



# Our Year in Review 2021-2022

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District



Cover Photo: Health checks for children at Narrangy Booris, Aboriginal Child & Family Health Services, Menai.




Artwork by Brenden Broadbent

## Acknowledgement of Country

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians on whose land we stand, and the lands our facilities are located on; the lands of the Dharawal, Gadigal, Wangal, Gweagal and Bidjigal peoples.

We would like to pay our respects to the Elders past, present and those of the future.

### Stay connected in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

-  @SESLHD
-  @SEastSydHealth
-  [www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au)
-  South Eastern Sydney Local Health District
-  South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

This book was produced by SESLHD's Media and Communications Unit, with 100% recycled paper.  
Photos contributed by Jane Dyson and Michael Amendolia.

# Contents

SESLHD snapshot	02
From the Board Chair	03
SESLHD Board and Executive Council	04
From the Chief Executive	05
Our strategic priorities	06
Medical miracles	16
Wellbeing initiatives help our teams to thrive	20
Care in our communities	22
Population and Community Health	24
SESLHD Mental Health Service	26
Prince of Wales Hospital	28
Sutherland Hospital	30
Royal Hospital for Women	32
St George Hospital	34
Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital	36
Garrawarra Centre	38
Uniting War Memorial Hospital	39
Calvary Health Care Kogarah	40
NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service	41
The power of giving	42
Our unsung heroes	44



# SESLHD snapshot



## About us



## In one day across SESLHD



## From the Board Chair



Michael Still  
Board Chair

It has been a year of exceptional achievements as well as a year that has brought many challenges for our staff – on the front line and in supporting roles – who delivered safe, high-quality healthcare in a year like no other.

Our people are to be praised and congratulated for their strength, capability and resilience over the past three years as we faced, and continue to face, the COVID-19 pandemic and all the challenges it presents.

We are truly fortunate to have a wonderful health system made up of highly skilled and dedicated staff who have continued to deliver exceptional care in all our hospitals and community-based services.

It was exciting to see the launch of the District's new strategic plan, *Exceptional Care, Healthier Lives*, which will shape the way we deliver healthcare services to 2025.

This Strategy provides a clear opportunity to position SESLHD as a leader in offering exemplary healthcare by implementing positive changes and enabling the partnering for healthier communities to promote health and wellbeing and improve equity.

It's certainly an exciting time to be working in our District as we embark on an era of expansion with more than \$1.3 billion invested into redeveloping our hospitals.

This includes the new Integrated Acute Service Building at Prince of Wales Hospital, a major upgrade of St George Hospital and the redevelopment of the Sutherland Hospital Operating Theatre Complex, including the installation of an MRI Suite.

Precinct initiatives are already proving successful. The implementation of the Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct Strategy has seen collaboration with our partners – University of NSW, Sydney Children's Hospitals Network and Health Infrastructure – across inter-professional education, translational research and industry engagement.

Highlights include the Health Innovation Forum and the launch of the Leading for Impact Leadership Development Program.

Our District is at the forefront of many new initiatives and innovations which support our patients.

The Royal Hospital for Women has become the first provider in Australia to

offer a new fertility treatment for women at a significantly lower cost which involves less hormone injections than traditional IVF and Prince of Wales Hospital collaborated with the University of NSW to develop a new-generation mobile intensive care tower on wheels which has the essential equipment an ICU patient needs.

Surgeons at Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital now have a new \$300,000 Zeiss microscope – one of the first of its kind in Australia – which makes surgery faster, safer and more accurate. And these are just three examples.

The past year has exemplified the high calibre of staff we have in SESLHD and we were proud that our hospitals were acknowledged for excellence in specific areas of expertise.

Sutherland Hospital was one of 13 hospitals across Australia recognised for delivering quality stroke treatment and care in the 2021 Australian Stroke Coalition Quality Stroke Service Awards; and Prince of Wales Hospital was officially named as one of the top 10 hospitals in Australia for excellence in dealing with hip fractures.

In line with one of our District's priorities, *Shaping the Future*, important research into liver cancer at the UNSW Microbiome Research Centre at St George Hospital received a boost. \$4 million in funding was received from the Federal Government to assist in Associate Professor Amany Zekry's work that focuses on understanding how the microbiomes contribute to liver cancer.

Much was achieved over the last 12 months to ensure our community has access to high-quality, safe healthcare. More than 2,200 stroke patients in regional and rural areas have now received life-changing treatment thanks to the innovative NSW Telestroke Service, hosted by Professor Ken Butcher and his expert team at Prince of Wales Hospital.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our Chief Executive Tobi Wilson, his management team and our 14,000 staff who have shown great spirit, dedication and commitment in delivering safe, high quality health services to our communities.



# SESLHD Board & Executive Council

## SESLHD Board

<b>Michael Still</b>	Board Chair
<b>Elli Baker</b>	Board Member
<b>Arthur Diakos</b>	Board Member
<b>Jonathan Doy</b>	Board Member
<b>Dr Jan Dudley</b>	Board Member
<b>Dr John Estell</b>	Board Member
<b>Dr Debra Graves</b>	Board Member
<b>Liam Harte</b>	Board Member
<b>Dr Gregory Levenston</b>	Board Member
<b>Neville Mitchell</b>	Board Member
<b>Helene Orr</b>	Board Member
<b>Professor Allan Spigelman</b>	Board Member

## SESLHD Executive Council

<b>Tobi Wilson</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Lisa Altman</b>	Director, Strategy Innovation and Improvement
<b>Jennie Barry</b>	General Manager, Prince of Wales Hospital and Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital
<b>Sharon Carey</b>	General Manager, Mental Health Service
<b>Andrew Elliott</b>	Director, Digital Health
<b>Fiona Fahey</b>	Director, People and Culture
<b>Danielle Fisher</b>	General Manager, Organ and Tissue Donation Service
<b>Dr Marianne Gale</b>	Director, Population and Community Health
<b>Donna Garland</b>	General Manager, Royal Hospital for Women
<b>Kate Hackett</b>	Director, Nursing and Midwifery Services
<b>Payal Kapoor</b>	Director, Finance
<b>Dr Jo Karnaghan</b>	Director, Clinical Governance and Medical Services
<b>Angela Karooz</b>	General Manager, St George Hospital
<b>Anne Milne</b>	Director, Corporate and Legal Services
<b>Claire O'Connor</b>	Director, Allied Health
<b>Kim Olesen</b>	Executive Director, Operations
<b>Vicki Weeden</b>	General Manager, Sutherland Hospital and Garrawarra Centre
<b>Associate Professor Christopher White</b>	Director, Research

## From the Chief Executive



**Tobi Wilson**  
Chief Executive

As everyone would be aware, it has been another challenging year for everyone who works in the health system. In spite of this I continue to be in awe of our people, who have continued to show caring, empathy and resilience as they support the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District community through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our staff have worked together in teams to deliver safe, quality healthcare to our communities. They are extraordinary in the way they look after our patients every day and I thank them for their professionalism, skill and incredible efforts.

