

A photograph of green tree branches with leaves, some of which are blurred, suggesting movement or wind, set against a light blue sky.

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred

Summary Report

Version 1 – For Consultation

April 2025

Healthy North Coast acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands across our region, and pays our respects to Elders past, present and on their journey. We recognise these lands were never ceded and acknowledge the continuation of culture and connection to the land, sky and sea. We acknowledge Aboriginal Peoples as the Land's first peoples and honour the rich diversity of the oldest living cultures.



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
CEO Introduction	5
Incident Summary	6
Response	8
Recovery	13
Appendix I: Health resource for Recovery Assistance Points.....	16
Appendix II: Resilient Kids Weathering the Weather resource	17

Executive Summary

Healthy North Coast developed this report to summarise lessons learned from Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, which occurred in March 2025.

The report is focused on the primary health care experience and the activities Healthy North Coast undertook as the local Primary Health Network.

Summary of reflections

1. A joint response and recovery effort led by LHDs and supported by primary health care works well when PHNs and GPs are involved in all stages of disaster management - planning, delivery, recovery and preparedness.
2. Joint health communications from LHD, PHNs, ACCHSs and other partners can have significant positive impacts - stakeholders reported feeling reassured that the health system was organised and integrated.
3. Planning priorities for future disasters:
 - a) Pre-agreed resource model for evacuation centres based on tiers and priority (small, medium, large)
 - b) Modelling of at-risk health, residential aged care and disability sites e.g. Ballina Hospital, Ulmarra aged care
 - c) Business continuity planning in general practice, ACCHSs, Aboriginal communities, AOD services, Residential Aged Care Homes, Residential Disability Homes
 - d) Embedding single point of truth of service availability via healthdirect's Service Finder
 - e) Building relationships with charities - St John First Aid and Red Cross psychological first aid in particular.

The report has, and will continue to, contribute to organisational learning. It will inform disaster preparedness with partners such as the Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, general practices, community pharmacies, mental health providers and NSW Government response and recovery agencies, to improve our local health response in future disasters.

CEO Introduction

Our region is vulnerable to natural disasters and these events have an impact on the health and wellbeing of local communities.

In recent years the North Coast experienced:

- Major floods in the Northern Rivers in 2017
- Devastating fires in 2019 and 2020
- Major floods in the Mid North Coast in 2021 and
- Catastrophic flooding in the Northern Rivers in 2022
- Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred in 2025.

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred showed us what we are good at, and what we need to improve on for future disasters. Thankfully the impact was not as severe as forecasted and the 200km category 2 winds did not eventuate. Many communities still experienced significant disruptions, however, such as power and network outages, strong winds and major flooding.

Thank you to:

- Our partners
 - Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts who are the NSW health leads for disaster management. We appreciated their inclusivity of and collaboration of Healthy North Coast and primary health care.
 - Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations who went above and beyond during Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.
- The Australian and NSW governments for their continued engagement, collaboration and funding.
- The primary health care workforce – general practice, pharmacy, allied health and Residential Aged Care Homes - who are getting more ready and organised to assist with disasters than ever before. It is an evolving space and we thank those who are riding the journey with us to enhance capacity.
- Commissioned providers – many who enacted business continuity plans to ensure staff were safe during the event and when safe to do so, getting their services reopened to support the community.
- Peak bodies – the Australian Medical Association (NSW Branch), the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, The Pharmacy Guild of Australia (NSW Branch) and the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association who supported response efforts by encouraging their members to take a coordinated regional response with Healthy North Coast and other support and advocacy.
- Healthy North Coast staff. Working in primary health care has not traditionally required signing up to disaster management. Our staff are now becoming national experts in community-driven and primary health care disaster management. Many of our staff were personally impacted by power and network outages, caring responsibilities and the impact of high winds and flooding from Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred – but continued to support our efforts 24/7 during the response period with 548 staff hours dedicated to response and recovery efforts in total.

