kempsey, Nambucca, Iluka, Yamba, Casino, Kyogle, Ballina, Byron Bay and Murwillumbah.

The services are community-based and localised and help to build social connectedness. They include case coordination, group work, early intervention and any required post-intervention support in schools.

## COUNSELLING PROGRAM SUPPORTS AGED CARE RESIDENTS

Healthy North Coast funded well-received counselling and psychological support services for people living in residential aged care facilities (RACFs) in northern NSW in 2020-21.

Delivered by Change Futures, the Wellbeing Support Service offered free, evidence-based individual and group counselling and psychological therapies tailored to the needs of residents.

It has been particularly beneficial for residents experiencing distress due to social isolation caused by COVID-19.

Change Futures also worked closely with RACF staff to provide additional mental health training and capacity-building opportunities.

Research undertaken by Beyond Blue showed that 10-15% of older people experience depression, and about 10% experience anxiety. The rate of depression among people living in RACFs is believed to be much higher, at around 52%.

For some people, adapting to living in a RACF can include:

- psychological adjustment to entering care and approaching the end of life
- physical and health challenges
- anxiety and stress
- social isolation
- grief and loss.

The Wellbeing Support Service was established after a successful 2019 trial involving nine RACFs from Kempsey to Tweed Heads.

'Thank you for your help. I now don't worry about anything and can sleep better and feel more at peace. Before, I felt that no one understood me, and it was a terrible feeling not knowing who I could talk to.'

'I feel a lot more calm and motivated after your visit. It was hard to engage at first, but I feel like it has helped me.'

## LOW-INTENSITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

In 2020-21, Healthy North Coast commissioned Remedy Healthcare to deliver free, low-intensity mental health support through the MindStep and Healing Minds programs.

MindStep and Healing Minds are low-intensity cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) programs led by trained mental health coaches to help people learn practical skills to improve their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Healing Minds is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples looking for support to improve their mental wellbeing. It is delivered by Aboriginal coaches.

## MENTAL HEALTH NURSES DELIVER 16,660 OCCASIONS OF SERVICE

The Mental Health Nursing Service provides clinical care for people experiencing severe and complex mental health challenges.

In 2020-21, Healthy North Coast funded \$1.58 million in mental health nursing services for 1,469 North Coast community members, who received 16,660 occasions of service.

51.87% of program participants identified as female, and 47.65% as male. 11.71% of participants identified as Aboriginal.

Clinical nursing services (assessment, medication management, care coordination, psychological interventions, psychoeducation) made up 43% of the service provided to participants. 24% of services were clinical care coordination/liaison, 15% were psychological interventions, 8% of sessions focussed on assessment, 6% of sessions focussed on psychosocial support, and 4% were cultural assistance.

There were significant reductions in the levels of psychological distress experienced by community members accessing the program,

Recruiting additional mental health nurses to deliver services on the North Coast was an ongoing challenge due to shortages in appropriately qualified people.



## ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS SERVICES

In 2020-21, Healthy North Coast commissioned seven alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services to address the needs of community members who identify as having problematic drug and/or alcohol use.

The services included INTRA, b.well, CORE, Young Person Early Intervention Program, Relapse Prevention Aftercare Service, Gulgiwhen Withdrawal Management Residential Rehabilitation Service, and Nimbin Integrated Service.

A range of interventions is available for differing stages of recovery, including care coordination, psychoeducation, counselling and treatment services, relapse prevention, day rehabilitation and residential rehabilitation and detox services for men who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

The AOD-commissioned activities provided services to more than 2,500 community members and delivered close to 20,000 occasions of service.

Outcomes for community members who received services included improvement in ATOPs (Australian Treatment Outcome Profile) scores, high parent and carer engagement in treatment, high satisfaction in client satisfaction survey and improvement in ATOP scores when measured 4 weeks post-exit from service.

To support building the health workforce and engagement with general practice, Healthy North Coast commissioned an addiction medicine specialist. To date, the RACGP and ACCRM training has been well utilised across the region. We have also used this expertise to develop stepped-care guides and enhance referral pathways for health professionals.



