

WE ARE

Issue 14 | Summer 2025 | FREE

Southern

Excellence in Care



Complex menopause
care expanded
across Southern

In this issue:

- Aunty Jeans glory in Batemans Bay
- Gloves off in the fight against infection
- Blooming tribute at cancer centre

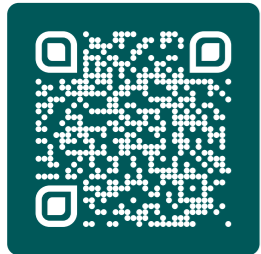


Southern NSW
Local Health District



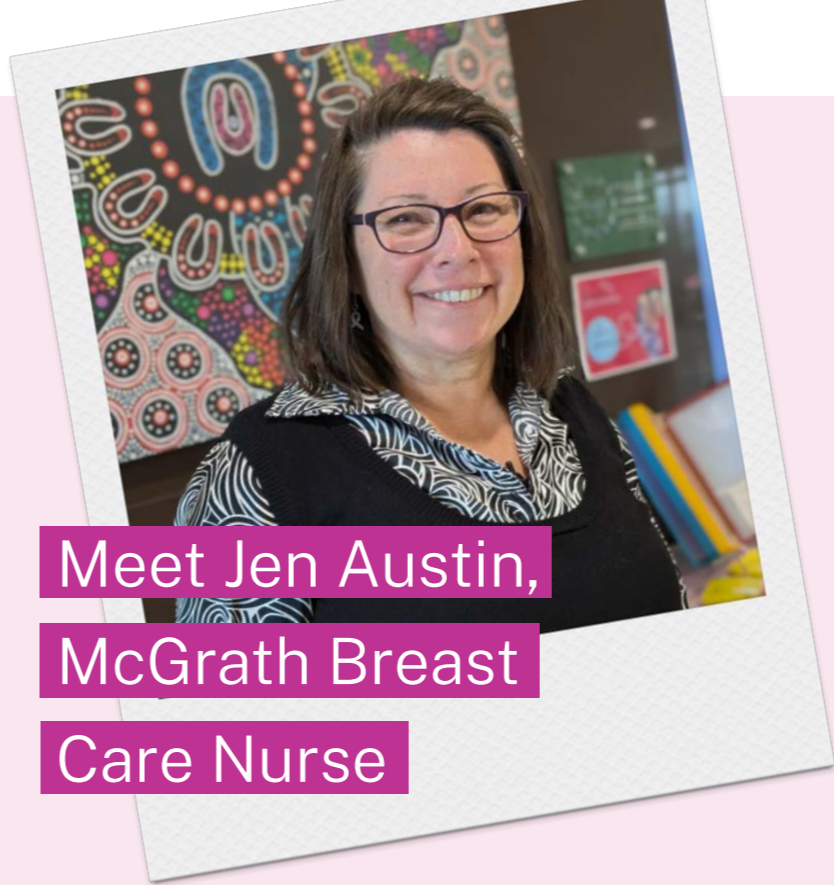
Celine, Midwife

and after school lagoon lounge



**Regional NSW,
make the move**

nsw.gov.au/makethemove



**Meet Jen Austin,
McGrath Breast
Care Nurse**



Jen Austin, a McGrath Breast Care Nurse, talked with patients, staff, students and visitors at Queanbeyan Hospital during October about the services the program offers to patients, to mark Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

“McGrath Breast Care Nurses are registered nurses specially trained to manage the care of people with breast cancer throughout the course of their treatment,” explained Jen.

“We play an important advocacy role as well as helping to clarify technical or complicated information that may not be easily understood.

“Most importantly, McGrath Breast Care Nurses offer vital emotional support for people with breast cancer and their families, during what can be a very difficult time.

Being a McGrath nurse is a privilege -every day, I know I’m making a real difference.”

Jen supports patients and their families in Queanbeyan and the surrounding areas, including Braidwood.

She has been a Registered Nurse since 2002 and became a McGrath Breast Care Nurse in 2023. She holds a Graduate Certificate in Breast Care Nursing, and a Graduate Certificate in Oncology Nursing.

“I value my role as McGrath Breast Care Nurse through being a constant source of support as an educator, information provider, listener, advocate and helping patients, their families, and carers.”

“Every day I make a difference by supporting patients and their families and I feel that my openness in navigating them through their cancer story helps build a trusting rapport and decreases stress and anxiety.”

There are currently 233 McGrath Breast Care Nurses across Australia who provide expert care to individuals and families experiencing breast cancer, for free.

Southern has McGrath Breast Care Nurses in Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Moruya, Bega and Cooma. Find your nearest McGrath Breast Care Nurse at mcgfdn.com/findanurse or call 1800 183 338.

Every woman’s breasts are different. Breasts differ in size, shape, and colour.

Get to know how your own breasts look and feel to understand what’s normal for you, so you can tell if something changes.

Look for...



A change in size or shape of your breast.



A change to the nipple, such as crusting, an ulcer, redness, or an inversion.



Nipple discharge that occurs without squeezing, which could include blood.



A change to the skin of your breast, such as redness or dimpling.

Feel for...



A new lump or lumpiness, especially if its only one breast.



An unusual pain in your breast or armpit that doesn’t go away.

If you have any breast changes or symptoms, see your doctor straight away.

Created by
Southern NSW
Local Health District
Media and Communications
Department

Contributors
Emma Woolley
Natalie Peck
Caroline Noonan-Edwards
Molly Sinclair
Anna Jolly
Penelope Cox
Eliza Milenkovic
Vanessa Barratt
Gerard Dennis

**Advertising and
editorial enquiries**
If you'd like to contribute a
story to *We Are Southern*
magazine or to pitch a story
idea, please get in touch at
snswhd-media@health.nsw.gov.au

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Message from our

Chief Executive

Welcome to the Summer edition of We Are Southern.

This edition celebrates the hard work and dedication of Southern's staff who deliver high quality care to our patients throughout the year. As a result of their professionalism and diligence many lives have been positively changed and I am very proud of all that has been achieved.

There are many positives we can take from this year. We have made progress on a range of key projects and initiatives such as the establishment of our Research Office, the consolidation of the Virtual Rural Generalist Service, and the strengthening of our Closing the Gap initiatives. Many exciting opportunities and plans lie ahead in 2025 as we develop these further.

We have come to expect that Southern staff will go above and beyond to do the right things by their patients, but that doesn't make us any less proud. We are Southern because each individual plays their part, every day throughout the year. As one of the largest employers in our region, that's a lot of people going the extra mile and I am immensely grateful for that.

I want to give a special thanks to those who are working over the holiday period - keeping our hospitals and health services functioning for those who need them most, knowing as we do, that it can be a very hard time if you are a patient at this time of the year.

With heartfelt thanks and appreciation,



Margaret Bennett OAM
Chief Executive

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Local access, lifelong impact

We look back at the history of
Southern's genetic counselling
service, and how the service
improves access for rural and
regional families.

Southern NSW Local Health District acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands within its boundaries, the Gundungurra, Ngambri, Ngarigo, Ngunnawal and Yuin tribes.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, community members and staff for their ongoing contribution to society and their commitment to improving health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

On the cover

Southern Menopause Care
Coordinator, Monica Fraser



District Clinical Trials Coordinator welcomed

Australians in rural, regional and remote areas face barriers in taking part in clinical trials, including distance, cultural difference, geographical isolation and workforce capacity. It is through the research done in clinical trials that people gain access to better treatments.

Southern's Research Office recently welcomed Nada Bechara as our District Clinical Trials Coordinator, to give more patients more treatment options regardless of where they live.

Nada is passionate about medical research and adapting evidence-based practice and has been conducting clinical trials since commencing at Blacktown Hospital in 2019.

Nada has a clinical podiatry background, most recently working as a senior podiatrist with Western Sydney Local Health District.

This appointment has been made possible by the Rural, Regional and Remote (or R3) clinical trial enabling program, supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Medical Research Future Fund.

The program is led by NSW Health along with 34 state and national partners across health, research, private and community sectors including ACT Health; and will deliver increased and more equitable access to clinical trials for patients in rural, regional, and remote NSW and the ACT.



Dietitians celebrate 20 years at Southern

Southern's Coastal Network Dietetics team recently marked twenty years of service to the District by both Paula Cauduro and Margie Contis.

"Paula and Margie have both contributed to the profession of dietetics fostering growth in a supportive and encouraging manner allowing an organic evolution of success and achievement for the department," said Anna Jolly, Manager Partnerships, Research & Innovation and Dietitian.

"Both Paula (working in Aboriginal Health) and Margie (in Renal) have provided so much in the way of clinical care for our consumers over the years, both experts in their field their accumulated clinical and organisational knowledge is an absolute asset to Southern.

"Thank you both for all you have done over the years Paula and Margie, it's been an honour to work alongside you both. Congratulations!"

Naturally, the celebration wouldn't be complete without cake, proving that even dietitians enjoy a slice of indulgence now and then!



Dashain celebrated at Lowe St offices

Dashain was celebrated at Southern's Lowe Street Queanbeyan offices on 9 October with several of the team originating from, or having connections to Nepal, Sri Lanka, India and other celebrating countries.

The Dashain festival, also known as Vijaya Dashami, is the largest and most significant festival in Nepal, celebrated by Hindus across the country and worldwide.

A delicious array of Nepalese, Indian and homecooked food was on offer to celebrate Dashain with District Wide Programs and Finance and Performance staff treated to a wide range of food including edamame bean salad, goat curry and butter chicken to name a few, all home made by staff and staff families.

The feast was well received by all team members in Lowe Street on the day.

