

BETTER HEALTH *stories*

HEALTHY
NORTH COAST

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NORTH COAST
An Australian Government Initiative

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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



Bringing specialist kidney care closer to home in Kempsey

Access to specialist nephrology services remains a challenge for many people living in regional communities. In Kempsey, where specialist kidney services are limited, Healthy North Coast's Renal In-Reach program has helped to bridge the gap by bringing specialist expertise directly into local general practices.

The In-Reach program connects GPs and their patients with a multidisciplinary team, including nephrologist Dr Lin Lin Myat and renal dietitian Yvonne Li, through in-practice education sessions and case conferencing.

By better coordinating local specialists, hospital teams and general practices, the program is providing patients with access to specialist kidney care closer to home while strengthening local capability to manage chronic kidney disease (CKD) within primary care, reducing the demand on local hospitals.



"We felt very welcomed in every practice we attended."
– Dr Lin Lin Myat.

"The doctors are engaged and ask insightful questions, which goes to show their dedication to patient-centred care."
– Yvonne Li.

"Enjoyable session, I learnt a lot regarding different presentations of CKD."
– Kempsey GP.

The benefits of the program extend beyond clinicians, with patients reporting a greater understanding of their own kidney disease and how to better manage their own health in their everyday lives:



"Previously I knew very little about kidney disease. After today I am now understanding more about kidneys, heart and blood pressure. I am very grateful for this opportunity to help me understand my health." – Patient.



In the July to August 2026 period, participating GPs reported:

21% increase in confidence managing chronic kidney disease

28% increase in confidence prescribing CKD medications

57% increase in confidence supporting colleagues within their practice to manage CKD





Taking health care where it's needed most

A nurse-led clinic in Ballina is putting trust and relationships at the heart of health care – and has now been recognised on the international stage.

The OneBridge clinic at Mary's Place, commissioned by Healthy North Coast with Australian Government funding under the Primary Health Network program, has been featured as a case study in the International Council of Nurses' 2026 International Nurses Day report, which showcases how nursing is helping improve access to care around the world.

The clinic provides primary health care for people experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness, or facing barriers to traditional health services.

From wound care and health checks to chronic condition education, mental health support and connections to drug and alcohol services, the clinic provides care in a familiar, supportive environment.

The partnership between OneBridge, Mary's Place (St Vincent de Paul Society NSW) and Healthy North Coast is helping people reconnect with health care.

The clinic was initially funded by a \$50,000 Primary Care Impact Grant from Healthy North Coast, with the service extended under HNC's homelessness program until at least March 2027.

Key outcomes:

290 nursing consults delivered across the initial 12-month grant period (July 2025 to July 2026)

Repeat attendance and continuity of care

Increased willingness to engage in preventative care

Successful referrals to GPs, allied health, mental health and specialist services



“For people who have been let down by systems – or who have learned to avoid them – consistent, compassionate care can make all the difference.” Sonia Martin, OneBridge founder and nurse



Helping people build their capacity to live well and stay connected

Healthy North Coast commissions Mission Australia to deliver the Commonwealth Psychosocial Support Program (CPSP) across the North Coast. This program supports people experiencing severe and persistent mental illness to build independence, strengthen community connections, and work towards meaningful recovery and improved wellbeing.

Accessed through the Medicare Mental Health phone service (1800 595 212) and delivered through hub locations in Coffs Harbour, Lismore and Port Macquarie, together with spoke locations in Grafton, Kempsey, Nambucca and Tweed Heads, the program provides person-centered, recovery-oriented support.

Participants work alongside support staff to identify their strengths, goals and practical supports that build capacity, resilience and long-term stability and wellbeing.

Supports include:

- ▶ peer-facilitated groups that focus on life skills, wellbeing, education, employment and social connection,
- ▶ coordinated multi-agency support for people living with severe and complex mental illness
- ▶ referrals to wrap-around services that support individual recovery needs.

For the April-June 2026 period:

5,159 occasions of service were delivered for people requiring support

1,064 (21%) of these occasions of service were for young people aged 12-25

6 in 10 people who were measured using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scales (K10+ and K5) or Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) outcome measures showed an improvement in wellbeing after accessing the service.

Case studies:

One participant experiencing a terminal health diagnosis, depression and social isolation rebuilt confidence, improved wellbeing and re-engaged with study and employment goals through peer-led support and community connection.

Following displacement during the Northern Rivers floods, another participant secured stable housing, maintained recovery from substance use, rebuilt family relationships, and improved overall wellbeing through coordinated psychosocial support.