The District's new strategy: *Exceptional Care, Healthier Lives* was launched and takes us to 2025 when our local population would have grown to more than one million people. The strategy has been shaped by staff, partners and communities, who contributed their vision and perspectives on what makes our District unique.

Our strategy sets out our vision for the future to ensure we meet the needs of our growing and ageing community, with focus areas on *Partnering for healthier communities; Providing person-centred care; Supporting teams to thrive* and *Shaping the future*.

The District also launched its Virtual Health Strategy this year, building on our foundations of world-class innovation and research in this space. The Strategy builds on the rapid changes that have been made over the last two years, providing a strong framework to allow our clinical teams to continue to innovate while ensuring we provide flexibility to our patients and consumers.

The COVID-19 Community Management Centre (CMC) is an excellent example of how virtual care can support our patients when they are in most need. The CMC provides a District-wide virtual care service for COVID-19 patients who are isolating at home.

Hosted by Prince of Wales Hospital, the CMC works closely with the COVID-19 Hospital in the Home teams at St George, Sutherland and Prince of Wales hospitals. They safely care for high risk COVID-19 patients in the community, providing support

and reassurance to remain safe in their homes, and streamline access to hospital care when it is indicated.

Our focus on *Partnering for healthier communities* saw the opening of the new integrated health care hub at Wolli Creek, in collaboration with Karitane, to support women, families and children's health and wellbeing by providing a broad range of early intervention and prevention services.

Our nation's First People are our priority and the District is creating culturally appropriate spaces to help Aboriginal people feel welcome. This year, the Dharawal Aboriginal Carers Lounge opened at Sutherland Hospital where patients, their families and carers can gather while patients are receiving treatment.

In line with one of the District's priorities: *Supporting teams to thrive*, 10 Wellbeing Ambassadors were appointed for a 12-month period, to promote staff engagement, make positive workplace cultural change and champion staff wellbeing and resilience. Wellbeing Grants of up to \$10,000 were also awarded to support wellbeing in the workplace.

This year we saw some major milestones reached including the 20-year anniversary of the Prostate Cancer Institute at St George Hospital; the Aboriginal Health Unit's 25-year anniversary of providing culturally sensitive care, leadership, advocacy and cultural guidance across the District and the celebration of 100 home births with The Royal Hospital for Women's homebirth program.

It has never been a more exciting time to be working in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. I am incredibly proud of the service we provide to our communities and I thank staff, volunteers and our community partners for their hard work and dedication in improving the health of our communities.



# Our strategic priorities

We have embarked on a new strategic plan to guide our District over the next three years.

More than 1,000 consumers, staff and partners collaborated to create the Exceptional Care, Healthier Lives 2022-25 Strategic Plan. The strategy sets out four key priorities.



## Partnering for healthier communities

We will adopt a whole of system approach to promote health, improve equity and empower communities.



## Supporting teams to thrive

We will promote a culture where people flourish and wellbeing is a priority.



## Providing person-centred care

We will provide safe, integrated, accessible and evidence-based care that places people at its heart.



## Shaping the future

We will lead innovative, digitally enabled healthcare informed by pioneering research.





### Sydney Airport COVID-19 screening

Staff screened overseas passenger and crew arrivals at Sydney International Airport to help contain the spread of COVID-19.

Our Disaster Management Unit led the ambitious undertaking, screening more than 387,000 people throughout the course of the pandemic. Staff followed stringent processes and carried out this essential work in a caring and compassionate fashion.

The team successfully liaised with the Sydney Airport Corporation as well as a number of state and federal agencies in an effort to keep the pandemic at bay.

### Protecting our communities

Our COVID-19 vaccination program began with the opening of the St George Vaccination Hub.

Due to the ongoing surges of COVID-19 cases, the program was expanded to outreach sites including Rockdale, Coogee, Centennial Park and the mass Bayside Vaccination Hub at the Novotel Brighton-Le-Sands.

In the Bayside Hub more than 650 redeployed staff from across the District came together to learn new skills to deliver COVID-19 vaccinations. More than 333,000 vaccines have been given.

### Dharawal Aboriginal Carer's Lounge

The Dharawal Aboriginal Carer's Lounge at Sutherland Hospital is a culturally appropriate space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, families and carers to enjoy a yarn, cup of tea, or simply have a rest.

The room has been decorated with Aboriginal artworks by local artists and a special piece of art created by our staff.

The opening of the lounge was celebrated with a Welcome to Country, smoking ceremony and Aboriginal performances.

### Vaccinating our most vulnerable

We provided 14,900 COVID-19 doses to community members experiencing disadvantage.

The program worked with over 50 partner organisations to vaccinate Aboriginal people, those living in social housing or experiencing homelessness, multicultural communities, people with disability and significant health conditions.

This was facilitated through walk-in clinics in 17 community-based locations and targeted promotion via local networks. Education sessions were also delivered to over 800 community members in eight different languages.



## Partnering for healthier communities





# Providing person-centred care

## Care for COVID-19 patients in their home

We facilitated the transition from three site-based COVID-19 telephone assessment centres to a centralised SESLHD model of care for COVID-19 positive cases in the community.

The model allows patients to be safely supported and monitored at home through the COVID-19 Community Management Centre (CMC), hosted by Prince of Wales Hospital. More than 4,000 patients have been remotely monitored through the CMC and kept safe in their own homes.

The centre also connects patients to social services, as well as mental health and maternity services.

## A sweet homecoming

The Royal Hospital for Women introduced a new model of care to enable eligible families to look after their premature babies at home with the support of a medical and nursing team.

The program supports families to bring babies home much earlier than expected. Once breastfeeding, babies can be discharged from hospital in the final weeks of their stay.

The program has delivered a number of benefits for babies, and their families, such as reduced parent-baby separation and increased parental confidence.

## NSW Telestroke Service

The NSW Telestroke Service, hosted by Prince of Wales Hospital, reached 23 sites across the state. Our 24/7 roster of on-call stroke specialists work with

multi-disciplinary teams in various regional hospitals.

They assessed more than 2,200 patients presenting with stroke symptoms. More than 400 of them were given reperfusion therapy, which restores blood flow to blocked arteries.

The service was a finalist in the NSW Premier's Award and has received broad recognition in local and national media for the care it is providing to many thousands of patients across NSW.

## Care for COVID-19 patients

There is no doubt that our staff went above and beyond their call of duty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The peak time support program implemented in aged care and neurology wards across Prince of Wales and Sutherland hospitals is one example of how our allied health, nursing, midwifery and support teams went the extra mile.

Whether it be spending countless hours talking with and listening to patients in isolation, connecting them with loved ones, and even playing a game of cards, this program demonstrates the exemplary care provided by our staff.

## A safer SESLHD

A safety attitudes questionnaire provided staff with an opportunity to anonymously share their attitudes, perceptions and beliefs about the safety of their workplace. The completion of this, in one of health's most challenging years, enabled us to monitor the effectiveness of our current quality and safety initiatives and to improve safety amongst our teams.





# Supporting teams to thrive

## Staff wellbeing

Staff wellbeing remains critically important as we transition out of a challenging period. It is vital to ensure our staff feel supported and appreciated.

