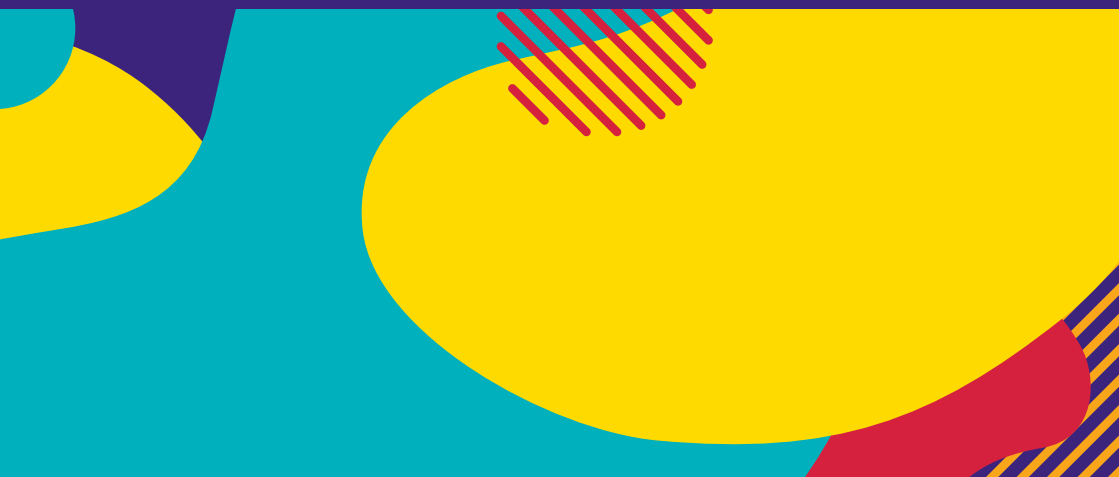


# Excellence in Allied Health Awards

Program



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# About the Awards

The NSW Health Excellence in Allied Health Awards aim to show NSW Health's commitment, recognition and respect for the critical contribution that allied health has in delivering patient-centred care.

The Awards will also allow NSW Health to show its appreciation to Allied Health Professionals for their diligence, persistence, and flexibility in responding to and meeting the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic, the recent NSW Bushfires & floods.



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# Acknowledgement of country

The NSW Ministry of Health acknowledges Aboriginal people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters of NSW and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

NSW Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land and waters upon which today's awards are held.



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# Acknowledgements

*“This is the first time we’ve held these awards and it is wonderful to have the opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the vital role our Allied Health professionals in responding to the needs of the health care system.”*

Andrew Davison, NSW Health Chief Allied Health Officer

*“Allied Health continue to demonstrate their pivotal value and resourceful nature in responding to the needs of the health care system. We are really excited to be hosting the inaugural awards and formally recognise the incredible talent that exists in the breadth of the Allied Health Professions.”*

Richard Griffiths, Executive Director Workforce Planning and Talent Development Branch



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**Award Categories & list of finalists**

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Aboriginal Allied Health Professional of the Year ..... 6-8

