

A newsletter
for primary and
community health
care providers
in NSW.

April 2012

issue #07



Health

healthy communities

FEATURES: Out-of-Home-Care Towards Normal Birth
Women survivors of child sexual assault **Child Protection**
and Wellbeing Positive Living in Aged Care **Chronic Care**
Health Consumers NSW **ACON** Walking with Carers



The Hon. Jillian Skinner MP, Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research addresses the Western NSW Health Forum in Dubbo

Western NSW Health Forum – Dubbo

More than 200 people embraced the opportunity to meet face to face with the state's Health Minister and an expert panel at the Western NSW Health forum in Dubbo on 9 February 2012.

The first of a series of community forums to be held, the NSW Health Minister wanted to hear from local communities about what concerned or pleased them about their local health services.

Topics on the table in Dubbo were many and varied, as people from Walgett, Brewarrina, Dubbo, Orange Bathurst, Gilgandra,

Wellington, Forbes, Parkes, Condobolin, Baradine, Mudgee, Peak Hill, Tottenham, Blayney, Cudal and Nyngan raised their concerns and suggestions.

The Hon Jillian Skinner, Minister for Health was joined on the panel by The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC -Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health, Dr Mary Foley, Director-General NSW Health, Dr Robin Williams Chair of Western NSW Local Health District, and Western NSW Local Health District Director of Operations Ms Lynne Weir.

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mums,
bubs +kids

chronic &
aged care

Non-Government
Organisations

rural &
remote health

priority
populations



Editorial from Dr Hammett

Increasingly partnerships and collaboration between the various levels of Government funding health services in Australia with non-Government Organisations, the private sector and consumer groups will be needed to deliver improved health services for people in our community.

Central to this is the importance of local decision making across our Local Health Districts and the involvement of consumers and communities in service planning and delivery. In this issue community engagement is highlighted in the update on the Minister's Consultation Forum in Western NSW in early February. The first of a series of community forums to be held by the NSW Health Minister, the Forum gave participants an opportunity to discuss what concerned them or pleased them about their local health services.

Organisations such as Health Consumers NSW also profiled in this issue actively support the involvement of health consumers in this process. We welcome their involvement and support of consumers in health service planning.

In this issue we also profile resources developed by NSW Health for the primary and community health sector. The Walking with Carers Resource provides practical support for the many carers in our community taking care of family and friends requiring ongoing support. The Education Centre Against Violence has just released two new resources to assist adult survivors of child sexual abuse.

The Newsletter also promotes the expansion of acute and community health care infrastructure in rural NSW to improve health services for residents in rural NSW. These services will greatly enhance the availability of health services for people in their local communities.

Following my recent appointment as the Deputy Director- General of Strategy and Resources in the NSW Ministry of Health I am looking forward to working with key stakeholders across the health system to stimulate system-wide initiatives that improve outcomes in healthcare.

In the primary and community health sector there is important work to do in NSW to build on the strengths and achievements of our services and models.

I trust that you enjoy this issue.

Dr Rohan Hammett
Deputy Director-General, Strategy and Resources

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Health assessments for children and young people in Out-of-Home Care – MoU

Children and young people in Out of Home Care (OOHC) often have high and unmet health needs and in general are more disadvantaged and vulnerable than other children. *Keep them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing* confirms the commitment of the NSW Government to address the health needs of children and young people in OOHC.

Recommendations under *Keep them Safe* are that within 30 days of entering OOHC, all children and young people should receive a comprehensive multidisciplinary health and developmental assessment.

Keep them Safe actions related to health assessments for children and young people in OOHC are being implemented through a staged approach. The initial phase is focused on provision of health assessments, interventions and reviews for children and young people entering Statutory OOHC who are expected to remain in care for 90 days or more.

OOHC Health Coordinators and Community Services Interagency Pathway Coordinators work together to support the timely provision of primary health assessments and aim to commence these within 30 days of a child or young person entering statutory OOHC. Based on the findings of the primary health assessment children and young people may receive a comprehensive multidisciplinary health assessment. Each child or young person has a health management plan developed for them.

To formalise this collaborative approach, NSW Health and Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), Community Services have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This sets out the principles on the roles of each agency in working together to facilitate access to health services for children and young people in statutory OOHC.