Grants of up to \$10,000 were awarded so staff could carry out wellbeing initiatives for their teams. Some examples include an outdoor gym for staff and a coaching program to help staff with career development.

Ten wellbeing ambassadors from our District were also appointed. They were each allocated one day each a week to focus specifically on supporting wellbeing initiatives.

In addition to wellbeing and mental health sessions, we found small but heartfelt ways to thank our workforce for their unwavering efforts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Coffee carts and delicious gelato – amongst many other things – were a small token of our appreciation.

## Small acts of kindness

We collaborated with our wellbeing leaders to carry out acts of kindness.

More than 2,000 kindness packs were given out to nurses and midwives. Inside the packs were chocolate Lindt balls, tea bags and affirmation cards.

A 'Kaleidoscope of Kindness' competition also awarded staff who demonstrated small acts of kindness with Novotel vouchers and kindness packs.

Lucky door prizes were handed out at the entrance to each hospital. Prizes included day spa vouchers, pamper packs, chocolates and soap.

## Empowering our leaders

Leaders across our District are supported and empowered thanks to our People Leader Hub. The hub hosts a magnitude of resources for current and future leaders to improve their skills. Some of these include: coaching and mentoring, communicating their goals clearly, helping team members navigate change, and challenging and identifying new ways of working.

## Staff forums tackle hot topics

A series of thought-provoking forums were held for staff across the District. Innovation through Collaboration was the theme of this year's Allied Health research forum. With over 30 stimulating papers presented, the event showcased the diverse research areas of expertise across our District. An inspirational keynote address by Professor Liz Lobb was a highlight for many.

Difficult ethical issues were also discussed in two separate forums to provide a safe space for staff, academics, and community members. Hundreds attended to deliberate issues including moral distress during COVID-19.

Amongst the topics discussed were how they coped with providing emotional as well as clinical care for COVID-19 patients whose families were unable to visit them. The new Voluntary Assisted Dying Law in NSW also prompted lively debate.





## Shaping the future

### New tool improves quality of life

A predictive tool was developed to identify patients with chronic conditions at risk of dying within 12 months in our hospitals.

The tool will identify patients who would benefit from early palliative care interventions to improve their quality of life.

The tool considers factors such as a patient's socio-demographic status, how many times they have been to hospital and their risk of hospitalisation.

Our model is 25 per cent more accurate than existing palliative care predicting tools.

### New digital microscope

Eye surgeons at Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital have been using a new 3D digital microscope, one of the first of its kind in the country.

Thanks to the hospital's Foundation, the \$300,000 Zeiss microscope has been in use for more than a year. It creates a highly-detailed cross section of the tissue which makes surgery faster, safer and more accurate.

Just as importantly, it allows several surgeons to work on the same operations in different locations. For instance, a corneal surgeon watched and instructed a complicated eye procedure from Canada to save a patient's vision while surgeons performed the operation in Sydney.

It can also be used for teaching, allowing top notch surgeons in Sydney to teach fellows and trainee surgeons in the bush.

### New ways of working for research

SESLHD is renowned for its cutting edge research. The all-important work undertaken by our research office ensures we remain at the forefront of technology and thus provide patients with the best possible care. By doing this our researchers uphold the reputation of our hospitals.

New and improved ways of working were implemented to ensure funding is provided in a fair and equitable fashion.

The new system, which includes external stakeholders, also encouraged collaboration across clinical trials so researchers can learn from their peers and establish a network of support. We also launched an education arm to build research literacy and capacity across SESLHD. This involves weekly webinars, enabling any research team to ask for advice about their applications.





## The man who cheated death

### They call him their miracle man.

Two years ago, at the peak of the pandemic, as COVID-19 was cutting a swathe through our population, 79-year old local businessman Marko Franovic was brought into Sutherland Hospital, critically ill from the virus.

There was no way to sugar coat his condition. As critical care consultant Grant Bennet put it: “We didn’t think Marko would survive. His lungs and kidney had failed.”

Marko’s life hung in the balance for five days as he lay in a coma.

But the self-made entrepreneur, who fled communist Yugoslavia and made a new home in Australia as a refugee in the 1960s, is made of strong stuff.

As he emerged from the fog of five weeks in intensive care, eleven kilograms lighter, he had only one concern: how could he give back to the hospital that saved his life?

“Once I could think straight, I said to the doctors, ‘I said, what can I do for you? You brought me back to life’,” he recalls. “And one of them said: build an institution.”

To the hospital’s astonishment, Marko proceeded to do just that, donating a cool \$1 million towards the cause. “No words can adequately express the care I experienced there,” he explains.

“Words truly fail me. In caring for the sick these people risk their own lives and the lives of all their families every day,” he said of Sutherland Hospital staff. “I think the public doesn’t respect them enough. All I can say is I am alive now because of their efforts.”

Marko’s million dollars is one of the biggest single donations ever made to the hospital.

The hospital plans to build a new research and education centre with the donation as well as expanding the oncology day clinic that will allow them to see almost twice the number of patients.

Marko, who is back at the helm of his construction company, is savouring every moment of what he calls his “new life”; spending time with his son and grandchildren.

Running through his life like a leitmotif has been the motivation to be generous. “It’s good to leave something for the next generation,” he says.

Sutherland Hospital General Manager Vicki Weeden said she speaks for all the staff when she thanks Marko for his incredible generosity.

## Blooming anew

**New Zealand-born health coach Kate Sherriff comes from a large family and has always planned on having a large family herself.**

She’s one of those women who are imbued with joie de vivre and who lives life to the full. Like many young people, she embraced her freedom after she’d finished school and university, leaving her home town of Gisborne and moving to Bondi for a working holiday. Life beckoned with a smile.

But soon after arriving on our shores, Kate’s world came crashing down around her. She was diagnosed with a rare form of cervical cancer. It was growing at such a rapid rate that the prognosis was grim.

“It was terrifying,” she recalls. “The doctors weren’t sure if I was going to make it,” she said. She was just 23.

Almost a decade later, her voice still quavers with emotion as she recalls her darkest moment: saying goodbye to her family. “It was definitely the hardest thing I’ve ever done in my life,” she says.

No-one knew what her chances of surviving would be, let alone whether she could ever have a family, but a crack team of specialists gathered around her to give it their very best shot.

Kate gritted her teeth and fought for her life, enduring round after round of chemotherapy and radiation. “If it wasn’t for The

Royal, I would not be here today,” she says.

The implications for her fertility were the last thing on her mind.

“I was focused on surviving,” she recalls. “I don’t think I was even ready to have a conversation about whether I could have children or not.”

But gynaecologists Professor Neville Hacker (now retired) and Professor Bill Ledger were anxious to give Kate a fighting chance at having a family one day. In a pioneering move, they harvested a tiny piece of her ovary before she started her first round of chemotherapy.

It gave her hope that one day – if she survived – the tissue could be transplanted back into her pelvis.

This would then, it was hoped, trigger a hormonal response to kick start her ovaries back into action again.