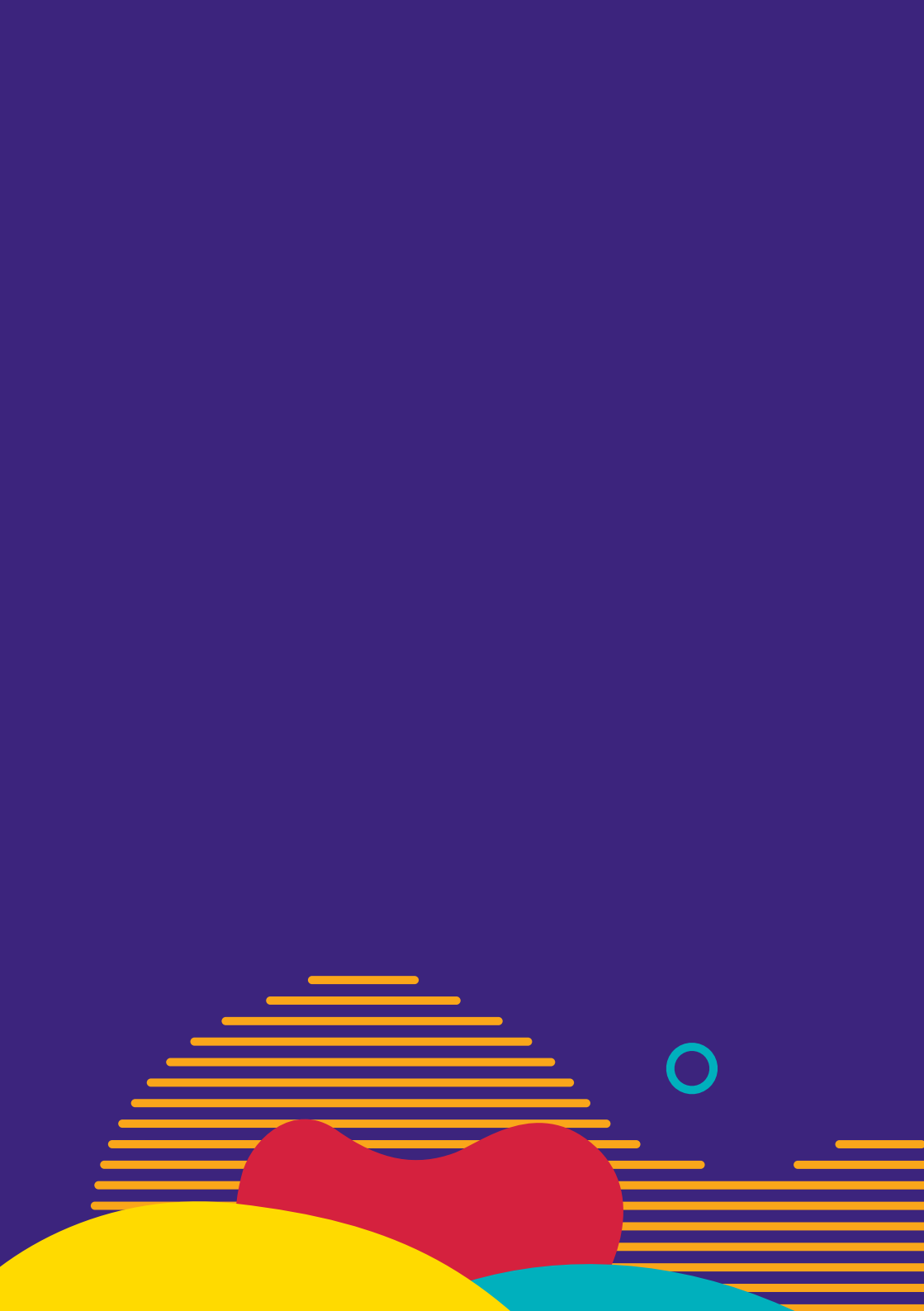
Allied Health Assistant or Technician of the Year ..... 10-12

Educator or Researcher of the Year ..... 14-16

Early Career Allied Health Professional of the year ..... 18-20

Allied Health Leader of the Year ..... 21-24





# Presenters

Award	Presented by
Allied Health Professional of the year	Minister for Women, Regional Health and Mental Health Bronwyn Taylor
Aboriginal Allied Health Professional of the year	Mr Anthony Paulson Board Director, Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA)
Allied Health Assistant of the year	Richard Griffiths Executive Director, Workforce Planning & Talent Development, NSW Health
Allied Health Researcher of the year	Phil Minns Deputy Secretary, People, Culture and Governance, NSW Health
Early Career Allied Health Professional of the year	Susan Pearce Secretary, NSW Health
Allied Health Leader of the year	Minister for Health Brad Hazzard