Chief Executives of Local Health Districts (LHDs) were advised of the MoU in November 2011 which contains a framework of interagency implementation for health assessments. The MoU will assist LHDs in arranging and delivering timely health screening, assessment, intervention and review for all children and young people in statutory OOHC.

For more information please contact Deb Beasley, Senior Policy Officer Maternity, Children and Young People's Health, NSW Ministry of Health at dbeas@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Within 30 days of entering OOHC, all children and young people should receive a comprehensive multidisciplinary health and developmental assessment.

Towards Normal Birth

NSW Health has adopted a position of birth as a normal part of the lifecycle. In keeping with this position, NSW Health has a policy direction of promoting normal birth, while recognising that some women will have, or develop, risk factors that may require intervention.

The *Towards Normal Birth in NSW* policy was released in 2010 with the aim of increasing the vaginal birth rate (and decreasing the caesarean rate) by:

- Developing and implementing strategies to support women to have a positive experience of pregnancy and birth
- Ensuring that midwives and doctors have the knowledge and skills to support women who choose to give birth without technological interventions, unless necessary

The policy was developed following a series of workshops with expert maternity clinicians (including midwives, obstetricians, neonatologists and psychiatrists) and reflects an evidence and consensus position on strategies to promote normal birth.

The policy recognises the spectrum of birth from planned elective caesarean sections to normal birth (birth with minimal or no medical intervention) and that a reduction in caesarean section rates will only be achieved by increasing the number of women who commence labour.

The policy outlines ten steps which centre on:

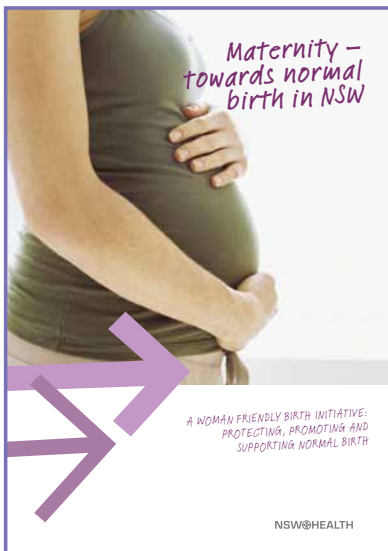
- Policies/guidelines to support clinical practice
- Training for staff
- Access to continuity models of care
- Information/support for women
- Access to specialist services including Vaginal Birth After Caesarean and external cephalic version (a procedure used to turn a fetus from a breech position or side-lying position into a head-down position before labor begins)
- One to one care during labour

Since the release of the policy, workshops have been held to assist Local Health Districts in developing local strategies to implement the ten steps to support the policy and to share successes and share local strategies to implement the steps detailed in the policy.

The most recent workshop held 7 December 2011 proposed a number of priority areas for action including:

- Statewide policies and guidelines for Vaginal Birth After Caesarean, external cephalic version and management of post-date women
- Training programs in Vaginal Birth After Caesarean, external cephalic version
- Development of tiered maternity networks with clearly defined roles for maternity facilities, clearly defined referral pathways and access to specialist clinics, for example, Vaginal Birth After Caesarean, external cephalic version
- Consumer Information
- Communication strategy around Towards Normal Birth for health services including key messages, progress, current initiatives and future priorities

NSW is the only state with an explicit policy promoting normal birth.



Workshops have been held to assist Local Health Districts in developing local strategies to implement the ten steps to support the policy.

A Celebration of survival for women survivors of child sexual assault

In a 'Celebration of Survival for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Assault' the Education Centre Against Violence launched two new resources "Sharing the Un-sharable: A Resource for Women on Recovering from Child Sexual Abuse –"; and the "Jacaranda Project Group Work Manual" in November 2011.

"Sharing the Un-sharable"

Funded by the Ministry of Health, this resource completes a series of highly regarded booklets for women and men who are victims of childhood and adult sexual abuse. The series produced by the Education Centre Against Violence is free of charge to relevant services for download from the internet and includes:

- "Who can a Man Tell" – information for men who were sexually assaulted as children, their parents, spouses and friends
- "When a Man is Raped" – A survival guide: Information for men who have been raped, parents, partners, spouses and friends; and
- "Recovering from Adult Sexual Assault, Navigating the Journey: A Resource for women, their family and friends."