Their daring move worked. Eight years later, The Royal’s gynaecologist Professor Jason Abbott performed the tissue transplant, grafting a tiny slice of Kate’s ovary back into her pelvis. Despite the fact that Kate had also had a hysterectomy as part of her treatment, a little miracle happened. They reversed menopause.

Gradually, over time, the team at The Royal were able to then successfully harvest eleven of Kate’s eggs.

“It’s really important for women to have the opportunity to have a baby or babies if they want one,” Professor Ledger said. “Otherwise they feel like there is a piece missing in their lives.”

“I was focused on surviving.”





## The Royal and Prince of Wales team up for baby joy

**The moment a father makes contact with his newborn child for the first time is always a special moment. It was even more so for Nathan Stapleton.**

Nathan sadly wasn't able to hold his second son Angus when his wife Kate gave birth in July this year; a much longed for brother to their 20-month-old toddler Harry.

The closest he was able to get to the new addition to his family was when Samantha Arbidans, midwife at the Royal Hospital for Women, tenderly placed Angus on Nathan's bare chest for some skin to skin contact. It was just one of the myriad of ways The Royal and Prince of Wales hospitals have gone to extraordinary lengths to help Nathan and Kate live their best life, and bravely face a situation many couples would find overwhelmingly daunting.

The former NRL star has spent months in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Prince of Wales Hospital after a tackle in a country rugby game went horribly wrong, leaving the 32 year old a quadriplegic.

But thanks to two extraordinary Prince of Wales ICU nurses – Megan Pinfold and Stephanie Rhodes – Nathan was able to attend the birth even though he cannot move and could barely speak.

Despite the fact it had never been done before, Megan and Stephanie organised a mobile intensive care unit so they could wheel Nathan and his ventilator along the corridors of the Randwick campus and over to The Royal.

Thankfully, Kate's labour was relatively fast, meaning Nathan was only out of ICU for several hours.

Only just learning how to speak again because of the pressure of his ventilator, he was able to whisper words of encouragement to Kate during her labour.

In the lead up to the birth Nathan said, "Never in a million years did I think I would be going to my wife's birth as a quadriplegic."

Kate was equally astonished. "What the hospital has done for us has been absolutely incredible. They have done absolutely everything possible for us."

Nathan scored 17 tries for the Sharks as a wing back between 2009 and 2014 before retiring to a property near Young in Central West NSW. He fell awkwardly after a tackle during a rugby game at West Wyalong on April 9, catapulting him into a cardiac arrest. CPR was performed for 16 minutes.

For Kate, it was as if time was standing still. She braced herself for the very worst. "I imagined I would be going to Sydney to turn off his life support because of severe brain damage," she said.

But then something wonderful happened. When Nathan regained consciousness, he looked straight at his wife, and straight into her eyes. "He recognised me," she says. "We just decided from that moment onwards to put everything possible into rebuilding our lives."

One thing is certain. Nathan has mental toughness in spades. On the wall opposite his bed in the ICU is a whiteboard adorned with inspiring quotes such as "I am not what happened to me. I am what I choose to be." Around that are photos of his life on their sheep and cattle property: dogs, kids, sunset walks with his wife, and beers on the deck with family and friends. He has much to live for.

Ahead lies a long gruelling rehabilitation, but Nathan is not the sort of man who gives up. He has already begun moving about in an electric chair which he mobilises with his chin. He also has his own laptop which he can use with visual technology.

The family will need to stay in Sydney for many more months before Nathan is able to be transferred into Prince of Wales Hospital's spinal unit. After that – no-one knows exactly when – will be the Stapleton's sweet, sweet homecoming.



“  
I am not what  
happened to me.  
I am what I choose  
to be.”



# Wellbeing initiatives help our teams to thrive

**Corinne Dubourdieu is a midwife at the Royal Hospital for Women. She radiates warmth and goodwill and spends her spare time learning acupuncture and meditating. She's one of the District's newly appointed wellbeing ambassadors, set up to help our teams to thrive.**

Corinne's role allows her to dedicate one day per week to organise things that lift the spirits of staff, whether it be massages, mediation sessions, or connecting them to free counselling sessions.

"It's wonderful to be able to give the staff a little boost and remind them of how important they are," she said.

There is no doubt the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on our health system and in particular on the mental health and wellbeing of health workers on the frontlines of pandemic response efforts.

And our staff certainly were on the frontline. Almost overnight, they suddenly began turning up to work clad in cumbersome personal protective equipment, and stepped into roles that had previously been completely unfamiliar to them.

To ensure that all the extraordinary efforts our staff have been making over the last few turbulent years is recognised, SESLHD has made a concerted effort to make their wellbeing a priority.

In addition to the ambassadors such as Corinne, wellbeing grants of up to \$10,000 were used to set up the likes of an outdoor gym at the Randwick campus and a coaching program for doctors.

Health practitioners have been appreciated as never before by our community; free coffee was offered and hand painted cards from school children arrived in the mail, brightening up hospital walls.

But just as crucially, SESLHD staff also found many ways to support and stand by each other.

Whether it was a debriefing session with their manager after a stressful shift, or a care package of tea and aromatherapy products, our District managers did everything they could to ensure our staff were able to keep putting one foot in front of the other, and thus continue caring for their community.

Small but heartfelt ways of thanking our staff were arranged such as The Gelato Man who created a sensation across our District by serving hundreds of sundaes and cones to staff. There were long queues at lunchtime for his sweet treats; favourites proved to be chocolate, passion fruit and salted caramel cones.

And finally, as we've all become aware during the lockdowns, caring for a dog, cat, or other animal can help relieve depression and anxiety, lower stress, and improve your heart health. Bring your pet to work day at St George Hospital, as a result, proved a huge hit.

It was hard not to smile as Lexie, the adorable pup of Deputy Director of Nursing and Midwifery's Julie Cosgrove took out first place, or be delighted by the antics of Byron Boss, the four legged friend of Director of Medical Services Heidi Boss as he rolled over and delivered high fives.

As our ambassador Corinne so aptly puts it, "Sometimes it's the little things that count the most."



“ Sometimes it's the little things that count the most. ”



# Care in our communities

Our District is renowned for the way we care for our community well beyond our hospital wards. Whether it's setting up mobile vaccination clinics for marginalised people such as the homeless in the inner city, or screening passengers for COVID-19 at Sydney International Airport, we pride ourselves on looking after as many people as we can, no matter what their situation.



One of the impressive ways SESLHD has done this is by adapting quickly to new technology that has enabled us to connect digitally with our patients rather than in a circumscribed physical space.

During the pandemic, we set up a COVID-19 Community Management Centre hosted by Prince of Wales Hospital. By shifting online, and working with hospital in the home teams at Prince of Wales, St George and Sutherland hospitals, more than 4,000 patients isolating at home with the virus have been monitored in the comfort of their own home.

Patients were given an app and an oximeter and submitted twice daily readings and symptom questionnaires. The system detects early signs of deterioration, allowing the clinical team to intervene before the patient's condition worsens. During the peak of the pandemic, the centre was looking after 1,000 patients.

