

NSW Telestroke Service

The Reperfusion Times

An internal newsletter for staff at NSW Telestroke Service Referring Sites

June 2023

Medical Director's Foreword

The NSW Telestroke Service celebrated the official end of project implementation at an event hosted by the General Manager of Prince of Wales Hospital on 31st January 2023. Representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Agency for Clinical Innovation, eHealth and South Eastern Sydney Local Health District gathered to attend a streamed event, simulcast statewide. Dignitaries from the Ministry were delighted to be able to hear from Mr Franco Munda, who spoke to us prior to the event from Moruya Hospital. Franco had been treated by Dr Leon Edwards and the team at Moruya Hospital and Franco and his wife Hetty, were keen to share their experience as part of this event.



Photo: NSW TSS End of Implementation Event at POWH

On 31st May 2023, we came together at the 2nd Annual NSW Telestroke Forum. It is always a pleasure to meet in person and have the opportunity to continue to build on our strong working relationships, drive innovation and best practice hyperacute stroke care. The NSW TSS and Rural Stroke Care Coordinators have submitted an abstract for [Stroke 2023 \(SSA-Smart Strokes\)](#), Melbourne 22-25 August, looking at access, treatment and outcomes of the service. As a Host Site team, we have updated the [NSW TSS Website](#) to include a page with resources and links for [health professionals](#). We are hopeful that this provides quick and easy access to information for front-line clinicians, in order to support the sustainable education delivery of the service across NSW.

This edition, the Reperfusion Times spotlights the Hunter New England Local Health District. Dr James Hughes and Dr Lisa Dark in Tamworth partner with the NSW TSS to provide one of two examples of our Hybrid model of care. This collaboration allows sites with a local neurology service to link in with NSW TSS roster of neurologists after hours or during periods when the local team is on leave. The NSW TSS model of care is integrated into the local model to allow for this to happen. This has proven to be a successful and rewarding partnership and is one way in which virtual care delivery can work to support and enhance the exceptional work that is being done in regional and remote NSW by dedicated specialists.

All the best, Ken

NSW TSS Recognition and Milestones



Photo: Michelle Dryburgh and Jason Matthews

[iNews Benchmark Awards 2023](#) were announced on 31st March and the eHealth project team who implemented the NSW TSS won the **Best Health Project** and **The Australian Technology Project of the Year**.

Congratulations to all recipients of **World Stroke Organisation Angels Awards**. *2022 Q4 Gold Status recognition:* Port Macquarie, Shoalhaven, Tweed and Wagga Wagga Hospitals. *2023 Q1 Gold Status recognition:* Coffs Harbour, Manning, Shoalhaven and Wagga Wagga.

The NSW TSS was featured in national news on the [ABC](#) and [The Sydney Morning Herald](#) for delivering high quality care in regional NSW.



NSW Telestroke Service delivers health care faster to regions than its city counterparts

National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards tagged throughout this newsletter



Clinical Governance Standard	Partnering with Consumers Standard	Comprehensive Care Standard	Communicating for Safety Standard
Preventing and Controlling Infections Standard	Medication Safety Standard	Blood Management Standard	Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration Standard

<https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/standards/nsqhs-standards>

Updates from NSW TSS partners

ACI Stroke Network Update

The annual **Stroke Forum** was held at the ACI on March 29. Over 150 attendees joined both in person and virtually and contributed to a lively discussion regarding the stroke continuum of care. The evaluations reflect a positive experience by all and we are looking forward to continuing the conversation at next year's event.

An **electronic handover form for transferred ECR patients** has been piloted at 4 referring sites. The form will be go live across NSW in July 2023.

A working group has been established to develop the **ACI Clinical practice Guide for Alteplase in Acute Ischaemic Stroke**. Updates will be provided soon.