The Northern Rivers Floods in 2022 demonstrated the need for health partners to develop a resilient health system – where primary health care is ready to be mobilised for future disasters when hospital services and other front line response agencies are likely to become overwhelmed.

We look forward to continuing to build our capacity to be more resilient and work with our partners to ensure our communities have access to high quality health and wellbeing services in the face of more severe and frequent climate disasters.



Monika Wheeler
Chief Executive Officer

Incident Summary

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred was a long-lived Coral Sea event that had a major impact over southeastern Queensland and northeastern New South Wales including widespread coastal erosion, damaging winds causing widespread power outages and some structural damage, and widespread heavy rainfall and associated flooding.

The Cyclone caused significant damage through damaging wind gusts, heavy rainfall with subsequent flooding impacts and severe coastal erosion of beaches. Heavy rainfall was recorded over a prolonged period, with seven-day totals exceeding 800mm in many areas including Gold Coast, the Northern Rivers district in NSW, along the Clarence River, above Dorrigo, and in Mullumbimby along the Brunswick River.

Widespread minor to major riverine flooding occurred across the North Coast region, with major flooding occurring in Richmond River at Coraki, Orara River at Coutts Crossing, Bellinger River at Thora and Clarence River at Grafton.¹ The NSW Government reported that more than 38,000 homes and businesses were without power across the North Coast region, with the worst hit areas between Tweed Heads and Yamba. By Tuesday 11 March, more than 7,500 homes and businesses were still without power.

The image below indicates the estimated area of impact.

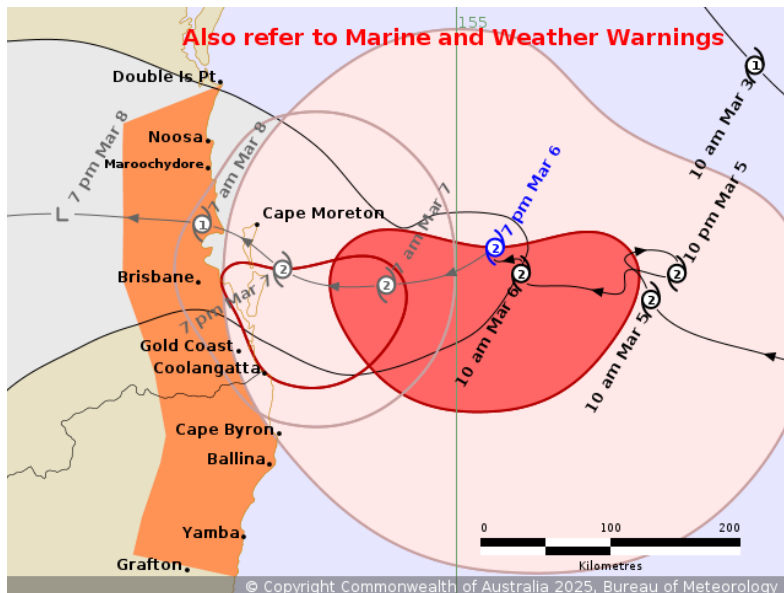


Figure 1 - Bureau of Meteorology Cyclone Alfred warning.

Evacuation orders were in place for East Bellingen, Woodburn and surrounding areas, Cabbage Tree Island, Lismore, Kyogle, Ulmarra, parts of Southgate, Great Marlow, Alummy Creek and low-lying areas of Grafton.

On 9 March, NSW SES reported that they received more than 10,390 calls and responded to more than 5,982 incidents relating to Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred across the North Coast of NSW.² There was one reported fatality, with a 61-year-old male from Dorrigo being swept away after his vehicle hit flood waters near Dorrigo, inland from Coffs Harbour.

