

Winter 2024



Sponsoring the Nyami Jinda Wellbeing Gathering for women on Gumbaynggirr Country



Having a yarn with OneMob Radio during Reconciliation Week in Coffs Harbour



HNC staff at the NAIDOC Week march in Ballina



With Mujaay Ganma Foundation, one of the successful NAIDOC Week grant recipients, in Bowraville

A note from CEO Monika Wheeler

Welcome to the Winter edition of Better Health Stories, where we celebrate the incredible work being done in primary health care across the North Coast.

The 2024 Immediate Care in Primary Health Conference was a personal highlight for me, where over 170 health professionals from diverse fields were brought together to upskill and connect. The energy and engagement in the room was incredible as we explored many topics in the realm of immediate care.

Our regional health system commitment to a 'one health system' approach is another significant step forward. By formalising our partnership with the Mid North Coast and Northern NSW Local Health Districts (LHDs) and Aboriginal Medical Services, we're working towards a seamless, integrated health care experience for all.

It was a pleasure to launch the LHD partnership with The Hon Rose Jackson, NSW Minister for Mental Health and North Coast, in July – a partnership that's already bearing fruit with the release of the Joint Regional Mental Health Plan.

NAIDOC Week was also a highlight, standing alongside First Nations communities and Aboriginal Medical Services to celebrate vibrant culture and heritage. It was fantastic to be able to award grants, through our Aboriginal Partnership, to support events and activities organised by twelve Aboriginal community-led collaborations.

There is so much fantastic work being done across primary health care in our region, and stories are just a glimpse of them. I hope that they'll paint a small picture of how, together, we are building a healthier and more connected North Coast.

Yours in health, *Monika*

The Healthy North Coast **CAN-DO** Effect

Community first and always

We are committed to serving our communities. We listen actively, and every voice is heard, respected and valued. We measure success by the wellbeing of our communities.

Achieving more together

We believe in the power of collaboration and teamwork. We value different strengths and perspectives. We know we can achieve more and create a lasting impact by working as one.

Nurturing innovation

We thrive on challenges and explore new ideas and approaches to problem-solving. We are always learning and open to change so we can drive advancements and growth that make a difference





Coordination

A 'one health system' approach on the North Coast

In July we were joined by The Hon Rose Jackson, NSW Minister for Mental Health and North Coast, to launch our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mid North Coast Local Health District and Northern NSW Local Health District.

This is a commitment to strengthening working relationships, reducing the complexity and barriers to entry for people needing primary health care.

The plan will improve access to integrated and affordable mental health, suicide prevention, and alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services, making it easier for people to seek help when they need it.

At the launch we heard a heartfelt speech from local community member Dom White, who shared her experience of navigating local mental health services, and the value of what a 'one health system' approach will bring to our community.

"Good mental health is a priority for each and every one of us and I for one am all for partnerships that work well together to tackle drug and alcohol issues and improve mental health."
Minister for Mental Health Rose Jackson.

Formulation of Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs and Suicide Prevention Joint Regional Plan



Formal commitment to a 'one health system' mindset

hnc.org.au/key-documents

NAIDOC Week events highlight alive and strong Aboriginal culture

Following a successful application process, the Healthy North Coast Aboriginal Partnership was pleased to award twelve Aboriginal community-led collaborations grants of \$2,000 each to support events and activities during NAIDOC Week 2024.

The events and activities that received funding focussed on health and wellbeing, connection to Country, or fostering positive social and emotional connections.

Funded activities included yarning circles, cultural and art activities, bush tucker planting, and dance and music performances for children and young people.

"We are proud to recognise the strength, resilience and pride of our Aboriginal communities. It is very special for us to support local NAIDOC committees as they plan amazing events to celebrate and share our Aboriginal culture." - Susan Parker Pavlovic, Healthy North Coast's Director of Aboriginal Health Partnerships and proud Yaegl woman.

"It's important to have events like this where we can have a yarn about carrying our culture with pride." - Aunty Ruth Walker, Mujaay Ganma Foundation in Bowraville, grant recipient.



\$24,000
awarded for local NAIDOC Week events



12 Aboriginal community-led collaborations



Grants were awarded across **6** Aboriginal Countries



4,500+ people participated in these activities across the North Coast

hnc.org.au/media/naidoc-week-highlights



Commissioning



11,000+
occasions of service



8,500
unique patients



45%
ED diversion



9%
indigenous clients

North Coast community delighted with Medicare Urgent Care Clinics

The recently-opened Medicare Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs) in Lismore and Coffs Harbour are now operating 12 hours per day (8am – 8pm), seven days a week, in a fully bulk-billed service with no appointments or referrals necessary.

Our UCCs are demonstrably reducing the burden on our local EDs, allowing them to focus on high urgency and life-threatening conditions.



"My son attended the clinic this morning and I just wanted to say what a wonderful experience it was.