A business case has been submitted to continue the **ACI Stroke Peer Mentorship Program** and there is ongoing review to streamline the application process. The **TACTICS VR Stroke Nursing Module** is now live. We are excited to provide a resource for nurses who want to learn more about the management of patients presenting with acute stroke and the central role that the nurse plays in that process.

27 sites (metro and regional) are now participating in **RISE**. If you would like further details and to join the program, please contact aci-stroke@health.nsw.gov.au.

We are excited to announce that Amanda Buzio will move into the **Stroke Network Nursing Co-Chair** position on July 1st 2023. Amanda brings a wealth of experience and knowledge into this role. We welcome Nicola Chappelow, Ferdi Miteff, Carlos Esperon-Garcia and Leon Edwards onto the **Stroke Executive**.



Photo: WSO Award winners at ACI Stroke Forum

eHealth

Migration from SfB to MS Teams for all NSW Telestroke Referring sites is now complete with MNCLHD the last sites to transition. See link for updates to [MS Teams WOW Quick Reference](#)



NSW Telestroke Service: LHD Spotlight

Hunter New England LHD

This issue we visit the Hunter New England Local Health District and its referring sites Tamworth, Manning, Armidale and Moree Hospitals.



Neurologist Spotlight HNELHD

Dr James Hughes & Dr Lisa Dark | Tamworth Neurologists

The NSW TSS Hybrid model is working well to support the local acute stroke services and having one centralised 1300 number to contact, has streamlined and standardised hyperacute processes. In particular the ability to benchmark performance with other stroke services across NSW with real-time data capture and supportive peer review. Despite Tamworth being one of the busiest EDs in regional NSW, the team has embraced the implementation of NSW TSS and the opportunity to ensure 24/7 access to reperfusion therapies. Through the support of ED Director Matt Shepherd, Tamworth ED and the radiology department continue to invest in stroke services and service improvement activities. From the commencement of the Tamworth stroke service, James and Rachel Peake (Stroke Care Coordinator) have worked together with the MDT to achieve the service vision. Rachel has been a passionate advocate for local stroke service provision in particular with First Nations Communities to build trust and rapport with healthcare services. Ongoing QI activity includes connecting patients to a rapid access clinic for comprehensive investigation and review to support safe follow up care.



FUN FACT: James and Lisa's daughter is an elite competitive gymnast. Lisa has become an expert at hair braids and their weekends and time off the on-call roster is spent supporting floor, vault, bars, and beam events.

Hunter New England LHD

Tamworth

The team at Tamworth hospital continue to review and work to improve processes to provide the best stroke care possible. The team in ED are very engaged in looking at how we can improve our door to needle times through reviewing process and education opportunities. We are also working on inpatient Telestroke education and have completed training with the Cath Lab staff who have taken a keen interest in the Telestroke Process. As a hub receiving patients from surrounding hospitals, we have also been working on stroke education with the EMET team and Local Ambulance to improve rapid transfer of suspected stroke patients to either Tamworth or Moree.



Photo: Tamworth ED team

Armidale



Photo: Dr Hugh Pearson, Naomi Mutch RN in Stroke Care, Kylie McGowan Chief Radiographer and Jaclyn Birnie Stroke Care Coordinator

Armidale Hospital went live as a NSW Telestroke Service referral site in October 2021. Armidale Hospital has a large catchment area with nearly 50% of the stroke patients travelling 90 minutes or more to arrive in the emergency department. The stroke service has continued to grow with the addition of a permanent part-time Registered Nurse in Stroke care.

To help ensure Armidale maintains consistent delivery of the NSW TSS model of care, the stroke care coordinator and RN in Stroke Care continue to provide ongoing education to the medical, allied health and nursing staff in the Emergency Department, General Medical Unit and Close Observation Unit. Our main goal for 2023 is to reduce our door to CT time with ongoing quality improvement and education activities.

A cross-sectional observational study on medication management of acute stroke patients in a rural ED in NSW has been underway in Armidale with a manuscript submitted to Australian Journal of Rural Health. Jaclyn Birnie presented details of the study at the ACI Stroke Forum 2023.

