

Monday, 30 October 2017

## **PUTTING A WINNING SMILE ON THE FACES OF SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY COMMUNITY**

HELPING vulnerable communities to improve their oral hygiene and partnering with local communities to improve dental access has earned Claire Phelan the NSW Health Collaborative Leader of the Year Award.

Ms Phelan won the award at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual NSW Health Awards, announced by the Minister for Health Brad Hazzard at Sydney Olympic Park on Thursday evening.

Since her appointment as Director of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Oral Health Service in 2014, Ms Phelan has transformed the service into a client-focussed organisation with a culture of innovation and excellence.

Ms Phelan is passionate about everyone having access to free dental care and has been working with communities in Sydney's south east.

One of her greatest achievements has been the development of a new two-chair dental clinic at the La Perouse Aboriginal Community Health Centre. This has given the local community free access to dental care right on its doorstep.

Ms Phelan is also behind the imminent redevelopment of the dental clinic for people experiencing homelessness located at Mission Australia Surry Hills, which will see the clinic increase capacity to two chairs.

By partnering with local communities and organisations, Ms Phelan has been able to improve access to dental care to populations who may not have been able to easily access it.

Mr Mark Shepherd, Acting Chief Executive, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, said an example of Ms Phelan's innovation has been the commissioning of a mobile dental clinic.

“This unique clinic is helping to achieve key service goals of improving access to dental care with a focus on equity and delivering targeted early interventions to priority populations,” Mr Shepherd said.

“The mobile clinic primarily services residents in aged care facilities but also partners with organisations such as the Poche Centre (University of Sydney), to deliver proactive preventive advice at community events.

“Ms Phelan has achieved this through transformational leadership, shared vision and collaboration with her senior management team, clinical teams, partner organisations and service users.”

Of winning her award, Ms Phelan said: “It was a wonderful surprise to receive this award and I’m truly humbled. I couldn’t have achieved the fantastic improvements we have made in oral health care without the continued support of my team and the support from across South Eastern Sydney Local Health District.

“This award represents the persistence, passion and planning that we put into our work every day.”

There were 35 finalists in 11 award categories recognised for outstanding innovation in the state’s health system.