

MURRUMBIDGEE

ISSUE 14 AUTUMN 2021

MATTERS

MAGAZINE

THIS ISSUE:
THE DREAM
DIRECTOR

RURAL
GENERALIST
TRAINING PATHWAY

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ABOUT US

Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) provides a range of public health services to the Riverina and Murray regions of NSW, Australia.

We provide services across a geographic area of about 125,561 square kilometres to a population of more than 240,700 residents. People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage make up four per cent of the population.

As the largest employer in the region, with more than 3,800 healthcare staff working across 33 hospitals and 12 primary health care centres, we are supported by hundreds of volunteers who make an invaluable contribution to enriching the lives of people in our care.

Our services are provided through:

- 1 Rural Referral Hospital
- 1 Base Hospital
- 8 District Health Services
- 5 Community Hospitals
- 16 Multipurpose Services
- 2 Mercy Care Public Hospitals
- 12 Community Health Posts
- 1 Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service

PUBLICATION

We would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land covering MLHD and remind people that we live and work on Aboriginal land.

Welcome to the 14th issue of Murrumbidgee Matters Magazine.

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FRONT COVER

Rural Generalist trainee Dr Maggie-Kate Minogue

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OUR VISION

Wellness is our Goal
Excellence is our Passion
Our People are Our Future



RURAL GENERALIST PATHWAY

MLHD Chief Executive Jill Ludford and Alam Yousuff visiting Gundagai Medical Centre to meet with new recruit Dr Maggie-Kate Minogue, practice owner Dr Maya Eamus and Dr Ryan Bulger.

First Rural Generalist trainees take up the reins in Murrumbidgee

Murrumbidgee Local Health District has welcomed the very first trainees on the Murrumbidgee Rural Generalist Training Pathway in Cootamundra, Gundagai, Temora, Wagga Wagga and Young this week.

Dr Maggie-Kate Minogue joined the Gundagai Medical Centre as part of her rural practice training. She will also work in the Gundagai Multi-purpose Service Emergency Department as a Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) under the guidance of Dr Paul Mara and Dr Maya Eamus.

Maggie-Kate hails from Harden and says returning to the region is a homecoming.

“I’m really drawn to rural medicine because I’m a country girl at heart,” said Maggie-Kate. “I feel connected to country communities and a sense of fulfilment which comes from caring for rural people.”

“After completing the first two years of my degree in Sydney, I moved to Wagga Wagga to complete the final four years at the UNSW Rural Clinical School Wagga Wagga Campus.”

Maggie-Kate has undertaken work placements previously in Gundagai and more recently Deniliquin.

Also joining the program in Temora is Dr Jo Murphy, while Dr Rhiannon Baldwin joins the practice in Young and Dr Sylvia Lim has arrived in Cootamundra. Dr Ariaah Steel has taken up her trainee position, commencing in the Wagga Wagga Emergency Department.

The Murrumbidgee Rural Generalist Training Pathway offers trainees the benefits of a single employer and certainty about location, income and working conditions for the duration of the pathway.

“We were so pleased to meet and welcome all the trainees as they arrived on their first day this week,” said MLHD Chief Executive Jill Ludford. “This heralds a historic landmark in the way we recruit and support the careers of junior doctors aspiring to become rural generalists in our region.”

Junior doctors on the Murrumbidgee Rural Generalist Training Pathway are given the experience, exposure and qualifications they need to become rural generalists in a nurturing environment with access to senior quality supervisors, preferred placements and great remuneration package.

For more information about medical career opportunities visit www.mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/careers/medical-services-careers



About the Rural Generalist Training Pathway

The Murrumbidgee Rural Generalist Training Pathway (MRGTP) provides a tailored, coordinated opportunity for medical graduates interested in a rural generalist career.

Junior doctors are given the experience, exposure and qualifications they need to become rural generalists in a nurturing environment with access to senior quality supervisors, preferred placements and great remuneration package.

This tailor-made training pathway provides advanced skills training and opportunities to practice at the top of your skills to achieve a fellowship under a single employer model. This offers secure employment and dedicated career advancement navigation for the duration of your rural GP training, with early well supported exposure to rural general practice and rural hospital work.

MLHD's Director Primary Health Care Alam Yousuff says the pathway provides many advantages over traditional programs.

"Some of the real benefits include the single employer model which provides certainty about location, income and working conditions for the duration of the pathway," said Dr Yousuff. "Trainees have access to employee entitlements including annual leave, long service leave and other employee entitlements."

"We also provide trainees with early frequent exposure to rural GP placements and seamless transition between hospital and community-based GP training placements under a single employer model.

Other benefits include strong professional links with referral hospitals and private practitioners in the region and becoming part of a rural practice network.

"Working in the Murrumbidgee region in itself has some great advantages too," said Dr Yousuff who operates his own GP practice out of Finley, a small country town in the west of the Murrumbidgee. "Nowhere else will trainees get to experience this beautiful country lifestyle, and the ability to experience a professional life with pace and variety, balanced with a country lifestyle and best remuneration."

"Really it's about balancing great career prospects whilst also enjoying the fulfilment and sense of connectedness that comes from serving in a rural community," he added. ■



PHOTOS: MLHD Director Primary Health Care, Dr Alam Yousuff met with new recruits:

Top left: MLHD Director Primary Health Care, Dr Alam Yousuff with Dr Jo Murphy and Temora Practice Manager Jenny Alchin

Middle left : MLHD Director Primary Health Care, Dr Alam Yousuff with Dr Rhiannon Baldwin, Dr Fiona Gleeson GP Supervisor and Practice Manager Therese McGlynn.

Bottom left: MLHD Director Primary Health Care, Dr Alam Yousuff with Dr Fred Offermeier GP Supervisor, Dr Sylvia Lim registrar and Practice Manager Leanne Clee.

Dr Joe Murphy

I think this pathway has a number of unique features.

Training rural generalists for the bush is the future of rural health.

These are doctors not only working in rural general practice, they're also involved with the hospital, working in emergency departments, delivering babies, providing anaesthetic services and so much more for people living in rural areas.

It's great to see a pathway that invests in those doctors that want to do that, and makes it an attractive profession for Junior Medical Officers coming through the hospitals. It prevents losing interns and residents to cities and other areas if they go to train somewhere else. If we can attract them to the bush and give them a structure where they can train and continue to develop their skills then we're less likely to lose them.

This single employer model provides the structure for both mentorship and support from professionals as well as reducing the administrative burden of changing employers. It provides structure for people to continue with their training as a rural generalist.