"Sharing the Un-sharable" is the newest contribution to these resources and reflects the collective wisdom of many survivors, counsellors and researchers through the inclusion of stories, illustrations and knowledge about the journey from surviving to thriving and overcoming the traumatic effects of child sexual abuse.

The Jacaranda Project Manual

The publication contains learning and wisdom gathered from the clinical expertise of the Northern Sydney Sexual Assault Service as well as best practice group work research. The manual provides an effective tool for workers seeking to run safe therapeutic groups for adult survivors of child sexual abuse and marks a milestone in therapeutic intervention for adult survivors of child sexual assault.

The Jacaranda Project is the culmination of a successful collaboration between the NSW Ministry of Health who provided the funding, the Education Centre Against Violence who managed the project and Northern Sydney Local Health District who developed the project.

"Sharing the Un-sharable" is the newest contribution to these resources and reflects the collective wisdom of many survivors, counsellors and researchers



Sue-Anne Post, keynote speaker and author of A Bit of a Postscript and Cathrine Lynch, Director Maternity, Children and Young People's Health

The resources are now available free of charge to relevant services by contacting the Education Centre Against Violence by telephone on (02) 9840-3737 or by email at ECAV@wsahs.nsw.gov.au

For women and men who are victims of childhood and adult sexual abuse download from the internet at <http://www.ecav.health.nsw.gov.au/ecav/index.asp?pg=0&s=R>

2011 NSW Child Protection and Wellbeing Interagency Conference



NSW Health staff with The Hon. Jillian Skinner MP, Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research at Day Two of the Conference

...achieve better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families ...

The conference was co-hosted by NSW Health and the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (AWCA) on behalf of the NSW Government, on 29 – 30 November 2011 at Crystal Palace, Luna Park Milsons Point.

Maximum capacity was reached, with the Conference attracting 500 delegates from government and non-government agencies with an interest in child protection and wellbeing from across NSW and interstate. Event organisers also had to manage a significant waiting list.

The Conference took place two years into the reforms that were established to achieve better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families under *Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing 2009 – 2014*, the response to the Wood Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection in NSW.

The Conference aimed to address four themes:

- What was our challenge?
- Have we changed practice and systems?
- Have we strengthened partnerships?
- What challenges remain?

These themes provided an opportunity to showcase various *Keep Them Safe* (KTS) initiatives operating across NSW including Family Referral Services and Child Wellbeing Units; to review how implementation of the reforms was progressing; and importantly, to assess the challenges that still remain.

The Hon. Pru Goward MP, Minister for Family and Community Services opened Day One of the Conference, and Day Two was opened by the Hon. Jillian Skinner MP, Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research.

There was a high response rate to the Conference evaluation survey, with approximately one third of delegates providing feedback. Keynote speakers Prof. Marianne Berry and Assoc Prof. Leah Bromfield, both from the Australian Centre for Child Protection, challenged delegates with evidence about child protection and wellbeing from Australia and overseas, and assessed a range of policy responses.

A key message that delegates took from Prof. Berry was the tension and imbalance in the system between keeping children safe (child protection focus) and ensuring their wellbeing. Prof. Berry's presentation was the overwhelming highlight of the Conference for most delegates,

and over 95% of survey respondents said they learned something that they could use in the future.

Leah and Marianne were fantastic, engaging and well informed.'

The Berry and Bromfield sessions were the highlight of the conference for myself and most people I spoke to.

Another keynote speaker, Mr Bill Pritchard, CEO of AbSec, observed that KTS was headed in the right direction however there was more work to do to support and build capacity of Aboriginal organisations, especially in the provision of out-of-home-care.

The Conference had sought to bring people together from across the sector. The survey found that this was achieved, with approximately 80% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Conference provided a good opportunity to network with colleagues.

Furthermore, if another Conference was provided, 73% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would attend.

Positive Living in Aged Care Awards

Applications now open

The Positive Living in Aged Care Awards commenced in 2007 to recognise innovative approaches in NSW Residential Aged Care facilities to improve the mental health and wellbeing of residents. NSW Health Older People's Mental Health Working Group was aware that there were some great initiatives within the residential sector and developed the awards as an opportunity to identify and showcase these.