# Aboriginal health commissioning highlights

Our Aboriginal community often experiences poorer health than non-Aboriginal people, and these inequities are unacceptable. We are working to address health inequities through effective cross-sectoral partnerships to improve access and quality of primary health care in our region.

## BUILDING CULTURAL SAFETY

We are building cultural safety across all aspects of Healthy North Coast, particularly across procurement and commissioning. This is achieved through application of self-determination, where Aboriginal people lead the content and process by facilitating and building meaningful engagement and collaboration with external Aboriginal organisations and within Healthy North Coast.

Cultural frameworks and applications are being applied, recognising and respecting Aboriginal ways of being and doing.

## INTEGRATED TEAM CARE PROGRAM

The Integrated Team Care (ITC) Program aims to:

- contribute to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic health conditions through access to care coordination, multidisciplinary care, and support for self-management; and
- improve access to culturally appropriate mainstream primary care services (including but not limited to general practice, allied health and specialists) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 2020-21, 11 commissioned providers delivered the ITC Program across the Healthy North Coast region.

These services included Werin Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre, Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service, Darrimba Maarra Aboriginal Health Clinic, Galambila Aboriginal Health Service, Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service, Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation, Bawrunga Coffs Harbour GP Super Clinic, and Rekindling the Spirit.

8 of the contracts were Aboriginal medical service ITC models and 3 provided services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing mainstream general practices.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING PROGRAM

Six commissioned services delivered social and emotional wellbeing programs across the region.

These were Werin Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre, Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service, Galambila Aboriginal Health Service, Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service, Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation, and Rekindling the Spirit.

Programs included a focus on cultural connection, community connectedness, and addressing social and cultural determinants of health.

## EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR ABORIGINAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

As part of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program, a Social and Emotional Wellbeing Evaluation Framework began development in 2020-21.

Healthy North Coast collaborated with 6 providers to co-design a social and emotional wellbeing framework to assist in measuring outcomes.

The evaluation framework and associated assessment tools will demonstrate how social and emotional wellbeing provides a foundation for effective physical and mental health. This includes identified risks and protective factors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a component of health and wellbeing assessment.

Indicators draw on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander understanding of how to measure mental health and social and emotional wellbeing, as well as general population measures including those from the Mental Health Management Performance Framework, which is used to measure the performance of the mental health system.

## DESERT PEA MEDIA ENGAGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Desert Pea Media, a commissioned service, sought to improve the social and emotional wellbeing of young Aboriginal people through a community development and engagement approach in 4 communities across the North Coast.

Desert Pea Media provided high quality, engaging content targeting local Indigenous audiences to educate about the realities of COVID-19.

Final reports showed the activities were a great success. In particular, a Fingal Head music video received more than 200,000 views on social media. Other music productions reached national audiences on platforms such as Triple J.

Desert Pea Media helped develop a unique, curriculum-based educational resource platform designed through strong community consultation, focusing on localised Indigenous perspectives and knowledge.

Evaluation of the initiative showed high engagement from young people and their communities, with feedback from participants overwhelmingly positive.

## BOWRAVILLE HEALING PROJECT

The Bowraville Healing Project aimed to improve the social and emotional wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

It was a self-determined model using narrative therapy to facilitate trauma informed healing in community in the form of group and individual sessions. Art and craft therapy was also used within this model.

## CASE STUDY JAANYMILI BAWRRUNGA INCORPORATED - BOWRAVILLE HEALING PROJECT

Meg (not her real name) is a young Aboriginal woman who self-referred for help with social skills.

Fear of being around people and feeling sick if called on to speak in class were preventing Meg from attending school.

Over 5 weeks, Meg was taken through role-playing of common scenarios that caused her to feel anxious. Meg and her instructor teamed up against anxiety and found ways around it.

Meg was worried about a school presentation she had to make and had chosen 'coercive control' as her focus. One strategy to support Meg to feel able to present to her class included using pre-recorded stories from interesting people.