No-one is left behind at SESLHD. We're always thinking about how we can care for people living in social housing, or experiencing homelessness, who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders or who are living with a physical or mental disability.

Our Population and Community Health Directorate set up 17 pop-up and mobile walk in vaccination clinics during the pandemic, vaccinating more than 14,000 disadvantaged people who may not otherwise have been protected.

Margaret Norris, who led the vaccination teams in the St George and Sutherland areas

says: "These are people who didn't have a regular GP, who were unable to use the online booking system, or who needed information in their own language. Some weren't eligible for Medicare because they're on temporary visas, while others had unstable living situations or were sleeping rough."

The key to the success of the pop up clinics was that they were set up in community venues close to where people lived and where they would feel at ease such as community centres, churches and town halls.

One of our most ambitious undertakings to protect our community was at Sydney International Airport, where we screened an impressive 387,054 people throughout the course of the pandemic to help contain the global spread of COVID 19.

And as always, helping families to thrive in their communities remains a hallmark of SESLHD's work. To encourage families to give their babies and youngsters the best possible start in life, a new health hub was opened in Wolli Creek in South Sydney. The hub will support the health of women, children and families, many of whom are newly arrived migrants and who may not have strong family networks.

Providing care in our communities is a win win situation. It makes care more accessible to people in the comfort of their own homes, and frees up space in our hospitals for those who need it the most.



# Population and Community Health

From vaccinating Aboriginal families to protecting young people from the harms of vaping, Population and Community Health prides itself on providing exceptional care, especially for those in our community who experience social disadvantage.

## Health hub opens for families in Wolli Creek

The Wolli Creek Hub is an innovative initiative delivering integrated services for women, children and families.

The hub provides access to care and education for families from diverse backgrounds living in our community. Maternity, psychosocial, parenting and women's health are among the services on offer.

## Celebrating consumer engagement

Over 100 people attended our first annual Consumer, Carer and Community Engagement Forum.

Twelve services showcased their projects and initiatives, demonstrating best practice in co-designed models of care.

According to attendees, the forum was inspiring, a true demonstration of the strength of our partnerships and displayed commitment to collaboratively improve our health services.

## Aboriginal health: Past, present and future

Our Aboriginal Health Unit celebrated 25 years of proudly providing leadership, cultural guidance, and strategic advice across SESLHD. Over 110 guests celebrated the milestone with a traditional smoking ceremony and cultural performance.

The unit supports our growing Aboriginal health workforce, facilitates changes in policy and practice, and coordinates District-wide initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In recent years, supporting access and uptake of COVID-19 and flu vaccinations among local Aboriginal communities has been a strong area of focus.

## A crack down on vaping

Our services developed a multi-pronged approach to address the increased use of vaping products, particularly amongst young people.

The Public Health Unit seized over \$6,000 worth of illegal nicotine-containing e-cigarettes. Four retailers were prosecuted and 27 on-the-spot fines, ranging from \$360 to \$1,800, were issued.

A webinar bringing together experts, young people and clinicians was hosted to explore how to engage young people in conversations about vaping, attracting over 170 participants from health and youth services.



O  
U  
R  
P  
E  
O  
P  
L  
E

### Dr Marianne Gale

*Director  
Population and Community  
Health*

What drew me to Public Health Medicine was its power to make positive change for the whole population, not only the person in front of you.

Public Health is not only about treating illness, but creating systems and environments that prevent ill health in the first place to enable people to live their fullest lives in good health.

My typical day consists of a lot of meetings from operational matters to high level strategic issues. It is important to me that every meeting moves us forward – to solve problems, to learn new things, to ensure we are doing the best for our clients and community and that we are planning thoughtfully and responsibly for the next generation.

Valuing the skills and expertise of the people around me is extremely important. We have so much potential in our people and my job as a manager is to create an environment where people can flourish. It's amazing what we can do as a team.

I feel very fortunate to have had some experience working overseas in low and middle income countries. The irony of public health is that it is often not noticed or valued until it is absent. Working overseas helped me to understand that.

Relative to most other places in the world, we have a fantastic preventive and acute health care system and while there is much still to be improved, there is also a lot we can be proud and grateful for.



# SESLHD Mental Health Service

Our mental health services improve the lives of our most vulnerable consumers, from distressed children to the intellectually disabled.

## Helping our young people

During the COVID-19 pandemic, young people started presenting to mental health services in greater numbers with higher levels of psychological distress. Increased demand for services often meant a delay in accessing care. To address this the Youth Brief Intervention Service was developed.

The service is offered to young people aged 12 to 25 years who are suicidal or at risk of self-harm. The aim is to help reduce their distress, help them develop a safety plan and to connect them with appropriate services.

The service has had a significant impact improving their general health and how they function in a community.

## Closing the Gap

We worked with local Aboriginal land councils to plan, design and implement health services tailored for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

One of our strengths is the ability to provide flexible, culturally safe services including mental health, drug and alcohol support.

Our Indigenous communities can sometimes be reluctant to access our hospitals. The service plays a crucial role bridging the two by fostering a sense of trust and goodwill.

## New approaches to mental health

During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic the service piloted two models of care for our consumers.

The Blended Virtual Adult Rehabilitation Program provides 12 weeks of high intensity support to help rehabilitate their psychological and social behaviour.

We also piloted a Virtual Short Term Assessment Service to support consumers and their general practitioners to access virtual mental health care.

These two preventative models reduce the need for acute mental health care.

## Helping the intellectually disabled

There are more than 125,000 people in NSW with intellectual disability and up to 40 per cent of them also live with mental illness.

Disabilities caused by genetic conditions as well as brain abnormalities can increase the risk of mental illness. Medications and their side effects as well as a variety of social factors also increase the risk of mental illness.

We partnered with specialist intellectual disability teams and the Disability Strategy Unit to improve care.



O U R P E O P L E

**Chris Hay**  
*Acting Service Director  
St George Mental Health  
Service*

I'm trained as a psychologist and I've always had an interest in mental health. Now, as I move into management, my interest is in the services and structures that support clinicians to support families and consumers.

Every day we start with an executive huddle to talk about our capacity, the risks for the day and other urgent issues. Then I'll discuss management of complaints, critical incidents and other operational requirements.

During all these meetings, the real challenge is to focus on what is in the best interest of our consumers and patients. You've got to come back to that all the time.

It can be hard because you have a range of competing demands, including staff and a variety of external stakeholders. The best part about working here is the people. The key is to build good teams and the most enjoyable part is seeing good teams work well together. Creating leadership is really important.

During COVID-19 there were opportunities to improve our services. We implemented an after-hours Nurse Manager.

We also created an Emergency Department Nurse Navigator position, who helps mental health patients through the emergency department system.



# Prince of Wales Hospital & Community Health Services

Whether they are adolescent or elderly, and live in Bronte or Bourke, we are a mainstay for patients across NSW. Being part of the Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct allows us to remain at the forefront of expertise, tapping into universities, researchers and some of the very best clinicians in the world.

## Integrated ECGs with patient Electronic Medical Record

A new project was implemented for electrocardiogram tests (ECGs), allowing them to be integrated with the patient Electronic Medical Record.