The awards are funded by NSW Health and are managed by the Aged & Community Services Association of NSW & ACT in partnership with the Aged Care Association Australia - NSW. Each year six awards, to a total of \$45,000, are presented to finalist facilities as part of a healthy ageing seminar attended by clinicians and care staff, service managers, organisations and policy makers from the aged care and mental health sectors. The seminar has attracted a range of high profile speakers with expertise in older people's mental health.

The Positive Living in Aged Care Awards recognise innovative approaches in NSW Residential Aged Care facilities to improve the mental health and wellbeing of residents

The awards are now entering their fifth year and already twenty four residential aged care facilities across NSW have been recognised for improving the lives of older people through positive strategies to promote their mental health and wellbeing. The project also received a Special Judges Award in the 2011 Australian and New Zealand Mental Health Service Achievement Awards.

Some of the winning strategies from the four previous years include:

- Building mosaic murals to increase sense of worth and belonging
- Setting up a Men's Shed on the facility's premises, supported by community organisations
- Intergenerational strategies involving school children and mothers and babies groups
- Spiritual reminiscence groups providing emotional and spiritual support
- Profiling residents' life stories, creating digital recordings of significant events in their lives, providing context and meaning for residents in the early stages of dementia

- Formation of a men's choir who have produced several CDs and made public appearances
- Groups to support older people during the transition into residential care
- And many more

Summaries of these and the other finalist strategies can be read online at <http://www.agedservices.asn.au/products-services/residential-care/positive-living-in-aged-care>.

The 2012 application form and further information on the Awards is available on the above website or by emailing Diane Herr, Project Officer at plac@agedservices.asn.au



Dr Mary Foley Director-General NSW Health (centre) presenting the 2011 Award for Category One - Strategy to Improve Outcomes for residents with a mental health condition to Peter Baldwin and Jill Davis from the Mater Christi Aged Care Facility, Sawtell Catholic Care of the Aged

NSW Chronic Care Conferences

The NSW Chronic Disease Conference and the 4th Annual Chronic Care for Aboriginal People State Forum were held in November 2011. Each attracted over 200 delegates. The events provided an opportunity to hear presentations from world class speakers, discuss current issues in chronic disease management, network, and hear about the latest developments in service delivery.

NSW Chronic Disease Conference 2011 - "Strategic Partnerships and Team-Based Care"

Hosted by the NSW Ministry of Health in partnership with General Practice NSW, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Agency for Clinical Innovation, the Conference acknowledged the work done so far across the state in developing service delivery partnerships. The opportunities and challenges involved in system reform required to enable effective integration were also investigated.

Key themes discussed at the conference included:

- Models of care: patient centred care; functional v disease-specific orientation of programs; service modalities including care coordination and coaching; effective maintenance and end-of-life care

- Strategic and governance framework – leadership and service delivery roles and responsibilities; the role of General Practice; linkages between hospitals, specialists and GPs; Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal program links; performance monitoring and accountability
- Quality and innovation – new technologies; evidence-based care for common conditions
- Service development initiatives – capacity building in primary and specialist care; service development in residential aged care and palliative care; further development of tele-health.

Conference feedback was overwhelmingly positive including the high quality of speakers. Speakers represented a broad range of fields including specialists, primary care providers, Non-Government Organisations, private health insurers, and academics. Dr Tony Lembke's presentation titled "Managing Multi-morbidities in Primary Healthcare" outlined the concept of a patient-centred medical home model of care.

This was particularly well received and sparked animated discussion. Presentations by A/Professor Richard Chye and Dr Peter Saul provoked much thought and debate regarding issues such as the appropriate time to introduce palliative care services; how to discuss advanced care planning, and dying with dignity.

Presentations are available at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/cdm/conference_2011.asp

A post conference paper will be circulated to all attendees in the coming month.

The Conference acknowledged the work done so far across the state in developing service delivery partnerships.