¹ Bureau of Meteorology, 9 March 2025, *Severe Tropical Cyclone Alfred (22U)*, retrieved 3 April 2025, <http://www.bom.gov.au/cyclone/history/Alfred2025.shtml>

² State Emergency Service (SES) New South Wales, 9 March 2025, *Tropical Cyclone Alfred, NSW SES Operational Update*, retrieved 1 April 2025, online source, <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/news/tropical-cyclone-alfred-nsw-ses-operational-update-sunday#:~:text=The%20NSW%20SES%20has%20received,Mid%20North%20Coast%20of%20NSW.>

The North Coast of NSW is one of the highest disaster declared regions in the country for frequency and severity across all three measures of fire, flood, and storm. Together with southeast Queensland, it has been labelled a disaster 'hotspot' in Australia³, with Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred compounding the 2022 Northern Rivers flood event, which had widespread impact on the region. CSIRO reports that as the frequency of major events like fires, droughts and floods increases, so too does the likelihood of multiple events. This was experienced in the 2022 Northern Rivers flood event, with two flood events occurring within one month. The impact of major events puts pressure on communities, infrastructure, systems and services. With the CSIRO noting it is almost impossible to respond to and recover from a new crisis if you are still dealing with the impacts of the last one".⁴

From the 12 March 2025, evacuation centres across the North Coast region commenced closure, with the move to recovery and wind down of emergency management operations, including Local Health Districts standing down the daily Emergency Operations Committees and evacuation centre coordination meetings and Healthy North Coast standing down the Crisis Management Team, under the Disaster Management Framework.

To support recovery, the Australian Government announced a financial assistance payment to eligible people adversely impacted by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. These Local Government Areas were included: Ballina, Bellingen, Byron, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed Valley.

The NSW Reconstruction Authority leads recovery efforts in collaboration with community leaders and other recovery partners. The Authority coordinated Recovery Access Points from 13 – 25 March 2025 in Tweed Heads, Ballina, Lismore and Coffs Harbour and a range of additional locations were added, to provide support to the community. 20 Recovery Access Points were established providing 400 operational hours of support. 20 partners attended the Recovery Access Points with over 8,000 individuals supported.

³ ¹ Sewell, T., Stephens, R., Dominey-Howes, D., Bruce, E., & Perkins-Kirkpatrick, S. (2016). *Disaster declarations associated with bushfires, floods and storms in New South Wales, Australia between 2004 and 2014. Scientific Reports* (6). Retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://www.nature.com/articles/srep36369#Fig5>

⁴ CSIRO, Ruth Dawkins, 19/4/2022, How to build resilience in the face of compounding extreme events, online source, 3 April 2025, <https://www.csiro.au/en/news/All/Articles/2022/April/compound-risk-extreme-events>

Response

Emergencies and environmental disasters can disrupt access to health care facilities, reduce the availability of the health workforce and cut off essential utilities such as electricity, water, and telecommunications. In rural areas, there is also the potential for environmental disasters and emergencies to exacerbate existing workforce shortages.

Between 9 and 13 March 2025, Healthy North Coast liaised closely with, and took direction from, the Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts as the health lead under the NSW State Emergency Plan regarding the health response.

Health care coordination and communication

Healthy North Coast participated in the following emergency management meetings including:

- Local Health District Emergency Management Operations Centre meetings (daily)
- Evacuation Centre Coordination Meeting (daily)
- National Coordination Mechanism meetings (weekly)
- Regional Emergency Management Coordination Meeting (weekly)

The LHDs participated in the State Emergency Operations Centre meetings.

Healthy North Coast sent out daily updates to the primary health care workforce to share information regarding the coordination of the regional health response. Healthy North Coast liaised with peak bodies including the Australian Medical Association (NSW Branch), the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (NSW Branch) and the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association who all provided support. The AMA sent a newsletter to their members encouraging them to work closely with Healthy North Coast in the response efforts. Practitioners provided feedback to Healthy North Coast that they felt informed and reassured and that there was a coordinated response due to this frequent and regular communication.

Joint communications

Healthy North Coast worked with the Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts to jointly promote telehealth services during the response period, due to many services closing or having reduced opening hours when the Cyclone was expected to make impact. Healthy North Coast created physical and virtual communication assets which were promoted across the region. A combination of organic and paid social media activity was undertaken.