What a delicious way to share and celebrate culture amongst our "work families"! Thank you to the teams involved for sharing these photos with your Southern colleagues.



ED improvements on show at conference

Southern's emergency departments (EDs) were on show at the 2024 CENA International College of Emergency Nurses Conference in Sydney in October, with Southern's Emergency and Trauma Clinical Nurse Consultant, Louise Casey, delivering a presentation on improving the safety and quality of emergency nursing care.

"Our District sought a solution to patient assessment improvements in our EDs, specifically pain assessment and improving nurse-initiated analgesia," explained Louise.

Southern partnered with the University of Sydney to implement HIRAID® (*History including Infection risk, red flags, Assessment, Interventions, Diagnostics, communication, and reassessment*) across our emergency departments.

"Evaluation of the implementation of HIRAID® demonstrated improvement in ED nurse related deterioration events, initial nursing assessment, communication, and clinical handover."

A pre post multi-method study demonstrated a 16% improvement in handover clarity and relevant information provided. 938 patients reported significant improved experience and care communication in 2021-2022.

"I was so very proud to be standing in front of ED nurses from around the world, flying the flag for Southern and for rural nursing. We are an amazing group of rural nurses, practicing in challenging and diverse EDs."

Donation helps get people on their feet

Meet Tri-Sara-Tops, Steadward Scissorhands, Stable Mabel, Sara Bella and Betty McSteadyface. They're the latest additions to Goulburn's physiotherapy department, thanks to a generous donation from BDCU Hospital Fundraising Inc.

The five new Sara Stedy devices are non-powered sit-to-stand aids that helps patients and residents move from a seated to a standing position. These devices will enhance the department's ability to support safe and effective patient mobility, benefiting both patients and staff by reducing the physical demands of patient handling.

The arrival of these long-awaited devices brought a wave of excitement through the department, leading to a unique and spirited celebration. Physiotherapy staff held a lighthearted competition to name each of the Sara Stedy devices, adding a personal and playful touch to their new additions. The fun didn't stop there, with the team continuing the festivities by staging a "horse race" event to usher the devices into their respective wards, showcasing their enthusiasm and creativity.

Thank you to BDCU Hospital Fundraising Inc for the donation, which will have a lasting impact on patient outcomes and the wellbeing of our staff.



District-wide boost to complex menopause care

Women who experience severe or complex menopause symptoms are set to benefit from enhanced support, with the official opening of a new menopause referral service.

Launched with an event at the Mogo Women's Group on World Menopause Day, 18 October 2024, the new Menopause Referral Service is part of NSW Health's extensive menopause network, which includes four health hubs and multiple referral sites throughout the state.

As a part of this network, the Southern Menopause Referral Service will provide District-wide outpatient care led by a newly appointed Care Coordinator Monica Fraser and Women's Health Nurses to support local women with severe and/or complex symptoms of menopause.

Southern's Menopause Service is linked to South Eastern Sydney

Local Health District's Menopause Hub, which means women can access a comprehensive approach to managing severe menopausal symptoms through a multi-disciplinary team of medical specialists and allied health professionals, including women's health nurses, physiotherapists, dietitians, and clinical psychologists.

General practitioners, specialists, and nurse practitioners can refer eligible women for advanced care through Southern's Community Health Central Intake Service at SNSWLHD-CommunityIntake@health.nsw.gov.au.

Women can also connect with the service directly through Southern's network of Women Health Nurses based at Eurobodalla, Bega, Queanbeyan, Yass, Cooma and Goulburn community health services.

Above: The service was officially launched at the Mogo Women's Group on 18 October

Below: Care Coordinator Monica Fraser



Everleigh welcomed as Goulburn's 2024 Lilac Baby

Every spring, Goulburn turns purple to celebrate the lilacs that bloom throughout the town. The Lilac City Festival, known affectionately as 'Lilac Time', is Australia's longest continuously-run community festival

Lilac Time has a rich history that dates back to the 1950s and has now become a beloved annual event for the community, spanning four days across the October long weekend.

Goulburn's Lilac Prince, Princess and Baby are announced at the opening ceremony of the festival, along with the crowning of the new Lilac Queen. The first baby born at Goulburn Hospital during the festival is known as the 'Lilac Baby'.

This year, the title went to Everleigh Arnold, born to parents Chris and Rachel at 4.55am on 5 October. The family was presented with a bundle of gifts on behalf of the town by 2024 Lilac Queen Samantha Schweers.

Congratulations to Chris and Rachel on their new arrival!

-with thanks to the Goulburn Lilac City Festival Committee



Local revenue optimisation work acknowledged

Southern's Finance and Performance Directorate were recently acknowledged at the 2024 HFMA Australia Health Finance Awards, highlighting their contribution and leadership in healthcare finance, with a focus on improving clinical documentation.

Accurate clinical documentation improvement is a critical part of the revenue cycle in healthcare, as it helps to ensure that billing results are accurate by reflecting the clinical care a patient receives.

Southern's Director of Operational Performance, Kavitha Gunaseelan, was recognised for her work improving revenue performance, leading a 21% increase in National Weighted Activity Unit (NWAU) improvement, enhancing clinical documentation and stakeholder engagement. Southern's Finance and Performance team were honoured for their work in the 'Team of the Year' category for improving clinical documentation and patient care, achieving a top state performance in NWAU.

In May 2023, Southern partnered with Clinical Documentation

Improvement Australia (CDIA) to launch the Revenue Optimisation Project, focused on improving our NWAU performance.

The NWAU is a way to compare and value public hospital services, such as emergency department presentations, admissions, and outpatient episodes.

The NWAU is weighted for clinical complexity, with the average hospital service worth one NWAU. More intensive and expensive activities are worth multiple NWAUs, while the simplest and least expensive are worth fractions of an NWAU.

By improving the accuracy of the Southern's clinical documentation we can:

- better communicate patients' health to the spectrum of health professionals
- better facilitate research by improving our categorisation of the patient's diagnosis
- better measure and manage the direct impact of the care delivery on reimbursement.

Congratulations to the team on their achievements!



Dementia the focus at Yass community event

Yass recently played host to a dementia community information session, held in collaboration with Yass Hospital Auxiliary, Yass Valley Anglican Parish, Dementia Australia, Yass District Hospital and Yass Golf Club.

Dementia is the general term used for the symptoms of an illness that affects the brain. There are many diseases that

can cause dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.

Attendees heard from Southern's Dementia and Delirium Clinical Nurse Consultant, Tracey Doran-Robertson about the different types of dementia, diagnosis, planning ahead, advice for carers and information about available services and how to access support locally.



Meet Simone Henry, Occupational Therapist

Having moved to the Bega Valley with her partner late last year to work in South East Regional Hospital's Mental Health Inpatient Unit, Simone is enjoying both her new role and all the area has to offer.

Simone works with people with a mental illness to provide recovery and skills-based interventions, which are both individual and in groups.

Simone says, "it's extremely rewarding to be part of someone's recovery".

The area has a lot to offer too. "I love to get outdoors, whether it's fishing, kayaking or hitting up the mountain bike trails."

As an OT in a mental health inpatient unit, Simone's role is to provide health, wellbeing and recovery supports through engagement in meaningful activity.

"I'm interested in how people's mental illness impacts their life roles and activities," Simone says.

"Part of my role is assessment - where I work with people to help them understand their strengths, and barriers, and identify what their support needs are. This involves psychosocial, functional and cognitive assessment," Simone says.

The next stage is to provide recovery and skills-based

interventions which are both individual and group facilitated.

Group activities that foster meaningful social engagement like Simone's regular BBQs, incorporate skills building like food planning, preparation and cooking, and support consumers' collaborative skills.

Individual interventions include education and recovery-based activities such as relapse prevention planning, building coping skills and sensory approaches.

"A sensory profile can help consumers understand how they respond to their environment and what sensory experiences they find calming, alerting or triggering," Simone says.

Consumers are encouraged to develop a 'sensory diet', which consists of experiences and strategies they can include in their routines to promote regulation and optimal functioning."

Simone enjoys the challenge of working as the Occupational Therapist in the unit, but says it's a team effort.

"The team has been really great," Simone says. "We support each other, and I really enjoy collaborating with the whole team."



Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix centenary event raises funds for Goulburn Base Hospital

We welcomed Bruce Tinsley and Dale Towell to Goulburn Base Hospital in September as they presented a donation on behalf of the Goulburn Motorcycle Grand Prix Association Inc.

The funds were raised as part of Goulburn's Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix centenary, which ran over three days in June 2024.

The funds raised as part of the event will go towards purchases for the hospital's Maternity Unit and Rehabilitation Unit, and were gratefully accepted on the hospital's behalf by Nurse Unit Manager Aleta O'Meara and Deputy Director of Nursing Rebecca Miles.

On 23 June 1924, more than 60 young motorcycle riders braved a frosty winter morning in Goulburn to write their names in the Australian motorsport history books.

The 1924 Australian Motor Cycle Grand Prix was the first of its kind in Australia, and the highlight of the centenary celebration was an

escorted, re-enactment ride along the original 80 kilometre course, with more than 400 riders taking part.

Starting from the monument commemorating the start and finish point of the 1924 race on Windellama Road, the triangular circuit extended from the outskirts of Goulburn to Windellama, across to Bungonia and back to the junction of the two roads.

Motor cycle racing has been a popular sport in Goulburn since the Goulburn Motor Club was formed in 1911. For the re-enactment ride, the community lined the street to cheer on the riders over the course.

