

BETTER HEALTH *stories*

HEALTHY
NORTH COAST

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NORTH COAST
An Australian Government Initiative

Winter 2026



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands across our region, and pay our respect to Elders past, present and on their journey.

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Coordination



Community Wellbeing & Resilience program making a difference in the Northern Rivers

It's been 4 years since severe flooding caused devastation across the North Coast region, with longer term impacts still being experienced.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) described these floods as one of the most devastating in the nation's history. Seven local government areas (LGAs) were affected, with towns like Lismore, Broadwater, Coraki and Woodburn experiencing the most significant impacts.

Healthy North Coast's Community Wellbeing and Resilience (CWR) program, through funding from the NSW Government, continues to support community resilience, disaster recovery and preparedness through a number of services, programs and training.

Recently, the CWR program was evaluated by third party Synergistiq to build evidence and share learnings to inform future funding approaches across the North Coast region. The evaluation, among many other key impacts, found:

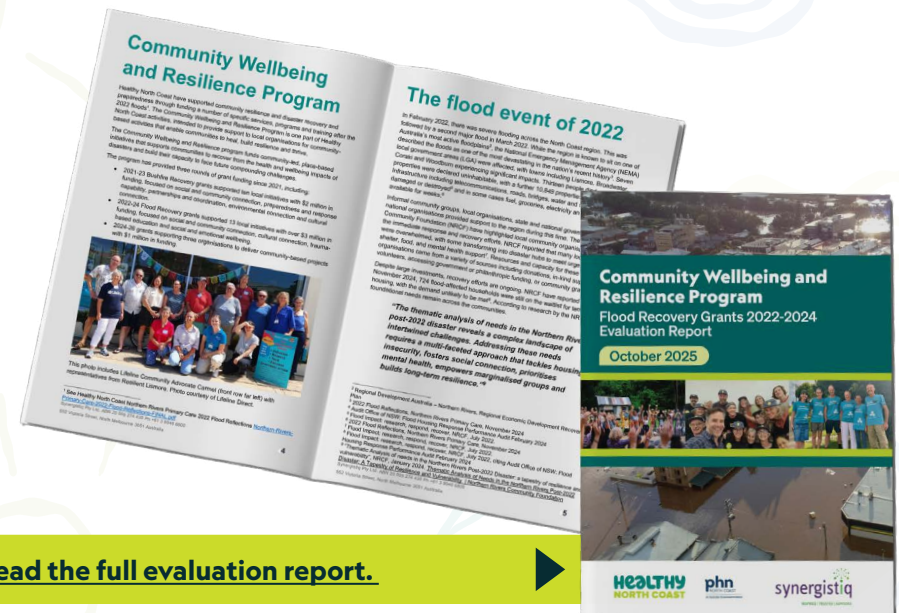
The projects provided support for community members who were struggling to meet their basic needs, with almost 30,000 participating in CWR programs (including 593 school aged and young participants).

There were over 3,000 Aboriginal-led trauma-informed, culturally grounded activities (yarning, weaving, bodywork, art and ceremony).

Many organisations, staff and volunteers provided substantial support to the communities. 1,595 people were trained in mental health skills, and 38 community leaders recruited and trained.

The program included funded projects like:

- ▶ **The Get Growing Youth Program, delivered by GROW, for young people in local schools**
- ▶ **Training community advocates through Lifeline Direct to deliver low intensity mental health interventions and trauma-based education**
- ▶ **Resilient Uki launched the Neighbourhoods Project, training local community leaders to strengthen community connection, build psychological resilience and support recovery after disasters**
- ▶ **+ many more.**



[Read the full evaluation report.](#)



Driving better health through local innovation

Healthy North Coast's Primary Care Impact Grants are continuing to fund innovative, locally designed projects that support high quality care for people with chronic diseases across the region.

To date, 48 Primary Care Impact Grants funded by the Australian Government have been awarded across the North Coast at a total of \$2,346,282.

The funding has gone directly to general practices, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, allied health businesses and other local providers across the Mid North Coast and Northern NSW, to test and scale creative solutions to current health care challenges.

One recent recipient – Lisa Strauss Health in Ocean Shores – has, through the funding, been able to deliver group-based, dietitian-led education sessions with people across local communities with a focus on the prevention and management of coronary heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

During a session, a participant shared that her type 2 diabetes had become increasingly difficult to manage following the loss of her partner. Eating alone had taken a toll on her motivation to prepare balanced meals, leading to social isolation and less consistent eating habits.

In a supportive environment, fellow participants offered practical and compassionate suggestions. Ideas included attending local trivia nights at community venues such as bowls clubs, where single diners can feel more comfortable joining in and connecting with others over a meal. The group also discussed simple meal preparation strategies for low-energy days, along with easy, healthy snack options to help maintain stable blood glucose levels.

The participant returned to report that she had implemented several of the group's suggestions, making small but meaningful changes to her meal routine.

She had also begun engaging in social activities, helping to rebuild her sense of connection and enjoyment around food.

Impact of these sessions include:

- ▶ A clear upward shift in understanding of type 2 diabetes management amongst group participants, with 77% rating their understanding as **good or very good afterwards** vs. 19% before **(+58%)**
- ▶ Improved understanding of coronary heart disease prevention, with 80% rating their understanding as good/very good afterwards vs. 39% before **(+41%)**
- ▶ Improved understanding of topics such as dietary fats, carbohydrate awareness and label reading.

[View more Primary Care Impact Grant recipients.](#)





Health Through Ages and Stages Conference

On Saturday 30 May 2026, around 150 health professionals from across the North Coast gathered on beautiful Bundjalung Country at Peppers Salt Resort & Spa, Kingscliff for the *Health Through Ages and Stages Conference* - a full-day event focused on timely and comprehensive care from conception to end of life.

All corners of the primary health landscape came together to explore innovative approaches to delivering high-quality care, with a strong multidisciplinary mix of general practice, allied health, nursing, and medical students. Sessions were structured into interest-specific streams covering preventative care, clinical updates and digital health/AI, allowing participants the flexibility to tailor their learning experience.

A wide range of health care topics were covered, including Carers across the Lifespan, Practical Guidance for Infant Allergy Prevention, What Clinicians Should Know about AI Now, Updates for Safer Asthma Care, Biomarkers, Monoclonals and the Future of Brain Health, Fitness Beats Thinness, Practical RHD Tools for Primary Care, Adult ADHD in Primary Care and more.

148 health professionals attended

Almost **9 in 10** attendees would recommend the event to a colleague

Almost **9 in 10** indicated they are likely to change something in their practice as a result

Three quarters of participants strongly agreed that the content was current, contemporary, evidence-based, and relevant to their practice

9 in 10 strongly agreed that the presenters/facilitators were engaging, qualified/skilled and knowledgeable

442 CPD hours delivered

17 different sessions with **4** additional practical workshops

35 different speakers and panellists

Quotes from attendees:

“Fantastic day - very engaging and extremely well run. Thank you HNC!” - Allied Health attendee

“An opportunity to bring health professionals together to discuss MDT management and care coordination is so important.” - Nurse

“Overall an invaluable day. Panellists engaging and knowledgeable.” - General Practitioner