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# Program

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3.45pm

Doors Open and Registration

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4.00pm

Ceremony Begins: Welcome &  
Acknowledgment of Country

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Speeches:

1. Minister for Health - The value of Allied Health in the NSW Health system
  2. Minister for Women, Regional Health and Mental Health - The contribution of Allied Health in Mental Health and in the regions
- 

Awards:

1. Allied Health Professional of the year
  2. Aboriginal Allied Health Professional of the year
  3. Allied Health Assistant of the year
  4. Allied Health Researcher of the year
  5. Early Career Allied Health Professional of the year
  6. Allied Health Leader of the year
- 

**Congratulations, Thank you and close**

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5pm-6pm

**Networking and Canapes**

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# Allied Health Professional of the Year

The Allied Health Professional of the year makes an outstanding contribution to clinical excellence, leadership, education and culture.

They advocate for evidence based practice, focus on value-based health care and provide safe, quality and compassionate patient care. They actively support a positive culture in line with NSW Health's CORE values.

Allied Health Professionals show commitment to supporting, empowering and upskilling those surrounding them.

They passionately advocate for their profession, Allied Health and collaboration across professions and services.

The individual is recognised by peers for their outstanding professionalism and the continuous demonstration of pride to be an Allied Health Professional within NSW Health.

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## Nicole Cerruto

### Pharmacy, Central Coast Local Health District

**Nicole is the Senior Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) Pharmacist at CCLHD and demonstrates extensive clinical knowledge and experience, is enthusiastic and hardworking.**

Nicole has presented at various professional hospital pharmacy bodies including the Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia (SHPA) Infectious Diseases Masterclass and the Australian Society of Antimicrobials (ASA) Annual Scientific meeting. She is responsible for CCLHD's response to Standard 3 for accreditation in May 2021.

Her AMS Program has resulted in the estimated cumulative saving of \$637,937 since 2015 and her projects have shown clinical excellence to the point of recent nationwide recognition in the AURA 2021 report. Her coordination of AMS rounds have resulted in >1800 changes in antimicrobial therapy to align with evidence-based guidelines and improve quality of patient care. She has collaborated with the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP) to look at surgical site infections retrospectively with the aim of reducing rates of infections.

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## Nicole Gintings

### Occupational Therapy, Hunter New England Local Health District

**Nicole began her career as a new graduate Occupational Therapist 15 years ago at the Royal Newcastle Hospital. Her passion is in Hand Therapy where she now works as a level 3 clinical specialist at the John Hunter Hospital.**

Nicole founded the Hunter Hand Therapy Interest Group which enables professional development, enhances continuity of care and up skills hand therapists working in the Hunter Region.

She is also involved in a world first research project investigating effectiveness of upper limb ranging for patients admitted to John Hunter Hospital with acute Guillain-Barre Syndrome, project received the 2020 'Impact Achievement' award for Hunter New England Allied Health Awards.

Nicole is a mentor for aspiring hand therapists enduring the rigorous application, study and examination process. She is described by her co-workers as an exceptionally dedicated hard worker who is passionate about her patients and their outcomes.

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## Anwar Hassan

### Physiotherapy, Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

**Anwar Hassan is a proud allied health professional and an outstanding clinician, researcher and leader in Cardiorespiratory Physiotherapy.**

Anwar has led multiple significant innovations in critical care and surgery, actively leading high quality and impactful research while completing his PhD. His development of a Pre-operative Exercise and Rehabilitation Program (PrEPP), has significantly reduced complications, decreased length of stay, decreased the risk of intubation and improved post-surgical outcomes and recovery.

The financial benefit analysis showed a cost saving of \$573,107 per annum with this program.

During the COVID-19 pandemic Anwar recognised unmet needs for both patients and hospital operations. Anwar worked with the Respiratory Team and Allied Health to develop a pathway for early discharge and education for patients so they could go home on oxygen. Anwar developed a Post COVID clinic. Anwar is now establishing new roles for Allied Health in a Post ICU Clinic.