Goulburn is considered to be the true birthplace of Grand Prix racing in Australia, hosting not only the first Motorcycle Grand Prix in 1924, but also the first Car Grand Prix in 1927, and, the first Australian Motorcycle TT (Tourist Trophy) in 1914. The Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix centenary event was a collaborative effort

between the Classic Riders Club of Goulburn, Goulburn Motorcycle Club, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, and the Goulburn Chamber of Commerce.

Above: Aleta O'Meara, Dale Towell, Bruce Tinsley and Rebecca Miles

Below: Winner of the 1924 Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix, Dave Brewster.



Queanbeyan lights up for Diwali celebrations

Queanbeyan Hospital hosted its inaugural Diwali celebration in October with a beautiful lunch gathering on the Level 1 Balcony area. The homemade food from staff was plentiful and delicious, and it was enjoyed by the many staff from across the Hospital who took the time to come in between shifts to celebrate and join the festivities.

The successful event was organised by Arun Sharma, Rakesh Patal and Kamal Singh, with support from Queanbeyan Site Manager Sam Sherd and their other Queanbeyan colleagues. They are pictured above right with Chief Executive Margaret Bennett who was delighted to be invited to join the special occasion and share lunch with colleagues.

In thanking attendees, organiser Rakesh explained that Diwali, the festival of lights, represents hope, joy, and the triumph of good over evil.

“This event offers a wonderful opportunity for our team to come together, celebrate our diversity, and strengthen our community spirit.”

Rakesh also joined other NSW Health staff from across the state in a special Diwali message shared across social media platforms by the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service.

Watch a special Diwali message from Rakesh



Yass bake-off highlights World Sepsis Day

Staff at Yass Hospital showed off their baking skills in September as part of their World Sepsis Day education program.

The Annual Yass Hospital World Sepsis Day Bake Off helps to raise awareness about recognising and treating sepsis early for better outcomes, by encouraging staff to get creative in the kitchen and bring out their most inventive themed creation. Prizes were on offer for the Best Sweet, Best Savoury, Best Overall and the coveted Pan Room Prize.

Staff also participated in a World Sepsis Day quiz to test their knowledge about what they can do in their role to help reduce the risk, incidence, and impact of sepsis.

Baking is fun, but sepsis is serious. Sepsis is a life-threatening condition and needs immediate medical attention. Sepsis can cause death or permanent damage without treatment. Even if you have already seen a doctor, if you or your child is still sick and not getting better, go back to your doctor or hospital emergency department, or call Triple Zero 000 if it is an emergency. Don't be afraid to ask "Could it be sepsis?"

Find out more at health.nsw.gov.au/sepsis





Could it be sepsis?

Sepsis makes kids very sick, very quickly. Know the symptoms. Get help fast.



Any infection can lead to life-threatening sepsis, and young children and babies are more at risk.

To learn more about sepsis visit health.nsw.gov.au/sepsis



March 2024 © NSW Ministry of Health, SHPN (HP NSW) 240065-4

Eurobodalla Regional Hospital team donate trikes to Ronald McDonald Family Retreat

Children visiting the Ronald McDonald Family Retreat at Batemans Bay have a new way to stay entertained thanks to a generous donation of six new tricycles from the Eurobodalla Regional Hospital project team.

The tricycles were handed over to Toni Lea-Howie and Lee Maiden from Ronald McDonald House Charities ACT & South East NSW, by representatives from Health Infrastructure, Southern NSW Local Health District, RP Infrastructure, and building contractor Multiplex, who are working together to deliver the new hospital.

Health Infrastructure Executive Director, Rural and Regional, Amanda Bock said that the tricycles, which were purchased by Multiplex, were assembled as part of a recent team-building exercise.

“Ronald McDonald House Charities do incredible work supporting sick children and their families, and the donation of the tricycles is a meaningful way for us to show our support,” Ms Bock said.

“Small teams worked together to assemble the tricycles as quickly as possible with each team member using only one hand.

“The team-building exercise was a fantastic way to foster collaboration and teamwork among the project team, and we were thrilled to be giving back to the community.”

Ms Maiden thanked the project team for their generous donation, adding they expect the trikes to be well-received by families visiting the Family Retreat near Batemans Bay.

“We offer a week’s free accommodation to families in our two spacious, comfortable three-bedroom units which gives them a chance to forget the stresses of hospital life and allows them to relax, enjoy special times and create fond memories,” Ms Maiden said.

“The charity is supported by many local businesses who provide vouchers to local attractions and dining options. The retreat is in a beautiful region with wonderful beaches creating a memorable holiday for all the families who stay here.”

The NSW Government has committed \$330 million to the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital, which will deliver a sustainable, modern and purpose-built hospital to support the needs of the entire Eurobodalla Shire from Narooma to Batemans Bay

The new hospital is under construction and is expected to be completed in 2027.



Batemans Bay Community Health plans on show

Batemans Bay residents are one step closer to accessing a new health facility with the latest designs for the new Batemans Bay Community Health facility now on display.

The NSW Government is investing \$20 million to deliver the new Batemans Bay Community Health facility which will provide modern, integrated and convenient healthcare, to meet the needs of the local community.

The Batemans Bay and surrounding communities were invited to view the latest designs, meet the project team, and find out more about the new Batemans Bay Community Health facility at drop-in sessions throughout October.

Construction for the new facility is expected to start in 2025, following planning approvals and the appointment of a building contractor.

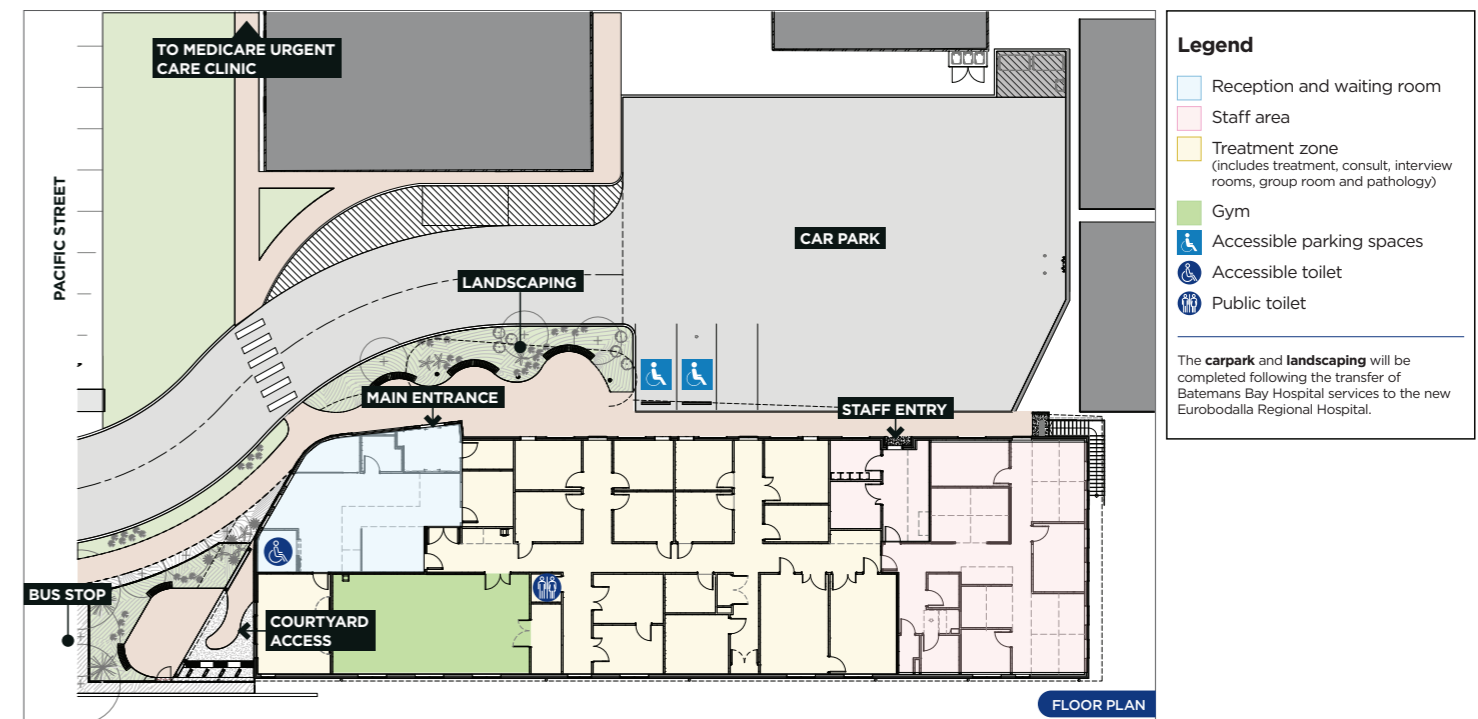
The detailed designs show the layout of the new facility including dedicated spaces for consultation, treatment, pathology, group rooms, and a gym.

The new Batemans Bay Community Health facility includes:

- Allied health
- Child, youth and family services
- Women’s health
- Sexual health
- Community nursing and wound management
- Palliative care
- Aboriginal health
- Community mental health, alcohol and other drugs
- Specialist outpatient clinics
- Pathology.

Batemans Bay Hospital will continue to provide health care services for the community while the Batemans Bay Community Health and new \$330 million Eurobodalla Regional Hospital are being built.

Hospital services from Batemans Bay and Moruya will transition to the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital once the new hospital is operational.



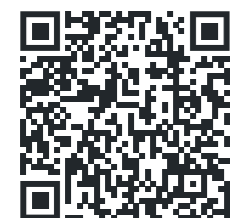
The Welcome Experience

If you are an essential worker thinking about relocating to regional NSW, The Welcome Experience offers tailored support for you and your family. Our dedicated Local Connectors will introduce you to the right people and services to help you settle into your new community faster.



