

2020/21

 HealthWISE



ANNUAL
REPORT

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and honour the Gamilaraay, Kwiambal, Bigambul, Bundjalung, Anaiwan, Jagera, Jinibara, Wakka Wakka and Yuggera Ugarapel people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways where HealthWISE services and facilities are located.

Further, we acknowledge the cultural diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pay respect to Elders as holders of sacred and important knowledge.

We celebrate the continuous living cultures of First Australians and acknowledge the important role played by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian society.

HealthWISE respects and acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, staff, Elders, and visitors who come from many nations across Australia

About Us

HealthWISE has been delivering federally funded primary health and social services for over 6 years. We are a not for profit organisation dedicated to creating healthy communities.

We service the New England North West region of NSW and parts of the Darling Downs and West Moreton regions of QLD.

By employing skilled and experienced local health care providers, we provide efficient and effective programs that improve access, increase awareness, decrease cost, empower communities and foster long term health.

We are a specialist provider of rural and remote services.

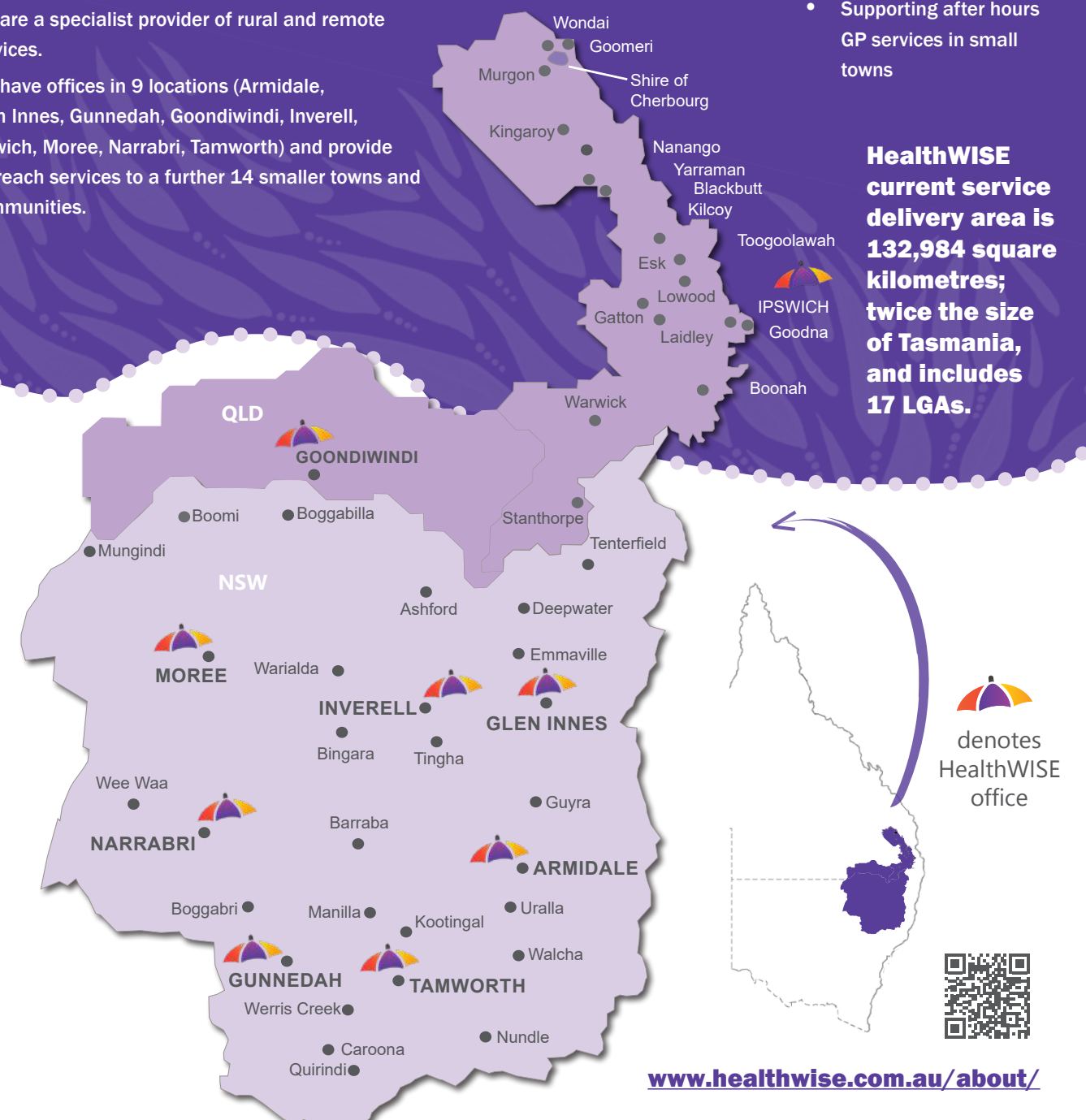
We have offices in 9 locations (Armidale, Glen Innes, Gunnedah, Goondiwindi, Inverell, Ipswich, Moree, Narrabri, Tamworth) and provide outreach services to a further 14 smaller towns and communities.

Of the 480,965 people in our region, 6.7% are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (compared to 2.7% nationally).

Our core business:

- Mental health services
- Allied health services - physiotherapy, speech pathology, podiatry, exercise physiology, dietetics, occupational therapy and memory assessment
- Supporting clients to prevent or manage chronic disease
- Co-ordinating medical specialist services where there is specific need
- Health education and screening in small towns
- Supporting after hours GP services in small towns

HealthWISE current service delivery area is 132,984 square kilometres; twice the size of Tasmania, and includes 17 LGAs.





Our Gift Fund

Providing small sums of up to \$3000 to organisations for activities that share our focus of disease prevention.

During the 2020/21 financial year, the HealthWISE Gift Fund supported three initiatives to prevent or reduce disease, across our regions. Gravesend Public School P & C, Ezidi Women's Wellbeing program coordinated by Embody Wellbeing and the recently launched Moree Women's Shed were supported through small grants.

Learning how to create healthy meals provides school children with skills for life. Primary school children at Gravesend worked together during Term 2 to learn new recipes and taste new foods they were not familiar with.

Moree Women's Shed was launched in 2021. Women in Moree now have the opportunity to meet on Tuesday mornings or evenings at the 'shed' and share friendship and enjoy creating art and crafts. The groups provided relief for a community that has experienced a plague, pandemic and flooding in recent months. The Armidale Ezidi Women's Wellbeing program was established in May to support the mental and physical health of women in the Ezidi community. Tailored sessions allowed social interaction while building fitness levels and developing flexibility.

The HealthWISE Gift Fund is pleased to partner with community groups who share our focus on disease prevention.

healthwisenenw.com.au/support-us/gift-fund/



Contents

- 1| Acknowledgement of Country
- 2| About Us
- 4| Our Gift Fund
- 5| Our Purpose
- 6| Vision and Values
- 7| Message from our Chair
- 8| Message from our CEO
- 10| Sounds good to me
- 11| Board of Directors
- 12| Our Organisation
- 13| Finance
- 14| Operations and Human Resources
- 16| Information & Communication Technology
- 17| Integrated Care Team
- 25| Mental Health Team
- 31| R U OK? Day
- 33| Aboriginal Health Team
- 41| Care Navigation Armidale
- 43| Communication & Marketing
- 46| Thanks & Acknowledgements

www.healthwise.org.au/

You don't just have to read our Annual Report!

Watch videos or go to websites either by clicking links or using your phone camera to scan the code.



Watch out for these symbols throughout our report.

HealthWISE branding encompasses Aboriginal artwork as well as images and language to help Aboriginal people feel welcome and respected.

Each HealthWISE office displays a copy of "Eurah – Medicine Tree" by Rod McIntosh, an Aboriginal artist of the Kamilaroi tribe. This work was commissioned by HealthWISE as a visual representation of wellness and was inspired by the HealthWISE Vision "Healthy Communities".



COVER SHOT – Brolly, our HealthWISE Mascot, visited McAndrew Park (Wondobah Park) located in Gunnedah on Gamilaraay Country, north west New South Wales. Brolly helped hand out sports gear to children as part of NAIDOC celebrations.





Our *Purpose*

**Creating better health
for our communities**

Our *Vision*

Healthy communities

Our *Values*



Empowerment

We know every employee has an equal role to play. We support each other by building confidence and capabilities, while working together to create healthier communities.



Equality

We work to maintain reciprocal relationships based on mutual trust in the communities we serve. We embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values and beliefs.