Arrangements were made for Meg to interview a local Aboriginal health worker and Jess Hill, author of *See What You Made Me Do* about coercive control.

Through implementing her strategies, Meg said she was actually looking forward to the presentation, which she said went very well, earning her an 'A' grade.

Working together to find ways to thwart anxiety's debilitating effects seemed to initiate a shift for Meg, who attended school regularly following her presentation.

## Place-based commissioning highlights

### 'FIRST 2000 DAYS' IMPROVING HEALTH IN THE CLARENCE VALLEY

The First 2000 Days project seeks to improve health and wellbeing for families in the Clarence Valley, focusing on the period from conception to age 5.

The project is a partnership between Healthy North Coast, Tresillian, the Northern NSW Local Health District, and Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation.

Partners work together to design and deliver early intervention initiatives that support families and children in the Clarence Valley.

The services available to families include antenatal classes, supported playgroups, parent groups, drop-in services, and various programs to help parents experiencing challenges in the early years.

In November 2020, the Child and Family Wellbeing Hub in Grafton was opened as part of the project.

The focus is on developing coordinated and person-centred services and working collaboratively to build a healthy foundation for life. There is particular emphasis on the service needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.





Tessa Parker, Evans Head Community Connector, welcomes visitors to the newly opened Community Hub

## CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY AT EVANS HEAD

Healthy North Coast's Healthy Towns program continued to deliver great outcomes in 6 smaller towns.

At Evans Head, a Community Connector oversaw numerous Healthy Towns initiatives, partnering with the Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre for delivery.

The programs and services delivered encouraged health and wellbeing in the community and helped to prevent social isolation and loneliness.

Nearly 1,600 community members accessed information and services through the Community Connector. Initiatives included:

- mental health first aid training, including for young people
- training in the use of a defibrillator
- community morning teas
- establishment of Healthy Hearts walking group
- mental health workshops
- children's first aid course
- a Relax and Recharge program to teach strategies to calm the mind and body.

The Community Connector helped develop and implement strategies to promote intergenerational connection. One of these is the Be Connected group, involving students and Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre volunteers coming together to assist older community members in mastering their technology – phones, tablets and computers.

The mental health first aid courses were highly valued, well-supported, and much appreciated. They enabled community members to increase their skills, knowledge and confidence in supporting people experiencing mental health issues.

The courses were particularly beneficial due to the stressful times of COVID-19, floods and fires.

## LAKE CATHIE'S A BLOOMING HUB OF GOOD HEALTH

In November 2020, the Lake Cathie Community Garden was officially opened, nestled in a tranquil setting next to the Lake Cathie Community Hub on Mullaway Road, Lake Cathie.

Healthy North Coast funded the Healthy Towns initiative through its North Coast PHN program, collaborating with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council to use the council grounds and community hall facilities.

The garden provides a space for community members to share knowledge and work together to improve their physical health and mental wellbeing, including producing fresh fruit and vegetables.

A Lake Cathie Gardening Club was also created with 12 volunteer members to design and begin work on raised garden beds, a communal area for workshops and school groups, establishing native bees, composting and worm farming, a bush tucker garden, sensory garden and disability access throughout.

Hastings Neighbourhood Services was also successful in securing support through the Healthy Towns initiative, receiving funding for the coordinator role at the Lake Cathie Community Hub. The coordinator role has been pivotal in activating the hub, which provides a range of programs and services to local residents to promote health and wellbeing, including Zumba, tai chi, craft groups, a play group for pre-schoolers including a fortnightly visit from the Port Macquarie library bus, social gardening for over 60s, a stretch and move class, and a homework hub open to children and parents.



Community volunteers come together to establish the Lake Cathie Community Garden.



## STRATEGIC GOAL 3

### Strengthen the primary care health system

Healthy North Coast delivers improvements in the primary care health system through strong relationships focused on better health outcomes. We are researching and finding new ways to improve access, patient satisfaction and health outcomes in our new Primary Care Access project. We are committed to developing support programs that deliver the Quadruple Aim, a framework to optimize health care system performance.

