

## NSW Telestroke Service

# The Reperfusion Times

An internal newsletter for staff at NSW Telestroke Service Referring Sites

April 2025

## Medical Director's Foreword

At the beginning of this year, Dr Najwa Khalil joined the service. A dual trained neurologist Naj recently completed her interventional training and I'm sure you'll join me in welcoming her to the NSW TSS.

The importance of timely intervention for reperfusion therapy in stroke care is well established and the foundation for the implementation of our service. Something close to my heart as a stroke neurologist and researcher is how we look after patients presenting with haemorrhagic strokes. Earlier this year I presented the final results from the Intracerebral Haemorrhage Acutely Decreasing Blood Pressure Trial II (ICH-ADAPT II) at the International Stroke Conference in Los Angeles. This research has been conducted over the last 10 years to provide evidence for the safety of aggressively lowering blood pressure in patients with primary haemorrhagic stroke. Last month the 9<sup>th</sup> World Intracranial Hemorrhage Conference (WICH) was hosted in Sydney. Stroke clinicians with specific interest in haemorrhagic stroke gathered from around the world, to review the most recent evidence for looking after these patients and how we advocate for up-to-date treatment protocols. As a service we have started monitoring how quickly we are able to manage the blood pressure of patients presenting with haemorrhage, as we know that time to anti-hypertensive is as important for this cohort as door to needle is for our ischaemic stroke patients. Since we have begun to collect this information for our patients in the NSW Telestroke Service, it is great to see how sites are improving their times delivering anti-hypertensives and recognising the time critical nature of this treatment. We're looking forward to continuing to improve these times and evolve our treatment guidelines. All the best, Ken

## NSW TSS Recognition and Milestones

**Time is Brain Awards:** We started this initiative 6 months ago and so far have shared **45 awards with around 150 members of staff!** We have recently surveyed recipients of the award and have received positive feedback, particularly regarding the impact the award is having for staff recognition and awareness of the importance of time in stroke treatment. It is becoming evident that the time criteria to receive an award may soon need to be adjusted due to the consistent improvement across the state.



*Shoalhaven team receiving their Time is Brain Award*

"Great to get some appreciation and positive feedback which is relatively rare in an Emergency Department" ED Doctor

### Angels Awards:


In Quarter 4 2024, **Dubbo, Coffs Harbour** and **Shoalhaven** were able to celebrate **Gold WSO Angels Awards**. Congratulations to all of the teams who work hard to achieve these awards.

Aligning with National Safety and Quality Standards

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




 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



Acute Stroke Clinical  
Care Standard

# NSW TSS Data Update

Reviewing the different metrics that define the process has always been an important part of service delivery and sustainability for the NSW Telestroke Service. Below is a snapshot of those key metrics both for **Door to Needle** in ischaemic stroke and **Door to Anti-Hypertensive** for haemorrhagic stroke. The data detailed below is over one calendar year and references only cases reviewed in the emergency departments of NSW TSS referring sites across the state.

Ischaemic Stroke March 2024 to March 2025


Encounter Type	Cases	Door to Alert	Door to CT	Door to Lysis Decision	Door to ECR Decision	Door To Needle Time	Lysis Decision to Needle
Emergency dept	1017	19.00	33.00	47.00	53.00	54.00	11.00

Haemorrhagic Stroke March 2024 to March 2025

Encounter Type	Cases	Door to Antihypertensive	Door to SBP<140mmHg	CTB to Antihypertensive	CTB To SBP<140mmHg
Emergency dept	113	42.00	85.50	13.00	53.50


## Do you know your Telestroke downtime procedures?

The recent impact of storms and cyclone in Northern NSW served as a good reminder of the importance of emergency preparedness, especially when it comes to time-critical conditions like stroke. So much of health care delivery relies on access to networks and power and in the context of telestroke, relies upon multiple online repositories, systems and networks. When those networks are disrupted, knowing what to do can make all the difference.



**What you need to know:**

- Where can you access your Telestroke downtime procedure?
- Has your downtime procedure been updated recently?
- What happens if the phone network is down?
- What happens when the CT scanner is down?
- Are your telestroke downtime procedures included in your education and orientation?



If your downtime procedure needs updating please reach out to our imaging coordinator [Melanie.Alexander@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Melanie.Alexander@health.nsw.gov.au) and she will be happy to work through this with you.

## Welcoming new staff in 2025

We are excited to welcome 3 new members to our Host Site Team! Briony is no stranger to Telestroke and we are very happy to welcome her back in to the role of Nurse Educator. Kelly has joined us from Tweed in a Project Officer position and her main priority will be overseeing the TeleMDT pilot project. We also welcome Micaylah to the Administration Officer role, Micaylah will be working Tuesday - Friday.