Community

We are committed to serving and empowering our communities.



Client focused

We put our clients first, listen to their needs, and seek to exceed their expectations with accurate and practical solutions.



Passion for excellence

We have pride in our work and excel at what we do. We are open to new ideas and committed to best practice and efficiency. We seek out the best talent, promote development and learn from our mistakes.



Visionary

We create an environment in which staff are solution focused, encouraged to take initiatives, producing new ideas and processes. We thrive on creativity and ingenuity.

Message from Our Chair



Another year draws to a close with the challenges of the global pandemic still pervading our lives. This lingering sense of the unknown leads us all to understand the importance of growing and maintaining strong connections across all areas of our community.

Firstly, at HealthWISE, the team has worked hard to maintain a culture of connectivity and collaboration, across state and jurisdiction boundaries with differing social restrictions. In particular I wish to commend the team responsible for delivering The Exchange. This event, now in its third year, adapted to the current climate, delivering a wonderful luncheon in Armidale, but was unfortunately thwarted in plans for a Queensland event. I cannot wait to cross the border next year to celebrate this great event.

HealthWISE has also provided innovative, flexible and adaptable work / life balance to ensure all team members can serve our clients, whilst looking after their own health and wellbeing.

Connection to our community is an important part of the role of the Board. A number of strong connections throughout our regions continue to develop working relationships and successful advocacy for HealthWISE. The clinical, operational and governance experience and expertise the Board brings to the organisation is essential to provide strategy and guidance to the HealthWISE team for program delivery. I wish to thank Dr Cheryl McIntyre who retired from the Board this year. Her thoughtful clinical guidance over the 6 years of her tenure was extremely valuable to the organisation. I thank each and every board member for another great year.

A personal highlight from my role as Board Chair this year was to participate in cultural awareness training delivered by WalanGaray. Marc and Shaun, the team behind WalanGaray, delivered engaging and thought provoking training across the organisation. I left inspired and challenged to do better.

HealthWISE is developing a Cultural Inclusion Framework, to guide every aspect of our work. This thoughtful, respectful and important work forms the basis of who we are as a team at HealthWISE. The importance of communication within the organisation and communication with the community as a whole, to ensure connectivity. This connection being so vital for social health and well-being.

Finally, I commend CEO Fiona Strang for being accepted into the SILA program, a highly selective leadership program for not-for-profit organisations. This program is focused on leadership for social change and influence, an aspect of our work at HealthWISE we hope to expand in the near future. I anticipate Fiona's participation will create a ripple effect throughout the organisation and the communities we serve, with great things on the horizon.

I thank the whole team at HealthWISE. I am so proud to be a small part of this organisation.

Lia Mahony
HealthWISE Board Chair

Lia

Message from Our CEO



Community Connections – staying strong and active.

Amidst the ongoing challenges provided by the COVID-19 pandemic, HealthWISE has experienced a year of strong growth and consolidation. With the uncertainty provided by the continuing pandemic, staying strong and active and ensuring HealthWISE service provision enables us to remain connected to community, has been important to the organisation's wellbeing. Our valued partnerships with key stakeholders across the region have matured, and connections with new communities, such as the Ezidi community in Armidale, have enriched the organisation and added to staff diversity.

Throughout the year, services have remained flexible, with a mixed model of telehealth and face to face. The HealthWISE Continuity Management Committee, ably led by Louise Ingall, has provided direction for our response to the changing world that is COVID. Such changes have been underpinned by the efforts of an IT team, who not only support the expanding HealthWISE team, but the endeavours of general practice in our communities across NSW throughout the pandemic.

Growth has brought new challenges to the organisation, particularly operationally. A key focus this year has been to actively review and invest in the building of strong operational processes to support service delivery. This has included a review of the conditions under which staff are employed, leading to the submission of a new Enterprise Agreement to the Fair Work Commission. How we manage and utilize our information has been formally assessed and improvements are being rolled out through a number of key projects. Our Communications and Marketing, Information Technology and Corporate Management teams have all been strengthened to meet the requirements of the expanding HealthWISE team.

A key strategic goal for the business has been the expansion of service provision in Queensland. 2020-2021 saw a growth in the business innovation team with the addition of a Business Development Lead primarily focused on Queensland. A highlight of the year was a week spent in Queensland meeting with key stakeholders and potential partners, and establishing new relationships.

Several active working groups have been established by enthusiastic staff members. Staff wellbeing, research and sustainability are gaining interest and commitment and the organisation has ventured



HealthWISE CEO Fiona Strang was accepted into Social Impact Leadership Australia (SILA) 2021-2022 Cohort.



Integrated Care Team Manager Anne Williams, QLD Business Development Lead Naomi Petty and CEO Fiona Strang spent a week in Queensland meeting with key stakeholders and potential partners, and establishing new relationships.



The Exchange Committee received the Women's Leadership and Development Program Project Grant.



HealthWISE has developed a working group to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Inclusion Framework.

into hybrid cars as a commitment to a sustainable environment. Through one such working group, development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Inclusion Framework has continued, under the guidance of Nola Turner Jensen, an Aboriginal/English/Irish Australian woman from Wiradjuri country New South Wales and Founder, Principal Director, content writer and Aboriginal consultant of Crackerjack Education. Nola's passion for strengthening culture and building resilience, enhanced through consultation with HealthWISE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, is embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into HealthWISE processes. This exciting and challenging work, supported by a diligent working group, is leading the way in ensuring we are a truly inclusive organisation.

We were delighted to receive funding through the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet under the Women's Leadership and Development Program Project Grants to deliver our successful Exchange events across 9 locations in northern NSW and southern QLD. The Exchange has been highly successful in bringing women in business together to learn and connect, and we look forward to connecting with many amazing women across the regions as COVID restrictions lift.

2020-21 saw the commencement of the planning and development of our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Under the guidance of Lisa Roberts, senior managers have reviewed, consulted, discussed and debated the future of HealthWISE and where the organisation needs to be in 5 years' time.

HealthWISE programs and services have again been recognised through nomination for a number of Awards, including the HNECC Primary Care Quality & Innovation Awards; the Ipswich City Business Awards and the Queensland Mental Health Week Awards. Such nominations are a nod to the quality of the services provided by the dedicated HealthWISE team.

As 2021-2022 approaches, HealthWISE can look forward to an exciting future as we unveil the business's strategic future for the next 5 years, and further develop the leadership potential within the organisation through participation in the Social Impact Leadership Australia Program (SILA).

In closing, thank you to the Board, ably led by Lia Mahony, the Senior Managers and the whole HealthWISE team for their ongoing commitment to the organisation and Vision of creating Healthier communities.

Fiona Strang
Chief Executive Officer

Fiona

Giving our pre-school aged children the best chance of success at school

Sounds good to me

Last year we launched our online program Sounds good to me.

The program supports early educators who are working with children aged 3-6 years in that important period before, and right at the start of, formal schooling to ensure children are starting school with the skills they need to learn to read and write without difficulty.

To support a smooth transition into school, children need age-appropriate speech and language skills, be able to hear and attend to verbal information, be familiar with books and stories and most importantly understand that words and sentences are made of up of sounds. These are the building blocks for success in literacy learning. Success at school opens doors for further education, training, employment and ultimately, health outcomes in life. To learn more please visit our website

www.soundsgoodtome.com.au

Throughout the year we have been busy promoting the Sounds good to me program and creating a community of early educators and parents.

To increase awareness of the program, we release a monthly blog post on our website and provide a free 30 minute webinar. These have been running monthly since August. The webinars aim to connect educators with a speech pathologist or other allied health professionals to improve on their skills and teaching methods. Topics covered have included introduction to phonological awareness, articulation, screening tools, rhyming, good listening, social and emotional skills, fine motor skills and asking questions.

The webinars are becoming increasingly popular with registrations increasing over the year. For example, our webinar in February 'Introduction to Phonological awareness' had 755 people register, 174 live attendees and 447 people have watched it to date. We are really thrilled to be bringing this important information to a much wider audience. Thanks also to our guest presenters from the HealthWISE team and beyond.

Social media posts each week are helping to build our on-line community. We have 649 people following us on Facebook and 28 on Twitter from around the world.

We launched a companion program for parents in January 2021 and - in response to demand - have created a version of the program that is suitable for family day care providers launched in September 2021.

We currently have 45 early childhood services, centres and schools and 23 parent members. Centres pay a signup fee and ongoing annual subscription to remain members. Parents pay for the first month's access and then a small monthly subscription until they have completed the program.