## BUILDING PRIMARY HEALTH WORKFORCE CAPACITY THROUGH EDUCATION AND NETWORKING

Healthy North Coast is committed to building the capacity of the North Coast primary health care workforce through education and networking. We offer regionalised continuing professional development that enhances skills, fosters local integration, and builds relationships between clinicians to improve communication between health services. We partner with local clinicians, local experts and training organisations to deliver high-quality face-to-face and online education.

During 2020-21, our Health Workforce Team provided comprehensive event management support to help local clinicians educate their primary health care peers. We ensured education was:

- informed by clinicians' learning needs
- evidence-based and led by best practice
- community-based and interdisciplinary
- strategically aligned to community health issues
- equitably distributed across the region
- strengthened with allocated networking time
- aligned with up-to-date HealthPathways and referrals.

### Clinical societies encourage interdisciplinary skills building and relationship strengthening

In February 2021, we introduced two new clinical societies (Kempsey/Macleay and Nambucca/Macksville) and relaunched the 6 existing clinical societies.

Breakfast events were held in the 8 clinical society regions, and local practitioners were invited to join. Current membership numbers are:

- Ballina & Byron – 79
- Tweed Valley – 61
- Lismore, Casino & Kyogle – 58
- Clarence Valley – 41
- Coffs Harbour & Bellingen – 57
- Nambucca & Macksville – 50
- Kempsey & Macleay – 46
- Port Macquarie & Hastings – 67



15 webinars



34 face-to-face events



49 events in total



2,186\* registrations



1,772 attendees/recording views

\*Face-to-face registration numbers were restricted due to COVID-19

'The establishment of a Nambucca/Macksville clinical society is an important step for the Nambucca Valley. The society will be helpful for clinicians in building communities of practice as well as providing additional incentive for potential clinicians considering moving to the area. Furthermore, I expect that the better coordination of education will support greater communication between health care providers and ultimately improve the health outcomes of one of our country's most disadvantaged communities.'

**Urunga Medical Centre GP,  
Dr Tim Francis**

## Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety through education

During the year, Healthy North Coast organised 12 cultural safety workshops, delivered in Port Macquarie, Kempsey, Nambucca, Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Lismore, Ballina and Kingscliff.

The training delivers fundamental principles of Indigenous culture and the major components of Indigenous cultural frameworks and systems developed over hundreds of generations.

It provides a foundation of skills and practical knowledge that is essential to developing cultural safety, cross-cultural approaches and community engagement. 280 primary health professionals across the region attended the workshops.

Allied health made up the largest number of attendees (27.4%) followed by nurses (19%). 22 GPs attended (7.1%) along with practice staff (12.6%) and 5 pharmacists (1.6%).

Other attendees included peer support workers, board directors, program managers, youth workers, students and education providers.

Sessions were held in Port Macquarie, Nambucca Heads, Kempsey, Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Ballina, Lismore and Kingscliff. This unique and immersive cultural safety roadshow unpacked the major components of the framework that underpins Indigenous culture.

'I loved that it was run by Indigenous people who had searched out their culture and who acknowledged the influence of present-day life and technology within their culture. I did feel respected and safe among the people.'

**Psychologist, Lismore**

'I have a much better understanding of systems, communication and ways of communication within this culture and also a very high respect for these ways.'

**Counsellor, Ballina**

## Immunisation Community of Practice

In early 2021, Healthy North Coast launched its Immunisation Community of Practice, supporting immunisation providers to stay up-to-date on important immunisation news, education opportunities, the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, and discuss other key issues. More than 250 health professionals registered for the Immunisation Community of Practice, including registered nurses, general practitioners, practice managers, educators, specialists, aged care workers and managers.

In collaboration with the North Coast Public Health Unit, Healthy North Coast delivered 6 education webinars covering a range of immunisation topic. These were well-received with 81% of participants willing to recommend a Healthy North Coast webinar and 62% of participants intending to implement something new into their professional practice following the session.

## LOCALISED HEALTHPATHWAYS HELPING TO SUPPORT LOCAL CLINICIANS

Our Mid and North Coast HealthPathways program supports clinicians and patients in their decision making with local, up-to-date information for general practice teams. HealthPathways also ensures patients are referred to the right local services in the most efficient way.