Figure 2 - Communications materials promoting the Medicare Mental Health Phone Service and healthdirect were physically handed out to community members in evacuation centres and promoted virtually via social media.

Healthy

North Coast

worked with the 6 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to promote disaster preparation information and telehealth services to Aboriginal communities.

Keeping our communities safe - stay prepared



Make sure you have your medications

Call your pharmacy or doctor and plan ahead to get your medication.



Stay safe and informed

The Hazards Near Me NSW app shows current information about local emergencies.

Call - 1800 595 212

North Coast
**HEALTH
CONNECT**



If you need medical advice and your usual AMS or GP is closed

Call North Coast Health Connect - access 24/7 confidential medical advice from registered nurses free, with no out of pocket costs via phone or web chat.

13 YARN

Mental health support

Call 13 YARN (13 9276) - the phone line is available 24/7. Speak to a mental health support worker, who can help you. If it is an emergency call 000.

Call - 13 92 76

Figure 3 – Healthy North Coast Aboriginal Partnership materials promoting disaster preparation messages and telehealth services for Aboriginal communities.

Healthdirect – Service Finder innovation

In previous natural disasters, Healthy North Coast has collated and communicated service changes through manual data collection processes which were shared on an as-needs basis with hospitals and other relevant stakeholders.

Healthy North Coast worked with healthdirect and the Department of Health and Aged Care to establish an innovative new virtual 'single point of truth' whereby changed service hours were updated onto healthdirect's Service Finder as live updates.

Over 76 North Coast general practice and community pharmacies reported changes to their service hours to Healthy North Coast, and these were updated onto the Service Finder during the response period.

More information on this initiative is available through Healthy North Coast's and healthdirect's joint media release available here hnc.org.au/media/after-ex-cyclone-alfred-healthdirect-helps-you-find-available-health-services/.

Telehealth usage

Healthdirect

From 7 to 24 March 2025, there were 1,475 calls to the healthdirect phone service from the North Coast region which resulted in 171 GP telehealth appointments. This was significantly higher than other impacted regions in southeast Queensland that received an average of 180 calls and 44 GP telehealth appointments during the same period.

North Coast Health Connect

There were 501 calls to North Coast Health Connect service during Ex-Tropical Cyclone, which resulted in 49 direct bookings into general practice and 4 direct bookings into pharmacy. 32% of these callers said they would have gone to ED or required an ambulance.

Medicare Mental Health Phone Service

361 calls, or 20 calls on average per day, were made to the Medicare Mental Health Phone Service from the North Coast during 7 to 24 March 2025. This was a 40% increase in service usage. Monday was the busiest day of the week and 2pm was the busiest hour of the day on average. Lismore and Coffs Harbour had the highest volume of calls.

Health care in evacuation centres

Healthy North Coast worked closely with the North Northern Local Health District and St John to coordinate a health presence in evacuation centres, as per the direction from the State Health Emergency Operations Centre.

The Northern NSW Local Health District developed a Clinical Services Delivery Model for Evacuation Centres which outlined a tiered support model based on the numbers of evacuees and clinical need. The Mass Evacuation Centre at Southern Cross University was given highest priority as it had the highest number of evacuees and clinical need.

The Clinical Services Delivery Model for Evacuation Centres was designed to ensure that primary health care needs, as well as clients participating in ongoing drug and alcohol treatment, had access to health services during their evacuation. It was envisaged, should the disaster be as significant as predicted, that there would be a shuttle services to run between evacuation centres and open health services such as the hospital, urgent care centres and pharmacies. This was not needed.

RACGP's *Providing Care in an Evacuation Centre*⁵ resource was reviewed and referenced for guidance. This document was developed in collaboration with Healthy North Coast after the 2022 Northern Rivers Floods.

Evacuation centres

St John and Australian Red Cross volunteers were present at all evacuation centres providing both first aid and psychological first aid at each site respectively.