**Briony Van Galen**  
Nurse Educator



**Micaylah Daher**  
Administration Officer



**Kelly Andersen**  
Project Officer

# Bridging the Gap in Stroke Care: TeleMDT Pilot Project

**Lessons learned** from the implementation of the NSW Telestroke Service (TSS) highlighted a critical gap in ongoing stroke care beyond the hyperacute phase in regional and remote areas. In response, a **feasibility-pilot project**, led by Kelly Anderson, will trial a Telestroke MDT model to improve access to stroke specialist neurologist advice in the acute inpatient setting. The project will utilise a standardised MDT tool to facilitate structured, collaborative decision-making among stroke specialists local multi-disciplinary team members and the patient. This initiative aims to improve long-term outcomes for stroke survivors by ensuring evidence-based, patient-centered care beyond the initial emergency treatment phase. The pilot will take place at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital and has the potential for broader implementation based on its feasibility. Stay tuned for updates on this exciting initiative!



TSS Implementation: Lessons Learnt (2022)

## Re-Imaging F.A.S.T

In response to local concern regarding impact on First Nations stroke survivors, their caregivers and community, the MNCLHD stroke, chronic care and health promotion teams', local Aboriginal Medical Service (Durri), Healthy North Coast PHN and Stroke Foundation collaborated to run a 'Stroke Day' event at Dunghutti Elders (Kempsey), during Stroke Week 2023. The best attended and impactful part of the day was dedicated to the experiences of four Dunghutti stroke survivors, who shared their stroke journeys. Following the success of this event, Jenni Steel (PMBH, Hastings Macleay SCC) and Heidi Lavis (PMBH Occupational Therapist) connected with the stroke survivors, who were keen to continue to promote community awareness and improve local understanding about stroke. From that, a project called **'Re-imagining F.A.S.T' was born creating a grassroots stroke message Dunghutti style!**



The project aims to increase First Nations people's awareness and response to the early warning signs of stroke, by collaboratively exploring and adapting the existing F.A.S.T stroke recognition and response tool in a culturally sensitive way.



The project team are thrilled with the response to their project transforming their message into artwork, which has been produced onto t-shirts, banners, magnets, lanyards and wrist bands to get the message out there. They have also made a short film based on their experiences, encouraging early response to stroke symptoms.



The group were also awarded a **Kempsey Shire Council Australia Day award for Community Group of the Year** – a real honour and great demonstration of the impact of their work locally.

Congratulations to the project team!



# ACI Stroke Network Update

The Stroke Network has a number of priority projects this year focusing on efficiencies in stroke care delivery. An overview is provided below:

## Hyperacute Stroke Transfers and Communication

The project, starting in late 2024, aims to reduce delays in hyperacute stroke patient retrievals, enhance transfer times, improve communication between stroke centers and referring hospitals, and create a standardised EVT transfer model with flexible local processes.

## Stroke Data Collection

A REDCap database is being developed with a minimum dataset, patient record linkage, and testing set to begin in March 2025. Go-live is planned for May 2025 with more updates to follow in the coming weeks and months.

## Incentive Funding

The update on the 'Bed 69' incentive funding allocation includes three indicators - **access to reperfusion**, timely access to **stroke units**, and access to **Allied Health review** - to reward good care and encourage service improvement. Funding is distributed directly to hospitals, and next steps involve the Ministry of Health sharing draft data for site review and surveying clinicians on current adjustor KPIs.

## TSS Engagement

The "Time is Brain" Awards are making waves across local health districts, bringing well-deserved recognition to stroke, emergency and imaging teams. Both Nepean Blue Mountains and Northern LHD have proudly shared the award's success in their local LHD news, celebrating the incredible efforts of staff and raising crucial awareness of timely stroke care.

This spotlight has created an opportunity for our local stroke champions to celebrate the remarkable strides made in delivering timely and effective stroke care.

But **more than just a celebration**, this recognition has also served as a vital platform to **highlight gaps** in the stroke care continuum and start conversations within LHD's as how best to support the full continuum of the stroke patient's journey.



LHD News Articles for Northern and Nepean Blue Mountains

## Education Update

We have been having great attendance this year at our nursing education series with some new topics added to the list, still focusing on the hyperacute phase of stroke.

### Our current topics include:

- Understanding Stroke Assessment Tools
- DOAC Reversals in Stroke
- Medication Safety in Telestroke
- ICrH in First 24 Hours - **NEW**
- Care for Acute Stroke Patients
- Imaging For Nurses - Ischaemic
- Imaging for Nurses- ICH
- Atrial Fibrillation - **NEW**
- NSW Telestroke MOC
- MOC Sim/ Table-top
- MOC Train the Trainer
- Alteplase
- Alteplase Train the Trainer
- Telestroke Patient's Experience

### April 2025



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	01 Imaging for Nurses 1400-1430	02 NSW TSS Model of Care 1430-1500	03	04
07	08 Understanding Stroke Assessment Tools 1400-1430	09 Alteplase (Theory) 1430-1510	10	11
14	15 NSW TSS Model of Care 1400-1430	16 Nursing Considerations: DOAC Reversals 1430-1500	17	18
21	22 Telestroke Patient Experience 1400-1430	23 Nursing Considerations: ICrH in the first 24 hours 1430-1500		25
28	29 Imaging for Nurses- ICH 1400-1430	30 Nursing Considerations: Medication Safety in Telestroke 1430-1500		

If you have any suggestions for further topics please reach out to our education team