### New look HealthPathways platform launches

In October, the Mid and North Coast HealthPathways launched its new mobile-friendly platform, delivering a new look and improved responsiveness. With the continuing pressures of COVID-19, the number of HealthPathways users in March increased by 50%. The time users spent actively engaged on the website also nearly doubled from February to March 2020.

As a 'one-stop shop', HealthPathways is designed to be used at the point of care. It enables primary health practitioners to be on the same page when looking after a patient. Also helping users stay informed is wide-ranging curated local, national and international advice.

Averaging around **1,000** users / month

**223,366** page views

**63,568** sessions

**39** new pathways

**82** clinical pathways and **47** referral pathways reviewed

**448** partial updates (278 relating to COVID-19):

## COVID-19 HealthPathways:

- COVID-19 Vaccination Resources
- COVID-19 Vaccination Procedure
- COVID-19 Vaccine-induced Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS)
- Myocarditis and Pericarditis after mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines
- COVID-19 Assessment and Management in Residential Aged Care
- Post-COVID-19 Conditions
- COVID-19 MBS Items

## ADDRESSING PRIMARY CARE ACCESS ISSUES

Healthy North Coast has initiated a project to respond to growing concern about people presenting to hospital emergency departments with low urgency conditions.

The Primary Care Access Project began in 2020-21 with comprehensive data analysis and consultation with local GPs, Aboriginal community-controlled health services and local health districts.

## Findings include:

- low urgency presentations to emergency departments by North Coast 15–24-year-olds are amongst the highest in the country
- people aged 65 and over account for 43% of GP presentations
- Aboriginal people are worst affected, and
- low urgency presentations for young people are highest in our inland regions of Kempsey, Clarence Valley and Casino.

In 2021-2022, Healthy North Coast will commission innovative solutions to addressing primary care access issues. We will:

- undertake co-design involving consumers, local stakeholders, national subject matter experts and shortlisted providers
- develop an evaluation framework
- commission providers to deliver new models of care that have the potential to achieve financial viability after an initial period of funding.

The aim is to increase primary care service use by young people (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) through new service delivery models that overcome access barriers.

This is an exciting opportunity to drive system change and achieve improved health outcomes and health equity across our region.

## WORKING WITH GENERAL PRACTICE ON QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

In 2020-21, Healthy North Coast worked closely with general practices on quality improvement activities through our Primary Care Impact program.

59 resources and activities were available for general practices, presented as 'less involved' or 'more involved' quality improvements, projects, or one-off service developments.

Across Healthy North Coast's footprint, 117 general practices engaged on Primary Care Impact for guidance and support, equaling 78% of PIP QI practices and 63% of total practices.

The program launched 13 on-the-pulse COVID-19 related activities, with 108 practices actively participating in a COVID-19 quality improvement initiative. The most popular topic was 'Increase patient and staff safety during COVID-19'.

Practices engaging in more involved quality improvement activities can also receive free in-practice facilitation with Healthy North Coast's contracted service, Medicoach.

66 practices engaged with Medicoach on 26 topics, including improving approaches and systems to achieve chronic disease management and workshops to assist team culture and resilience during COVID-19.

Healthy North Coast provides ongoing operational support to general practices. Regular practice support visits with management and frontline clinical staff further assist practices with quality improvement activities. Examples include additional sessions to improve understanding of data and collated information sets, for example, Pen CS and LUMOS.

Healthy North Coast facilitated small group sessions during the year to identify topics of interest, priority areas of focus, and emerging needs.

Examples included wound management and initiatives to increase the frequency of nurse-led primary care service provision, with ongoing evaluation.

## SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES: A HEALTHY WIN FOR EASTERN DORRIGO RESIDENTS

The April 2021 opening of the Ulong Health Hub was a long time coming for resident and chief proponent Carol Cleary.

It had been more than 20 years since the village had a GP and at least 5 years since Mrs Cleary began the fight to improve access to health services for people living in the Eastern Dorrigo area.