Healthy North Coast coordinated and funded over 100 hours of GP care across all of the evacuation centres, with 12 GPs attending evacuation centres in Lismore, Ballina, Byron Bay, Evans Head, Mullumbimby, Kyogle, Ocean Shores and Kingscliff. The GPs spent a couple of hours at evacuation centres checking with centre coordinators and evacuees, providing medication script renewal and basic health response needs.

Mass Evacuation Centre at Southern Cross University, Southern Cross University

⁵ RACGP, 2024, *Providing Care in an Evacuation Centre*, available at www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/practice-management/managing-emergencies-and-pandemics/evacuation-centre-resources/information-for-general-practitioners-working-in-e/role-of-gps-1/providing-care-in-an-evacuation-centre

A General Practice Extended Care Model was established at the Mass Evacuation Centre in Lismore.

As per the Clinical Services Delivery Model for Evacuation Centres, the following health services were deployed to this centre due to the high numbers of evacuees and the complexity of health needs:

- Medical and nursing
 - First aid
 - Triage
 - Wounds
 - Prescriptions
 - Other health needs
- Mental health
 - Psychological first aid
 - Telehealth promotion
 - Disaster recovery
- Aboriginal health
 - Cultural safety
 - Access and coordination
- Pharmacy
 - Medication management
 - Script dispensing
- AOD
 - Advice for problematic alcohol and other drug use
 - Clinical withdrawal management and overdose support
- Public health advice
 - COVID-19
 - Infection control and communicable disease management
 - Environment health advice
- Administration
 - Coordination – rosters, functional area liaison, supplies
 - Quality management – health records, data, privacy



Figure 4 - Still from video at MAC Evacuation Centre with GPs Dr David Glendinning, Dr Courtney-Anne Blackhall, Dr Chris Bentley and Monika Wheeler, CEO Healthy North Coast

Alcohol and other drugs

Healthy North Coast worked collaboratively with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia to provide advice to community pharmacists in advance of the cyclone regarding dispensing of Schedule 4 medicine. Healthy North Coast advocated for the authority to allow for a pharmacist to supply any Schedule 4 medicine (except S4Ds) under the [National Health \(Continued Dispensing – Emergency Measure\) Determination 2025, which was issued on 6 March.](#)

We Are Open

Healthy North Coast's We Are Open program focuses on supporting general practice, Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisations and pharmacies to extend their opening hours at short notice, to support service continuity and increased access to health care during disasters. The program was opened but not used. More information on the program is available here <https://hnc.org.au/primary-care-impact-topics/we-are-open-extended-hours-response-by-general-practice-ams-and-pharmacy>.

HealthPathways

The Mid and North Coast HealthPathways program's comprehensive resources were distributed to GPs, nurses and allied health professionals during the response period.

Medicare Urgent Care Clinics

The North Coast has Medicare Urgent Care Clinics in Coffs Harbour and Lismore. Healthy North Coast worked with centre providers to ensure power supply issues were addressed with access to generators. Lismore Medicare Urgent Care Clinic and the on-site community pharmacy was able to continue service provision from 7:30 am to 7:30 pm during and post the ex-tropical cyclone event, as was Coffs Harbour Medicare Urgent Clinic which maintained opening hours of 8 am to 8 pm 7 days. The Lismore Urgent Care Clinic treated over 150 people from 7-9 March 2025 and provided extended hours access to pharmacy services when the majority of other services and even local shops were closed. Transfer protocols were able to remain in place during and post event, to support care and diversion from hospital.

Residential Aged Care Homes

Healthy North Coast was the main point of communication between Residential Aged Care Homes (RACHs), the Local Health Districts and the Department of Health and Aged Care. This was agreed by all parties as the preferred approach to streamline communications. Some RACHs were under great strain facing potential evacuation and/or loss of staff due to the disaster. Healthy North Coast published 6 communiques to RACHs through the response period and established a dedicated RACH communications channel. Healthy North Coast triaged and contacted each RACH in impacted areas to understand their disaster preparedness and provide support, with 31 priority RACHs contacted and supported over the weekend of 8-9 March.