What we can help you with

-  Relocation
-  Partner Employment
-  Housing
-  Cultural connections
-  Social connections
-  Leisure and recreation
-  Education and childcare
-  Accessibility and healthcare
-  Local knowledge



Regional NSW, make the move



Southern collaboration on show at 2024 National Rural & Remote Health Awards

Southern's Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) implementation team were announced as the Rural/Remote Multidisciplinary Health Collaboration of the Year at the 2024 National Rural & Remote Health Awards.

Held at the National Press Club in Canberra, the awards honour those who keep rural and remote communities healthy. The team were presented with their award by Professor Roger Strasser AM, Professor of Rural Health, Founding Dean Emeritus, Northern Ontario School of Medicine University.

The team are pictured above with Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC Governor-General of the Commonwealth of

Australia, and Southern's Chief Executive, Margaret Bennett.

Also celebrated at the awards was Rebekah Bowman, who was a finalist in the Rural/Remote Health Advocate of the Year category. Bek is the District Midwifery Manager of Southern's midwifery team across our five maternity services.

Entries for the Awards were assessed by a judging panel including rural health practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and advocates.

The finalists were selected from almost 200 nominations across ten categories, including nominations from rural and remote areas in every state and territory.

Southern has successfully implemented a VAD service, aligning with the New South Wales Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2022.

The service ensures that each person's unique circumstances are respected, with choices supported without judgment, regardless of their setting, geographic location, or preferred language.

Southern's VAD service was commended for demonstrating exceptional commitment to providing empathetic and supportive end-of-life care, making a significant difference in the lives of individuals and families through their person-centred approach.

Eurobodalla Regional Hospital: Meet the Expert Kellyann Johnson, Aboriginal Health



We sat down with Kellyann to find out how she's been involved in the planning for the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital and what it will mean for the future of Aboriginal health and the community.

Tell us a bit about you.

My name is Kellyann Johnson and I am the District Manager for Aboriginal Health with Southern NSW Local Health District. I am a Yuin woman, with bloodlines all the way down the coast from Nowra to Wallaga Lake.

Could you tell us about the site of the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital?

The site of the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital is the traditional home of the Walbunja people. It includes more than 20 acres of beautiful land with stunning views over to the mountains.

The site provides lots of open spaces for people to feel connected to Country, and for the hospital to grow.

How have the Aboriginal community been involved in the planning and design of the new hospital?

The Aboriginal community have been able to influence (the new hospital) in a variety of ways. One key aspect is the ability to birth on Country for Aboriginal women. The hospital design includes spaces outside the birthing suites that allow the families to take new babies outside, onto Country.

The hospital also includes the creation of outdoor spaces and yarning spaces and quiet spaces, spaces to reflect and just wander through the environment.

It's important to have a nice environment and lots of space, particularly for Aboriginal people, because hospitals are not traditionally a place of good memory.

Being able to go outside and connect to Country, within nature, helps people come to terms with whatever suffering or stressors they're having because they're at a hospital.

How will a single Eurobodalla Regional Hospital benefit the local Aboriginal community?

I think the benefit of having a single Eurobodalla Regional Hospital is that people can be treated at home on Country.

It will be a level 4 hospital. So, it'll have all the services or the mod cons of what you would expect with a new hospital.

The hospital environment is being informed by Aboriginal groups so it will be a very culturally, welcoming, space. The Aboriginal Health team will be located at the new hospital together and be able to assist both with inpatient services as well as programs in the community.

They will be connectors, to care for Aboriginal people.

What would you like the community to know about the new hospital?

I would like community members to get excited about what the new hospital is going to bring for them and what it's going to mean for their health.

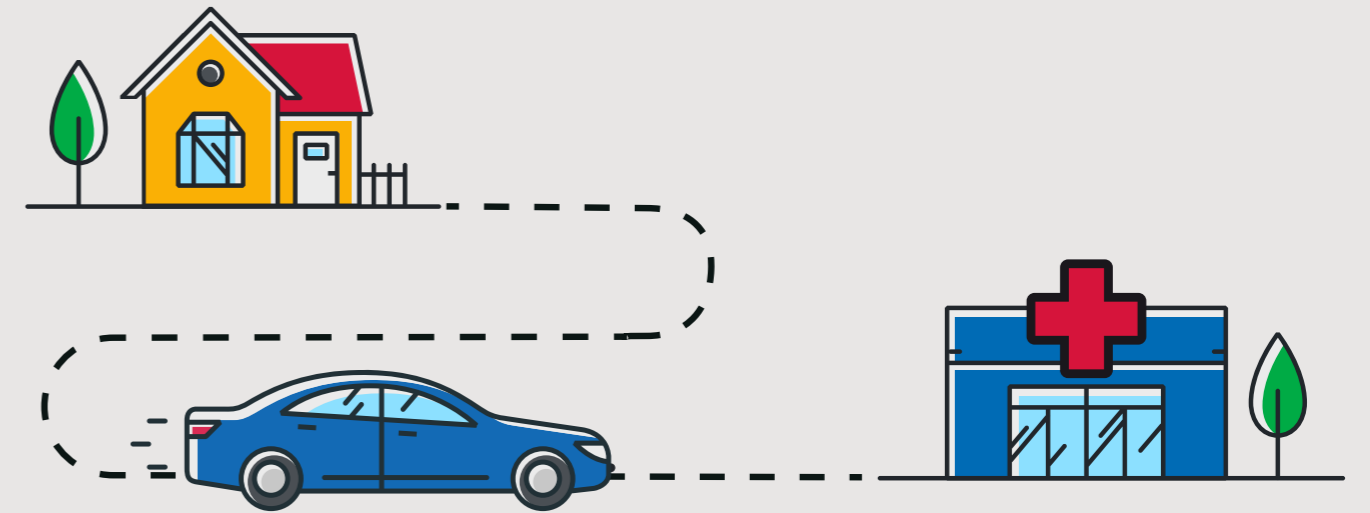
More specialist services, will be provided here in the Eurobodalla and they'll be provided to community members from Durras all the way down to Wallaga Lake

In addition to the new hospital providing a culturally safe space for Aboriginal people to seek treatment, it will be a safe and welcoming environment for the whole community of the Eurobodalla.

Do you travel long distances for specialised healthcare?



If you travel more than 100km one way or 200km within a week you may be able to claim financial assistance towards travel and accommodation costs.



To find out if you are eligible



Ask

your social worker or healthcare team



Call

1800 478 227

or



Visit

iptaas.health.nsw.gov.au



Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme - IPTAAS

Scan the QR code to learn more.

Eden Jaandas rise and break through the water

This year the Eden Aunty Jeans program, run by Aboriginal Health at Southern in partnership with Grand Pacific Health, was successful in receiving funding from the NSW Aboriginal Knockout Health Challenge.

The Eden Jaandas (humpback whales) organised a 10-week

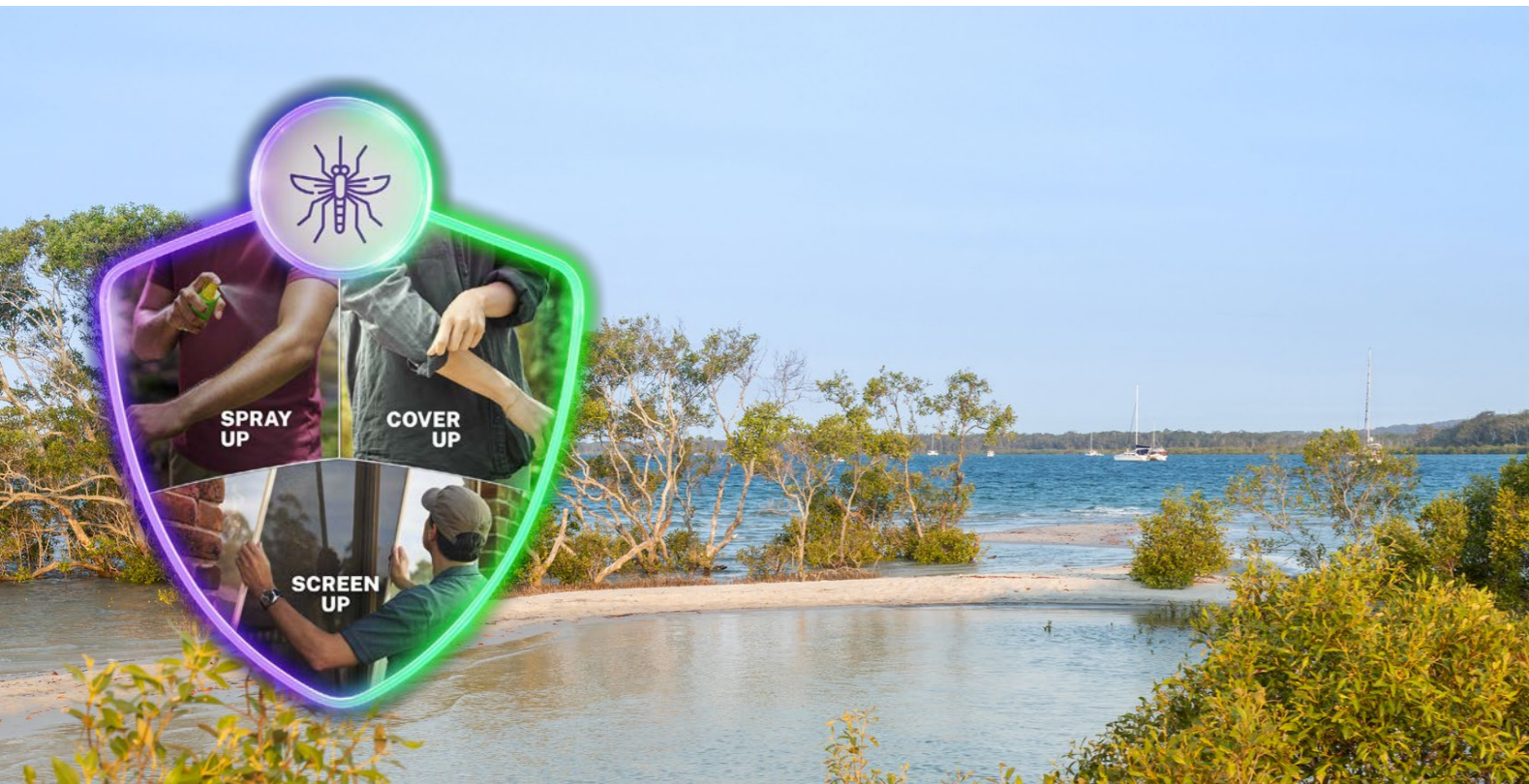
aqua aerobics program supported by Exercise Physiologist Clarra McKinnell at the Sapphire Aquatic Centre in Pambula.