The 4th Annual Chronic Care for Aboriginal People State Forum - "Clinical & Cultural Competence in Chronic Disease Management"

The Conference focused on the four major chronic disease groups prevalent in Aboriginal populations across NSW and beyond: cardiac, respiratory, renal disease and diabetes. The forum provided an opportunity to explore and identify innovative strategies that are both culturally and clinically appropriate and effective in improving health outcomes in Aboriginal communities.

Presentations were from a range of stakeholders involved with policy, research and service delivery. The presentations provided examples of clinical excellence and discussed case studies, policies or projects signifying the importance of both clinical and cultural perspectives in preventing, treating and managing chronic disease. Also presenting were representatives from the four peak bodies governing chronic disease strategies, Diabetes Australia, Kidney Health Australia, The Australian Lung Foundation and Heart Foundation.

The conference included both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff working together in frontline, management and clinical positions to deliver quality health services to the Aboriginal community. Some of the most notable presentations were:

- Dr Noel Hayman: 'Early detection, management and treatment of Indigenous chronic disease: The Inala Experience', which highlighted factors which increase access to services for Aboriginal people, efficacy of Aboriginal health checks, and programs successfully implemented using Closing The Gap funds
- Professor Alan Cass: 'Addressing the burden of chronic disease to close the gap in Indigenous health: Research, policy and practice'
- Dr Janet Kelly: 'Complex patient journeys: The challenges of providing city hospital care for country Aboriginal people'.

We look forward to our 5th Annual forum in 2012, for more information please email at CCAP@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Presentations from the forum are available at <http://www.hssevents.health.nsw.gov.au/ccap/presentations>



George Bloomfield - Aboriginal Liaison, Violette Michael - Senior Social Worker, Officer from Liverpool Hospital, SWS LHD

Presentations provided examples of clinical excellence and discussed case studies, policies or projects signifying the importance of both clinical and cultural perspectives in preventing, treating and managing chronic disease.

Health Consumers NSW has arrived!

Nothing about us without us

Health Consumers NSW (HCNSW) is the peak health consumer organisation which aims to provide the independent and constructive voice of health consumers in shaping policy and services in NSW.

Established in 2010 and funded by a Ministerial grant, HCNSW principles were laid down early.

Independence, membership-based governance, and representation of issues across the health spectrum in NSW were identified as the key elements of the organisation's charter.

HCNSW reflects "best practice" elements of state and national peak consumer models. Voting membership is open to health consumer groups who are able to nominate consumer representatives to the Management Committee. Other health related organisations and individuals from across the health spectrum, who support the consumer role in shaping health policy and services, join as Associate Members.

Consultants and other clinicians who have shown an interest in the organisation have been invited to join as Friends of Health Consumers NSW. Their support is possibly unique in Australia, showing formal recognition by the medical world of the value of consumer participation in health services, public and private. Members are networked by newsletters, emails and through the website. The health consumer perspective is sought wherever decisions about consumers are made.

HCNSW Projects

- A recent key initiative of HCNSW has been the launch of its **Consumer Representatives Program** which provides a conduit to trained and informed consumer representatives skilled at conveying the broader health perspective. The program includes training and support for consumer representatives to enable them to act as equal participants in health services decision making.

- HCNSW also works in partnership with the **Consumers Health Forum of Australia** (CHF), the national peak body of health consumers. CHF has been federally funded to develop and deliver training and support for community members of Boards of Local Health Districts and of Medicare Locals around Australia. The first workshop was held in Canberra in September 2011 and HCNSW hosted the following one successfully in Sydney on 7/8 March.
- HCNSW is working to establish consumer networks around key generic health issues. The first **Chronic Disease Consumer Network** forum was held on 13 March 2012 in Sydney and will feed back to the NSW Ministry of Health Chronic Disease Program Steering Group.

Sally Crossing AM, Chair and Betty Johnson AO, Deputy Chair, recognise HCNSW's important role in bringing together the voice of consumers through its constituent member organisations. Its aim is not to duplicate the role of member health consumer organisations, but to augment and focus their voices in the NSW health (public and private) system to provide a view at state and national levels.