Like most kids they don't always look forward to visiting the doctors but today my kids had such a positive experience! From the lady at the front desk who was kind and friendly - getting the kids colouring pads and making the whole waiting experience not just pleasant but fun for the kids! To the triage nurse who was also great to the doctor who seen us this morning - she deserves to be commended for the way she interacts with her patients. My son was so anxious about getting a swab done and she was just wonderful, He was smiling through the whole experience because of the way she interacted with him. The doctor was exceptional! It was the best experience I've had at a doctor's in a long time.

This service is such an asset to the community - not only because we would have been facing lengthy waits in the ER to see a doctor if not for this Clinic, but because the service that was provided by all staff today was nothing short of amazing. A very heart felt thank you to all the staff that helped us - you made a big difference in my little family's day!" – Patient of Lismore Medicare Urgent Care Clinic



hnc.org.au/medicare-urgent-care-clinics



Capacity Building

Building community wellbeing and resilience through participatory grant making

Healthy North Coast's Community Impact team is working to support communities to recover from disaster, and build resilience for future challenges. To achieve this, we trialled a participatory grantmaking approach for our 2024 Community Resilience and Wellbeing program, making space for the people of our region to have a say on the decisions impacting them.

Grassroots community leaders from seven shortlisted organisations gathered in Ballina to peer review project proposals, learn from each other, and help lead decision making. The projects spanned a broad spectrum, including support for vulnerable communities, building social capital, disaster preparedness training, and community and youth development initiatives.

The participatory approach focuses on relationships, breaking down competition for funding, fostering collaboration, and empowering communities to lead the way, ultimately driving long term change towards thriving communities across the North Coast.

"It felt like it levelled the playing field, especially for organisations which may not have as much skill and capacity in grant-writing." - Participatory grant making participant

hnc.org.au/community-wellbeing-resilience-program



\$1M of funding channelled into community wellbeing and resilience projects



7 shortlisted participants



4.5/5 participant rating for likeliness to participate in a similar process in future

Partnering for excellence in primary care nursing

We're partnering with the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA), rolling out two programs to build the capability, support, develop and upskill primary care nurses on the North Coast.

13 practices from across the region are participating in the 'Building Nurse Capacity' program, and seven nurses in the 'Transition to Practice Program', after a successful Expression of Interest process.

The Building Nurse Capacity program supports nurses to develop nurse-delivered, team-based models of care – also known as nurse clinics.

The Transition to Practice Program focusses on nurses who have transitioned to primary health care, providing them with additional assistance, including mentoring, exclusive education tools & resources, and networking opportunities.

Overall, the total funding is \$331,000 split equally between APNA and Healthy North Coast, which allows our nurse workforce to work to the top of their scope, focusing on improving access to care and patient health outcomes, while alleviating pressure and workload on GPs.

"The BNC program has enabled our nurses to implement a process for ensuring eligible patients are offered a healthy heart check, which includes education resources on healthy lifestyle tips including information on nutrition and exercise. The practice has used some of the funding to purchase a halter monitor and several patients have been able to utilise this." - Queen Street Medical Centre.

"As an undergraduate Registered Nurse, acute care/ward nursing wasn't my passion. I was lucky enough to start at the Lismore Clinic, which felt right especially with the supportive team and great mentors. Now as a new graduate Registered Nurse, the TPP program has allowed me to expand my knowledge and increase my confidence in my new role." - Brooke Fresen.

hnc.org.au/workforce-development



\$331,000 investment into North Coast primary care nurses



7 nurses sponsored in the TPP program



13 general practices participating in the BNC program



Thousands of North Coast patients benefiting from this investment in nurses



Capacity Building

Immediate Care in Primary Health

In June, 170+ health professionals from across the North Coast gathered on Gumbaynggirr Country, Coffs Harbour, for Healthy North Coast's 2024 Immediate Care in Primary Health Conference.

All corners of the primary health landscape came together at the conference – with a great mix of general practice, allied health, nursing, pharmacy, and medical students.

The conference kicked off with a thought-provoking panel discussion and Q&A on 'tackling health reform' with leaders in local health care, hosted by the Healthy North Coast Board.

The conference, facilitated by HNC Medical Educator Dr Andy Williams, continued in earnest with 24 sessions across profession-specific streams: GPs, nurses, allied health and pharmacists.

A wide range of health care topics were covered, including sports injuries, managing immediate care in the very young (and the very old), immediate care in the diabetic, acute arrhythmia, acute headache, and the role of nurses in immediate care triage.

It was incredible to see so many local primary health care professionals share their knowledge, engage with experts, acquire valuable perspectives, and influence the direction of primary health care in our region.



"I think that was one of the best conference days I've had in years - all the speakers were so engaging."

"Wonderful, informative, confidence building day. Thank you."

"Fantastic education across a diverse range of clinical areas and a friendly/ social environment."



173 health professionals attended



91% attendee rate



487.5 CPD hours delivered



90% of GPs would change something in their practice with knowledge gained



70% of the non-GP audience would implement what they learned into their profession



100% of GPs felt the delivery of the event was engaging and interactive



90% of GPs felt the content was current, contemporary and evidence-based



83% of all attendees felt the learning objectives were entirely met.

hnc.org.au/education-networking