Dr Ariah Steel

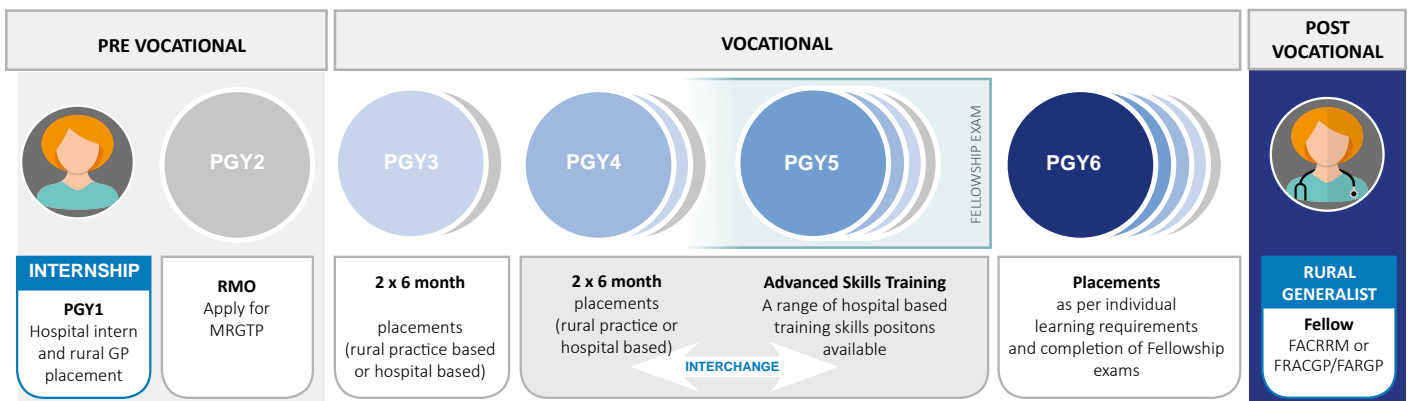
GP training was something I always wanted to do but I probably wouldn't have if it weren't for this model. Having a salary, annual leave, maternity leave, as well as being part of a team by being linked to a hospital, it just makes sense for me and I wouldn't have done it any other way.

For me it's the diversity. You can see patients as a GP, do a day on the ward delivering babies, work in emergency, do palliative care. I think that it will appeal to a lot of people.

Becoming a rural generalist means if I was in a parachute and was dropped somewhere remote I can look after someone and keep them safe until they got to a bigger area. That's the kind of doctor I want to be.

Coming from the city, where I spent an hour and a half on the train to get to uni, to now living five minutes from work, I really enjoy the lifestyle. I have three dogs, I can go for a run in the bush before work. I get to do more of the things I enjoy.

TRAINING PATHWAY





From the Chief Executive

THE OUTBACK OFFICE

I often tell my metro counterparts about our extraordinary country lifestyle.

Here in the Murrumbidgee, I can proudly say we have some of the most beautiful countryside in the world.

Our region stretches from the Snowy Mountains in the east to the long dry plains and wide blue skies in the west, north to picturesque Lake Cargelligo and south all the way along the Victorian border to Tooleybuc.

We are remote, isolated and face some unique challenges, driving these vast distances and working from the road.

One of the highlights of my role is getting out to visit our facilities and meet with the incredible people who deliver our services, and our teams who work hard every day to ensure safe clinical care, no matter where they are.

As I criss-cross the region, I get to meet the most resilient people and hear the most amazing stories of compassion as well as the enterprising way our teams devise to deliver care in our communities.

This is the reality of the 'Outback Office' for many of our teams who drive these distances each and every day. The travel involves navigating long dusty roads, encountering mobs of cattle or sheep, dodging the occasional wildlife and struggling to find phone reception.



Over the past few months I've been lucky enough to visit Boorowa, Harden, Junee, Coolamon, Tumut, Deniliquin, Hay and Wagga Wagga.

Nothing beats country hospitality.

Our team always welcome me warmly to the facilities and are so proud to share their latest technology, innovations and quality initiatives.

Our staff are resilient, proud and driven by a desire to put patient safety first.

I'm so proud of everything they do.

My site visits are an important way for me to listen to and stay connected with what's happening at the coal face. Hearing stories of patients' experiences and speaking with staff about their day to day challenges really helps me to understand better the demands on our health service.

The feedback we receive during the visits, coupled with strategic consultations, surveys and workshops really help to inform our way forward.

Our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan is in the final stages of development and will soon be available on our website.

This plan outlines the District's new vision which is
Exceptional rural health care

Healthier together, care tailored to peoples needs

Our priorities will focus on

- Holistic Health and wellbeing
- Lifting health outcomes
- Locally led reform
- Workplace at its best

As always, we continue to receive and act on feedback as a way to improve each and every day on what we do, and how we deliver exceptional rural health care.

If you have feedback you would like to provide, you are welcome to use our feedback channels:

via email:
MLHD-feedback@health.nsw.gov.au

via post:
The Chief Executive
Locked Bag 10
Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

or via phone:
1800 011 824

Wishing everyone a healthier and happier 2021!

Jill Ludford
Chief Executive



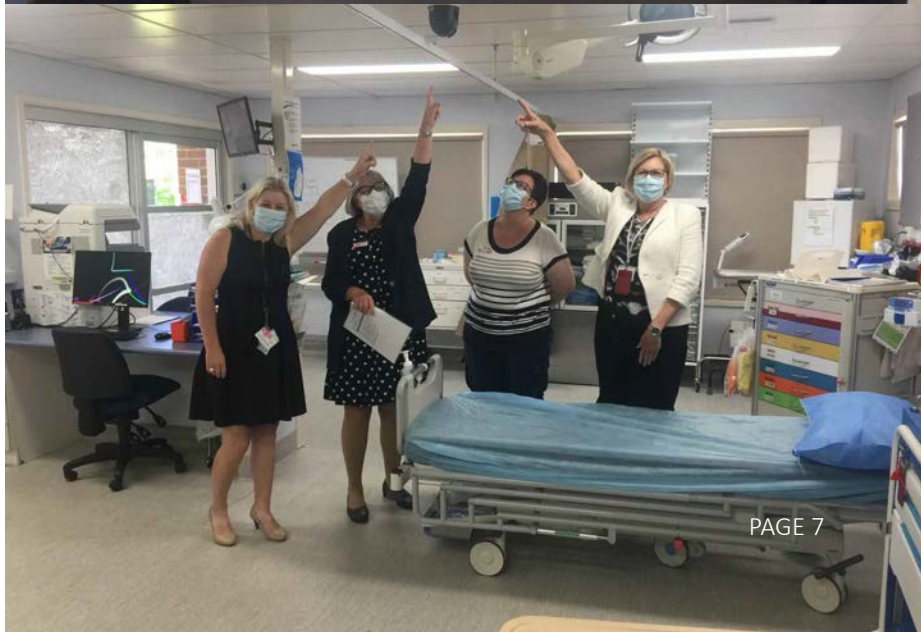
Photos from top:

>> Meeting resident Mr Derek Harwin during my site visit to Coolamon MPS

>> Visiting with Aboriginal Elders and community members at Yarkawa Indigenous Centre in Deniliquin

>> Staying COVID safe with the team at Junee MPS

>> Boorowa Health service, pointing out the new Critical Care Overbed Camera System. 48 new cameras will have been installed in MLHD facilities in Emergency Departments, Intensive Care Unit's and Special Care Nurseries. The new cameras provide higher quality images and allow clinicians who provide virtual specialist support to our facilities in emergency and critical situations; with the ability to live stream and remotely control the camera on a brand new secure NSW eHealth network. Already feedback from the new system has been fantastic from both the critical care specialists and facility staff using the new cameras.



MEET OUR PEOPLE



George Lam
Physiotherapist

A physio who cares for people, not just their bones and joints

Physiotherapist George Lam has a consistent challenge that he overcomes each day at work; building the confidence required to encourage people to adopt a healthier lifestyle when they--quite reasonably – fear significant injury or any increase in pain.

As Murrumbidgee Local Health District’s Musculoskeletal Services Coordinator, George manages services for two vulnerable patient groups – people with osteoporosis who have broken a bone, and others who live with disability caused by osteoarthritis.

MLHD’s Osteoporosis Refracture Prevention Program, works with people whose bones have become fragile because of the disease process, leading to a fracture. The program aims to reduce the chance of them experiencing further fractures, which is more important than it may sound; hip fractures are particularly serious and can lead to some patients dying in hospital

“Once people with osteoporosis have had a fracture they can easily have another fracture within a year or two,” says George, adding that some patients – particularly men – don’t even realise they have osteoporosis until they’ve broken a bone.

First steps are usually a bone-density scan and prescribing appropriate medication and supplements to improve bone health, and then support with an exercise program which will help to build the strength of bones and muscles.

George also coordinates MLHD’s Osteoarthritis Chronic Care Program, working with patients who have osteoarthritis, who are usually uncertain about doing exercise because moving hurts.

“Most of my osteoarthritis patients are older and they are worried about physiotherapists making them do extreme exercise,” says George.

“Not a lot of people with this disease do a lot of physical activities, but it is important to get them gradually moving a bit so they don’t get deconditioned or their pain will be even worse.

“It is hard to start exercise again, but for some it might mean they can defer or even cancel hip or knee surgery as they reduce their body weight and slow the disease’s progression.”

The program starts them off with simple, gentle exercises they're confident to do, with these increased carefully over time to avoid stirring up symptoms. But rather than looking at physical activity in isolation, it considers broader health and lifestyle issues and support that will set them up for success.

"We care about the person's life, not just their bones and joints," George says.

Patients might be referred to a dietitian, for instance, if losing weight will help to reduce pressure on their joints, or to a GP or pharmacist if medication for pain relief isn't working or causing side effects. Some appreciate support to give up or reduce smoking.

Others might need mental health or emotional support while engaging with exercise therapy. George says it's not unusual for patients to become depressed because they are confined to home and have lost their independence.

He says while many patients engaged in the program are on a theatre list with late-stage arthritis, he would like to see larger numbers of younger people being referred from the community.

"We would like to see more people with early arthritis because we can do a lot more to prevent deterioration. We can slow down the disease process a lot easier when lifestyle is improved while the symptoms are still relatively minor.

"With better control of the arthritis, they may have a better life, be able to go up and down steps, to the shops or anywhere they like. It is better for their health and their quality of life." ■



PATIENTS TO BENEFIT FROM HOSPITAL AUXILIARY DONATION

Wagga Wagga Base Hospital (WWBH) Auxiliary recently presented a cheque for \$50,000 to Wagga Base Hospital Maternity Unit as part of its fundraising efforts to buy new equipment for patients and staff.

The funds have been used to purchase new equipment from the Maternity Unit's wish list including two new bassinets, a Fetal Monitoring Machine and Pod and a Double Door Immunisation Fridge.

Wagga Wagga Base Hospital General Manager Troy Trgetaric said the hospital

and staff were extremely grateful to the Auxiliary for their ongoing efforts to improve patient care.

"With your dedication and generosity, we are able to continually improve patient experiences and outcomes," he said.

This year's donation will take the total donations from the Auxiliary to the Hospital since 2008 to \$1.8 million. ■





EDUCATION DRIVES TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Education Manager, Charmaine Marshall oversees the Education and Development for all Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) staff.

“Our team has a passion for education, we feel it really does make a difference in all levels of our organisation. Whether it is leadership development or clinical education, we support our people on the ground to meet their goals and organisational outcomes, which leads to excellent patient care,” says Charmaine.

“Our focus is around our people and how we can support and develop their capabilities to not only meet their own goals, but to also meet the organisation’s Strategic Goals, it really is a ripple effect.”

Charmaine joined the MLHD Education Team last October and has travelled to Wagga from Perth. Her previous role within the Ambulance Service in Western Australia as Senior Education Manager for Paramedics and EMT volunteers is a perfect match of skills and experience for her position within MLHD.

“It is very much about supporting staff in their current and future roles and making sure patient care is at the forefront and to the right standard. Our job is to develop people so they feel confident and competent, and certain in their roles so they can deliver those great patient outcomes,” Charmaine says. “I love that my job is about personal and professional transformational change and Innovation.”

Moving to Wagga from Western Australia to assume her position as MLHD Education Manager has been a pleasant surprise. “I was surprised, Wagga has the number nine best beach in Australia, and many more activities than what I thought. Everyone is friendly and supportive and really open, letting me know about local things to go and see. It is lovely.”