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## Libby Loneragan

### Physiotherapy, Western New South Wales Local Health District

**Libby is a Physiotherapist at Bathurst Hospital with an illustrious career spanning over 56 years.**

Libby's roles in rehab, Riding for the Disabled, acute wards, fracture clinic, women's health, pre & post-natal care over many decades has had a positive & lasting impact upon countless members of the Bathurst community, servicing generations of families. The most significant aspect of Libby's career, is her capacity to mentor, inspire & support all those she has worked alongside including Physiotherapists, Allied Health & others within the interdisciplinary team.

Libby was a member of the APA Physiotherapists Management Group for 10 years & rural representative member of the Complaints Committee of the NSW Physiotherapy Registration Board for 20 years. Libby was part of the establishment committee & an inaugural member of SARRAH (Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health), now nationally recognised as the peak body representing Allied Health & held the position of NSW Coordinator for 3 years. Libby was also the rural representative on the state advisory group that worked on establishing the Chief Allied Health Officer role within the Ministry of Health.



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# Aboriginal Allied Health Professional of the Year

The Aboriginal Allied Health Professional demonstrates exceptional commitment, professionalism and compassionate care.

They are committed to improving and advocate for culturally appropriate health care of Aboriginal peoples and communities.

This Allied Health Professional is a leader amongst peers; passionately advocates for their profession, Allied Health, NSW Health and the Aboriginal workforce.



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## **Melissa Stephens**

### Social Work, Central Coast Local Health District

**Melissa is an experienced social worker who lives and works on Darkinjung Land.**

Melissa recognises & acknowledges the intergenerational trauma & interface with the health system. She walks alongside her patients to advocate for outcomes that best meet their need and ensure their safety. She is committed to improving & advocating for culturally appropriate health care of Aboriginal peoples and communities. Respectfully reminds others that it is not about clinicians & agendas but about what the client needs & wants.

Melissa identified improvement needs in the area of culturally appropriate practices for victims of sexual assault. Resulted in changes to physical space, a cultural shift across all staff, & lead to the creation of identified roles in the team.

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## **Emma Dole**

### Physiotherapy, Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

**Emma Dole is Senior pain physiotherapist for Nepean Hospital, and a proud Aboriginal woman and is recognised for her confidence as an Aboriginal leader amongst her peers.**

Emma is recognised for her ability to respond to complex cultural challenges with individuals and at a service level. Emma demonstrates initiative in leading innovative projects and activities to promote culturally appropriate care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Her passion for improving the cultural knowledge and personal growth of her colleagues has seen a significant increase in completion of cultural training.

Emma is always looking for improvements in the quality and experience of care received by Aboriginal clients and enthusiastically embraces the opportunity to provide mentorship to our Aboriginal cadets and trainees, along with year 10 students in the Koori Kids program.

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## Jemma Milloy

### Social Work, South West Sydney Local Health District

Jemma is the Team Leader of SWSLHD's Aboriginal GOT IT program and is highly regarded by her peers within SWSLHD both within the Mental Health and Aboriginal Health services.

Jemma's role in leading the GOT IT multidisciplinary team in the adaption process and implementing the service model has been exceptional. She has established a highly functional team that leverages their clinical and cultural knowledge to provide responsive services to Aboriginal families with children at risk of conduct disorders.

GOT IT Team have undertaken groundbreaking work that infuses Aboriginal ways of learning and engaging into the program methodology and recognizes the importance of a strong cultural identity in building resilience

Jemma is a highly valued member of the Aboriginal Health Leadership Group and is an active contributor in our peer supervision structure, often supporting and providing advice to colleagues out of session.