Healthy North Coast chipped in along with others, including Coffs Harbour City Council, TAFE NSW and Coffs Harbour's Northside Health to help make the dream a reality.

Capping off the excellent news and crucial to the health hub's success was Northside Health GP Jay Ruthnam's commitment to providing monthly bulk-billed, face-to-face consultations in Ulong.

The health hub operates out of Ulong Hall in conjunction with an ongoing fortnightly nursing service provided by TAFE NSW – scheduled for 2 weeks after Dr Ruthnam's regular visit.

Supporting this service on the first Tuesday of the month is video telehealth, with residents able to make appointments to speak to their regular GP or a GP from Northside Health.

Healthy North Coast supplied 2 dedicated laptops for telehealth, a fridge to keep medicines and specimens, thermometers, blood pressure monitors and oxygen gauges.

"This is such a wonderful result for our communities. All those years of hard work and persistence have paid off, and our mountain communities will be better for it. Everyone involved should be very proud of themselves," Mrs Cleary said.

## COMMUNICATIONS

In 2020-21, Healthy North Coast continued to support our local primary health care workforce through our dedicated communications. Regular newsletters and eBlasts tailored to a health professional audience helped to distil key COVID-19 information and resources, promote event and training opportunities, and to share classifieds advertisements. Dedicated webpages were published throughout the year tailored to health professionals.

Engagement through web and social media:

- **97,585** website visitors (hnc.org.au)
- **Most visited webpage** – Primary Care Impact Topics
- **37,981** visits to COVID-related website content
- **4,500+** practitioner newsletter subscribers
- **4,600+** Facebook followers
- **2,500+** LinkedIn followers

Published and promoted:

- **197** primary care workforce classified advertisements
- **357** events and education opportunities
- **493** local news and information updates

Top 3 downloaded resources:

- **Population** health factsheet
- **Aboriginal** health factsheet
- **Tweed** LGA factsheet

A woman with dark hair and glasses is smiling and looking towards the left. She is wearing a black sleeveless top. In the background, other people are seated at a long table in a meeting room, some looking at laptops. The room is bright and modern.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 4

### **Grow high-performing teams focused on quality**

Understanding that a strong staff profile focused on organisational culture and quality outcomes is key to delivering our vision, Healthy North Coast has continued to focus on growing high-performing teams. This mindset ensures the ability to adapt to emerging priorities and a rapidly evolving health environment while delivering our vision of better health for people living on the North coast.

## COMMITTED TO CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

After achieving organisation-wide ISO 9001:2015 certification in June 2020, Healthy North Coast underwent its first surveillance audit in 2021.

This ongoing periodic review of our quality management system (QMS) ensures the organisation continues to meet the ISO 9001 quality standard requirements. It also validates our commitment to consistency, continual improvement and customer satisfaction.

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

- continuing to strengthen organisational culture
- continuing to ensure our QMS documentation is relevant and applicable to our business, accessible and compliant with relevant standards and legislative requirements
- embedding risk-based thinking into the organisation
- automating processes to achieve efficiencies wherever possible
- 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, ensuring our communities are at the centre of our work.

## NEW CLOUD-BASED HR AND WHS SYSTEMS

Healthy North Coast has implemented a new cloud-based Human Resources (HR) and Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) system coupled with an outsourced telephone industrial advisory service.

This gives us paperless, secure control over all our employee records from recruitment through to when an employee leaves the organisation.

The cloud-based software makes both HR and WHS data accessible anywhere on any device for both management and employees. It has the added benefit of ensuring all documentation is compliant with relevant industrial requirements.

Healthy North Coast also benefits from a 24/7 telephone advisory service to assist in ensuring compliance with what can be complex industrial and legal HR requirements.

## FLEXIBLE WORKING PROCEDURE INTRODUCED

Healthy North Coast has adapted to a COVID-19 world by implementing a flexible working procedure.

The new procedure provides our people with increased flexibility in relation to when and how they work their hours, including a mix of office / home-based work. This enables employees to vary their hours and use their home as a workplace on agreed days.