Reflecting on her own career, Charmaine is happy to see herself here for the long haul, “Healthcare and Education are a good match for me, coming from an Ambulance background, I used to be a Volunteer EMT, and compassion and caring it is very much in my blood, I imagine I will always be in health or a care giving organisation.” ■

A LEGACY OF CARING AND INSPIRATION

Merran Bolton retires from Narrandera Hospital

After 45 years of dedicated service, Merran Bolton, has retired from Narrandera Hospital – the hospital where she was born, started her nursing career and had her skills and commitment recognised with senior roles including Nurse Unit Manager and Acting Facility Manager.

Mrs Bolton was among the last nurses to start a successful nursing career without a tertiary education, learning on the job from sisters and matrons in a strict environment where nurses took pride in mitred bed corners, sparkling pan rooms and immaculate uniforms with starched veils.

“It was very different back then,” says Mrs Bolton, whose training included months at Prince Henry Hospital in Sydney and Kenmore Psychiatric Hospital in Goulburn.

“From day one you gain practical hands on skill and experience that you carry with you throughout your career.”

Mrs Bolton spent time as the scrub nurse for caesareans in theatre, back when babies were delivered locally, and worked in emergency at a time when there were many highway accidents before Narrandera was bypassed.

Always keen to upskills to better serve her community, she learned to use a computer, completed demanding courses in adult and paediatric trauma, and first-line emergency care.

As Acting Facility Manager, Mrs Bolton never let her seniority pull her entirely away from having contact with patients.

“I did a shower the other week, because the staff were under the pump. I thoroughly enjoy that basic stuff and I’ve always liked to have a little chat with my patients in the morning. You pick up so much just by having that bit of a chat, and offering someone a cup of tea in their time of need is pretty important too.”

Mrs Bolton is proud of Narrandera Hospital’s reputation and says the management team takes great pride in having so many local people employed there.

“It is a great place to work. I’ve loved serving our community. It’s lovely to be working in your home town and having local connection with the patients and families within our community. Of course we have our ups and downs, it has been a great workplace where hospital staff become good friends and patients feel welcome and comfortable.

“I’m very lucky to have worked with dedicated, loyal, hardworking staff in my career. What more would a person want? I’ve had great mentors, including great doctors, who made me feel well supported, were great teachers, and have been a big part of my life. It’s been a good career.”

Mrs Bolton, 62, had five children during her nursing career and for 15 years drove 56km each way from home to work.

“I had good parents who were heading into retirement and a husband who was very supportive during the early years of



having children and throughout my working career. If you have that support there’s a lot you can do,” she says, adding that she decided to retire while she still has the energy to babysit her grandchildren.

Kate Williams, 38, has recently been appointed Nurse Unit Manager and will be stepping up to cover the Facility Manager for the next few months.

Mrs Williams, who started at Narrandera hospital as a Registered Nurse and Midwife in 2008, has job shared the Nurse Unit Manager role in a temporary capacity for the past 12 months.

She says Mrs Bolton will be remembered as a good role model who was a stickler for following correct processes, maintaining a high standard, and taking the time to call families and keeping them up to date with what was happening with their loved one.

“She will definitely be missed very much,” says Mrs Williams.

“Nothing ever fazed her; no matter how many people kept coming to her with problems throughout the day she took it in her stride.”

With her years of wisdom and experience, Mrs Bolton has had a deep impact on the hospital’s work culture.

“We have a lovely bunch of beautiful and passionate nurses and they really do respect the patients and do that little bit extra to ensure the hospital’s reputation,” says Mrs Williams.

“They go that extra mile and they do really care. We are very lucky to have them.” ■

NEW GRADUATE NURSES AND MIDWIVES

51 new graduate nurses and midwives began work at hospitals and health services across the Murrumbidgee this February.

Nursing and Midwifery leader Annie Skipworth extended a warm welcome to the new nursing and midwifery recruits as they embark on their career with NSW Health.

"We are so delighted to welcome these enthusiastic nursing and midwifery graduates," said Ms Skipworth. "They will have a unique opportunity to play a vital role in our extraordinary healthcare system as it continues to battle against the threat of COVID-19."

The graduates attended orientation sessions hosted virtually across ten local MLHD sites before being dispersed to their hospital and health service locations.

More than 54,000 nurses and midwives currently work in the NSW public health system, an increase of 24.7 per cent since 2011.

The NSW Government has invested in a record total 8,300 frontline health staff over four years, including an additional 5,000 nurses and midwives, including mental health and palliative care nurses.

The Chief Nursing & Midwifery Officer, NSW Health, Jacqui Cross, thanked the new graduates.

"As you embark on this wonderfully rewarding career, remember what you do as nurses and midwives is at the very heart of the public health system, caring for people in our hospitals, at home and in our communities," Ms Cross said.

"Your commitment and compassion combined with clinical skills make a huge difference and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the people of NSW," she said.

"We wish all our new starters the very best with their careers," added Ms Skipworth. ■



PHOTOS FROM TOP

Cootamundra nurse graduates Gillian Turner and Tiffany Duncan; Mika Beerenwinkel and Reeta Guragai nurse graduates at Henty MPS; nurse graduates at Batlow Caitlin Smith, Tumut's Lydia Grigg and Tumbarumba's Nikita McIntyre pictured with Bridget Bates; Gundagai's Chelsea Bennett and Kim McGowan.



HIGHER PROFILE FOR RIVERINA REGIONAL TRAINING HUB IN GRIFFITH

Article contributed by Fran Trench, Chief Executive Officer, Riverina Rural Training Hub

Three universities have rural clinical schools in the Murrumbidgee region – the University of Notre Dame Australia, the University of NSW and the University of Wollongong.

The Notre Dame and UNSW Rural Clinical Schools are based in Wagga Wagga and the University of Wollongong is based in Griffith. Between them they support over seventy full-time medical students.

These students also gain clinical experience in our smaller region towns. Many graduates from these rural clinical schools continue their training rurally at Wagga Wagga and Griffith Base Hospitals and in our regional general practices.

The Regional Training Hubs program was announced by the federal Assistant Minister for Health in April 2017, funded to improve regional health care by increasing training opportunities for medical students and junior doctors rurally.

Twenty-six regional training hubs were created across Australia. Since establishment in mid- 2017 the Riverina Regional Training Hub has worked closely with key community health and education stakeholders in NSW and especially within the MLHD, providing assistance in the development of clinical training pathways to enable medical graduates to complete more of their postgraduate training regionally both in General Practice and other Specialities.

Suitable medical students and post graduate trainees with a demonstrated interest in rural practice have been identified and supported toward their aspirations of rural study, training and careers. As they have graduated local medical students have in their turn provided a welcome, support and mentoring to new medical students.