Watch a video about Sounds good to me



Our Board of Directors

Ms Lia Mahony Chair

BPharm (Hons), MClinPharm

Ms Mahony is a pharmacist based in Tamworth.

- Appointed Chair September 2015.
- Director on Clinical Governance Committee.
- Director on Corporate Governance Committee.

Dr Stephen Howle

MBBS, FRACGP Dip. Phys.Med. OAM

Dr Howle is a recently retired GP based in Tamworth.

- Appointed December 2014.
- Chair of the Clinical and Cultural Governance Committee.

Dr Cheryl McIntyre

MBBS BSc (Med), FRACGP, FACRRM, DRANZCOG,
DipPaed, DipDerm

Dr McIntyre is a GP Obstetrician based in Inverell.

- Appointed December 2014.
- Resigned 29/04/2021.
- Director on Clinical and Cultural Governance Committee.

Ms Lynette Rickard

BSc, Grad Dip Education

Ms Rickard is the Acting General Manager TAFE Digital

- Appointed December 2014.
- Director on Finance, Audit and Risk Committee
- Chair of Corporate Governance Committee

Mr David Aber

BE, MLGM

Mr Aber has a background in local Government.

- Appointed January 2016.
- Director on Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.
- Chair Corporate Governance Committee.

Mr James Wallace

BEcon, AssocAICI, AssocFPAA, Accredited SMSF
Specialist Advisor, Member SMSFPAA, JPMs

Mr Wallace, based in Tamworth, has a background in accounting.

- Appointed January 2016.
- Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

Ms Amy Creighton

MPhil, BHSc, Cert IV Aboriginal Health

Ms Creighton is a Gomerioi woman with over 30 years specifically in Aboriginal health.

- Appointed Director 2018.
- Director on the Clinical and Cultural Governance Committee.

Mr Stephen Doley

MBA, Member AICD, Adv Directors course

Mr Doley has an executive background working in large not for profit organisations

- Appointed Director June 2018.
- Director on the Corporate Governance Committee.
- Director on the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

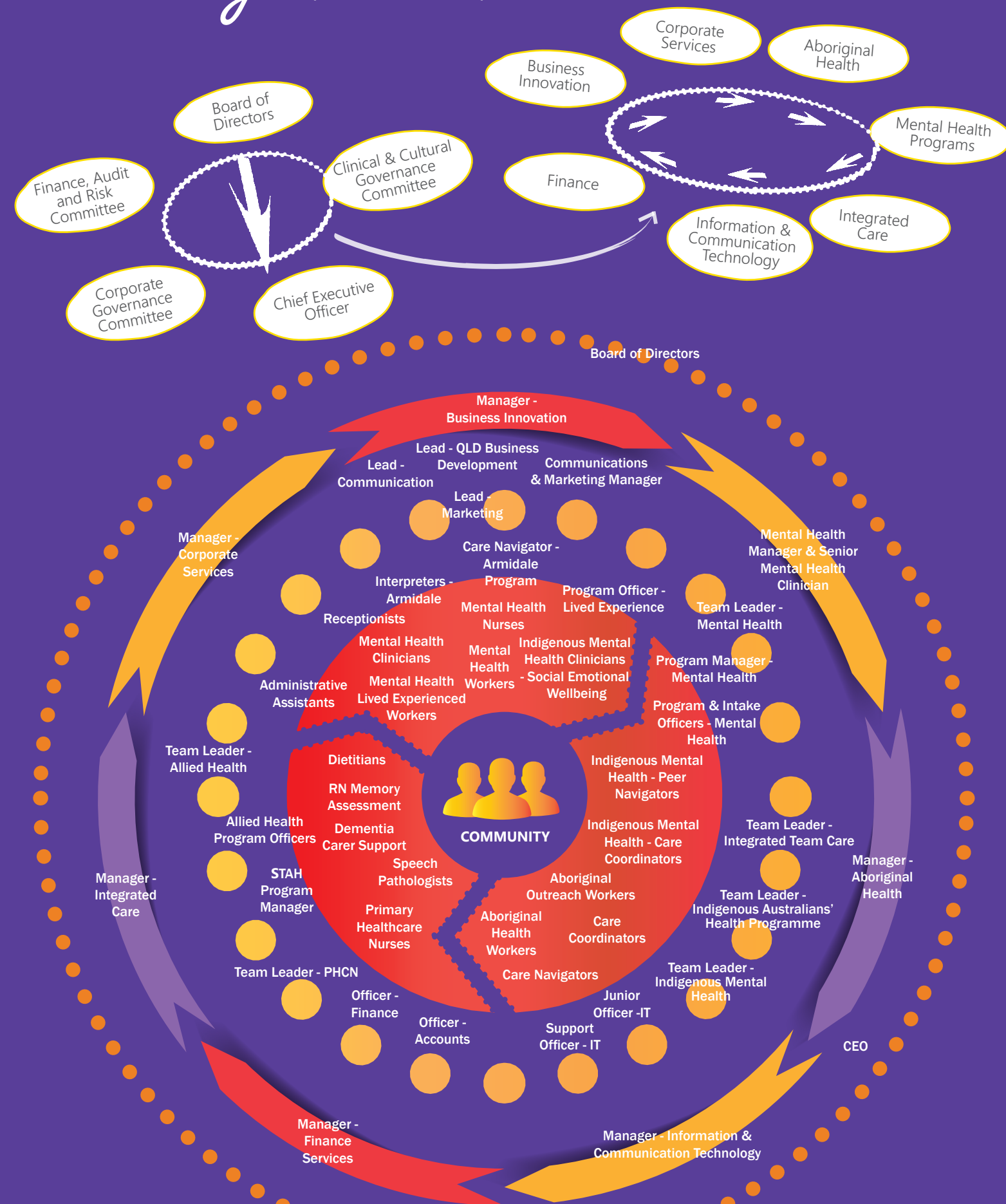
Ms Ann Houston

MBA, GAICD, BEd

Ms Houston has an extensive background in management consultancy and is based in southern QLD. Ann brings a commercial and entrepreneurial perspective to our Board.

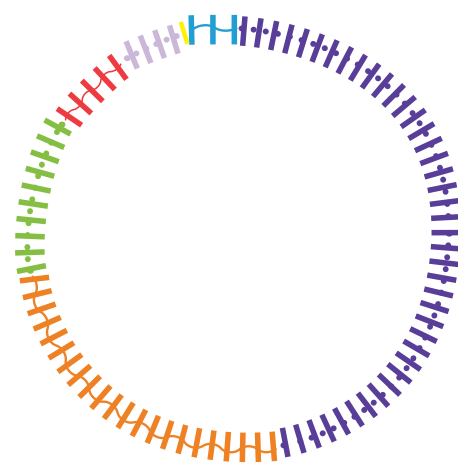
- Appointed Director February 2020.
- Director on the Corporate Governance Committee

Our Organisation

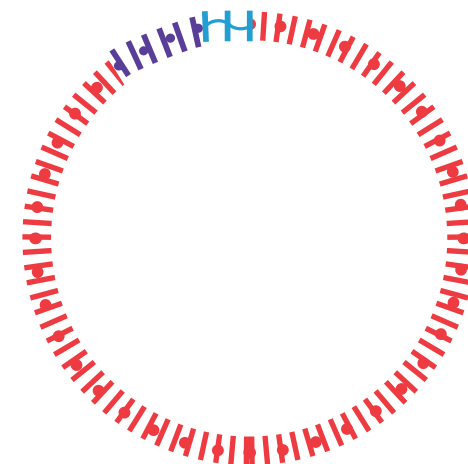


2020 - 2021 *Finance*

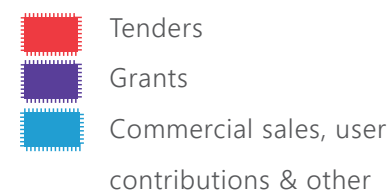
Nicolette Randell
Finance Manager



Revenue by Service Area



Revenue by Income Type



Key Expenses



The Finance Team is:

Nicolette Randell, Dianne Bannigan, Kate Bannigan & Sharon Worley

Operations

HealthWISE has continued to go from strength to strength in the 2020-2021 Financial Year.

Additional funding won through the tender process in conjunction with the continual overall growth of HealthWISE allowed for expansion within our Operations Team. In January we were able to recruit the additional role of Operations Officer which has greatly assisted the Corporate Services Manager & the Operations team.

We saw the fleet across HealthWISE increase to a total of 25 vehicles.