Support provided included:

- 2 surge workforce requests.
- Support for Infin8 Care in Tweed Heads to allow 4 residents to shelter in place and avoid planned but unnecessary hospitalisation.
- Support for Rathgar Lodge in finding alternate places for residents set to evacuate.
- Numerous requests for contact and support coordination from NSW Health and emergency services.

St Andrews Byron was the only RACH to evacuate, with Rathgar Lodge, Ulmarra ready to evacuate but did not, after consultation with NSW Police and the Northern NSW LHD.

Healthy North Coast also requested that the Australian Government approve the extension of the Healthdirect RACH Fast-Track After hours service to 24/7 for the duration of TC Alfred disaster response. The fast-track service still links into the same GPs, but it prioritises the calls from RACHs.

Recovery

Healthy North Coast liaised closely with NNSW and MNC LHDs to stand down response efforts and transition to recovery stage on 11 March 2025.

Healthy North Coast worked with commissioned providers to promote help-seeking behaviour and enhance the provision of mental health and wellbeing supports during the recovery period.

The formal recovery stage concluded with outreach recovery response efforts on 25 March 2025.

Recovery Assistance Points

The NSW Reconstruction Authority established Recovery Assistance Points from 13 – 25 March 2025.

Healthy North Coast coordinated 240 hours mental health clinical supports at Recovery Assistance Points in Lismore, Ballina, Coffs Harbour, and Tweed Heads from in collaboration with commissioned service delivery partners:

- **North Coast Safe Havens** delivered by The Buttery
- **Medicare Mental Health Centres** delivered by Open Minds
- **Resilient Kids** delivered by Social Futures
- **Care Finders** services delivered by EACH and Footprints

Healthy North Coast also collaborated with the Australian Red Cross and the Northern NSW and Mid North Coast Local Health Districts to ensure a coordinated approach was taken to step consumers up into higher acuity clinical services where required. Service navigation was supported for consumers, health workers and volunteers through the development of a joint flyer that was made available at each Recovery Assistance Point (see Appendix I).

Safe Havens

4 Safe Haven sites were commissioned by Healthy North Coast in 2022 through the NSW Government's Mental Health and Wellbeing Flood Recovery Package. The Safe Haven services are in Murwillumbah, Mullumbimby, Lismore, and Woodburn.

In the 3 weeks following the impact of Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, the Safe Havens saw an increase in access to services, particularly in the second week, post event (10-16 March) with 213 hours of

Healthy North Coast's post

Healthy North Coast is at Southern Cross University.
★ Favourites · 12 March · Lismore, NSW · 🌐

It's funny who you bump into at evacuation centres.
Here's our CEO Monika Wheeler with Lismore legend Jenny Dowell, former mayor of Lismore and now a Deputy Leader at [Australian Red Cross](#).
Sometimes the passion for community service never leaves you! ❤️
The role of Red Cross at evacuation centres is to offer psychological first aid, and supporting people who may have been affected by trauma.



Figure 5 - Jenny Dowell, volunteer, Australian Red Cross and Monika Wheeler, CEO Healthy North Coast at the Lismore Evacuation Centre, Southern Cross University, 12 March 2025



Figure 6 – Anna Mavay, Regional Manager The Buttery, Minister Rose Jackson, Leone Crayden The Buttery CEO, Paul, participant Safe Haven and Richelle Hewitson, Senior Clinician Safe Haven, Mullumbimby, 12 March 2025.

counselling provided across the 4 Safe Havens, compared to 20 counselling hours the previous week. 344 participants accessed services during the second week of March, which was triple the amount in the previous week at 111 participants.

Medicare Mental Health Phone Service

The Medicare Mental Health national phone service is a free service funded by the Australian Government and commissioned by Healthy North Coast that connects people with mental health information, services, and supports. The North Coast region utilises this service to provide information, clinical assessment, and connection to local referral pathways. The Medicare Mental Health Phone Service principle of 'no wrong door into mental health' is delivered through a hub and spoke model. 704 phone calls were made to the Medicare Mental health Phone service between 3 March and 3 April 2025. This is a 17% increase compared to the same period in 2024.