Recently Notre Dame medical graduates, including one who has been working in the region for seven years, welcomed third year medical students, their partners and families to the region. This community support is critical to retaining students in the area as they graduate.

For the first time this year the Riverina Regional Training Hub has a physical presence in Griffith, working out of the Griffith Base Hospital but collaborating with other key health stakeholders including St Vincent's Private Community Hospital and the University of Wollongong. This has provided opportunities to work even more closely with clinicians and support staff, to meet the new trainee doctors commencing work at Griffith Base Hospital and to support medical students, helping both groups identify potential rural training pathways and careers in the region. ■

THE DREAM DIRECTOR

Krysten Taprell is a Griffith-based Psychologist and is part of MLHD's Mental Health team.

Krysten works in the Got It! Program, an early intervention program for children. She is also an artist, blogger, podcaster and now, a published author.



TECHNIQUES: Krysten Taprell's new book uses a children's story to help guide parents and children through techniques to control upsetting dreams.

PHOTOS: Kat Vella

Griffith psychologist releases children's book to address nightmares

Article contributed by Kat Vella, Griffith Area News

"When your kids can't sleep it effects the whole family."

These are the experienced words from Griffith's latest published author and child psychologist Krysten Taprell.

The Dream Director is her debut, illustrated children's book for helping to guide children and parents through the emotional turmoil of childhood nightmares.

"When working with kids and families one thing that comes up a lot is kids with nightmares, which is fairly normal," Mrs Taprell said of her more than 20 years experience in the field.

"But I've always thought that these poor families would have to come and see a psychologist when the techniques are really quite simple and parents can do it."

The Dream Director is a children's story book that centres around techniques used in therapy to empower children to gain control of their dreams.

"I think every kid has bad dreams, I think that's a normal part of development and I think all kids go through a stage where they're scared to go to sleep or they're coming into their parents' beds," Mrs Taprell explained.

"Most of the time they just outgrow it but it's nice to have some ideas of some things they can do to manage it well."

Disrupted sleep can be frustrating for parents and devastating to children said Mrs Taprell. Sometimes parents can respond dismissively to what seems like a trivial dream to them, but can be a truly scary experience for their children.

"Parents in this situation are usually sleep deprived as well but I think if your kid wakes you up in the middle of the night and says they've had a dream about a

purple monster your response is most likely: 'It's not real. Go back to sleep'," Mrs Taprell explained.

"But for the child it's really real. They've experienced it in their dream, their heart was racing they felt like they were there so it can be really terrifying for them.

"So these techniques are just a way to give the control back to the child so they don't feel so helpless, but also for the parents so they don't feel like they are banging their head against a brick wall."

Mrs Taprell has dedicated two years of her very busy life as mother and therapist to writing and illustrating the book which is now available to purchase online, and now the moment has finally arrived she is excited for what the future will hold.

"I actually can't wait to physically hold it in my hands. It's all a bit surreal still," she said. ■

An Australian Government Initiative

Rural Pathways to Post-Graduate Medical Training

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GRIFFITH
RIVERINA



We can:

- Give you the information you need about rural medical training pathways
- Help navigate a rural medical training pathway for your career
- Connect you to career advice from rural specialists

Contact Us

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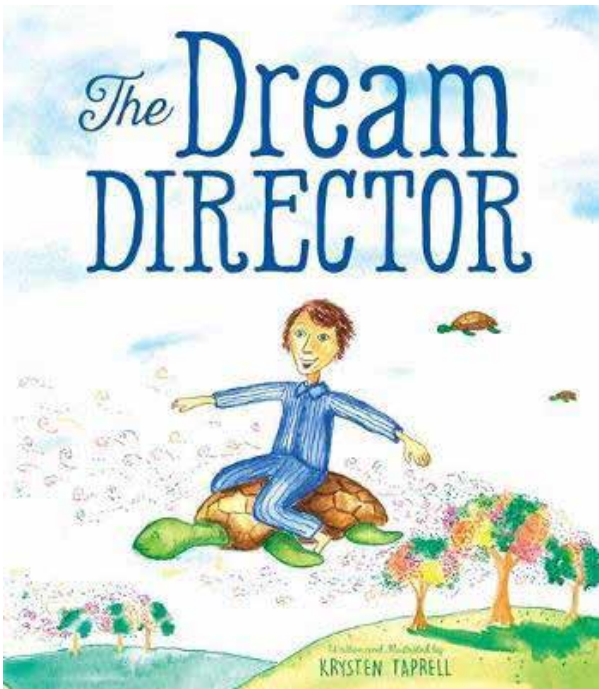
Email: RRThenquiries@nd.edu.au

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Krysten's book has been receiving great reviews including this one from Maggie Dent, parenting author and educator- "Nightmares can cause some of our little ones huge angst and they have a tendency to become repetitive habits and very distressing for both kids and parents! Psychologist Krysten Taprell has written a fabulous picture book that allows kids to take control of their dreams, especially nightmares. The Dream Director combines imagination and creative humour to nurture the capacity for kids to change their dreams and to build bravery at the same time. This excellent book will be so helpful for so many parents with little ones struggling with nightmares."

To find out more about Krysten's book go to www.thetherapistparent.com.





Snowy Valley Council plants wicking beds in the Tumbarumba community as part of the 2020 Healthy Town Challenge

Snowy Valleys wins 2020 Healthy Town Challenge

A project co-run by Snowy Valleys Council and the Murrumbidgee Local Health District has been named as the winner of the 2020 Healthy Town Challenge.

The challenge is an initiative of the Heart Foundation and the NSW Centre for Population Health. It supports regional and rural communities to facilitate healthy living activities to improve the health of their members.

Early last year, five communities – Condobolin, Holbrook, Murwillumbah, Muswellbrook/Denman and Snowy Valleys – received a grant of \$15,000 each to bring their proposed projects to life. Today, the Snowy Valleys project, “Move & Grow”, was named the overall challenge winner, with the prize being an additional \$5,000.

In the “move” component, community members were invited to join free gentle-exercise and tai-chi classes. When the pandemic hit, online videos replaced in-person classes. Regular classes have since resumed, with around 100 residents attending two classes each week.

For the “grow” component, wicking beds – water-conserving garden beds for growing veggies – were set up in Tumut’s Richmond park and at the

Tumbarumba Creekscape. These are being cared for by council staff and members of the community.