Participation in the challenge offered the opportunity to participate in an activity that was new to some and supported social connection, physical activity and

finished off with a healthy lunch at the end of each session. The group was also supported by Twofold Aboriginal Corporation who transported the group to and from facility.

Southern has three NSW Knockout Health Challenge groups being supported this year, with activities also happening in Goulburn and Eurobodalla.

The NSW Knockout Health Challenge is a health program proudly led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW. The program is run for communities by communities, to improve their health in the ways that matter to them.



KEEP MOZZIES AWAY

Protect yourself and your family from mozzies in three easy steps:

SPRAY UP • COVER UP • SCREEN UP

Some mozzies in NSW carry diseases that can make you very sick. Learn more at www.health.nsw.gov.au



Roundabout partnership helping coastal families

A partnership between Moruya's Gadhu Family Health Service and Canberra charity, Roundabout, is helping south coast children and families off to a brighter start.

"This has been a difficult year for many, with cost-of-living pressures putting more people in a position of need," said Kellyann Johnson, District Manager Aboriginal Health.

"When families find themselves facing economic challenges or other forms of crisis, asking for help or support can feel embarrassing or emotionally taxing. With Roundabout, we're able to provide direct support to families that we already have relationships with, which is making a real impact."

So far, over 160 babies and children from 65 families have been helped by Gadhu staff through the partnership.

Roundabout Canberra was established in 2018 by a group of Canberra mums.

The charity take donations of pre-loved baby and children's items; and their team of volunteers sort,

clean, check and pack them in their facility in Holt.

Along with supporting families in Canberra, Roundabout volunteers regularly drive down the Clyde to provide them to Eurobodalla families in need via a network of social services and community organisations, including Gadhu.

"Roundabout volunteers perform thorough safety checks on items with mandatory safety standards; and through this process identify cots, prams and car seats that cannot be repaired and are unsafe to rehome," said Roundabout Canberra CEO and Founder, Hannah Andrevski.

"Only high-quality donations are provided to families. Giving

shouldn't just be about providing essential items; but should be about delivering a message that someone cares, understands, and has put love and care into the act."

"We take donations of pre-loved baby and children's items and our team of 250 volunteers sort, clean, check and pack them in order to provide them to local families in need."

Roundabout Canberra is asking for help to support families in need in our region through the donation of your preloved goods.

For information on how to support their work, visit roundaboutcanberra.org



New app aims to improve concussion care

Southern is proud to be taking part in the AUS-mTBI Study, which aims to gather vital insights to predict long term outcomes following concussion.

The national collaborative effort, led by Curtin University, brings together clinicians and healthcare providers from around Australia, who partnered with researchers and people with lived experience, to design the AUS-mTBI concussion app.

“Concussion is a common injury,” said Louise Casey, Trauma and Emergency Department Clinical Nurse Consultant and AUS-mTBI Principal Investigator for Southern.

“There are many causes of concussions including falls, recreational injuries, car accidents, or sports. While many children and adults with concussion will notice their symptoms improve within a few days, it can take longer to recover from a concussion.”

“Approximately 30% of children and adults may experience symptoms for longer than four weeks. Early identification of concussion and appropriate management in the early stages post-injury can help to accelerate recovery. It is therefore important a suspected concussion is not ignored.”

The AUS-mTBI study seeks to discover why some people experience long-term, sometimes debilitating symptoms when it comes to concussions. It involves more than 100 concussion experts and their organisations around Australia and is recruiting thousands of people from across the country, to help build a clearer picture of concussion recovery.

Central to the study is the HeadCheck app, developed in collaboration with the AFL by the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute to help translate the research in an accessible and useable format to give concussion sufferers, as well as parents, trainers, coaches and teachers, information to recognise concussion and manage recovery.

The HeadCheck app can be downloaded for free from the App Store or Google Play or accessed via the web-based platform.

More information is also available at headcheck.com.au



AUS
mTBI

The Australian Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Study

Have you had a concussion?



Support your recovery journey with guidance around managing your concussion and contribute to research via the HeadCheck app or website.



<https://tinyurl.com/4aphncrn>

Complete the study for a chance to win one of five Visa gift cards

@ausmtbi

AUS mTBI | Curtin University | Murdoch Childrens Research Institute | perron | UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY | Griffith University | THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND | MONASH University | curve | AlfredHealth | DEAKIN University | National Imaging Facility | SYNAPSE | ECU | MACQUARIE University

This study has been approved by the Alfred Hospital Ethics Committee [ID 95470]

Eurobodalla Regional Hospital: Meet the Expert Phillip Carter, Medical Imaging

We sat down with Phillip to find out how he's been involved in the planning for the new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital and what it will mean for future of medical imaging services.

Who are you and what is your role in Eurobodalla Health Services?

My name is Phillip Carter and I'm the Manager of Imaging Services in Eurobodalla covering Moruya and Batemans Bay.



How have you been involved in the planning and design of the Eurobodalla Regional Hospital?

I've worked here since 1998 and on my first day of work my then manager said we needed to start working towards a single-site hospital with one service for imaging, theatres and emergency.

So we've been planning for the last two years and we've developed a bespoke medical imaging department that meets our needs and the community's needs. We're getting MRI scanners, new CT scanners, extra ultrasound services and extra X-Ray services so that we can do the full range of imaging required by a Level 4 hospital.

What does a single-site hospital mean for a patient?

As an example, rather than being dropped to Batemans Bay and being transferred to Moruya for imaging services, they will come directly to the new Eurobodalla Hospital, which will provide better patient care, better

patient outcomes, quicker treatment, less waiting, better turnaround times, basically just provide that higher level of service quickly.

Because there will be less ambulance transfers, there will be less ambulances on the road, which makes more ambulances available to Triple Zero (000) calls. So, when you have an emergency, you're able to get the hospital quicker because we won't be transferring between hospitals.

What about staffing for the new services?

Another benefit is that we will be able to employ more dedicated specialist staff in emergency and radiology particularly emergency physicians and radiologists which will reduce our reliance on fly-in and fly-out specialists which will improve the service and improve the quality of care.

What is one thing you really want the community to know about the future of medical imaging services in Eurobodalla?

In expanding our services and

to extend our hours of opening and will provide a high level of service that the community needs. It's really exciting to move into a new state of the art bespoke facility that's going to meet the needs of the community, not just now, but into the future.

What would you tell someone interested in coming to work in the imaging team at Eurobodalla Health Service?

We have a great medical imaging team in Eurobodalla. We work together as one and it's a great place to work, we have a brand new hospital coming, it's exciting, we're getting new technology, new equipment and it really is a great place to work. I just can't say enough good stuff about working here.

I've been here for 26 years, I don't want to go anywhere else and I'm really looking forward to bringing more people into my team and having them experience what we've experienced for the last 26 years. It's a great place to be.

Photo Gallery: Aunty Jeans Mini Olympics

Southern won the shield at the Aunty Jeans Mini Olympics on 23 October at Batemans Bay High School, in a close-run contest with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District.

Teams faced off in games such as quoits, bullseye and frisbee, while making new friends, and meeting up with old friends.

The Aunty Jeans Program is a community orientated initiative to support Aboriginal people with/or at risk of chronic illness. The Program combines health promotion and health assessments, information and education, exercise sessions, healthy eating and fun activities.

The Aunty Jeans Program was originally founded by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, Aboriginal Chronic Care Unit, in memory of a well-respected local elder who was passionate about Aboriginal health, advocacy and culture.



The gloves are off in the fight against infection at Southern



The ‘Gloves Off, Clean Hands, Safe for All’ quality project is being delivered across Southern to improve hand hygiene and reduce unnecessary non-sterile glove use.

Non-sterile gloves (NSGs) are often over-used in the healthcare sector, contributing to poor hand hygiene, and financial and environmental waste.

Published research on hand hygiene in healthcare indicates that NSGs are commonly worn when they are not required and that inappropriate glove use can be associated with lower compliance with the World Health Organization’s 5 Moments for Hand Hygiene.

Wearing disposable gloves is a common behaviour in our hospitals, however there are occasions such as direct contact with intact skin and routine observations where clean hands can be used if staff aren’t going to come into contact with a bodily fluid. Research shows that when gloves are used only when needed hand hygiene improves, reducing risk of infections.

The project aims to reduce the overuse of gloves and decrease the amount of avoidable waste being sent to landfill.