Medicare Mental Health Centres

Medicare Mental Health Centres are a welcoming and non-judgemental place where you can access free mental health information, services, and supports. The North Coast region has Medicare Mental Health Centres located in Lismore and Coffs Harbour. Services were impacted by storm damage and power outages and reopened 12 March. Additional service support was provided to the Recovery Access Points, with services open over the weekend of 15-16 March to support mental health and wellbeing needs. The Medicare Mental Health Centres delivered 1,653 service contacts to 608 clients during the month of March 2025. There was a 27% increase on service contacts when compared to the previous month.

Care Finders

Care Finders support vulnerable older people who would not be able to arrange services without intensive support and do not have a family member or friends who can help. Funded by the Australian Government and commissioned by Healthy North Coast, Care Finders are available across the North Coast and are delivered by:

- EACH (Coffs Harbour, Clarence Valley, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca and Bellingen)
- Footprints Community (Kyogle, Tweed, Lismore, Byron and Ballina)

Healthy North Coast coordinated Care Finders staff to attend evacuation centres to offer immediate and intensive support to older people arriving at the centres for shelter. They also linked in with the Local Health District Assessment teams so that vulnerable older people could be fast tracked for an Aged Care assessment for rapid access to aged care services and more appropriate respite accommodation.

Joint communications

Healthy North Coast and the Mid North Coast and Northern NSW Local Health Districts promoted available health, mental health and wellbeing service and support options to the region by distributing flyers at the Recovery Assistance Points (see Appendix I), as well as via social media.

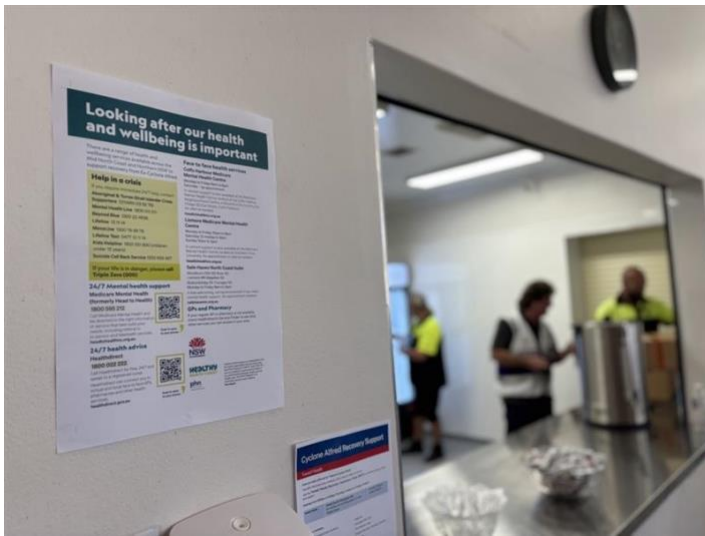


Figure 7 - HNC and NSW Health posters at the Tweed Heads Recovery Assistance Point, 13 March 2025



Figure 8 - HNC and NSW Health posters at the Tweed Heads Recovery Assistance Point, 13 March 2025

Resilient Kids

The Resilient Kids program provides a range of free mental health and social and emotional wellbeing activities to build the resilience of flood-affected young people (aged 8–18 years). The program was made possible through a \$10 million grant from the Australian Government’s National Emergency Management Agency, is commissioned by Healthy North Coast and delivered by Social Futures (service delivery lead), The Family Centre and Human Nature as a 2022 Northern Rivers floods recovery initiative.

The Resilient Kids program developed a resource, *Weathering the Weather*, to support children and young people experiencing mental health issues to stay calm, reduce the psychological impact of the event and promote the supports available through the program (see Appendix II).