To encourage residents to establish their own gardens, council produced instructional videos and ran a competition to win free soil or aggregate. A total of 75 cubic metres of soil and 50 cubic metres of aggregate were delivered to winning households in Tumut and Tumbarumba.

The additional grant will be used to put in another two wicking beds in the towns of Batlow and Talbingo, which were heavily affected by the 2019 bushfires.



“While all participants in the 2020 Healthy Towns Challenge were impressive, the Snowy Valleys project really stood out as a great example of how a simple idea can motivate a community to be healthier and happier,” said Anna Flynn, the Heart Foundation’s NSW & ACT Heart Health Manager, who was on the judging panel.

“The project came at a time when this community really needed a boost. Parts of the Snowy Valleys Council LGA had been badly affected by bushfires, and then COVID-19 took hold. ‘Move & Grow’ provided some fun and positivity during a difficult year.

“The judging panel particularly liked the way in which this project could be adapted and achieve terrific results even during the strictest lockdown conditions. This is a testament to the commitment and resilience of the project team, as well as to the Snowy Valleys locals.

“The Healthy Town Challenge highlights the important role communities can play in helping residents eat well, move more and sit less, which is vital in reducing the incidence of heart disease – Australia’s single leading cause of death.”

Snowy Valleys Council CEO Matthew Hyde said the program was a fantastic example of council partnering with local communities and stakeholders for healthy outcomes.

“I congratulate our Place Activation team for continuing to deliver high quality and innovative community projects, and our appreciation also goes to the team at Murrumbidgee Local Health District for their support in the coordination and running of the program.” ■

BOARD CHAIR’S MESSAGE



MLHD Board Chair Gayle Murphy

One of the best things about my life is my role as a ‘Ma’. My grandsons (Harper and Reuben) mean so much to me. I want the best for them.

For this reason I often think about what we are doing to our planet and what we are leaving the generations to come.

At the January Board meeting the Murrumbidgee Local Health District Board unanimously decided to take the lead in ensuring the District moves towards Sustainable Healthcare.

Sustainable Healthcare is already part of our new Strategic Plan and staff have been working to decrease our footprint on earth.

Board Directors were amazed by data presented to us. 25% of all human disease and death in the world is attributed to environmental factors and the rate for children is higher. The Health sectors contribute to 7% of Australia’s carbon footprint.

Some of the projects commenced by staff are:

- Reducing the consumption of electricity, natural gas and LPG
- Stabilise the generation of clinical waste and general waste to landfill
- Stabilise water use

MLHD will be looking for further ways to enhance our sustainability and encourage our valuable Local Health Advisory Committees to assist us in our goals.

Thank you,

Gayle Murphy
MLHD Board Chair



Thank you to our staff

Dear Staff,

Recently I was out walking and noticed written on the footpath in colored chalk "Thank you health care workers - You are our heroes."

These words were surrounded by love hearts.

Two eight year old girls, Amy and Hollie, had decided to send this message to everyone who passed by their house as they were certain that health care workers would keep them safe.

This message expresses so simply but powerfully what the Murrumbidgee communities believe about health care workers.

Our communities realise staff sacrifice so much to ensure they give quality and safe care. They realise you strive for excellence and nothing else will do.

I sincerely thank YOU for what you do and also your families who support you in many ways.