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## Cameron Edwards

### Physiotherapy, Western Sydney Local Health District

**Cameron is an Aboriginal physiotherapist at the Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals (BMDH)**

Cameron identified concerning issues regarding the experience of Indigenous physiotherapy students. He took the initiative to collaborate with the University of Sydney, his manager and the broader BMDH Physiotherapy team, to implement student placements at Blacktown Hospital that are culturally responsive and safe for Indigenous students.

Cameron has commenced planning and negotiations to embark on a PHD research journey with a focus on services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. He has also hosted a podcast-series "Deadly Physios" commissioned by the APA.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Cameron trained as an Allied Health COVID-19 Vaccinator and in addition to working in the mainstream vaccination hubs, attended the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outreach vaccination clinics which the local Aboriginal community loved demanding his return for their second jobs.





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# Allied Health Assistant or Technician of the Year

This award recognises the allied health assistant/technician and support person who consistently provides extraordinary and quality support for allied health professions and allied health services.

They actively supporting a positive culture in line with NSW Health's CORE values.

This individual demonstrates a commitment to elevating the patient experience by being the backbone of the allied health service for their organisation.

They show professionalism and are a proven team player.

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## Madison Keane

### Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network

**Madison is valued member of the Austinmer Adolescents team.**

Madison is an exceptional mental health care worker who is highly skilled in supporting young people to achieve their recovery goals. All her time is spent engaging with individuals on the unit, and she has demonstrated determination to find ways to support the patients

Madison's strength-based approach to working with complex young people, and her ability to nurture and sustain their motivation to various care plans is a testament to her confidence in providing safe quality care and patient focused assistance. She gently encourages patients to explore novel experiences, including the herb garden, art and music therapy.

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## Tameka-Lea Cahill

### Murrumbidgee Local Health District

**Tameka has been an Allied Health assistant for over 10 years at Hillston MPS.**

Tameka has several AHA qualifications (Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Nutrition and Dietetics) that she can incorporate into her daily work with clients and is always looking for opportunities to upskill and recently identified a gap in support for the visiting dentist who visits the MPS monthly to deliver the Oral Wellness Lifelong program. She is now pursuing upskilling as a dental hygienist

Tameka runs community exercise and water aerobics groups and supports the running of the 'Stepping On' Program. She continually champions the role of allied health in helping clients to live well in our community by supporting the implementation of treatment plans and escalating any areas of concern quickly and appropriately.

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## Sarah Gibson

### Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

**Sarah Gibson is an allied health assistant in NBMLHD Primary Care and Community Health.**

Sarah is naturally client focused, committed to improving client outcomes and supporting them achieve their goals, and in ensuring care plans are client centred and holistic. She is focused on improving processes, as displayed by her recent initiative to improve efficiencies and record keeping for the short-term equipment loan pool.

On a regular basis clients, their families, carers and staff of all disciplines provide positive acknowledgement of Sarah for her professionalism. Many have commented that Sarah is the best AHA they have worked with in their careers.

Sarah completes all tasks above and beyond expectations including the provision of care, intervention, education, handover, contributions to meetings, contributions to quality improvement, and identifying areas for service improvement.

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## Amanda Pollak

### Northern Sydney Local Health District

**Amanda is pharmacy technician who is currently the Pyxis Systems Administrator and responsible for the management of the network of automated dispensing cabinets used at RNS to store medications and dispense doses on the wards.**

Amanda demonstrates flexibility, initiative, good communication and excellent problem-solving skills daily. During her time at RNS, she has developed a high level of competence in all areas, as well as being the Senior Technician for the dispensary, and for the distribution service, and also acting as Chief Technician for a year to cover maternity leave.

Amanda also took on a leading role in the initial phases of the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out, providing training sessions when required to upskill any staff who will be working shifts in one of the NSLHD vaccination hubs.



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# Educator or Researcher of the Year

The Allied Health Researcher of the year has made exemplary contributions to research to enhance Allied Health service delivery.

Their research has been impactful and can be translated into practice. The research has been peer reviewed and published in within last 2 years.