“We are encouraging staff to ask one simple question -is it ooey, gooey, spewy or poeey? If the answer’s yes, gloves should be worn. If the answer is no, practicing hand hygiene before and after contact at the point of care is suitable,” explained Kelly-Anne Knight, Southern’s Infection Prevention Clinical Nurse Consultant.

“Gloves aren’t needed in situations such as checking a temperature, pulse or blood pressure, or when pushing a wheelchair or trolley.

“It’s important that gloves are still used where there may be exposure to blood and other body fluids, including contact with mucous membranes and non-intact skin.”

Wearing gloves does not replace the need for hand hygiene.

“Hand hygiene, such as handwashing or use of alcohol-based rubs should always be used before putting gloves on and taking them off,” explained Kelly-Anne

One NSG has an estimated carbon footprint of 0.034 kg CO₂e. In comparison, using one application of Alcohol Based Hand Rub has an estimated footprint of 0.0009 kg CO₂e.

Southern’s hospitals and health facilities used over 2 million non-sterile gloves in 2023, generating 10 tonnes of landfill and a significant carbon footprint, as well as a financial cost of over \$135,000.

The ‘Gloves are Off’ Project was first conducted in 2018 at the Great Ormond St Hospital (GOSH) in the United Kingdom. A staff education program was implemented, and the number gloves used was reduced by approximately 30% with associated cost and waste savings. There were demonstrated improvements in the ability of healthcare workers to make appropriate risk assessments with regards to glove use.

In a pilot of the ‘Gloves Off, Clean Hands, Safe for All’ at Newcastle’s John Hunter



Goulburn’s Surgical Ward are working to reduce the number of gloves we send to landfill.

Hospital last year, the project was successful in improving staff capability in performing standard precautions risk assessments, improving patient care, saving money and reducing waste, while reducing the Local Health District’s carbon footprint.

Through small, mindful actions like reducing unnecessary glove use, Southern is taking significant steps toward a safer and more sustainable healthcare environment.



Five moments of hand hygiene

1. Before touching a patient
2. Before a clean/aseptic procedure
3. After body fluid exposure risk
4. After touching a patient
5. After touching patients and surrounds

World Health Organization, Training Tools



Jo's blooming tribute to Goulburn Cancer Centre staff and patients

When Jo-Anne Picker entered a national floristry competition, there was an obvious source of inspiration for her – the patients and staff at Goulburn's Cancer Centre.

Jo is no stranger to the Cancer Centre. She first accessed the service in 2000, and then again in 2018 after a recurrence. During that time, she's seen the service evolve – from its previous the Bourke Street Health Service location, to the new site co-located with the Goulburn Base Hospital.

Jo took up studying floristry last year, as a way of having a day a week away from treatment doing something she loved. As part her study, Jo was encouraged to enter the national WildFlowers Australia National Floristry Competition.

Australia is home to some of the world's most striking and unique cut flower and foliage varieties. The national competition has been running since 2008 and is a very special annual event exclusive to Certificate III students enrolled at a registered training organisation. Entries to the competition are facilitated by course teachers.

For the 2024 competition, students were required to design and make two pieces, a hand tied bunch and a wearable item (such as a corsage, buttonhole/boutonniere, or a hairpiece). The two pieces needed to be complementary in style, colours and materials so that the styling and props make sense in the display. To add a further dimension to their work, students were required to create a display to stage their entries.

Reflecting on the competition's theme, *It Takes Two*, Jo was inspired by the floral wall mural in the new Goulburn Cancer Centre to create her entry.

Jo said she wanted to celebrate the Goulburn Cancer Services team, and recognise the dedication and care she has experienced over the years.

"Like many things in life, you take inspiration from your lived experience," explained Jo.

"The inspiration for my work came from attending the new purpose-built Cancer Centre, built as part of the hospital's redevelopment.

"The new treatment room was decorated with brightly coloured wildflower murals, transforming the centre from a sterile white room, which lead me to reflect on just how much colour and nature



Ringling Out

Ring this bell
Three times well
Its toll to clearly say
My treatment's done
This course is run
And I'm on my way!

- Irv Le Moyne

can impact people's wellbeing."

Jo notes the link between patients, family and nurses, and the collective hope of treatment.

"Myself and fellow cancer patients, along with the treating nurses, can spend long hours in this room, and it is a much more comfortable space to be in, compared to the previous location."

Displayed along with Jo's floral creations is a bell.

"It's a representation of the ceremony that is carried out in many cancer centres around the world, a tradition taken from the Navy to indicate all is well," said Jo.

"Ringling the bell is a chance for people who have finished treatment and are told they are cancer-free to celebrate with family, friends and staff who

have cared for them during their treatment. Although there doesn't seem to be much reason to celebrate when talking about cancer, I wanted to share a story about hope for new cancer treatments, and the collective hope we share giving people the opportunity to 'ring the bell!'"

In Jo's bunch of flowers, the stems are bound by a blue ribbon, at the point where they all cross with a binding material. Jo explained that the ribbon is a metaphor for the role of Southern's staff in her patient journey.

"The blue ribbon in my piece is a representation of the Oncology staff, to recognise the significant impact the staff have – like the binding point in floristry, they are the binding point in supporting patients and their families during their cancer care."



Left: Jo-Anne Picker's entry for the 2024 WildFlowers Australia National Floristry Competition

Above: Jo-Anne Picker (right) with Jane Robertson at the Goulburn Cancer Centre

2024 Excellence in Allied Health Awards

The winners in the inaugural Southern NSW Local Health District 2024 Excellence in Allied Health Awards were announced on 14 October 2024, Allied Health Professions Day.

These individuals excel in the delivery of compassionate and innovative service and play a vital role in providing patient-centred care to our community. Our Southern winners will be nominated for the NSW Health Excellence in Allied Health Awards, to be held in Sydney in early 2025.



These individuals excel in the delivery of compassionate and innovative service.”



Allied Health Assistant of the Year

Chloe van Gool
Physiotherapy, Queanbeyan

A team player, Chloe has significantly contributed to the multi-disciplinary team by providing safe, quality and patient-focused assistance to elevate the human experience.

Allied Health Educator of the Year

Jacqueline Hogbin
Social Work, Moruya

Kathryn Goldsworthy
Physiotherapy, Bega

Joint winners in this category, Jacqueline and Kathryn are making an outstanding contribution to education and improving clinical standards through a progressive, positive learning culture. They show commitment to empowering others and upskilling and supporting staff to elevate the human experience.

Allied Health Leader of the Year

Gretchen Buck
Physiotherapy, Batemans Bay

Gretchen provides visionary leadership and supports a highly professional and positive team culture. She supports, empowers and upskills her staff and is a model of leadership.

Allied Health Professional of the Year

Anna Jolly
Dietetics, Moruya

Anna is recognised by her peers for role modelling the CORE values and is a highly professional and well respected member of the team. She shows outstanding contribution to evidence-based safety, quality and clinical excellence.



Meet Emma Turner, Transitional Nurse Practitioner

A growing Nurse Practitioner (NP) workforce in Southern is working to improve outcomes for our rural communities.

Emma Turner is a Transitional Rural Generalist Nurse Practitioner based in Moruya, and a full-time student in the Master of Nurse Practitioner Course. Her specialty is emergency and acute care.

“Choosing to be a rural generalist nurse practitioner was a meaningful decision to follow my passion for providing comprehensive care to underserved communities,” said Emma.

For Emma, becoming a NP is an important step in ensuring that the community receives continuity of high-quality care.

She began her nursing career as an Endorsed Enrolled Nurse. Her commitment to healthcare led her to become a registered nurse, with a focused ambition to specialise in emergency nursing, particularly in rural healthcare settings.

“NPs are expert, highly qualified nurses who work autonomously at an advanced level of practice,” explained Kassandra Packwood, Southern’s District Deputy Director Nursing and Midwifery Leadership.

“NPs assess and diagnose patients, request and interpret tests, prescribe therapies and medications, and receive

and make referrals to other health practitioners.”

“Nurse practitioner models provide an adaptable and integrated approach to meet health care demand. At Southern, we have NPs working across a range of settings, including renal, emergency, aged care and oncology.”

NPs are registered nurses who have the authority to practice independently and collaboratively in an expanded clinical role. The role was established in the United States in 1965, and in Australia in 2000. Today there are over 2500 Nurse Practitioners in Australia.

NPs work within a broader scope of practice than a registered nurse (RN) and in most circumstances can independently manage entire episodes of care. This enables earlier access to care and reduces delays to treatment.

Extensive national and international studies show that NPs increase health care access and cost effectiveness. Research also indicates that patients accept the NP role and see it as a safe and effective part of their healthcare.

Emma explained how a year working in a nurse manager role focused on leadership and education in practice development led her to pursue a Nurse Practitioner pathway.

“My goal is to provide impactful care in rural areas, often facing shortages of healthcare providers, to improve access

to care and improve health outcomes,” said Emma.

“As a generalist, you have the opportunity to treat a wide range of health issues, which can be both challenging and rewarding. You have the opportunity to become a key player in managing various aspects of patient care.”

“My choice to be a rural generalist nurse practitioner reflects a commitment to improving healthcare access and quality in communities that need it most.”

NSW Health uses a Transitional Nurse Practitioner Pathway to employ nurses while they complete their education and training.

Emma is excited about the clinical career paths for the nursing profession the expansion of the NP workforce brings.

“I am passionate about becoming a Nurse Practitioner. I am very happy to share my journey to facilitate nurses who are interesting in embarking on a transitional nurse practitioner pathway.”

Outside of work, Emma enjoys family life on the south coast.