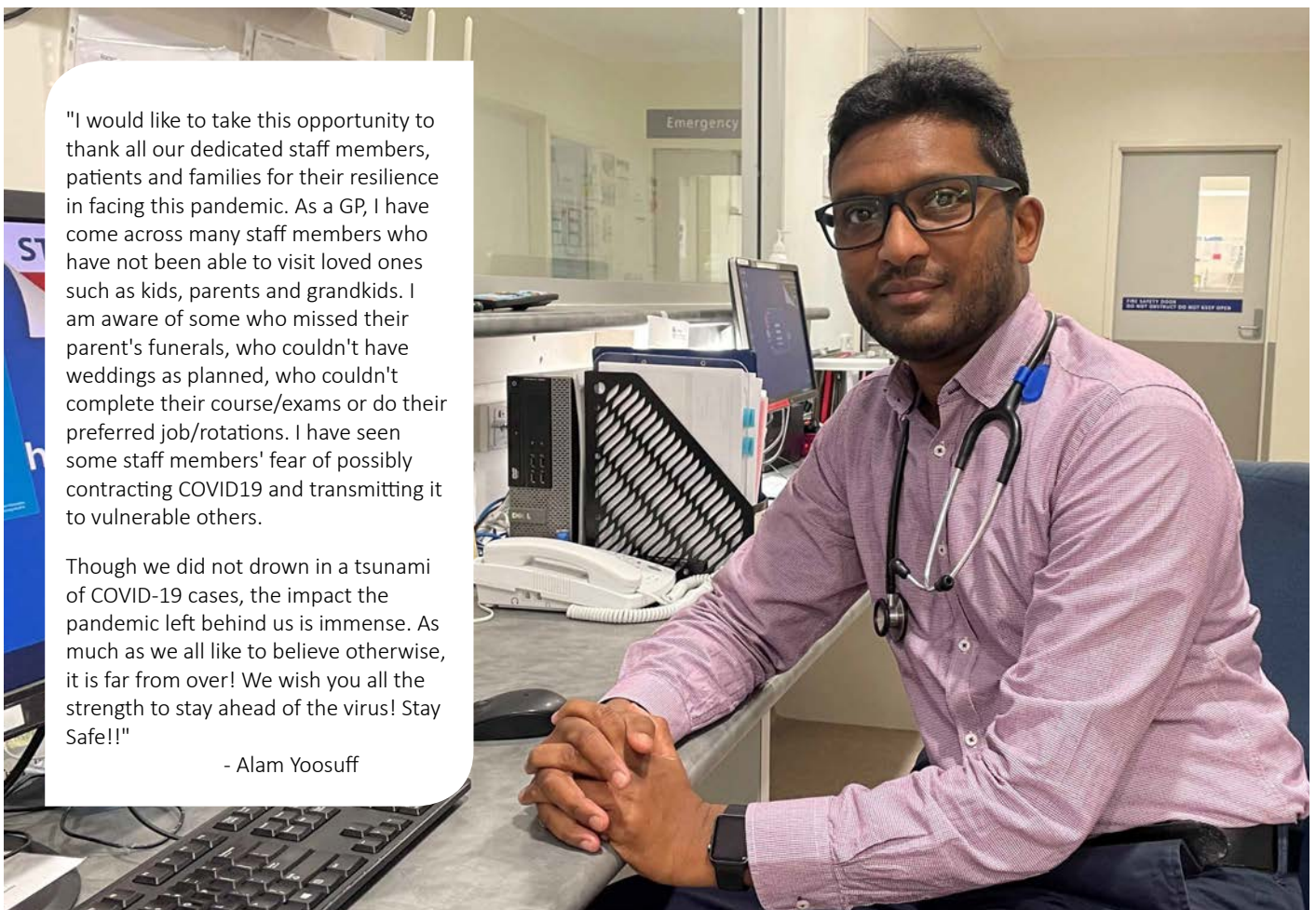
Gayle Murphy
MLHD Board Chair



"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our dedicated staff members, patients and families for their resilience in facing this pandemic. As a GP, I have come across many staff members who have not been able to visit loved ones such as kids, parents and grandkids. I am aware of some who missed their parent's funerals, who couldn't have weddings as planned, who couldn't complete their course/exams or do their preferred job/rotations. I have seen some staff members' fear of possibly contracting COVID19 and transmitting it to vulnerable others.

Though we did not drown in a tsunami of COVID-19 cases, the impact the pandemic left behind us is immense. As much as we all like to believe otherwise, it is far from over! We wish you all the strength to stay ahead of the virus! Stay Safe!!"

- Alam Yoosuff

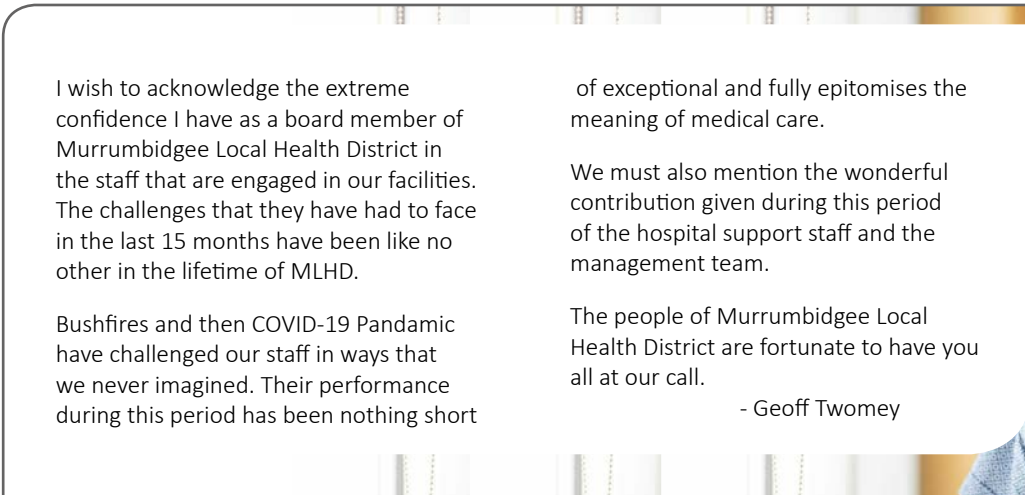




"To all the staff and their respective families, I extend to you my personal thanks and appreciation for your ongoing work ethic and devotion to your role as providers of a service which is truly invaluable ."
- John Ireland
Board Director



My sincerest thanks for working tirelessly through the extraordinary challenges the last 15 months have presented. You have gone above and beyond to ensure the health and wellbeing of our district, whilst undoubtedly facing your own challenges. Thank you for your ongoing care, compassion and commitment.
- Elizabeth Dixon
Board Director



I wish to acknowledge the extreme confidence I have as a board member of Murrumbidgee Local Health District in the staff that are engaged in our facilities. The challenges that they have had to face in the last 15 months have been like no other in the lifetime of MLHD.

Bushfires and then COVID-19 Pandemic have challenged our staff in ways that we never imagined. Their performance during this period has been nothing short

of exceptional and fully epitomises the meaning of medical care.

We must also mention the wonderful contribution given during this period of the hospital support staff and the management team.

The people of Murrumbidgee Local Health District are fortunate to have you all at our call.

- Geoff Twomey



from the MLHD Board x

Deniliquin LHAC Mental Health Awareness Initiative

Local Health Advisory Committees are made up of volunteers who advocate fiercely for health services in their community.

LHACs are proudly supported by Murrumbidgee Local Health District and Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network and work with both organisations to identify local service needs, ways to improve access to services, and to assist in planning and development.

In Deniliquin, the LHAC has been actively raising awareness in the community around access to the range of mental health service on offer in the community. They started with a comprehensive communication campaign called LHAC CHATS, through local press, radio and a social media campaign.

"We introduced an 'LHAC Chat' column in our local newspaper to raise the profile of services, and we also developed a series of posters to help people navigate through the spiders web of services to get where they needed to go."

Ms Liebenberg said Mental Health was a priority area identified early by the LHAC, and they were keen to reduce stigma while raising awareness and improving access to services.

Following up from this, in a collaborative partnership with the Deniliquin Mental Health Awareness Group (Deni MHAG), the LHAC launched a campaign "We care about your mental health". A series of posters were developed to help people navigate the pathways to help, so people could get to where they needed to go. This campaign was expanded to adapt these posters for use across all of the 33 LHACs in MLHD.

The LHAC and Deni MHAG also focused on training to help community members play a role in helping to identify friends and loved ones who might need support.

"Around 1 in 5 Australian adults experience a common mental illness each year," said Ms Liebenberg. "Understanding how to talk about mental health and help someone in need are important skills. Many people feel uncomfortable and unprepared when thinking about starting a conversation with someone they are concerned about."

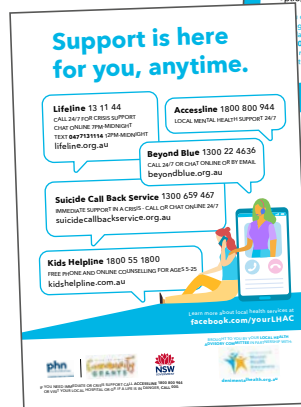


Lourene Liebenberg, Chair Deniliquin LHAC

In 2021, the Deniliquin LHAC has their sights set on a number of new initiatives including a Men's Health campaign; disseminating LHAC Chats into a comprehensive digital and printed Health Directory and using our Facebook page to bring focussed health awareness campaigns such as cancer and chronic conditions to the community.

"We haven't lost sight of the Mental Health issues and it's still a priority on our agenda, we are just expanding the focus of the projects to include some other areas that are also important in our community."