In the 2020-2021 financial year we saw a reduction in our incidents by 26% with the total number of Incidents being 11. We also saw a 12% reduction of our vehicular related incidents compared to the previous year.

Christine Kershaw
Operations Manager



The Operations Team is:

Christine Kershaw, Melissa Cavallaro, Wendy Newman, Joy Jenkins, Kate Bannigan, Cailin Jolliffe, Kara Rushton, Leanne Coghlan, Gemma Booker & Mark Rex

Human *Resources*

36
New employees joined HealthWISE during 2020-2021

Staff retention was
80%

26%
new staff identified as Aboriginal

100
The total number of staff at the end of 2020-2021



Business Development Queensland

HealthWISE continues to develop services and initiatives across southern Queensland.

Since November 2020, Queensland Business Development Lead, Naomi Petty has met with stakeholders and community groups across the HealthWISE footprint to identify opportunities for HealthWISE to meet gaps in health services, connect with communities and raise awareness of the experienced HealthWISE team.

Naomi joined health professionals and business leaders from Ipswich and surrounding regions at events over the last year including Business Expo Ipswich, Red Ant Round Up Kingaroy, and the Savvy Scenic Rim Expo.

HealthWISE will expand services in 2021 with Dietitian support commencing for Ipswich, Somerset, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim, Toowoomba and surrounds.

A collaboration involving HealthWISE and QLD Education will see onsite psychological services supporting primary and secondary school students within the Lockyer and Laidley clusters.

Events are also planned for farming communities located within the Scenic Rim to continue to be supported after being severely impacted by bushfires.



Queensland Business Development Lead, Naomi Petty



Visit our IT support business site!

myTechWISE

www.mytechwise.com.au



**The
Information &
Communication
Technology Team is:**
Michael Gill,
Jacob McLeod & Pukar
Thapaliya

Information & Communication Technology

2020-2021 was a year that continued to introduce challenges for the IT team at HealthWISE. 'Snap' lockdowns as a result of COVID-19 were announced and implemented (often with very short notice) at various stages throughout the year in parts of New South Wales and South East Queensland. These lockdowns added to workflow and IT challenges for all staff.

The continued growth of HealthWISE staffing numbers saw the need to increase the capacity of the IT team. We welcomed Pukar Thapaliya to our team as Junior IT Officer. Pukar has become a valued member of the IT team, assisting with the team's workload. He has also worked closely with the team developing and implementing the HealthWISE initiative 'Sounds good to me', developing a new web platform and CRM and providing support to this service.



HealthWISE is now well prepared and readily able to cater for staff to work from home, with the majority of our IT infrastructure and services now located within a mix of private and public cloud platforms.

The IT team developed and deployed IT 'take home kits' for each office, which enabled staff without internet or computer access at home to continue working from a home based environment. Our cloud-based VoIP system allowed staff to utilise their desk telephones at home to make and receive phone calls on behalf of HealthWISE, remaining in contact with staff, clients and other stakeholders.

Telehealth continued to be an important and crucial tool for our clinical staff to be able to conduct appointments with clients via telephone and secure video linkups, at short notice. The IT team was available to assist staff to remain connected with our community, with the provisioning of additional webcams, new mobile phones, laptops, headsets and support.

Support to Medical Clinics continued to grow, with several additional practices signing up to our managed IT services offering, under our IT branding of myTechWISE.

Michael Gill

Information & Communication Technology Manager



The Integrated Care team has worked hard to connect with individuals and communities in need. We work alongside the people we support, many of whom are living with very challenging chronic health conditions, to learn skills and ways to stay strong and active to lead a more fulfilling life.

The Integrated Care team has grown to 58 people this year. We provided services under 16 programs with a total budget of more than \$6.7 million. It was by far our biggest year.

The teams were ably led by Alicia Pratt - allied health team leader, Anne Galloway - mental health manager and Fiona Robertson - senior primary health care nurse. Fiona retired from HealthWISE late in the year and I thank her for her commitment to the role. Chris Connor is the new PHCN team leader. Sandie Davis has continued to thrive in her role as Integrated Care Team Executive Assistant and we have been able to bring Tess Johnstone on board as Executive Assistant for Mental Health. I am so grateful to be surrounded by this team of intelligent, motivated and skilled women.

Thank you to Fiona Strang and the Board for their support and guidance always. Thank you to our colleagues in the Aboriginal Health Access, Operations, IT and Communications teams for helping us achieve our goals. Thank you to our partners and communities and most especially to the people we support and work with each day. You make working at HealthWISE rewarding, fun and fulfilling.

Anne Williams
Integrated Care Manager



Allied Health Team Program

Alicia Pratt - Allied Health Team Leader

RDN Funded Services

RHOF – Rural Health Outreach Fund

Despite COVID-19 disruptions...



122
visits were delivered
by 15 specialists

Services included Dermatology, Rheumatology, Psychiatry, Neurosurgery, Ophthalmology and Paediatrics.



1,742
hours of service

This represents Providers who were quick to offer telehealth in response to COVID-19 restrictions, so people didn't miss out on the care they needed.



3,997
people received
a service



12%
of people
identified as
Aboriginal

The Allied Health Team is:
Alicia Pratt, Amelia Smith, Amy Ashman, Anna Haire, Cate Doyle, Kate Perrett, Linda Foskey, Miranda Wright, Rany Chou, Sally Henry, Samantha Humphries, Sue Hombsch & Susanne Kable.



RDN Funded Services

MOICDP – Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program



264

visits conducted



2,445

services provided to people



84%

of people identified as Aboriginal



488

people were new to these services

Services included Exercise Physiology, Podiatry, Diabetes Education, Dietetics, Paediatrics, Aboriginal Health, Gynaecology, Paediatrics and Endocrinology

Gunnedah Indigenous Chronic Disease Groups – Health and Resilience

HealthWISE Dietitian Amelia Smith, together with the Aboriginal Health team in Gunnedah, conducted 12 MOICDP (Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program) clinics in 2020/2021 and delivered 3 support group education sessions.

73 individual nutrition consultations with Amelia dovetailed into a consultation with Diabetes Educator/Clinical Nurse Educator teamed with an Aboriginal Health Practitioner. Most consultations

were delivered face-to-face, however some phone consultations were requested.

Monthly support group education sessions occurred between March and May 2021. These COVID safe events included education about preparation of healthy food as well as nutrition related health topics such as reading food labels. HealthWISE Mental Health clinician, Krinent Singh was a guest presenter at one of the groups to highlight the importance of self-care and mental wellbeing. 22 occasions of service resulted from the support groups. These groups were held in collaboration with 3 different local Aboriginal organisations.

This monthly clinic provides a key local support hub for Aboriginal clients in the Gunnedah region. People with Diabetes in particular also access regular services through the other MOICDP supported services in Gunnedah such as podiatry and exercise physiology clinics.

The support of the local Aboriginal Health team from HealthWISE to schedule appointments and reminders, and provide transport is crucial to the ongoing success of these clinics



Good News Story

My name is Isabell but my friends call me Belle. I love drawing and making milkshakes!

I go to Gwabegar Public School. There are ten children at the school and three in my class.

I love talking but I am hard to understand which is hard because I have a lot to say!!! My Mum says I can be nervous talking to new people.

I have a friend Anna and she is a Speech Pathologist. I am not nervous talking with her. Anna works in Narrabri. I have never been there but she says it's nice. All I know is it is a long way away.

She came to see me at my school when I was in Kindergarten last year and then I saw her over the computer at school on zoom.

We played games on the computer and if I went really well she would send me special things in the post like speech games and surprises. She made a funny Santa that I could practice my sounds with at home over Christmas. We would have competitions about who had the best earrings. She told me my Christmas earrings were the best she had ever seen. She talked to my Mum over the phone every time we met and she told Mum that I was working hard. Mum also worked hard with me at home on the speech work. I like doing zoom so I don't miss any school. The School Learning Support Officer practiced the speech games with me at school that Anna gave her.

I saw Anna again this year at school. At first I didn't know her in the classroom because she had to wear a mask but then I saw her earrings and I knew who she was! We had some more visits over zoom and Anna said my talking was getting better. I am hoping I won't be nervous around new people anymore as my talking gets better.





Priority Allied Health Service (PAHS)



9,452

appointments
were provided
in our area

The PAHS program continued to provide a range of allied health services to communities across the New England North West.

Small Town After Hours (STAH)



2,423

patients have
been seen
by the STAH
program

That means 2423 people were cared for at their local hospital even though the local GP was on leave! The STAH program enabled those people to remain in their home town rather than be transferred to a hospital in another town.