Betty Johnson AO, HCNSW Chair, Morag Morrison, Secretariat HCNSW and Sally Crossing AM, Chair HCNSW attending a joint Community, Consumer and Carer Participation conference with Sydney and Sydney West LHD's consumer groups in November 2011

For further enquiries please contact Morag Morrison, A/Executive Director at secretariat@hcnsw.org.au or visit the website www.hcnsw.org.au

ACON

ACON (formerly the AIDS Council of NSW) is NSW's and Australia's largest community-based gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) health and HIV/AIDS organisation.

ACON's primary focus is the provision of information and support for people at risk of or affected by HIV. This includes HIV prevention programs for the population groups in NSW most at risk of HIV transmission – gay men, sex workers and people who inject drugs. For people with HIV, their families and carers, ACON provides a broad range of health promotion and support services. In the area of policy and advocacy, ACON provides advice on issues related to HIV and human rights. ACON also has specific projects which work with cultural groups which have been identified as at risk of HIV. These include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as young, mature-age, Asian and sexually adventurous gay men.

ACON's programs and services also cover other health issues for members of the GLBT community such as sexual health, mental health, alcohol and other drug use, ageing, homophobic violence, domestic violence, counselling, home-based care, housing and workplace equality. ACON also works with legislators, policy-makers and mainstream service providers to improve their understanding of issues affecting GLBT people.

With the support of 120 staff and over 700 volunteers, ACON delivers its services from offices in Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Lismore, Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour. ACON provides services in other regional centres in NSW through partnerships with local GLBT groups and healthcare agencies or via a program of outreach visits to selected areas.

In 2010/11, ACON had over 142,000 client interactions and distributed 480,000 condom packs, 256,000 units of sterile injecting equipment and 367,000 units of educational literature. ACON also provides a range of workshops, retreats, seminars, forums and events to help clients and community members get the knowledge, skills, resources and networks they need to improve their health and wellbeing.

Right across NSW, ACON's team of caring and professional people genuinely understand and value the unique character of the people and communities they serve.

In addition to improving individual health outcomes, ACON is also focused on promoting a collective 'culture of care' which involves community members looking out for each other in relation to HIV, sexual health, alcohol and drugs, and safety on the street, in the home and at work.

ACON works in partnership with a broad range of state, federal and local government agencies, other NGOs, community organisations and research bodies to deliver programs and services to an extremely diverse community and client base.

If your organisation would like more information about working with ACON, there are many opportunities available throughout NSW.

More Information:
Tel: (02) 9260 2000
Freecall: 1800 063 060
acon@acon.org.au
www.acon.org.au
facebook@ACONhealth
twitter@ACONhealth



ACON volunteers providing home-based care for people with HIV (Image provided by William Yang)

ACON works to improve the health and wellbeing of the GLBT community and people with HIV, and reduce HIV transmission.

Expansion of NSW Health Infrastructure

The Commonwealth Government's Health and Hospital Fund (HHF) is enabling expansion of health infrastructure in NSW. This Program is further enabled through co-contribution provided by the NSW Government.

Acute and community health care facilities in rural NSW will be expanded. Access and support for cancer patients in rural, regional and remote Australia will also be improved and help to close the gap in cancer outcomes between the city and the country.

There have been four Rounds of funding under the HHF Program with a significant emphasis on enhancing rural and remote services.

New Regional Cancer Centres in NSW

Round 2 of the HHF was directed toward Regional Cancer Centres (RCC).

In Round 2 of the HHF \$539.9 million was allocated to 21 projects across Australia; \$115.8 million was allocated to six NSW projects. NSW Health coordinated five successful projects for new Regional Cancer Centres, including radiotherapy services, in the Central Coast (Gosford), Shoalhaven (Nowra) and New England (Tamworth) areas.

It is anticipated that treatment rates for patients will improve as the new and expanded services come on line over the next two to three years.

Existing centres have been expanded at Wollongong and the North Coast (Lismore, Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour).

The total investment for these new and expanded services is \$149 million comprising a Commonwealth contribution of \$113 million; a NSW contribution of \$35 million; and a \$1 million local contribution to the Shoalhaven RCC project. NSW is also responsible for the ongoing operating costs of these services.

A sixth project, for patient and carer accommodation at Lismore to support the Cancer Centre, was successfully submitted by the Northern Rivers Community Cancer Foundation.