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## Dr Laura Kirsten

### Psychology, Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

**Dr Laura Kirsten is a nationally recognized expert in the field of psycho-oncology.**

Laura works to translate research findings and conduct research into practice to ensure people living with life limiting cancer diagnoses receive care underpinned by the best available evidence. She serves in leadership roles at state and national levels, notably in chairing both the Psycho-oncology Group and the

Clinicians' Research Interest Group within the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia.

Laura has published almost 50 peer-reviewed articles and is widely cited. In the last four years she has published findings of 10 studies spanning RCTs, systematic reviews, qualitative studies and Delphi surveys, demonstrating the breadth of her research expertise and capacity to address clinically relevant research questions of different types.

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## Dr Cathryn Crowle

### Occupational Therapy, Sydney Children's Hospital Network

**Dr Crowle is a Senior Occupational Therapist and Co-Lead of Research in the Grace Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Children's Hospital Westmead. She is also a Conjoint Clinical Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney.**

Cathryn is recognized nationally and internationally as an accomplished researcher with expertise in early detection for neurodevelopmental disorders, especially cerebral palsy. In 2020, Cathryn consulted on establishing a state-wide follow-up process for high-risk infants in Tasmania and she collaborated on a brief for the UK Parliament on early detection and intervention for at risk

infants

Her work on the implementation of the GMA early detection program in the Grace Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) has transformed clinical practice and had a huge impact on the care of babies in NICU. This knowledge translation has ensured that infants are now screened for risk of cerebral palsy from birth, allowing earlier referral for early intervention to maximize infant outcomes.

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## Dr Nicola Clayton

### Speech Pathology, Sydney Local Health District

**Dr Nicola Clayton is Clinical Specialist Speech Pathologist with more than 20 years' experience in adult dysphagia and is currently employed at Concord Repatriation General Hospital.**

Nicola is recognised nationally and internationally for her clinical expertise and research in the assessment and treatment of complex swallowing disorders in critical care, respiratory disease and severe burn injury.

She is involved in the up-skilling and empowering of others in Speech Pathology to undertake research as well as the commitment to disseminating her own research for the benefits of Speech Pathology.

Nicola initiated and is leading a state-wide COVID research study in Speech pathology. The project, titled Clinical profile and recovery pattern of dysphagia in COVID-19: the NSW experience, is a multi-site study that now has up to 25 hospitals in NSW enrolled.

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## Conjoint Associate Prof Justine Naylor

### Physiotherapy,

### South-West Sydney Local Health District

**Conjoint Associate Professor Justine Naylor is a leading academic physiotherapist based in SWSLHD and has made a major national and international contribution to research in the area of orthopaedic medicine and rehabilitation.**

Justine's research has guided clinical practice in numerous ways, having contributed to clinical practice guidelines and recommendations, including publications on best practice in total joint replacement surgery.

Conjoint Associate Professor Naylor led a randomised clinical trial comparing inpatient to home-based rehabilitation following total knee replacement. The paper was published in JAMA in 2017 and had major impact on the use of rehabilitation after joint replacement and has led to changes in clinical practice and clinical practice guidelines. Her academic excellence has led to her, both as a Chief and Associate Investigator, to obtain over \$11.5 million dollars in competitive research funding from 44 successful grants since 2005. She has over 132 publications with an h-index of 32.





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# Early Career Allied Health Professional of the year

(under 2 years post-graduation)

This award recognises early career Allied Health Professionals who have shown exceptional potential during their first two years of practice.



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## **Zoe Trebilcock**

### Speech Pathology, Murrumbidgee Local Health District

**Zoe joined the Deniliquin allied health team in 2020.**

Zoe's commitment to the health service during the COVID-19 pandemic requires recognition. As an early career speech pathologist, she has stepped up when needed to participate in our COVID-19 screening clinic while maintaining a high standard of clinical care in her speech pathology role. This has involved the provision of outreach pop-up testing clinics at the last minute.