This significant change has been possible due to investment in mobile, cloud-based systems, which employees can access remotely via home PC or mobile devices. The benefits of these flexible arrangements are:

- improved organisational productivity
- enhanced ability to attract and retain employees
- improved employee wellbeing
- ability for parents to better manage the balance between family and work.

## NEW CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK AND ONLINE PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS

Our new business capability framework (BCF) sets out the core competencies that are required for employee roles at all levels of the organisation.

These competencies fall into 4 areas:

- technical expertise
- service delivery skills
- interpersonal skills, and
- strategic thinking.

The framework makes it clear when entering a role what skills are required. It also defines the competencies that an employee needs to understand if they are to have the necessary skills.

The BCF underpins Healthy North Coast's new automated performance process, where employees are assessed annually against the core competencies of their role. The focus of the performance review is on improvement.

Training modules are being developed for each identified competency to support employees in the delivery of their role. These will be accessed by employees through a new automated learning management system.

## SURVEY SHOWS BIG IMPROVEMENTS IN WORKPLACE CULTURE

Healthy North Coast completed its second independent culture benchmark survey during the year.

The results were evidence of an improving culture. With over 82% of staff responding, there were significant improvements to be seen. These included:

- staff engagement up by 26% - placing us as a 'culture of success'
- disengagement down by 13%
- culture has moved from reaction to success
- out of 63 survey questions, 37 rated better; 22 stayed the same and 4 rated worse.

HNC has a well-developed Culture Action Plan and will continue to look at initiatives that encourage diversity, inclusion and employee wellbeing.

## HEALTHY NORTH COAST'S NEW LISMORE OFFICE OPENS

Uncle Gilbert Laurie welcomed the Healthy North Coast Board and staff to Bundjalung Country and performed a traditional smoking ceremony as part of the official opening of our new Lismore office space in September 2020.

The new office, located at Suite 10, Conway Plaza, in the heart of Lismore, is spacious, modern and welcoming and an ideal location to work with community, clinicians and service partners.

The office design is open plan and features specially commissioned Aboriginal artworks, a board room and video-conferencing facilities in a space designed to bring people together.



Julie Sturgess, Chief Executive Officer, and stakeholders at the opening of the Lismore Office.

## MOTOR VEHICLE FLEET UPGRADE SUPPORTS OUR WORKERS

Healthy North Coast completed an upgrade of its motor vehicle fleet in 2020-21, with the vehicles featuring new Indigenous-themed graphic designs as part of our branding.

It is important Healthy North Coast has a modern fleet to support staff in servicing our large geographical footprint. The benefits of an upgraded fleet include:

- a procurement model that ensured best value purchase with automatic car replacement
- improved safety features and comfort built into the large body vehicles
- a more environmentally friendly fleet with hybrid technology reducing emissions and delivering better fuel efficiency
- reduced vehicle maintenance costs associated with the age of the vehicles
- NAVMAN technology ensuring the location and use of vehicles is known
- booking intelligence software reducing old manual processes.

With their striking artwork, the new vehicles make our presence in the community much more visible. The designs were commissioned from North Coast artists after consultation with local Aboriginal land councils, community-controlled organisations and communities.

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



## CYBERSECURITY – STAYING ALERT, NOT ALARMED

Having delivered a major IT transformation project last year, Healthy North Coast continued to build on our cloud-first digital strategy to find more ways to optimise our security levels. Multi-factor authentication (MFA) was rolled out to all staff to help bring another layer of protection to our internal systems and information.

Wherever possible, we deploy single sign on to help staff to securely access multiple related applications and systems using just one set of trusted credentials.

In preparation for onboarding with the Primary Health Insights platform, the national PHN data warehousing solution, Healthy North Coast prepared a comprehensive internal data governance audit during October - December 2020. The audit included a third-party examination of our IT infrastructure, data security/privacy and cybersecurity systems.

Healthy North Coast is committed to maintaining the highest level of security awareness and protection. Continuing independent audits, regular testing and staff cybersecurity training form part of our IT strategy.

# STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

		2021	2020
	NOTE	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Revenue from continuing operations	4	37,645,092	39,144,490
Interest received		608,023	449,053
<b>Expenses</b>			
Commissioned services		(20,683,329)	(23,399,798)
Employee benefits expense		(8,292,041)	(6,756,270)
Client support services		(4,084,912)	(4,980,553)
IT and Telecommunications		(1,191,871)	(1,111,621)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(654,968)	(539,494)
Conference attendance and hosting		(146,932)	(179,398)
Insurances		(149,933)	(56,511)
Printing, postage and stationery		(76,446)	(83,178)
Property expenses		(226,774)	(230,069)
Consultancy expenses		(174,812)	(228,101)
Agency / Advisory expense		(671,211)	(378,744)
Interest expense on lease liability		(69,983)	(60,420)
Other expenses		(1,243,811)	(986,743)
<b>Profit before income tax</b>		<b>586,092</b>	<b>602,643</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Profit for the year</b>		<b>586,092</b>	<b>602,643</b>
Other comprehensive income		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>586,092</b>	<b>602,643</b>

The full set of Healthy North Coast's certified financial statements, including notes, can be located at <http://hnc.org.au/financial-statements>

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

		2021	2020
	NOTE	\$	\$
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	29,581,783	13,811,616
Trade and other receivables	7	274,556	725,208
Other financial assets	8	5,684,391	14,000,000
Other assets		54,774	151,451
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>35,595,504</b>	<b>28,688,275</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Trade and other receivables	7	68,549	121,841
Property, plant and equipment	9	437,551	244,603
Intangible assets		85,454	52,999
Right-of-use assets	10	2,249,293	1,745,947
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>2,840,847</b>	<b>2,165,390</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>38,436,351</b>	<b>30,853,665</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	11	8,520,785	8,925,780
Contract liabilities	12	20,730,129	13,921,916
Lease liabilities	10	660,589	489,472
Short-term provisions		5,000	-
Employee benefits	13	612,242	513,768
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>30,528,745</b>	<b>23,850,936</b>

		2021	2020
	NOTE	\$	\$
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Lease liabilities	10	1,690,608	1,423,478
Employee benefits	13	174,977	123,322
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<b>1,865,585</b>	<b>1,546,800</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>32,394,330</b>	<b>25,397,736</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>6,042,021</b>	<b>5,455,929</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained earnings		6,042,021	5,455,929
<b>Total Equity</b>		<b>6,042,021</b>	<b>5,455,929</b>

# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF HEALTHY NORTH COAST LIMITED

## REPORT ON THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL REPORT

### Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Healthy North Coast ("the Entity") which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Entity is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the Entity's financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

### THOMAS NOBLE & RUSSELL CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Per:



K R FRANEY

(Partner)

Dated at Lismore this 12th day of October 2021

## WHO WE ARE

### Board

**Dr Adrian Gilliland**  
Chair

**Dr Caroline Hong**  
Deputy Chair

**Rebecca Bell**

**Warren Grimshaw**

**Sam Hardjono**

**Graeme Innes**

**Dr John Moran**

**Kerry Stubbs**

**Dr Joanna Sutherland**

### Executive

**Julie Sturgess**  
CEO

**Glen James**  
Executive Director,  
Mental Health and AOD

**Monika Wheeler**  
Executive Director,  
Wellness

**Luke Elias**  
Director,  
Operations & Engagement

**Samara Finlayson**  
Director,  
Digital and Communications

**Tony Hendry**  
Director,  
Corporate Services

**Sarah Robin**  
A/Director,  
Healthy Communities

**Marni Tuala**  
Deputy Director,  
Aboriginal Health

**Claudine Tule**  
Director,  
Commissioning

### Member Organisations

Mid North Coast Division  
of General Practice

North Coast Allied Health Association

North Coast GP Training – closed 23 July 2021

Northern Rivers General Practice Network  
trading as Nordocs

University Centre for Rural Health



**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](http://hnc.org.au)