The program is provided in Boggabri, Bingara, Barraba, Warialda, Manilla, Walcha, Wee Waa and Murrurundi. 8 STAH GPs support this program. Many of these GPs contributed to providing care 24/7 in some small towns this year.

<https://healthwisenew.com.au/services/allied-and-primary-health/>



Speech Pathology ESL (English as a Second Language) Group

Good news story

Many people who move to Australia with limited English speaking skills may become isolated and limit their interactions with broader society. In order to be able to successfully live and participate in society, people need to have an understanding of where they can access the things that they need, the names of these places and what they look like. People with an ESL background can benefit from the HealthWISE speech pathology service.

Speech pathologist Rany Chou and student speech pathologist Jordan ran an English as second language group from October through to December 2020 with 5 participants from Burma and Malaysia.

We worked on increasing the participants' functional English and social participation so that they understood more about the Tamworth community and some Australian culture.

As well as practice conversational English, the group completed practical activities.

1. Cooking quesadillas

The participants learned to read and follow an English recipe to cook a popular meal in Australia – quesadillas.

2. Café visit

We visited a local café – Hopscotch Restaurant and Bar in Tamworth, to give the participants some experience eating out, as this is not something they generally feel comfortable doing. We wanted to encourage them to be out and about more.

All the participants learned how to greet the café staff and order their food and beverage in English by themselves. The staff were very helpful and supportive, and they welcomed HealthWISE to return anytime.

The group participants were appreciative and thanked HealthWISE and the PAHS program for the opportunity.

- Rany Chou
(Speech Pathologist)



Primary Health Care Nursing

Chris Connor – Primary Health Care Nursing Team Leader



215

PHCN
events



4,859

people
participated



14.5%

of people
identified as
Aboriginal

This year we farewelled Fiona Robertson from the HealthWISE team. Fiona has been in the senior role since September 2015. We also said goodbye to Chloe Wilkin who left following maternity leave for her third child. Fiona and Chloe are both still living in Narrabri and we see them from time to time. In August 2021 we welcomed Catharina Du Plessis to the team based in Tamworth.

Our Primary Health Care Nurses (PHCNs) provide education, health promotion and screening activities and events in more than 50 communities of less than 2000 people across the New England and North West of NSW.

The PHCNs travel for countless hours and work in partnership with a wide range of trusted stakeholders. The Rural Adversity Mental Health Program (RAMHP) team in our service area has been a particularly strong partner this year.

Feedback on the PHCN program is consistently high, with communities really valuing the work the PHCNs do. Despite COVID-19 restrictions throughout the year, the PHCNs exceeded their targets.

In addition

Early in 2020 in response to the devastation from fire and drought in Glen Innes and Tenterfield, we secured 12-months funding to employ an additional nurse to expand this important program and assist these communities to recover. The additional funding allowed for a further 50 events with 1299 participants!

**The Primary
Health Care
Nurse Team is:**
Chris Connor, Letecia
Kearney, Wendy Allen &
Catharina Du Plessis

Two members of the PHCN nursing team Chris Connor and Letecia Kearney, completed the Heart Foundation Ambassadors Program. This program was designed to support prevention, early detection and better management of Cardiovascular Disease to improve patient care and outcomes. The most up to date evidence was provided to increase the participants' knowledge and confidence to deliver this information throughout our communities. Professional relationships and networks from across the health care system were developed.

What started as a face to face program had to be provided by Zoom after the first workshop. Presentations were delivered by Cardiologists, Pharmacists, Cardiac Rehabilitation Clinicians and Practice Managers who each discussed pathways to recovery and ways to improve health outcomes.



An evidence based Quality Improvement Activity project was completed by each participant to support our goals and improve patient care. Chris and Letecia compiled and presented to the group on "Coping strategies for working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic".

Good news story

HealthWISE secured additional funding from HNECC PHN to support drought relief. Five Women Like Us (Comedians) events were held in small rural communities during November 2020 and June 2021 across 4 LGAs. These events provided a much needed diversion in each community as mental health and resilience was stretched and there was a need for community cohesion and a get together coming out of lockdown after the COVID-19 pandemic, bushfires, drought, flooding and a mouse plague. A Mental Health, Wellness and Wellbeing presentation was delivered at each event. Free health checks and referral pathway forms were provided to attendees as well. 320 people attended these events –there were restrictions on numbers at the times.

"We need more of these events to bring us together."

"This was the best night out- thank you for a great meal, great friends and great entertainment and take home messages."

Bringing communities together in a safe environment for a free event, a meal and entertainment and a laugh with friends, neighbours and colleagues has a far reaching impact and these events are talked and laughed about long after the event is over. The feedback from these events is invaluable and provides us with an overview of how community members are travelling-mentally and physically.

"Congratulations-Thank you for bringing these much needed events to our small communities."



See our
Facebook page for all
upcoming events!

Mental Health Team

Anne Galloway – Mental Health Team Leader

Over the last 12 months we have said goodbye to 2 valued staff members Stephen Savage and Jenny Roberts and welcomed 6 new members so the team has continued to grow significantly allowing us and our contractors to meet the increasing demand to provide services to the people we support across the regions. Like in all other HealthWISE programs our clients have had to respond to lockdowns resulting in variations in the mode of service delivery, interruptions to routines and in spite of it all have continued to commit to their recovery.

The border forces were shining on us briefly and we were able to come together in June 2021 giving us the opportunity to catch up (in person) to network and plan.



The Mental Health Team is:

Anne Galloway, Tanya Hague, Adam Dunn, Alex Stephenson, Anne Edwards, Augustine Meegavel, Ayden Riethmuller, Brad Jorgenson, Dean Johnson, Donna Boughton, Elizabeth Shepherdson, Fiona Little, Jenna Grills, Kate Stewart, Kerryn Smith, Kersha Harding, Kirsty Walker, Krinent Singh, Kylie Trudgett, Leon van der Linde, Lisa Staples, Lynn Hall, Malcolm Watts, Marielle Braz, Nibesh Maharjan, Nicole Stubbs, Paul Pearson, Peter Gurren, Rathi Ramanathan, Rod Cooper, Rozi Backhausen, Samantha Sheppard, Sean Kijurina, Tess Johnstone & Vernita Hanrahan

Mental Health Team

Anne Galloway – Mental Health Team Leader

Mental Health Lived Experience

also known as the National Psychosocial Support program.



532 sessions were delivered and

66 referrals were received.

Lived Experience Workers provide support to clients referred to HealthWISE in the Southern Downs and South Burnett and Cherbourg areas in south eastern Queensland. The Lived Experience Workers provide services in partnership with clinical coordination staff.

In addition we implemented and evaluated a trial to include Lived Experience Workers within the Social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples program. Lived experience staff delivered 931 consultations as part of the pilot.

The trial demonstrated the model of incorporating Lived Experience Workers as an integral part of service delivery combining the Clinical and Psychosocial support workforce to provide mental health services is achievable and successful.

Clinical Care Coordination

formerly Mental Health Nursing program



837 sessions were delivered and

98 people seen

We have been fortunate to support our continued growth towards an interdisciplinary mental health workforce with the inclusion of other disciplines approved to deliver this service. This program works in partnership with the Lived Experience Workers and supports the recovery and management of people living in the Southern Downs, South Burnett and Cherbourg.

Pilot Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Lived Experience



931 sessions were delivered and

146 people

Social and Emotional Wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



2,567 sessions were delivered and

302 people

The model is flexible, culturally safe and provides support across the lifespan. Referrals remain high and we work with local services to support the needs of multiple communities.



Primary Mental Health Access - PRIMA

This program continues to develop and plays an important role in improving access to mental health services across our region. 2,655 assessments focused on the needs of the person within the stepped care model were undertaken in the New England North West.



2,655

Number of referrals the PRIMA program team processed

A Client's Story

During our initial session a 37-year-old female client explained since her mother had passed away, she became overcome with grief and loss, missing regularly visiting her, finding solace in her mother's emotional nurturing and guidance. She explained that her grief and loss process is complicated by feeling guilty that she could have somehow prevented pneumonia which had ultimately led to her mother's death.