Every ECG performed at Prince of Wales and Sydney Eye hospitals is now captured electronically. In the 11 months since the system has been in place, we have electronically recorded more than 53,000 ECGs.

This project allows ECGs to be readily available across SESLHD and reviewed anytime and anywhere electronically by our experts. Alerts allow clinicians to check if an ECG has not yet been reviewed, increasing patient safety.

## Head and Neck Rapid Access Clinic

This new clinic aims at speeding up access to treatment for what can be a very fast growing cancer. Recent evidence shows that head and neck cancer can grow on average 70 per cent every month.

The early diagnosis of major head and neck cancers is therefore resulting in vastly improved results for patients.

It is also economical because smaller operations are being done earlier, rather than larger operations being done later.

Thanks to our clinic, 13 cancers in 74 patients were diagnosed much earlier than they would have been if they had been treated through the standard referral process.

## State of the art Operations Centre

We created a new centre for managing the hospital operations which vastly improves the patient journey throughout the facility.

The Operations Centre allows the Deputy Director of Nursing to work closely alongside the after-hours nurse managers, the nursing staffing management team, the patient flow and access team, the after-hours clinic nurse educators, advanced practice nurses and a member of the corporate services team. This enables them to provide a much more efficient model of care.

In the busy Operations Centre, live data is analysed to manage patient flow using electronic platforms such as the NSW Ambulance arrival board and emergency FirstNet.

The state-of-the-art facility will relocate to the Acute Services Building when it opens early next year.

## Reduction of healthcare acquired infections

In 2019, we identified a problem with increasing hospital acquired infections and set up six working parties to improve the situation.

As a result, hospital acquired infections were reduced by more than 50 per cent in the following areas: sepsis pathway, invasive devices and aseptic technique, environmental cleaning, hand hygiene, standard and transmission-based precautions, and cardiac surgical site infection.



**Justin O'Hare**  
*Service Manager  
SESLHD Community  
Management Centre*

The SESLHD COVID-19 Community Management Centre (CMC) is the remote monitoring service for high risk COVID-19 positive adults throughout SESLHD.

This service allows people to be monitored safely at home during their COVID-19 isolation period. Since October last year we've monitored over 4,000 people.

Anyone who registers COVID-19 positive and comes through NSW Health or external referral sources such as GPs are referred to us, then assessed by our clinical care team.

My job is a typical management job. It is operational, making sure safe patient care is practiced, making sure staff are well supported and there's clear direction in what they need to do. There's also a strategical part of it.

The CMC is currently looking to move into other health cohorts, utilising the same model. But at the heart of it, it's making sure that it's safe patient care that we are providing.

I've been working at Prince of Wales Hospital since I was a new graduate nurse in 2009. I started nursing in my mid 20's. What was attractive to me was being able to engage with people.

It's a people business. It's good coming to work knowing that you're doing something that's impacting people in a positive way.

OUR PEOPLE





# Sutherland Hospital & Community Health Services

Since opening in 1958, Sutherland Hospital has grown into a world-class facility with new buildings, technology and innovation to provide exceptional care to all patients, from newborns and children through to the elderly.

## Exceptional care for vulnerable patients

Sutherland Hospital is leading the way when it comes to caring for vulnerable patients.

We have introduced new strategies to help staff anticipate the needs of our vulnerable patients, and implement tailored strategies to ensure these needs are met.

Our approach takes into account not only a person's clinical condition, but the range of factors that affect their health status and ability to access and benefit from our services.

## First-of-its-kind care for elderly patients

Our Geriatric Flying Squad were the first team in the District to provide medical support for a cluster of twelve COVID-19 positive residents within their aged care facility. At the time, clusters of this size were transferred to hospital.

The team cared for this extremely vulnerable group and successfully managed to keep them well and in their home while ensuring other residents and staff remained isolated and safe.

This specialised care paved the way for responding to outbreaks in aged care facilities across the District.

## Recognition for outstanding care

Our staff have been praised for providing world-class care.

We were recognised at the Australasian Outcomes Centre Rehabilitation Awards for Excellence, where we were granted first prize in NSW for stroke, reconditioning and orthopaedic replacement outcomes.

Our stroke service also received an Award for Excellence in the Australian Coalition Quality Stroke Service Awards, recognising our hospital as a top performer in stroke management. The award was received shortly after the launch of our new 24-hour acute stroke thrombolysis service.

## Outdoor rehabilitation courtyard

Our courtyard received an upgrade and redesign, transforming it into an outdoor rehabilitation training area to help patients navigate the outside world.

The area includes a car, so patients can practise getting in and out, a shopping shelf with a trolley, uneven surfaces, ramps, steps and many more features specifically designed thanks to patient consultation.

The design helps patients to build the confidence they need to return to doing things that make life meaningful.



OUR PEOPLE



**Andrew Nielsen**  
*Acting Nurse Unit Manager  
Bakala Aged Care Assessment  
Unit Sutherland Hospital*

I'm a Shire boy, as they would say, and my love of nursing sprung from my initial experience as a life saver at Elouera Surf Club. It was there I realised how much I was interested in the first aid and basic life support components of lifesaving.

I have always had a caring nature and even as a student I absolutely loved nursing and am happy I've stuck with it.

Sutherland Hospital has an amazing staff culture. Everyone works well together to support patients and their families and that makes the biggest difference.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I spent 18 months working in testing clinics, first as a team leader for our clinic and then managing my own COVID-19 testing clinic at Caringbah.

There was a significant outbreak in the Shire. I think we ended up seeing nearly 700 people one day at our hospital's testing clinic.

For me, I remember the teamwork and comradery. Everyone pitched in. We were open 8am to 8pm and a lot of staff, myself included, didn't get a real break during that time.

It was absolutely crazy, but I think it was just one of those things that's a testament to our District and our hospital.



# Royal Hospital for Women & Community Health Services

The Royal Hospital for Women is the state's only hospital dedicated solely to women and babies. We are there for women, newborn and families through every life stage from fertility treatment through to end of life care.

## Hospital homebirths a great success

The Royal Hospital for Women celebrated their 100th homebirth through the publicly-funded Midwifery Group Practice model. There has been a steady increase in births at home since the program began in mid-2018.

One of the benefits of the program is that women birthing at home cultivate a long-term relationship with their midwife who is with the woman in the lead up, during, and after the birth.

Women find birthing at home calming as they are in a familiar place and it is often a family experience, something that's not possible in hospital, especially during the pandemic.

Our families have reported increased satisfaction and less medical intervention with their births at home.

## Closing the Gap

We started an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Care Committee which aims to understand and improve the care for these local residents.

The committee is working on Closing the Gap for our Aboriginal mothers and babies.

Comprising Aboriginal staff and community members, the committee is well aware that there is still a long way to go.

Aboriginal women and their infants experience significant disadvantage in health outcomes compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Access to timely, effective and appropriate maternal and child healthcare can contribute to reducing these existing health disparities.

## Fundraising for The Royal

The Royal Hospital for Women Foundation held their first 'Giving Day'.