For many patients and their families the costs and impact of travel for treatment may be significant. For example, in 2008, 254 cancer patients resident in the South Coast and Shoalhaven areas collectively spent 5,371 hours travelling for radiotherapy services. The establishment of comprehensive cancer services in regional areas, supported by the other important clinical services, will be of great significance in reducing some of the burden of cancer treatment for these residents.

Once these new and expanded services are established, 95% of the NSW population will be within 100 km of a comprehensive cancer centre offering radiotherapy.

Notwithstanding this improved access, it is recognised that travel can still be burdensome while undergoing cancer treatment and, as a result, patient and carer accommodation will be established as part of the Nowra and Tamworth cancer centres. Recent changes to IPTAAS will also result in greater financial support to assist with the costs of travel and accommodation.

One of the drivers for increasing regional access to radiotherapy is to increase the use of radiotherapy as part of overall cancer care. It is anticipated that treatment rates for patients will improve as the new and expanded services come on line over the next two to three years. For example, before the North Coast Cancer Institute opened in 2007, 520 residents (in 2006) with a new cancer diagnosis travelled out of their region for radiotherapy services. By 2010, 788 residents of the mid north coast with a new cancer diagnosis received radiotherapy (an increase of over 50%), with 554 (70%) of these patients treated locally.

As part of the RCC projects, expanded treatment capacity at Port Macquarie and Lismore has already been achieved, with commissioning in late 2011. Construction is progressing well at the other sites.



Dubbo Hospital site

A fourth Round of the HHF with a focus on regional health infrastructure was opened for submissions in October 2011. NSW is awaiting advice on approval of its applications.

Acute and community health care in rural NSW

The third round of HFF funding released in 2010 focuses on upgrades to regional health infrastructure, expansions to regional hospitals, ongoing development and to supporting the clinical training capacity of regional hospitals.

NSW has received approval for five of its applications and will receive capital funding to a total of \$849.3M. This comprises HHF grants totalling \$438.3M and a NSW Government capital funding contribution totalling \$411.0M. This funding will enable development of modern healthcare facilities suited to the future needs of the communities. These build on the NSW Government's strategic objective for the provision of quality, safe and sustainable health services to regional, rural and remote communities.

Bega Valley Health Service Redevelopment (known as the South East Regional Hospital Development) \$170.1M

To be built on a greenfield site in Bega the new hospital will consolidate key health facilities within the Bega Valley Health Service - Bega and Pambula Hospitals. This integrated new health service on a single site will enable the range and level of services to increase, including introduction of a number of new services to the region. The co-location of all these services will provide improved networked care coordination and support more efficient resource utilisation.

Dubbo Base Hospital Redevelopment \$79.1M

This is the first component of a staged redevelopment of the Dubbo Base Hospital campus. This will ensure that Dubbo is well placed to make significant progress towards the future delivery of a greater range of inpatient and related healthcare services to its catchment population. The new purpose-built infrastructure and substantial refurbishment will accommodate expanded surgical services and operating theatre capacity, renal dialysis services, additional inpatient medical beds, a new maternity unit, and an expanded capacity to provide ambulatory care.

Port Macquarie Base Hospital-Expansion \$110.0M

The Hospital will be expanded to provide a fourth and fifth clinical services pod. Schematic design work on the expansion has finished with construction expected to start by the end of 2012. When completed, the expanded hospital will have a significantly larger Emergency Department (ED), additional medical and surgical inpatient beds, new paediatric ward, new and additional operating theatres, a new Critical Care Unit, and a cardiac catheterisation laboratory.

Tamworth Redevelopment Stage 2 \$220.0M

The substantially upgraded and refurbished facility will enhance a range of clinical services priorities including: Medical, Surgical, Paediatrics, Maternity and Birthing, Special Care Nursery, Palliative Care, Emergency, Renal Dialysis, Oral Health, a newly refurbished Cardiac Catheter Laboratory, and Medical imaging. The redevelopment will complement the new Cancer Care service approved under the HHF Round 2.