“Our family enjoys exploring the beautiful ocean and estuaries of our local area, with fishing being a shared passion. I also love immersing myself in podcasts, which I look forward to catching up on after completing my Master’s degree this year.”



Southern is proud to support Nurse Practitioner Week, an annual celebration of the role of NPs in Australian healthcare.

The Australian College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) hosts the event, which highlights the importance of NPs in improving health outcomes and delivering quality care.

Preschool partnership helping children off to the best start

A partnership between Southern's Brighter Beginnings program and the Queanbeyan & District Preschool Association (QDPA) is increasing the number of children accessing free health and development checks provided to 4-year-old children to identify any support they may need early – before they start school.

QDPA's four preschools have been taking part in the Brighter Beginnings program since its 2023 pilot, providing essential health checks for preschool children.

To support the program, a grant from the NSW Government's Health and Development Participation (HDP) Grant Program has allowed the association to transform an unused office space at Mura Preschool into a dedicated space for health and development checks by the Brighter Beginnings team.

The space will also serve as an inclusive space for enrolment meetings, family meetings, educator networking, as well as a private space for breastfeeding mothers.

"We are so thankful to be a recipient of the Health and Development Participation Grant which had funded the refurbishment of this space," said Ashleigh Daly, Executive Officer of Queanbeyan & District Preschool Association.

"The grant will support further implementation of health and development initiatives across our preschools, including professional development, allied health support, and refurbishing spaces for health checks to be conducted in a culturally safe and inclusive space," added Ashleigh.

QDPA have commenced partnering with local community organisations to tailor unique support for families and children at preschool, thanks to the grant.

Sonia Bonora, Team Leader of Southern's Brighter Beginnings program said the partnership would help more children get off to a better start at school.

"Health and development checks are very important. They help you track how your child is growing and developing by looking at how they play, learn, speak, act and move," said Sonia.

"At the moment, about 2 in 5 children are starting school developmentally off track. We also know many children in NSW are not getting their 4-year health and development check.

"Increasing the number of children who complete the 4-year health and development check can help families get information they need to support their child's health, growth and development, and seek help where needed, before

their child starts school."

NSW Health, in partnership with the NSW Department of Education, are rolling out free 4-year-old health and development checks in ECEC services across all NSW Health local health districts.

Participating preschools and long day care services will let parents know when this program is coming to their service.

The 4-year check is also available through your doctor or your local child and family health service. The Blue Book has information on the recommended checks for your child.

Find out more about the program at health.nsw.gov.au/ececchecks



Above: The refurbished spaces at Queanbeyan's Mura Preschool



Genetic counselling in Southern: the legacy of a pioneering regional service



For Matt Burgess, starting his career as a genetic counsellor in a regional town was a big learning curve, but one that set the foundation for his career.

“I’m a Newcastle boy. The role in Goulburn was the second position I applied for – I wasn’t even sure where it was exactly.”

Matt (*left*) worked as the genetic counsellor in Goulburn’s Regional Child Development Unit, between 2004 and 2005. The genetics service had been established in the early 1990s and had been on pause for 18 months when Matt moved to Goulburn as a new graduate.

“When I started, a big part of the role was just getting out there and talking to the providers in the area to let them know that I was there. I don’t think I saw a client for about a month.”

With the service soon thriving, Matt was part of a multidisciplinary team providing comprehensive, client centred, multigenerational care for families.

“It was a really valuable experience being embedded in the Child Development Unit. I learned a lot working alongside the paediatrician, the OT, the speech pathologist, and the psychologist. That was invaluable.”

The service was an outreach location of the Liverpool Hospital Clinical Genetics Service in south west Sydney. Along with support from another rural Genetic Counsellor in Wagga, the partnership ensured he was well supported as an early career practitioner.

“It was good to go up there once a month or so and train and do some professional development. A clinical geneticist would also drive or fly down from Liverpool to do a day clinic with me.”

“It was a really good foundation. It was an advantage that some of my peers never got.”

“People appreciated being able to see me locally, but if my next available clinic wasn’t for months and then they could also get seen in Canberra or Sydney.”

Genetics counselling services are rare in rural and regional Australia. In 2021, there were just 25 genetics counsellors working in NSW outside of metropolitan Sydney.

Carolyn Rogers (*right*) worked to establish the Genetic Counselling service at the Child Development Unit (CDU) in the early 1990s, alongside Professor Gillian Turner AO. Like Matt, she described working at the service, and moving to Goulburn, as a learning curve.

“I found moving to Goulburn a bit of a cultural shock. Even though I was newly married to a local, I wasn’t considered a local, even after 15 years in the town. However, with the establishment of the Police Academy, there were many residents who weren’t local, and we tended to join forces.”

“I think Goulburn was chosen because it was reasonably central to the three health districts and being attached to the CDU, who also covered those three districts, made establishing a new service easier.”

“Having a genetic service available to individuals in country and metropolitan areas is crucial to providing health care and equality. Many families are unable to travel the distance to major genetic units for many reasons (financial, distance, work commitments and difficulty getting the referred individual to the appointment) and would just not attend.”

Carolyn went on to work with Professor Turner at the NSW Genetics of Learning Disability (GOLD) Service in Hunter New England Local Health District, providing genetic services to NSW families with fragile X syndrome and families who have two or more male relatives with intellectual disability.

“I really enjoyed working with Professor Gillian Turner and when she moved from Sydney to Newcastle to be the Director of Hunter Genetics in 1996, she asked me to continue to work with her.”

“I moved to Newcastle in 1997 and worked with her till she retired, a total of 20 years. Gill’s main interest started with Fragile X syndrome (which she pioneered worldwide) and then expanded to include all genetic causes of intellectual disabilities (ID). Gill received an AO in 2000 for her contributions to genetic research in the field of ID and she sadly passed away in September this year at the age of 93.”

Today, Southern’s genetic counselling services continue to thrive, supporting pregnant women, children and adults who have been diagnosed with a genetic condition, are thought to have one, or are at risk of having one.

The service assesses children who may have a genetic or an inherited cause for their problems, while also provides clinics for adults requiring information, testing, diagnosis and support for conditions. When it’s clinically indicated, the service can arrange for clients to be seen by a Geneticist, who can order tests for specific genetic conditions, including cancer genetic services.

Genetic counsellors evaluate and explain genetic test results, and support patients with their

decision making while they learn and adjust to a genetic diagnosis on their journey to stay healthy and well.

The service sits within Southern’s Child, Infant and Family Tertiary Service, based in Goulburn. The service continues its link with the Liverpool Hospital Clinical Genetics Service, with outreach clinics in Pambula, Moruya and Karabar Community Health Centre in Queanbeyan.

As a rural outreach service, the team can provide services closer to where the patient lives. For genetic counselling, this means that extended family can be more easily included, leading to a more inclusive and effective diagnosis.

The need for genetic counselling varies depending on the particular genetic test involved and the context of testing. Follow-up counselling is offered to ensure ongoing support, review previous information and to answer new questions as they arise.

The field of clinical genetics and genomics has grown significantly since the service’s establishment, both as a clinical specialty and in patient demand. Major advances have taken place during this time in the understanding of the human genome and the association between genetic variation and disease.

As a specialist service, access to the service requires a written referral from your GP or specialist. For children, a paediatrician referral is required (GP referrals are not accepted). Referrers should visit HealthPathways for referral information.

For more information about CIFTS, visit: nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/snswlhd/our-services/child-and-family-health



Small acts of kindness make a big difference

A smile, a thank you – it’s the small acts of kindness that make the difference to the experiences of our staff, patients, families, and carers across NSW Health.

To mark this year’s NSW Health Gathering of Kindness (11–15 November) here at Southern, we invited staff, patients, families and visitors to nominate a Southern staff member or volunteer for a 2024 World Kindness Day award.

Over 350 nominations were received. As nominations were received, recipients were emailed their certificate, including the kind words from their nomination. Their email included a link to nominate a colleague and help spread a wave of kindness across Southern.

The NSW Health Gathering of

Kindness uses World Kindness Day on 13 November to continue a conversation about bringing kindness and compassion into the delivery of healthcare.

This year, the program focused on *Kindness is my Superpower*, seeing kindness in action across NSW Health; encouraging the use of kindness and compassion to reconnect with hearts and minds, despite the daily challenges faced in healthcare.

The NSW Ministry of Health’s Division of Health System Strategy and Patient Experience partnered with the Nursing and Midwifery Office and the Hush Foundation to deliver a virtual program of daily events which explored opportunities for

creativity, change, collaboration and courage.

This year, NSW Health launched the updated NSW Health and the Arts Framework, reflecting the commitment to creating environments that shape relationships between self and community. These are key factors of health and wellbeing. The Framework highlights how arts can be used as part of the solution to some of the key challenges faced in healthcare, particularly within Mental Health and Aged Care.

NSW Health has a long and proud history of providing safe and kind care to patients, families, carers and volunteers.