The 12 hour telethon brought together staff, patients, ambassadors, donors, family members and the community to raise funds for the hospital.

The team raised more than \$250,000 for specialised equipment, programs and research for women and newborns.

All day the room and phone lines were buzzing with energy and generosity as every dollar that was donated was doubled by major donors.

Giving Day was supported by high profile ambassadors such as the Sydney Swans, beautician Carla Oats and athlete turned doctor Jana Pittman.

## Listening to our community

We know from experience that the advice and opinion of consumers – interested community members – can make a big difference when it comes to making sure our hospital remains as user-friendly as possible.

These engaged volunteers play an important role ensuring our patients' needs are always kept firmly in mind in our everyday work and in any changes we make in the operations of the hospital.

From reviewing signage to working on strategic objectives, they help us to improve the experience of both visitors and patients.

To bolster their engagement and participation, our Consumer Partnership Advisory Committee has elected five new highly motivated consumers. More than 50 of our staff were also trained at a collaborative consumer partnerships forum to develop ongoing strategies.



OUR PEOPLE

**Marian Jones**  
*Clinical Midwife Consultant  
High Risk Pregnancy  
Royal Hospital for Women*

I come from a long line of nurses and midwives. My Mum is a nurse, my Sister is a nurse, and my Grandmother was a midwife.

I tried to rebel against it, because that was the expectation, but the pull was too strong.

I completed a degree in psychology and one day I saw an open day for nursing and midwifery. Midwifery just grabbed me as we're looking after, on the whole, well women, supporting a normal, natural physiological experience.

I only planned to be at The Royal for a year and then go travelling. That was in 2007. I think that says a lot.

I guess it's the people that you meet along the way. They become more than colleagues, and South East Sydney, I mean it's such a beautiful place.

We deal with lots of complex cases, so the support of my colleagues, learning from one another, sharing experiences, that's really important to me. Without that in this department we wouldn't be able to function.

I'm really proud of how we did things here at Maternal Fetal Medicine during the pandemic. The way we were still able to support women and provide women focussed care, that's what I'm most proud of.



# St George Hospital & Community Health Services

St George Hospital is among the state's leading centres for trauma, critical care and emergency management. The hospital continues to grow with the latest infrastructure, technology and innovation to provide its patients with first-class care.

## Concept design for \$411M Ambulatory Care Precinct

We marked the completion of the concept design for our new \$411 million Ambulatory Care Building.

The precinct will deliver a range of outpatient, ambulatory and day medical services, subacute aged care beds, as well as outpatient and inpatient rehabilitation services.

Ongoing consultation with members of the local Bidjigal Aboriginal community will continue to ensure the design incorporates narratives around Country as a place of healing and physical and mental wellbeing, as well as the traditional meaning of Kogarah as a 'place of many reeds.'

## New short stay service

A Short Stay Inpatient Unit was established in response to increased demands on our Emergency Department as a result of COVID-19, providing an alternative location for suitable patients awaiting admission.

This unit accommodates patients seven days per week, relieving the demand on the Emergency Department and significantly reducing the length of time a patient waits to be cared for.

The service provided care for over 700 patients.

## Staff wellbeing at the forefront

Code Lavender is an extraordinary initiative helping to address the welfare and wellbeing needs of staff. After an emotional or stressful event or shift, senior staff initiate a Code Lavender to swiftly facilitate a wellbeing session.

The session involves a trolley stocked with resources such as tea, colouring books and aromatherapy products to support the four pillars of our Workforce Wellbeing Framework: mind, body, environment and culture.

## Multi-million dollar precinct in the wings

Stage one of a three-stage refurbishment of the Operating Suite in our Clinical Services Building was completed. Works were fast-tracked thanks to the NSW Government's \$3 billion COVID-19 Recovery Plan.

Refurbishment of the first four of eight theatres displays optimal design features such as the latest air-handling systems and anaesthetic and scrub bays. It also delivered an expanded sterile storeroom and four procedure rooms.



**Samantha Gifford**  
*Aboriginal Hospital Liaison  
Officer St George and Sutherland  
hospitals*

I provide social, emotional and cultural support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. I want to make the hospital a welcoming and safe environment for them.

I liaise with multidisciplinary teams to support the patient while they're in hospital and then link them in with services if needed. Patients appreciate it if I pop in and have a quick yarn.

As a child I had a fear of hospitals. A lot of my family were either taken away or passed away in hospital, so I was quite scared of the hospital system.

When I first started, I struggled with my fear, but I received a lot of support from Aunty Marg from the Aboriginal Health Unit. She provides mentoring and understood what was required and some of the challenges for community. She was very supportive.

During the pandemic we had a very special moment where we were able to facilitate a private ceremony for an Aboriginal patient who was awarded an Order of Australia medal at her bedside.

Two of the patient's family were able to attend and bless her, she summoned the energy to give a small speech.



# Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital

Australia's first hospital remains a bedrock of patient care in the heart of the city. As well as our emergency department and clinical wards, we are a state-wide referral unit for eye disease. Our specialised hand unit also deals with trauma, abnormalities and diseases.

## Pandemic heroes

When the 'call to arms' program was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, our healthcare teams were trained to support the District's immunisation hubs. Our staff stepped into various roles at Prince of Wales Hospital, supporting telehealth, critical care, and peri operative services as well as carrying out their usual duties at Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital.

## Staff recognition

Fay Skuthorpe, president of the Friends of Sydney Hospital volunteers, was honoured in the Australia Day recognitions and was awarded with a Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of her 35 years of volunteer service.

Corneal surgeon Professor Stephanie Watson was also awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia during the Queen's Birthday tributes for service in ophthalmology.

Several others from SESLHD won prestigious awards.

## Easy wayfinding

Finding your way in a hospital can be difficult at the best of times, let alone for our many visually impaired patients.

In partnership with Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation we began using a vision friendly wayfinding solution called BindiMaps. This is an indoor audio navigation app, using language to help guide patients and visitors.

BindiMaps complements hospital signage and is one of the many wayfinding improvement strategies underway.

## Lest we forget poppies

This year's Anzac Day, liberated from COVID-19, was always going to be a special one. The hospital already pays respect to those who served; an honour roll in the main foyer lists the 149 courageous staff who volunteered for active service.

To further honour those staff this year, and all those who died or serviced in the war, more than 500 hand crocheted and knitted red Flanders Field poppies were made and decorated the hospital's picturesque courtyard fountain.

The poppies were made by volunteers from the Sydney Hospital Grad Nurses Alumni, Friends of Sydney Hospital, local community groups and hospital staff.



OUR PEOPLE

### Sita Pokharel

*Administrative Services  
Manager Sydney/Sydney  
Eye Hospital*

I'm originally from Nepal, where I completed a Bachelor in Healthcare Management. When I moved to Australia, I did my Masters in Health Management and Public Health and I started in Northern Sydney LHD and really loved it.

I came to Sydney/Sydney Eye Hospital on a secondment in 2019. Because it's a small hospital you know everyone, so it feels like you're not coming into a ward, you're coming into a family business. So when this job was advertised as a permanent position, I could not stop myself, I had to apply.