Professor Neil Spratt | NSW TSS Armidale Site Neurologist

Armidale is a small regional hospital and is the primary stroke centre for a number of surrounding hospitals, including Inverell, Glen Innes and Tenterfield. Transferred or bypassed patients represent a significant portion of their stroke workload, making treatment within a standard thrombolysis window very challenging for many of their patients. The DAWN and DEFUSE 3 trials showing benefits of EVT in the 24 window were game-changing for Armidale. Through Armidale's initial involvement with the pilot telestroke model, and now the NSW TSS, these trials were able to be translated almost immediately into clinical practice! This is an achievement all those involved in telestroke should be proud of, since the traditional teaching is that it often takes 10 years for this to happen. The excellent results of patients from Armidale and other centres in HNE and the MNC were used to support the case for our current, excellent state wide service.



FUN FACT: Neil recently spent a couple of awe-inspiring weeks trekking among some of the highest mountains in the world, in the Annapurna range in Nepal, with his son. He also shares Canadian citizenship, though not the accent, with Ken – since his parents were Canadian biologists, doing PhDs in Australia, at the time of his birth (they ended up staying).

NSW Telestroke Service: LHD Spotlight

Manning



Photo: Manning ED team

Successful implementation of NSW TSS and transition to BAU included establishment of a code stroke at Manning. Regular education activities for nursing and medical officers contribute to sustaining the model of care.

These activities have had a significant impact on local site metrics post NSW TSS go live, including improved median DTN time by more than 20 mins. Manning received their first WSO Awards Q1 2023 with their ongoing service improvement seeing them achieve Gold Status.

The ongoing commitment from staff in the care of stroke patients, with the support from NSW TSS Site Neurologist, Carlos, has been commendable. [Dawn's](#)

[story](#) reflects the impact of NSW TSS on patient outcomes.

Dr Carlos Garcia Esperon | NSW TSS Manning Site Neurologist

Manning was the first hospital starting to provide telestroke services in the HNELHD in 2013, and is currently one of the busiest sites of the NSW Telestroke network. The ED team (led by Jon Cohen) and the local stroke coordinator (Emma and Thembie currently, Fiona and Joe in the past) have been delivering excellent care over all these years despite working in a very hectic hospital. This is followed by the high level of care provided during the admission by Dr Knight, Dr Braude and many others physicians. We are very lucky at NSW Telestroke Service to be working with such a fantastic group of professionals.

FUN FACT: When I am not on call, I enjoy a good run or playing a bit of classic rock on my electric Gibson guitar. Happy for a chat about music anytime!



Moree



Photo: Moree ED nursing team

Moree provides thrombolysis for acute stroke patients whilst organising transfer to another facility that assists with providing the ongoing coordinated stroke care.

Moree is currently organising an education session for the local hospital staff, including locums, GP's, nurses, radiology staff and allied health. Organised with the help of the Primary Health Network, Dr Carlos Garcia Esperon, Rachel Peake and Dr Matthew Shepherd will visit Moree for a site visit and education evening to support and update the Moree hospital staff on all things stroke and telestroke at the end of July (Thursday 27th July in Moree). Moree has been working extremely hard at achieving the door to needle time in under 60 minutes and recently achieved that goal with a positive outcome for the patient.

Dr Beng Lim Alvin Chew | NSW TSS Moree Site Neurologist

Moree went live on the NSW Telestroke service in October 2021. Elke Murray was the project officer and did a great job implementing the NSW TSS processes at Moree. It is unique in the NSW Telestroke setting as it is the only site with an ED led by [FLECC](#) trained nurses with locum medical support. Recently Elke handed over local support of the service to Alice Hannam as Telestroke Coordinator who has been able to continue to build on Elke's great work.

FUN FACT: Alvin loves food and keeping active!