Left: Jane Adams and Edwina Seaton from Cooma’s Palliative Care team both received multiple nominations for a World Kindness Day Award from staff and patients recognising their kindness



Southern NSW LHD Care and Kindness Charter

At Southern NSW Local Health District, we are committed to providing kindness and compassion in every interaction with patients, carers, families and our work colleagues. We understand that the commitment to kindness starts with us being kind to ourselves and looking after our own wellbeing so that we can care for others. From that foundation we commit to:

 <p>Consistently providing person centred care by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging and involving patients in conversations and decisions about their care • Supporting and involving families and loved ones • Taking a genuine interest in the well-being of patients and colleagues • Being available, and listening attentively, to show our patients and colleagues that we value them • Asking patients for feedback about their experience so we can improve 	 <p>Showing kindness and respect every day by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being empathetic, approachable, gentle and patient • Smiling and openly communicating with people • Respecting the different cultural backgrounds and experiences of patients and colleagues. • Maintaining your privacy and dignity • Providing access to support, including Pastoral Care • Saying good morning, good night and thank you 	 <p>Advocating for our patients by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking up and taking respectful action on your behalf when needed • Providing honest answers to questions I am asked • Treating all consumers and staff as individuals and working to reduce stigma and negative bias • Delivering on commitments we make to patients and colleagues • Supporting our colleagues in challenging situations • Treating others as if they were a member of my own family or community 	 <p>Demonstrating accountability and integrity by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a role model for care and kindness through our words and actions • Never walking past care that is unacceptable – ‘the standard I walk past is the standard I accept’ • Respectfully addressing all instances where others are not contributing to a culture of care and kindness • Supporting others to have the courage to call out poor behaviour • Actively promoting a culture of caring and kindness in our teams
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A passion for rural and remote medicine

In any given week, Canberra-based Dr Vimbai Kapuya can see patients face to face at Yass District Hospital's Emergency Department, provide care to patients virtually anywhere across the state from Bourke to Bega as part of the award-winning NSW Virtual Rural Generalist Service or be in NT training a new generation of rural generalist doctors.

Add to that her additional duties as a Fellow of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), where she sits on multiple committees, it's clear that Dr Kapuya runs a busy schedule. And that's exactly how she likes it!

"I feel privileged to have created a flexible career where I can work in different locations and focus on so many aspects of rural and remote medicine, while sharing my skills

and knowledge in meaningful way.

"No day is the same – but they are all very fulfilling. I feel that I benefit from playing a variety of roles, including a rural generalist providing care, an educator, and a member of a tight knit Hospital ED team on the ground here in Yass. It offers me great variety and professional satisfaction," said Dr Kapuya.

In July 2024, Dr Kapuya received the Patient Safety Award at Southern's 2024 Excellence Awards, which honours an extraordinary individual who consistently creates a culture of patient safety within their team.

Her award nomination stated, "Dr Vimbai Kapuya's dedication to patient safety is evident in every aspect of her work at Yass Hospital. Her active listening,

clear communication, and open dialogue create a supportive environment where patients and staff feel empowered to speak up about safety concerns. Her leadership in addressing potential safety issues and her commitment to improving teamwork and communication during safety huddles and handovers contribute to a safer and more effective healthcare environment. Dr Kapuya is a dedicated and highly skilled physician at Yass Hospital who excels in fostering a culture of patient safety within her team."

Having trained as a Rural Generalist in the Northern Territory, Dr Kapuya did her medical degree in South Africa before moving to Australia. She also holds a diploma in Child Health and completed her Advanced Skills Training in paediatrics. She has a keen



interest in medical education and has a post graduate certificate in Medical Education obtained through Flinders University. She is currently the ACRRM regional director of training in the Northern Territory.

Dr Kapuya is passionate about bringing better health care to people living in rural and remote areas, and her experience as both a physician and an educator gives her a unique perspective on the very real challenges and opportunities in rural generalist medicine.

"There are some very significant challenges rural medical officers face, including burnout, fatigue and at times professional isolation. Through my roles I see how important programs such as the Virtual Rural Generalist Service can be in alleviating some of these pressures, whilst ensuring that communities have access to high quality 24/7 medical coverage."

"Working both as part of the team of VRGS doctors, onsite in Yass and in my educator role in the NT I find that I'm in a good position to share knowledge with colleagues, especially about changes in medicine and practices, and also share professional experiences and case studies from other unique rural settings. This is so beneficial and important that we are always learning and always upskilling."

"As a rural generalist you really do need to be confident and comfortable in your own abilities and know what you are doing – working in relative isolation can be challenging because you can't just refer to another colleague in the hospital. But we develop amazing skills of resilience and problem solving and an ability to do what we can with the resources available."

During her eight years working in the Yass Valley, Dr Kapuya

has become a much valued and respected part of the hospital community, as evidence by the message of support shared publicly when she won her award.

"I feel very blessed to be part of this team at Yass. I enjoy providing care and getting to form relationships with our patients and families. I work in an environment with nurses, doctors, allied health professionals and support staff who work very hard every day to maintain a safe and satisfying patient experience ... and that's why I stay!"

Above: Dr Vimbai Kapuya was the winner of the Patient Safety Award at Southern's 2024 Excellence Awards.



Prepare to beat the heat this summer

Hot weather can affect your health, causing dehydration, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

Extreme heat or heatwaves are periods of unusually hot weather. Climate change is resulting in more hot days and more intense heatwaves in Australia.

Extreme heat can cause severe illness, hospital admission and even death. Before, during and after a period of hot weather, it's important that you keep cool and stay hydrated.

Your body normally keeps itself cool by sweating and moving more blood towards the skin.

In extreme heat, or if you are physically active in hot weather, your body's natural cooling system can begin to fail. Your body temperature can increase to dangerous levels, leading to severe heat-related illness including heat stroke and heat exhaustion. More mild heat-related illness include heat cramps and heat rash. The strain of the body trying to keep cool can also worsen the symptoms of some existing medical conditions. For instance, someone with heart disease may feel dizzy or even have a heart attack.

Heat-related illness can affect anyone and is more likely to happen when you are dehydrated and can't produce enough sweat to help you cool down. Know the signs of heat-related illness, how to give first aid, and how to get help.

Hot weather can affect everyone, but some people are more vulnerable:

- people aged 65 years and older
- babies and young children*
- pregnant women
- people who are homeless
- people with some medical conditions including heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease, neurological disease, and mental illness
- socially isolated people
- outdoor workers.

Find out more about staying well during hot weather at health.nsw.gov.au/beattheheat



Tips to prepare yourself and your home before hot weather arrives

- Check that air-conditioners, fans, refrigerators, and freezers are working properly.
- Learn about safe food and medicine storage during hot weather, and especially during and after a power outage.
- Make a plan with family, friends and neighbours to keep in contact during hot weather and know who to call if you need help.
- Make sure you have contact details for your doctor, pharmacist, or other source of good health advice such as Healthdirect.
- Speak to your doctor if you are unsure about how your health condition or medication might affect your ability to cope during hot weather.
- Make sure you have enough food and medicine for everyone in your home so you don't have to go out in the heat.
- Know where in your local area you can go to get out of the heat. Places that may be cooler than your home include air-conditioned public buildings such as libraries and shopping centres; and parks with plenty of trees and shade.
- If you can, consider some changes to your home to help keep it cooler. Changes could include installing blinds, curtains, external awnings, shutters or other shading to prevent sun shining on windows and insulating your home.



Recipe

Scrambled egg muffin sandwich

Ingredients

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1 tomato | 2 slices reduced fat cheddar cheese (optional) |
| ½ small avocado | |
| 4 eggs | 2 English muffins, halved (wholemeal/wholegrain if available) |
| Pepper, to taste | |
| 1 tablespoon oil* | |

Method

1. Preheat the oven/grill to 180°C.
2. Slice tomato and avocado and set aside.
3. Crack the eggs into a bowl and sprinkle with pepper. Use a fork to mix the eggs combining egg yolks and whites.
4. Heat oil in a large frying pan. Wait until the oil sizzles a little then pour in eggs. Using a spatula, gently pull the eggs from the edges of the pan into the centre. Remove the pan from the heat before the egg is completely cooked.
5. Optional step if using cheese: place cheese slices on top of two of the muffin halves and grill in the oven for 5-8 minutes, or until the cheese has melted.
6. Add avocado slices, scrambled eggs and tomato slices to the muffin halves and then cover with the remaining halves to make sandwiches.
7. Option: Add additional vegetables to the muffin sandwiches (e.g. capsicum, spinach, mushroom). If you're looking for some spice, try serving with a drizzle of hot/chilli sauce.

This sandwich is piled with creamy scrambled eggs and melty cheese for a quick meal at breakfast time with a veggie punch!

Serves: 2

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Level of difficulty: Easy



**HEALTHYEATING
ACTIVELIVING**

For more recipes, visit healthyliving.nsw.gov.au

Sign up to help us find out more about your experience of feeding your baby.



Artist: Deborah Stiles

In partnership with the University of Wollongong, we are conducting a research study to learn more about the infant feeding practices of women who have received antenatal care at Bega, Cooma, Goulburn, Moruya or Queanbeyan.

By signing up for this research study, you will receive a short survey when your baby is approximately 6 months old, to tell us about your infant feeding experience.

The research findings will be used to improve public health strategies to support women and families in the postnatal period.

Scan to sign up, or to find out more



redcap.link/BRIGHT2024

Queries about this study can be addressed to our local Site Research Team:

Rebekah Bowman
Chief Investigator
0408 300 119
Rebekah.Bowman@health.nsw.gov.au

Jenny Flaherty
Chief Investigator
0438 585 229
Jennifer.Flaherty@health.nsw.gov.au

This research project has received ethical approval from the Greater Western Human Research Ethics Committee and the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council (Ref: 2023/ETH02273).

Southern NSW Local Health District acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands within its boundaries, the Gundungurra, Ngambri, Ngarigo, Ngunnawal and Yuin peoples.



Southern NSW Local Health District



Instant health advice for when accidents happen

If your child is injured or unwell call healthdirect for **free** on **1800 022 222**.

A registered nurse will help you access the health care you need from anywhere, day or night.

health.nsw.gov.au/anywhere

Healthcare 

anywhere

1800 022 222

call healthdirect