Wagga Wagga Hospital Redevelopment \$270.0M

This will enable the development of new models of care and an improved focus on the clinical needs of patients. This includes increased capacity for mental health, additional acute overnight inpatient capacity, expanded ED, new renal dialysis facility, expanded Operating Theatre Suite, Cardiac Catheterisation Laboratory and angiography suite, Women's and Children's inpatient unit, additional Birthing Suites, expanded Central Sterilising Services Department, Pathology and Medical Imaging Departments.

The commencement of the first phase of construction, which is the new Mental Health facility, is scheduled for March 2012, with the whole redevelopment expected to be completed in late 2016.

Walking with Carers Resource

Walking with Carers has been developed as an information resource to support the many carers in NSW providing care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic medical condition, terminal illness or who are frail.

Anyone can be a carer. Carers may be family members, friends, neighbours or other community members. They may provide care for short or long periods, or only occasionally. However, in many instances, care is provided on a regular and ongoing basis. Usually this care is unpaid other than cases where a pension or benefit is payable.

Those who provide care need reliable information, expert advice, understanding, and support. *Walking with Carers* has been developed as an information resource to support the many carers in NSW providing care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic medical condition, terminal illness or who are frail.

Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (LHD) developed the Walking with Carers resource to provide advice and contacts to assist carers in their LHD including:

- Their rights within the NSW Health care system
- The location of acute and community health services
- Information on availability of payments and allowances

- Contact details for Commonwealth Respite and Carelink centres
- Tips for working carers, young carers and Aboriginal carers and
- Information and tips for carers on looking after themselves.

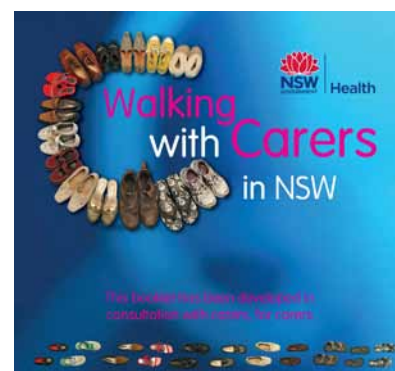
The very positive response to the resource in Nepean Blue Mountains LHD encouraged the Nepean Blue Mountains Carer Support Program to approach Primary Health, Community Partnerships and Chronic Disease Branch to request funding support to develop the resource for statewide usage.

The Ministry of Health provided \$40,000 dollars under the NSW Carers Action Plan 2007-2012 to support the development process. The resource was supported under a number of the plan's priorities.

After intensive collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Nepean Blue Mountains Carer Support Program has developed the Walking with Carers resource into a practical tool to assist carers across the NSW Health health care system.

Once published, the resource will be available on the NSW Health website, in hard copy from the Better Health Centre, in hospitals and in GP's surgeries across NSW.

For more information please contact Peter Schmiedgen
pschm@doh.health.nsw.gov.au



Western NSW Health Forum – Dubbo

Continued from front

The panel was peppered with questions on a wide range of topics from capital works inquiries, through to calls to expand cancer care services. However it was the recruitment of staff to smaller facilities that received the most attention throughout the night.

Participants included Health Service staff, Health Councillors, community members, and representatives of various Local Government Areas and key stakeholder organisations including Aboriginal Health Services, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Carers NSW, Cancer Care West, NSW Police, Meals on Wheels and Divisions of General Practice just to name a few.

Feedback from the participants of the event has been positive with the majority being appreciative of the opportunity to present their concern directly to the Minister for Health.

The video recording of the Western NSW Health Community forum is now available on the NSW Ministry of Health website.

See below for the link. Use the scroll down bar on the right hand side of the page to access further information and videos from the Forum.

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/multimedia/index.asp#watch>

Participants included Health Service staff, Health Councillors, community members, and representatives of various Local Government Areas and key stakeholder organisations

Attendees at the Forum wait to address the Minister



Members of the Western NSW Local District Board from the left: Associate Professor Joseph Canalese OAM, Dr Darryl Mackender, Dr Robin Williams (Chairman), Mr Paul Mann, Mrs Joan Treweeke



healthy communities

Healthy Communities is produced by the Strategic Development Division of NSW Health for primary and community health care providers. Many of the programs and services described in this publication are funded by NSW Health. Services operated by Non Government Organisations (NGOS) are also profiled.

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Editor: Inga Rozenauers, Senior Policy Officer, iroze@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

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