For more information about Local Health Advisory Committees visit the website: mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/get-involved





Focus on New Fathers program

A FREE text message based service called SMS4dads for dads to be and dads with newborns

Eligibility criteria

- open to all co-parents, regardless of gender
- partner is 12 weeks pregnant or baby is six months or younger
- first time dads and dads expanding their families
- living in the Northern NSW, Murrumbidgee, Northern Sydney or Western Sydney local health district – NSW postcode required

Text messages for dads

- up to three messages a week
- from 12 weeks prenatal to when baby is 12 months old
- timed to the development age of the baby
- tips towards building the baby-dad relationship and maintaining parental wellbeing

“Colleagues, GPs are a highly valued source of advice about parenting. This program makes it easy to amplify the support we provide. Please get your practice team involved in alerting new fathers to the program and giving them the card which has the enrolment QR code – supplies available from your PHN.”

Michael Fasher GP, Blacktown, NSW.

Support for GPs and health professionals

- free three week trial for health professionals health.nsw.gov.au/focus-on-new-fathers
- contact your PHN for business cards and resources
- email MOH-MaternityChildandFamily@health.nsw.gov.au

Enrol via
[health.nsw.gov.au/
focus-on-new-fathers](https://health.nsw.gov.au/focus-on-new-fathers)



This program has been funded by the Commonwealth Government under the Health Innovation Fund.

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PHOTO GALLERY



>> LEFT: Chief Executive Jill Ludford visiting Harden Health Service with Board Chair Gayle Murphy, Cluster Manager Joanne Garlick and Facility Manager Kerry Menz

>> BELOW: MLHD Board Chair Gayle Murphy, Chief Executive Jill Ludford and Director Clinical Operations visited Boorowa Health Service recently to meet with staff. Pictured here with Facility Manager Cecelia Walsh inspecting the new over bed camera systems.



>> ABOVE: Priority Populations Program staff Samantha Price, Rebecca Tyne, Rachel Harmer. MLHD's Priority Populations Program provides specialised services to people dealing with Violence, Abuse and Neglect (VAN). If you, or someone you know is experiencing Violence, Abuse or Neglect please contact MLHD for assistance by calling Community Care Intake Service on 1800 654 324 (Monday to Friday 8.30 am – 5.00 pm).



>> ABOVE: FAREWELL TO MERRAN: After 45 years of dedicated service, Merran Bolton (pictured centre in red), has retired from Narrandera Hospital – the hospital where she was born, started her nursing career and had her skills and commitment recognised with senior roles including Nurse Unit Manager and Acting Facility Manager.



>> ABOVE: Junior Medical Officers at the Orientation earlier this year.

>> BELOW: The Wagga Wagga Hospital Auxiliary recently donated \$50,000 to the maternity unit.





MPHN preparing updated Health Needs Assessment for the region

Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN) is seeking community and consumer feedback over the coming months as it prepares an updated Health Needs Assessment (HNA) for the Murrumbidgee region.

The 2022-2024 HNA for the region will be determined by the data and information provided through the two online surveys – one mini two-question and one in-depth community surveys; and the Conversations on the Couch events.

MPHN CEO Melissa Neal said all community members are encouraged to share their thoughts on what is important to them about health, and what improvements could be made, in order to ultimately improve the health outcomes of the region.

“Every three years we look at the various sources of information available to us about the health of our region including data and feedback from community, to help us identify any new or emerging needs for us to consider as we plan our activity,” Ms Neal said.

As part of the campaign, MPHN representatives will visit several towns across the region to have casual ‘Conversations on the Couch’ with community members and health professionals.

“These conversations enable people to talk to us and help us plan for future services so that all Murrumbidgee people achieve the best health outcomes,” Ms Neal said.

The HNA Community Feedback surveys will commence in March, with people living in Hilltops, Cootamundra-Gundagai and Snowy Valleys Local Government Areas encouraged to provide their feedback.

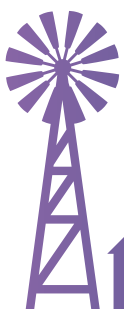
“HNA Community Feedback is a great opportunity for people to share their thoughts and views on how we can reduce risk factors and improve the health of everyone in the community,” Ms Neal said.

Each month between March and August this year, the HNA Community Feedback campaign will focus on up to three neighbouring LGAs each month, with one location within these hosting Conversations On The Couch. The full schedule is as follows:

Month	LGAs	Conversations on the Couch
March	Hilltops, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Snowy Valleys	25 March – DJs on Neil, 26 Neil Street, Harden (9.30am-11.30am)
April	Carathool, Griffith, Hay	29 April – Hanwood (Location TBC)
May	Bland, Temora, Junee Berrigan, Federation, Greater Hume	27 May – Junee (Location TBC) 28 May – Howlong (Location TBC)
June	Edward River, Murray River, Murrumbidgee	17 June – Jerilderie (Location TBC)
July	Coolamon, Leeton, Narrandera	30 July – Coolamon (Location TBC)
August	Lockhart, Wagga Wagga	27 August – Lockhart (Location TBC)

People are encouraged to head to www.mphn.org.au/hna to submit their feedback during the relevant month. To stay up to date with all the HNA Community Feedback news, follow MPHN on Facebook or Twitter @MurrumbidgeePHN.

Taking the pulse on health services
across the Murrumbidgee



Mental Health ups and downs are a normal part of life.

No matter how you are feeling, there are a range of local services that can help.

Discuss your options any time with Murrumbidgee **Accessline**

1800 800 944



SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

LIFELINE 131114

MHECS - MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY CONSULTATION SERVICE

RECOVERY UNIT

GENERAL PRACTITIONER

SUICIDE WAY BACK SERVICE

WELLWAYS

COUNSELLING

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS INFORMATION SERVICE

MAP MY RECOVERY

SPECIALIST COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

LGBTIQ+ FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT GROUP

MY STEP TO MENTAL WELLBEING

ACCESSLINE

ROAR - REACH OUT AND RELAX

FAMILY COUNSELLING

WELLNESS SERVICES

Learn more about local health services at facebook.com/yourLHAC

BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOUR **LOCAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



IF YOU NEED IMMEDIATE OR CRISIS SUPPORT CALL ACCESSLINE 1800 800 944 OR VISIT YOUR LOCAL HOSPITAL OR GP. IF A LIFE IS IN DANGER, CALL 000.

denimentalhealth.org.au