Zoe has assisted the Speech department in the development of their virtual speech pathology service and often aids colleagues from other disciplines in this space.

Zoe has encouraged a positive morale in a health service through her amazing musical talent and willingness to participate. She coordinated and edited the Deniliquin Health service award winning musical video in the 2020 Pressure Injury Competition in only her first few months at work.

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## **Aaron O'Callaghan**

### Radiography, Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

**Aaron joined the NBMLHD radiography department in 2021.**

Aaron has demonstrated commitment to providing compassionate patient care for bariatric patients by upskilling his colleagues in bariatric patient management.

Aaron has shown growth in angiography and demonstrated enthusiasm towards angiography shifts. He has shown an ability to learn quickly and adapt to the workflow of various interventional radiologists both during hours and on-call. He knows his limits and ensures he asks questions when unsure.

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## Vincent Cram

### Psychology, Sydney Local Health District

**Vincent is a Clinical Psychologist in the RPA Virtual Hospital.**

Vincent has devoted his time to establishing procedures to improve the entire team's efficiency and workflow and improve the care and well-being of our clients. Vincent has been an advocate and voice for the needs of the broader team, liaising with other professionals at our service to ensure we have vital information related to service delivery and our clients.

He has championed novel research into the nature of our service to understand how we could improve and increase client outcomes. All the while training new team members and completing the daily tasks required of his role.

Vincent has established and engaged in regular clinical supervision with senior clinicians, peer-consultation with other clinical psychologists, and various professional development courses including a 3-day workshop and a district wide training day for psychologists.

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## Sophie Fletcher

### Social Work,

### Western New South Wales Local Health District

**Sophie is in a new graduate Social Work position at Orange Health Service.**

Within her first year, Sophie was able to identify areas for capacity building for the Social Work team, sought out professional development and apply for grants to provide the required training. She has a thoughtful and considered attitude towards consumers and their carer's, and is respected as a highly competent professional, due to her ethical approach to practice and respectful multidisciplinary and holistic care.

Sophie is consistently kind, caring and compassionate in her approach to patient care and to those with whom she comes into contact in the course of her work.



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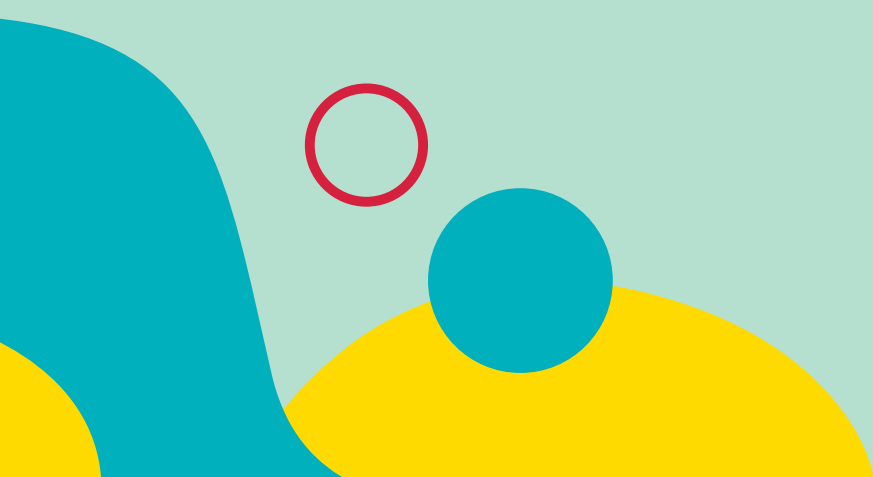
# Allied Health Leader of the Year

This award highlights an outstanding Allied Health Leader; who continually exhibit excellence in leadership, focusing on values of teamwork, innovation, service, quality, compassion and integrity.

The Allied Health Leader of the year show exceptional skills to support, mentor and coach staff.

The Allied Health Leader of the year is visionary.