Community Wellbeing and Resilience program

Healthy North Coast’s Community Wellbeing and Resilience (CWR) program funds community-led, place-based initiatives that support communities to recover from the health and wellbeing impacts of disasters and build their capacity to face future compounding challenges. Funded through both Australian and NSW disaster recovery funding, current and passed CWR projects actively supported their communities as they recovered from the impacts of Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. More information and Healthy North Coast’s CWR program is available at <https://HealthyNorthCoast.org.au/community-wellbeing-resilience-program>.



Senator Jenny McAllister visiting the Resilient Kids team.

Appendix I: Health resource for Recovery Assistance Points

Looking after our health and wellbeing is important

There are a range of health and wellbeing services available across the Mid North Coast and Northern NSW to support recovery from Ex-Cyclone Alfred.

Help in a crisis

If you require immediate 24/7 help, contact:

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporters 13YARN (13 92 76)

Mental Health Line 1800 011 511

Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636

Lifeline 13 11 14

MensLine 1300 78 99 78

Lifeline Text 0477 13 11 14

Kids Helpline 1800 551 800 (children under 12 years)

Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467

If your life is in danger, please call Triple Zero (000)

24/7 Mental health support

Medicare Mental Health (formerly Head to Health)

1800 595 212

Call Medicare Mental Health and be directed to the right information or service that best suits your needs, including referral to in-person and telehealth services. headtohealthnc.org.au



Scan to save to your phone

24/7 health advice

Healthdirect

1800 022 222

Call Healthdirect for free, 24/7 and speak to a registered nurse. Healthdirect can connect you to virtual and local face to face GPs, pharmacies and other health services. healthdirect.gov.au



Scan to save to your phone

Face to face health services

Coffs Harbour Medicare Mental Health Centre

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm
Saturday – by appointment

In-person support is also available at the Medicare Mental Health Centre, located at the Coffs Harbour Neighbourhood Centre, in Block B of the Community Village (22 Earl Street, Coffs Harbour).

No referral needed.

headtohealthnc.org.au

Lismore Medicare Mental Health Centre

Monday to Friday 10am to 8pm
Saturday 12 midday to 8pm
Sunday 10am to 2pm

In-person support is also available at the Medicare Mental Health Centre, located at Southern Cross University. No appointment or referral needed.

headtohealthnc.org.au

Safe Haven North Coast hubs

Woodburn (123-125 River St)

Lismore (46 Magellan St)

Mullumbimby (15 Tincogan St)

Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.

A free welcoming, caring environment if you need mental health support. No appointment needed.

safehavennc.org.au

GPs and Pharmacy

If your regular GP or pharmacy is not available, check healthdirect's Service Finder to see what other services you can access in your area.



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

Appendix II: Resilient Kids Weathering the Weather resource



Weathering the Weather

In Northern NSW we get some wild weather - from floods and storms, to droughts and fire - and recently a cyclone!

Weather events, and other changes that affect our day-to-day life, can be very stressful. Even after the danger is over, it can be hard to feel okay again.

Here are some ways to help your body and mind stay calm, so you can tackle the changes. If you'd like help finding some things that work for you, or you want to chat about anything, we're here.

Quick tips to wellbeing

- Move your body – dance, walk and play
- Sleep – let your body recharge like a phone
- Connect with friends or family – chat through what is happening in your world
- Being kind to yourself
- Learn ways to handle tough moments (like the activities below)
- Give your body fuel with healthy foods and lots of water!

5 ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO YOURSELF

1. Five senses exercise

Try and connect with your senses one at a time.

2. Box breathing

Relax by breathing slowly. It helps calm your nerves, reduce stress, and helps you focus better—great for when you're feeling anxious or just need a moment to chill!

Connection, choices and support for flood-affected schools, young people & their families.
 1800 719 625 | info@socialfutures.org.au | socialfutures.org.au/Resilient-Kids

Figure 9 - Resilient Kids Weathering the Weather resourced developed to support children and young people during Ex-Cyclone Alfred (page 1)