As our sessions progressed, the client concluded that, objectively, she could not have contributed in any way to her mother developing pneumonia and subsequently passing away from the affliction. She further indicated that she has accepted the idea that different persons experience grief and loss in their unique way, and that she has come to terms with her grief process, taking as much time as needed to accept losing her mother. Also, she indicated that she is so thankful that her partner proved so understanding and nurturing

Later during our sessions, the client shared that she is starting to make progress in terms of her grief and loss and guilt issues. She indicated that she has put a few Christmas decorations on her mother's grave so that her mother could feel included in "this year's Christmas." She further shared that she has resumed walking for exercise and that she is getting a lot of reward from the activity.

Towards the end of our sessions, the client shared that the particular day was the anniversary of her mother's death, and that she is "a bit sad," planning to visit her mother's grave later in the afternoon. She indicated that she intends to read a poem to her mother, but lamented that even these actions are simply not the "same" as compared to the times she and her mother were interacting in real-time. Even so, the client opined that she is making progress in terms of her initial presenting issues and that she plans to visit a friend next week, just to play games and enjoy each other's company.

During our concluding session, the client indicated that we were able to work through and process her grief and loss issues and that she is "doing much better." She explained that due to the support provided during our sessions as well as from her family, she has regained her motivation and appetite for what life has to offer.



healthwisenew.com.au/services/mental-health/



Primary Mental Health Care

The team provided 10,168 sessions this year in the New England North West.

Along with psychological therapy services for people experiencing mild to moderate mental distress, the program also delivers clinical care coordination for people with complex mental health needs and services to residents of Aged Care facilities.

Suicide Prevention Initiative

We were fortunate to secure additional funding from NSW Ministry of Health to continue to provide this program until 2024. The program provided 1215 sessions for people following a suicide attempt and to those affected by suicide in the community as well as support and attendance at postvention groups and community education. We have partnered with Roses in the Ocean to deliver Touchpoint training for our communities. The Lived Experience reference group continues to give clients a voice in the way this program is managed and delivered.

Client feedback

A total of 196 client surveys were completed in a single focused month.

Question	People who agreed or strongly agreed
It was easy to make an appointment	182 - 93%
The health information I was given was easy to understand	190 - 97%
This service has helped me to identify what I need to do to manage my condition	180 - 92%
I am satisfied with the healthcare I have received from this service	193 - 98%
I would recommend this service to my friends, family and other people	191 - 97%

The role of a Lived Experience Worker

Names have been invented for the purpose of this story

63 year old male, of Aboriginal heritage, living in the Lockyer Valley (West Moreton Region). After long term incarceration, the client is on parole and determined to reintegrate with family, the local community and not return to prison. Combined referral for Lived Experience Worker (LEW) and Clinician within the Social and Emotional Well Being (SEWB) program from Kambu Health in Ipswich.

During initial consultation, the client discussed that he had moved back with family into the Lockyer Valley due to release from long term incarceration. The client wanted to grow connections and relationship with his children, other extended family support and social connections. In particular with his Mother's country (Central Queensland) and the Cherbourg Community. The client further highlighting possible collaborative goals towards cultural support, COVID isolation support, gaining a driver's licence and strengthening cultural connections.

Overall support was provided for family and social connections. General discussion regarding parole conditions and outcomes have also been discussed and supported, in collaboration with the LEW. Additionally with a particular focus on meeting and supporting parole requirements and gaining

a driver's licence (as very limited public transport options exist), as a primary focus (and potential difficulty) for the client. The client has also increased his artwork time, which is utilized as a significant stress reduction technique.

Positive outcomes, as stated by the client, include:

- Increasing family connections, community social contacts and cultural interactions have also occurred over the period of time with the LEW. Including attending family funerals and events held within the Cherbourg Community.
- Client completing Driver Training and now preparing for Provisional Licence test.
- Social connections and support through COVID restrictions by both LEW and SEWB Clinician.
- Relaxed parole conditions due to compliance with all requirements.
- Reconnection with extended family at both Cherbourg and Central Queensland. Additionally increased positive interactions with immediate family (Children and Grandchildren).
- On-going positive, appropriate and increasing social and emotional well-being (including resilience and personal confidence) for the client.

RUOK?

HealthWISE ran an RUOK Day initiative where we paired up with local coffee shops to provide free coffees and mental health information to customers.



Read more about this on our blog!

healthwisenew.com.au/blog/sharing-the-ruok-day-message/



The Exchange

Women from across northern New South Wales were inspired by guest speakers and panel members at 'The Exchange' events in Tamworth and Armidale during 2020-21.

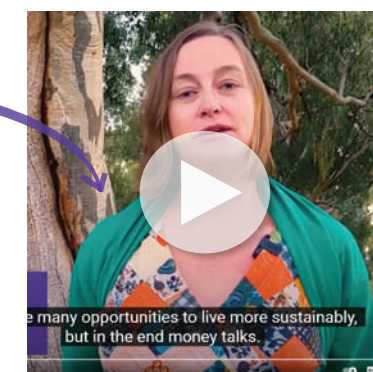
Bronnie Taylor, NSW Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women reflected on the variety of career steps she has made to date when she addressed guests assembled in Tamworth. Building on the theme of 'mentoring and networking' Minister Taylor described the supportive relationships that have helped steer her career.

Guests in Armidale were welcomed with song by Kathy Kelly and provided with multiple ideas around incorporating sustainability into their personal and professional lives. The panel included UNE lecturer and yoga teacher Dr Sue Watt, HealthWISE primary care dietitian Dr Amy Ashman and Tanya Bagster, partner at Roberts and Morrow.

Women from across northern New South Wales and southern Queensland will continue to have the chance to develop leadership skills as HealthWISE hosts nine 'Exchange' events over three years, supported by the Commonwealth Government's Women's Leadership and Development Program.



President of Manilla Community Renewable Energy, Emma Stilts had this 'call to action' for anyone interested in living sustainably.



healthwisenew.com.au/the-exchange/



Another year of working together with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Local Health District, Government, Non-Government organisations and with the General Practices across the regions to strengthen community connections – stay strong and active, to ensure we are able to deliver quality, culturally safe and holistic health care to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people in the New England North West NSW and Darling Downs West Moreton QLD through the Integrated Team Care Programs, Indigenous Australians Health Programme and the Indigenous Mental Health program.

While it has been another challenging year, the Aboriginal Health Access teams are filled with pride as we reflect on the achievements of our Aboriginal Health programs and the internal and external partnerships in 2020 - 2021.

Lastly, I would like to say thank you to the communities across the New England North West NSW and Darling Downs West Moreton QLD regions who continue to embrace the support and services. I would like to acknowledge and thank all of the Aboriginal Health staff for their dedication, effort, excellence and passion.

Jay Ramirez
Aboriginal Health Manager

www.healthwise.org.au/services/aboriginal-health/



Integrated Team Care

Mary Porter - Integrated Team Care (ITC) Team Leader

NSW ITC 18,276

Episodes of services to clients through a combination of care coordination, outreach services and supplementary services across the New England North West region.

Partner organisations Armajun, Pius X and Walhallow AMS continue to help enhance the Integrated Team Care program across the region.

In the 2020/21 financial year HealthWISE were funded to deliver the Integrated Team Care Program in the New England North West Region from the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network. This program is being delivered in partnership with Armajun Aboriginal Medical Service, PIUS X Medical Aboriginal Service and Walhealth Aboriginal Medical Service. This covers 12 Local Government Areas across the New England North West

This partnership has provided assistance to over 1800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the financial year. The number of Care Coordination services provided to these clients in the past year were 15,939 and the number of Supplementary Services provided 2337. This highlights the dedication that the ITC Team have in providing a client focused service.

Each team member provided service delivery either from their home or at the office depending on COVID -19 rulings and showed their flexibility at a moment's notice without interruption to service delivery to the community and with key stakeholders.

HealthWISE and our Partners received a new contract for an additional further three years commencing from July 1 2021, from the Primary Health Network.



The Integrated Team Care Team is:

Mary Porter, Val Williams,
Chris Southwell, Glenn Allan,
Coreena McKenzie-Ride,
Talitha Gardner, Jess Keynes
Geraldine Campbell, Vivian
Holten, Toni McGrady &
Rebecca Bell

Integrated Team Care (ITC) QLD

2,000

Episodes of services through a combination of care coordination, outreach services and supplementary services across Goondiwindi, Texas and Inglewood.

We were able to establish a partnership with Inglewood Medical Centre in 2020 – 2021 to help enhance the Integrated Team Care program across the region.

All Integrated Team Care services were delivered to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people living with chronic disease.

Integrated Team Care services included;

- Making specialist and allied health services accessible for clients.
- Providing follow up care.
- Telehealth model of care.
- Navigating clients and families through the health system.
- Providing cultural brokerage and support if required.
- Providing health literacy and support services.