During my secondment, the team was very supportive. I'm not only talking about the team that directly reports to me, but above me, the executive manager. I think that really helped me to decide to come back.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, with all our clinics and elective surgeries cancelled, there was little activity in the clinics and wards, whereas in the vaccination hubs and our testing clinics workload was through the roof.

Whenever I asked if any of my staff were interested to go and help out, they would raise their hand.

That just amazed me. I feel so privileged for that kind of support.





## Garrawarra Centre

Garrawarra Centre is paving the way when it comes to compassionate care for people with advanced dementia, with staff continuing to be recognised for their outstanding work.

### Social connection lounge

To ensure residents and their loved ones remained connected during COVID-19 restrictions, we created a visitors lounge consisting of adjoining rooms divided by a perspex window.

Allowing contactless visits was particularly important for our vulnerable dementia residents, who presented special challenges when it came to keeping in contact with their family and friends.

Jackie Harding, the wife of one of our patients, was one of the first to utilise the COVID-safe initiative. "I give 100 stars to Garrawarra, this is such a positive opportunity to be able to see my husband and I hope more people take advantage of this," she said.

### Staff praised for world-class care

Our staff have been commended for their outstanding work in aged care.

We received accolades for our innovative approach to non-pharmacological management of people with advanced dementia.

Our centre was granted four awards at the SESLHD Improvement and Innovation Awards 2021 and were acknowledged at the International Enhancing Practice Conference 2022 for providing exceptional, life-changing care to our residents.

## Uniting War Memorial Hospital

Set within beautiful tranquil grounds in the heart of Sydney's eastern suburbs, Uniting War Memorial Hospital is a leading light in aged care assessment and rehabilitation. Our sole focus is to give people over 65 the best possible chance to live with dignity, purpose and independence.

### Geriatric Flying Squad

When an older person in the community suddenly develops a serious condition such as a urinary tract infection, pneumonia or becomes delirious, our flying squad can swoop in, either in person or virtually, to provide medical, nursing and allied health support.

We provide antibiotics, scanning, rehydration, and electrocardiogram tests along with short term case management, thus avoiding patients unnecessarily going to hospital and the emergency department.

The squad played a crucial role during the pandemic managing COVID-19 patients in the community and in aged care facilities, helping to keep people out of hospital as appropriate.

### Early Dementia Program

We rolled out a new nine week program for people newly diagnosed with early stage dementia, as well as their carers.

The Integrated Rehabilitation for Early Dementia, run face to face by our experts and clinicians, aims to increase knowledge, skills and to instil confidence. The course covers planning, goal setting, rehabilitation, small group education, as well as individual support.

Participants learn how to adjust and learn about their dementia along with practical skills to keep their brain and body active and healthy, maintain social connections, and access government supports.

### Ramped up continence clinic

Up until recently, we ran a continence clinic one day a week which resulted in a five month waitlist. To meet the growing demand for this service we now have a Continence Advisory Service three days a week. This has been made possible by joining forces with the Royal Hospital for Women.

At the clinic, a nurse and physiotherapist look at the participant's fluids, diet and lifestyle, as well as bladder training, pelvic floor muscle training, bowel health and continence products.





## Calvary Health Care Kogarah

Calvary Health Care Kogarah provides gold-standard rehabilitation, palliative, and community healthcare services to our community.

### Supporting staff wellbeing

Wellbeing initiatives have been a strong focus to ensure staff are supported while caring for the most vulnerable patients during the pandemic.

Staff were greeted throughout the year as they started their shift with gifts and a warm welcome from the executive team.

Extended support from the local community was shown through generous donations. Handfuls of chocolates

and other treats were shared amongst staff as tokens of appreciation.

A COVID-safe luncheon was held to thank staff for their efforts, with the executive team serving up plates full of delicious food.

### Rehabilitation redesign

A review was undertaken to improve rehabilitation for our patients.

We increased our workforce to ensure staff with diverse skill levels worked across our rehabilitation wards, which in turn improved our ability to care for more acute patients.

The redesign was a success. The time patients spent in hospital was reduced, and their rehabilitation was improved, which led to patients going home faster and healthier.

## NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service

The NSW Organ and Tissue Donation Service is the state-wide agency responsible for increasing organ and tissue donation for transplantation in NSW, giving thousands of people a fighting chance of survival or a better quality of life.

### World-first consortium to fight corneal blindness

Corneal blindness affects more than six million people across the globe. We collaborated with Australian leaders in corneal bioengineering to develop eye tissue to treat them.

Corneal transplantation relies on deceased human donor corneal tissue however an acute global shortage is preventing access to treatment. We aim to bridge that gap.

### Volunteers shine at the Royal Easter Show

For the very first time, we attended the Royal Easter Show to raise awareness of organ and tissue donation and encourage registration on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

Eighteen volunteers and staff attended over the twelve days, achieving a record of 600 registrations, 200 surveys completed and hundreds of conversations.

All this would not have been possible without the support of our volunteers who generously give their time.

### Support for donation specialist nurses

Donation specialist nurses play a pivotal role in supporting families through the donation process.

In an effort to support our specialist nurses in having the difficult conversation with families following the death or imminent death of a loved one, simulation training was provided so that clinical scenarios could be rehearsed in a protected environment.



# The power of giving

The Sydney Eye Hospital Foundation raised more than \$1.1 million in funding allowing:

- The latest 3D microscope technology for patients with glaucoma, cataract, corneal and retinal issues.
- Regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients access to care, accommodation and critical needs.
- BindiMaps, an audio-based navigation app for patients and visitors to use within the hospital.

The Royal Hospital for Women Foundation facilitated the purchase of the following:

- Specialised incubators that are vital for babies requiring resuscitation shortly after birth.
- A first-of-its-kind parenting program providing mental health support for mothers and their families.
- Hospital in the Home, a new model of neonatal care that will allow babies to go home sooner and will create more capacity for babies requiring intensive care.

The Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation raised money for the following:

- \$167,000 for a new eye diagnostic machine to monitor patients with diabetes.
- Annual funding of \$100,000, for five years, for the Kidney Biobank Research Project.
- \$120,000 for the Reg Inglis Scholarship to help cardiac patients.
- \$1 million, as part of a \$2 million commitment, for automated dispensing cabinets for pharmaceutical drugs.

St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation provided the following:

- Five medical research grants allowing them to continue their cutting edge work.
- A three-year partnership with Southern Care Cancer of \$50,000 a year to fund vital research. The first grant was awarded to Professor Yong Li, for the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer.

Meet the hospital foundations who inspire people to give back. Their donations are a crucial source of revenue for our staff and services.







# Our unsung heroes

Volunteers in our District's hospitals and clinics were a glaring absence during the COVID-19 pandemic so it has been wonderful seeing their gradual return.

Our vollies are important not only in helping our hardworking staff, or fundraising for vital equipment, but in the way they cheer up our patients.

Whether it's bringing them a newspaper or a cup of tea, helping patients or their families navigate our corridors, or staffing canteens, they make a huge contribution.