They drive quality improvement in patient care, service delivery and a commitment to value based health care. They are leaders of a positive culture across professional groups in line with NSW Health's CORE values.



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## Damien Smith

### Physiotherapy, Hunter New England Local Health District

**Damien is the Physiotherapy Service Manager John Hunter (JHH) and Belmont (BDH) Hospitals.**

Damien is a highly personable, compassionate and supportive leader. His enablement of staff and commitment to Excellence inspires and motivates team members to represent the CORE values in their daily practice inside and outside of the Physiotherapy department. When asked to describe Damien's leadership in three words the senior team consistently listed: transparent, empowering and trustworthy.

Damien has Sponsored and facilitated model of care redesigns within JHH/BDH Physiotherapy for: emergency department, Maternity and Gynaecology, Soft Tissue Injury Review Clinic, BDH Shoulder Clinic. Neurosurgery and Orthopaedic Parallel Spinal Physiotherapy clinics.

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## Andrea Worth

### Social Work, Sydney Children's Hospital Network

**Andrea is Co-Head of Psychological Medicine, at SCHN, leading a large and dynamic workforce. Her warmth, tireless support, and dedication brings out the best in her staff in challenging and busy environments.**

Andrea worked collaboratively with staff to manage an unprecedented demand for Mental Health care through the implementation of innovative models of care. She has tirelessly advocated and re-designed the allied health therapeutic programs for young people with serious mental health difficulties on the Acute Child and Adolescent Mental Health Units.

She has driven the establishment of the innovative alternatives to Emergency service at SCH and continues to advocate for services that enhance the capacity of at-risk young people and their families.

Andrea demonstrates an innate ability to identify how the skills and expertise of Allied Health professional fit together to build unique teams around children and families, fostering a deep respect for the unique and varied expertise of the Allied health workforce. She recognises and cultivates the potential in individuals, providing opportunities to build the capacity of new Allied Health clinicians and consolidating the skill of experienced clinicians.

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## **Katherine Kelly**

### Speech Pathology, South-West Sydney Local Health District

**Katherine holds the lead NDIS position in SWSLHD. She is a recognized NSW leader, providing consultation and collaboration on statewide NDIS projects and system changes.**

Katherine achieves NDIS key objectives by embedding clinician-led change and working collaboratively with key multidisciplinary stakeholders at each facility to establish robust networks. She has built an extensive collaborative network throughout NSW and become an instrumental leader in transforming the way the NDIS interfaces with the health system.

These connections have been instrumental in linking various NSW Health and external programs in a way that would not have occurred without Katherine's leadership, support and positivity to bring these services together to improve patient care.

She enables staff to anticipate and manage complex situations. Katherine epitomises collaboration; striving for excellence in care for people with disability through positive partnerships and respect.

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## **Megan Byrne**

### Nutrition and Dietetics, Western Sydney Local Health District

**Megan is Head of Nutrition and Dietetics at Blacktown/Mt Druitt Hospitals and has always fostered a culture of clinical excellence, quality improvement and recognition within her local dietetics team.**

In 2021, Megan was seconded to set up and run the operations of the Blacktown COVID-19 Vaccination Hub. She set up the hub, managed all staff and resources and was an early advocate for adapting the way vaccinations could be delivered to patients with complex needs requiring a low sensory environment. She implemented the first low sensory vaccination clinic in NSW.

Megan was asked to step up and run the Qudos Bank Arena NSW Health Vaccination Centre as the Operations Director. In this role she led a truly multidisciplinary, multiagency team that vaccinated over 340,000 recipients in 13 weeks. She led a team of clinical and non-clinical staff, and workers from Australian Defence Force, Baxter Healthcare Australia, QUDOS Bank Arena, Circa and QANTAS to name a few. Megan was an early advocate for the training of allied health clinicians to work as vaccinators and was able to quickly integrate these staff into the vaccination hub operations.