The Team located at HealthWISE Goondiwindi have had another successful year at ensuring service delivery to ITC Clients and meeting with key stakeholders across the Local Government Area and also on the NSW side of the border to



ensure any cross border issues are dealt with in a seamless manner.

This past financial year dealing with closed borders between NSW and QLD was the main concern but the team persevered and having many networks in place to call on really assisted in this.

The number of clients are steadily increasing and the health literacy being provided to community members to navigate the health system has been excellent.

Providing over 2000 episodes of care in the financial year was a fantastic effort by the team.

This program is funded by the Darling Downs West Moreton Primary Health Network. HealthWISE received a new contract to deliver this program for an additional two years which is great news.



Closing The Gap Event, Coledale Community Centre: Glenn, Talitha, Deslee, Amanda and Jye



Two of the founders of One Connection Disability Services, Dalliss Ramage (artist and proud Gomerai man) and Manbir Rooprai are pictured proudly holding Dalliss' amazing artwork. One Connection Disability Services have donated some of their artwork for the reception area in our Tamworth office



2021 Aboriginal Health Team Strategic Planning sessions

**The Indigenous
Australians' Health
Programme Team is:**

Emma Costello, Jye Millgate, Dalton
Dorrington, Antoinette Wenner,
Russell Cook, Jerrica Wortley, Amelia
Williams, Steven Haines, Vicki
Gardner, Sharlee Bruce and
Valerie Orcher-Booby

Indigenous Australians' Health Programme

Emma Costello - Team Leader

8,500

Episodes of service to clients through a
combination of clinical services, chronic
disease management, healthy lifestyle and
support programs across Tamworth, Gunnedah,
Narrabri, Moree and surrounding areas.

These IAHP services included



Assisting with the completion
of **715** Health Assessments.



Assisting with Allied Health
appointments.



Assisting with Specialist
appointments.



Transport services.



The completion of basic
health checks/observations.



Assisting GPs with reminders and
recalls, and follow ups if needed.



Coordination of the Indigenous
chronic disease clinics.



Coordination of allied health clinics



Healthy lifestyle and support
programs.



Healthy lifestyle & chronic
disease workshops



Telehealth model of care

IAHP Highlight for 2020 - 2021 - Core IAHP Funding extended and IAHP Expansion Funding.

This year (March 2021), we were successful
with securing additional funding under our
Indigenous Australians Health Programme (IAHP)
to enhance our current service provision and
workforce in the Gunnedah and Narrabri LGAs. This
funding was for the remainder of 2020 - 2021,
and the following two years. Along with this, we
received notification from the Department of
Health that the core funding contract for our
current IAHP Program will be extended
in line with the new contracts, i.e.
until 30 June 2023.



HealthWISE IAHP has grown and adapted over the 2020/21 year. Fitness has continued in groups as well
as at home, making use of take-home packs distributed by the IAHP team.

The Indigenous Mental Health Team is:
Deslee Mathews, Lionel Solomon,
Frances Prowse, Glenys Mulley &
Amanda Naden



Indigenous Mental Health

2,200

Provided over
episodes of services to clients through group support, care coordination and peer support services across the Peel and Tablelands clusters.

Partner organisations Armajun and Walhallow AMS, and Flourish Australia continue to help enhance the Indigenous Mental Health program across the Peel and the Tablelands.

The Armidale Indigenous Mental Health Program servicing the Armidale, Walcha and Uralla communities have continued adapting to changing circumstances in client needs, program delivery and working more closely with local stakeholders in service delivery.

Once again keeping abreast of COVID-19 compliance for service delivery, functioning as part of a remote team and also caring for and managing the added responsibilities of care for staff, clients, family or loved ones, and self during the ongoing impacts of the pandemic.

The Tamworth Indigenous Mental Health Program has continuously serviced the Liverpool Plains LGA for the past 12 months. The IMH group is facilitated every fortnight, group members aged from 20-80 years old attend. It is a group of Aboriginal men and women with low to moderate mental health challenges. The group came together to do some art and craft, some came to relax and yarn to other members, others came to engage back out in the community. It is a culturally safe environment for Indigenous people with mental health challenges.

Group members would share knowledge about upcoming community health events that might be beneficial for someone else in the group. The elderly group members spoke about local history and educated the younger members of the group.

"In this group I have witnessed that our Kinship with our elders has had a great positive impact on the younger generation as most of the young people that attend have been lost without hope and no sense of direction because every day mental health challenges have stripped them from living a fulfilling life"

IMH services included;

- Providing cultural brokerage and support if required.
- Providing clinical support services to Mental Health clinicians and GP's.
- Healthy Lifestyle & Mental Health Awareness Workshops
- Assisting GPs and Mental Health clinicians with follow ups if needed.
- Navigating clients and families through the Health and Community sectors.
- Telehealth model of care.
- Group Therapy and support programs.
- Transport services.

IMH Program Delivery to Participants

This year our Armidale Indigenous Mental Health (IMH) groups programs have contributed to our indigenous communities staying strong through activity and connection through challenging times.

Our group programs offered the opportunity for our indigenous community members to gather for music and yarnning circles in Walcha. Armidale and Uralla clients enjoyed activities provided through a collaboration with Armidale and Region Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Healing Place and NSW Health - Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD) which offered gatherings for art, weaving, jewellery making and Tai Chi classes. This allowed the time and space for local indigenous women to gather for educational, health and cultural educational course information and presentations. Presentations were made by HealthWISE Memory Assessment Program, NSW Health HNE LHD and Armidale TAFE.

The Indigenous women of the Walhallow reserve have accepted the IMH program into their community, they know the benefits it can have for their families and encourage others to use the service and encourage individuals to self-refer. An IMH team member visited the community with Walhealth doctors fortnightly.



IMH Team Connections

We came together more this year as a team, meeting over video conferencing both the IMH team and also our broader HealthWISE team, in an effort toward connection and staying strong. This was really important for our individual motivation, particularly when we were working from home. These opportunities appeared to keep the spark ignited keeping stoking our team fires with interest, curiosity, motivation and community.

Highlights for the IMH Team this year included the announcement of one of our group projects being awarded a finalist in the Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network (HNECCPHN) 2021 Primary Care Quality and Innovation Awards - Supporting patients through technology - category. Our team was honoured to be a finalist for our Yarning and Practice of Quiet Stillness on Country. This groups program was adapted due to the pandemic and continued to be delivered. The IMH referral form was improved this year to allow a holistic approach to participant's recovery. Also the IBOBBLY SEWB app was introduced whilst waiting for psychologist appointments.

New networks continue to develop throughout the delivery of our service, both within local community as well as across HealthWISE services and offices, and NSW Health services.

Working together has been important this year for service delivery and has seen our program forging stronger community connections working collaboratively with other local service providers. HealthWISE IMH team continue to be appreciative of the opportunities to gain broader perspectives that are presented through attendance at our local interagency and community meetings and in attending local Aboriginal Interagency Meetings (Aboriginal Community Development), and NSW Health Community engagement project meetings.

Good News Story

The IMH program has helped a client with complex needs move from one Local Government Area (LGA) to another. The client was unwell and felt the IMH program was not helping her, however during the process the client built rapport with the IMH staff member and thanked IMH staff for not giving up on her and delivering what the worker said she was going to do. The client is now in another town, in a caravan park and with services wrapped around her. The client is working on her recovery with local services.

Care Navigation Armidale

In 2017, Armidale was chosen as an ongoing humanitarian settlement location. Since 2018, when resettlement commenced, Armidale has become home to over 650 Ezidi humanitarian refugees, with an estimated 300 more expected to arrive as international borders start to reopen.

GPs have struggled to cater for the Armidale Ezidi population, with factors including; a higher than anticipated number of arrivals, high levels of complex trauma, grief and depression, high rates of chronic illness, lack of face to face interpretation and barriers to accessing follow up allied health and specialist appointments.

Since 2020, HealthWISE have delivered a care navigation service for humanitarian entrants with Ezidi ethnicity based in Armidale. The aim of the program is to assist individuals and families from the Ezidi community to identify their health goals, and to problem solve solutions for barriers that may be impacting their overall health.

While care navigation demonstrates characteristics of care coordination, its ultimate goal is to empower service users to navigate the healthcare system independently. Working from an empowerment perspective, the

HealthWISE care navigation team provides service users with the support and practical assistance they need to confidently navigate the health system and to identify and address any barriers that may prevent timely access to care.

The care navigation program has been designed to work in collaboration with General Practices, and the care navigator co-locates with three local practices- Armidale Medical Centre, Integral Health, and West Armidale Medical Centre.

The care navigation team consists of the care navigator, Melissa van Leeuwen, and two interpreters, Kaso Elias and Jehan Darwesh. Kaso and Jehan are members of the Armidale Ezidi community, and bring with them knowledge and understanding of the Ezidi culture. Kaso and Jehan are invaluable members of the team and the ability to provide face to face interpreting has allowed the program to overcome much of the language and communication barriers, and develop strong connections and trust.

The arrival of the Ezidi humanitarian refugees has highlighted many challenges for the local community, and one of the main barriers faced by both communities is language and communication.

To help address this, in September 2021, the HealthWISE team created a series of short, animated videos that explained the Australian healthcare system across 11 topics. The videos were presented by the care navigation translators, Kaso and Jehan, and spoken in Kurdish/Kurmanji.

The videos cover a range of health topics, such as Medicare, IPTAAS, emergency and ambulance services, patient expectations and informed consent, treatment options and patient responsibilities. The videos are animated with simple to understand pictures, and include English sub-titles to assist with English word recognition.

It is hoped these videos can help to alleviate some of the confusion surrounding healthcare in Australia, and provide a valuable addition to existing resources for the Ezidi community.

The Australian healthcare system is complex and can be difficult to navigate for many people. The care navigation program seeks to assist the Ezidi population to build capacity and empower them to make informed decision regarding their healthcare.

healthwisenenw.com.au/services/ezidi-refugee-video-resources/



The Care Navigation Pilot Program Team is:
Melissa van Leeuwen,
Kaso Elias and Jehan Darwesh.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Inclusion Framework working group

The HealthWISE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working group was formed to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into HealthWISE processes and practices, which in turn is an important step towards understanding, respecting, and representing the world-views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The framework will encourage culturally-safe work practices, while valuing the cultural diversity that enriches and moves the organisation forward.

Under the guidance of Nola Turner Jensen, HealthWISE Framework Coordinator & Consultant, the working group has commenced discussions by systematically work through the organisation's process of recruitment, governance, leadership & administration, HealthWISE acknowledgment protocols as well as welcome to Country protocols and purpose.

Our plan is to make this framework truly our own and entrench into our organisation's everyday life.



WE'RE
COVID
SAFE

Continuity Management Team

The HealthWISE Continuity Management Team, a collective of executive and staff from across programs and offices, continued to guide the organisation through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The team continues to meet regularly to adapt service delivery and procedures in response to health advice and changes in state based public health orders.

Louise Ingall shared our business continuity process with other primary health care providers as part of the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network COVID-19 Showcase in May.



**The
Communication &
Marketing Team is:**
Sally Urquhart, Louise Ingall,
Naomi Shumack, Georgia
Etheridge & Naomi
Petty

Communication & Marketing

Sally Urquhart
Business Innovation Manager

HealthWISE Communications Team engaged in projects across the year, that support our vision and purpose including participation in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Cultural Inclusion Working Group, Wellbeing group, Research group, Sounds good to me project and coordinating the Health Literacy working group. HealthWISE is committed to becoming a health literate organisation, and contributing to improved health literacy in our communities.

The team support recruitment across the organisation as well as continuing to promote our events and news across social media platforms.

Over the last year, 60 HealthWISE stories were published across television, print and digital media, sharing good news stories and showcasing events.

2,192

HealthWISE Facebook
page followers July 1, 2020

↑ 2,558

HealthWISE Facebook
page followers June 30, 2021

ENGAGE WITH MEDIA:

- Regular press releases about our events and good news stories
- Generate content
- Build relationships with media and to be considered as a first contact
- To be known as experts in our field

60
episodes



Visit us on Social!



Why I chose to get vaccinated



**Jenna
Grills - Mental
Health Clinician**

My wife and my mum are both people who would be extremely vulnerable to COVID should it reach our region; in addition to the many clients I see who are also at greater risk.



**Russell
Cook -
Aboriginal Health
Worker**

As I work and live with people with chronic illnesses, I wanted to make sure I'm protecting them and the community



**Melissa
van Leeuwen -
Care Coordinator**

I am young and healthy, and not everyone can get the vaccine. So I knew if I did it, it would help protect others in the community.



**Naomi Petty
- Business
Development Lead, QLD**

To protect against COVID infection.



**Val
Williams - Care
Coordinator**

My personal decision to have my COVID-19 shots was because I feel it's important to protect myself, my family & work family/mates.

As an Aboriginal person, with chronic illnesses our community is very vulnerable, and this is how we keep them safe as well.



**Lionel
Solomon -
Indigenous Mental
Health Peer Support
Worker**

My doctors told me that with my medical conditions, if I got COVID-19 I would die 100%.



**Wendy
Newman -
Reception**

I need to protect myself, family, friends and community.



**Anne Williams -
Integrated Care Team
Manager**

I know that vaccinations work to improve public health. My parents vaccinated me as they grew up surrounded by dreadful diseases such as small pox and polio - my mother grew up in India and Burma. We had our children vaccinated against common illnesses such as measles and mumps etc and COVID-19 is now one of those common illnesses.

HealthWISE Celebrations



Thanks and Acknowledgements

Aboriginal Hostels Ltd – Tamworth	Good Start Learning – Gunnedah	PIUS X Aboriginal Corporation
Apsley Riverview Hostel	Gravesend Public School P&C	Professor Sue Kurrle
Armajun Aboriginal Health Service	Gunnedah High School	Prue Jamieson
Autumn Lodge	Hillvue Public School	Quirindi Retirement Homes - Eloura
Baptist Pre-School – Gunnedah	Heart Foundation	RENTFAST
Benevolent Society	Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network	Right Choice Strategy
Bloom Hearing	Hunter New England Health - Integrated Chronic Care for Aboriginal People	Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Accommodation Office
Calvary Mater Hospital Accommodation Services	Hunter New England Health – Population Health	Rural Adversity Mental Health Program
Cerebral Palsy Alliance Challenge	Hunter New England Health Hydrotherapy Pool Staff	Roses in the Ocean
Cherbourg Regional Aboriginal & Islander Community Controlled Health Service	Jocellin Jansson	Rural Fit
Clontarf Foundation	John Hunter Patient Relative Accommodation	Standby National Suicide Postvention Services
Club Synergy 24/7	Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health	Services Our Way
Country Care Link	Hymba Yumba Independent School - Springfield	Tamworth Aboriginal Medical Service
CrossFit 2340	Local communities in our area	Tanya Bagster
Curlewis Public School	McLean Care Gunnedah	Tattersalls Hotel Armidale
Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network	Medical Specialists, Allied Health and Mental Health Providers	Hon Bronnie Taylor, NSW Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women
Dementia Australia	Miyay Birray Youth Service Moree	The Courthouse Hotel Tamworth
Department of Health	Moree Secondary College	The K Factor
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Office for Women	Moree Women's Shed	University of Newcastle Department of Rural Health
Dr Amy Ashman	Namoi Valley Christian School	University of New England
Dr Casey Sullivan	Narrabri Shire Council	Vision Australia
Dr Sue Watt	Narrabri Public School	Walhallow Aboriginal Corporation
EACH	NSW Ministry of Health	Winanga-Li (Gunnedah & Narrabri)
Elizabeth Hunter Lodge	NSW Rural Doctors Network	Yaamanhaa Aboriginal Men's Group
Embody Wellbeing	One Connection Disability Services	
Emma Stilts	Oxley Vale Public School	
Flourish Australia	Phoenix two390 Gym and Personal Training	
General Practices across our region		
Gomerai Gaaynggal Centre		

Armidale

1st Floor, 109 Jessie St
Armidale NSW 2350
(02) 6771 1146

Glen Innes

1/124 Bourke St
Glen Innes NSW 2370
(02) 5733 5308

Goondiwindi

Shop 4/82 Marshall St
Goondiwindi QLD 4390
(07) 4519 3503

Gunnedah

2/88 Barber St
Gunnedah NSW 2380
(02) 6742 3633

Inverell

6/18 Sweaney St
Inverell NSW 2360
(02) 6721 4117

Ipswich

22 South St
Ipswich QLD 4305
(07) 3050 4438

Moree

161 Balo St
Moree NSW 2400
(02) 6752 7196

Narrabri

93-95 Barwan St
Narrabri NSW 2390
(02) 6792 5514

Tamworth

213 Peel St
Tamworth NSW 2340
(02) 6766 1394



www.healthwise.org.au