Nellie Woodward is adamant she could have done better.

The 89-year-old cruised home in last month’s City 2 Surf race in 3 hours and 14 minutes – but was held up near the end by a reporter thrusting a microphone toward her for a chat.

That delay may not have cost her a placing in the top 10, but it just might be enough to lure her back next year for another go.

Mrs Woodward, from Drummoyne, credits her athletic talent to her twice-weekly visits to the Strong Clinic at Balmain Hospital for the past seven years, and eight weeks walking the Bay Run and flexing her calf muscles on Heartbreak Hill, the crushing 80 metre climb near Rose Bay.

“She even gave up wine in the final week of training,” her daughter, Jan Grayson, said.

Mrs Woodward is one of 260 elderly people who use the Strong Clinic’s gym equipment to build strength, balance and general fitness.

To show her appreciation for the clinic, she wore a Balmain Hospital shirt for the race and raised more than $800 to buy more equipment.
Message from the Chair, District Board

It was fantastic to see the Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, attend RPA to help launch Sydney Local Health District’s Organ Donation for Transplantation Plan.

The unit will be enhanced with the creation of the nation’s first dedicated academic position for organ donation for transplantation, a conjoint appointment with the University of Sydney; the re-establishment an SLHD organ and tissue donation steering committee; and additional staff to provide 24/7 coverage throughout the hospital, strengthening our Whole of Hospital approach to organ donation and enhanced auditing program.

The plan will help ensure RPA continues to be a world leader in organ donation for transplantation.

Construction is nearly complete on the new mental health facility at RPA, with the officially opening planned for late November.

The new unit, which will have additional facilities such as a six-bed assessment area and a short stay ward, will enhance the services already provided to mental health patients in the inner west and meet their needs for decades to come.

We are also fast closing in on our 2014 Annual General Meeting, planned for December 4 at the Centre for Education and Workforce Development. I invite you all to attend to celebrate the good work conducted across the District this year.

Message from the Chief Executive

It’s been an incredibly busy few months again across Sydney Local Health District, with activities kicking off with the 110th birthday of the Sydney Dental Hospital.

Congratulations to all staff involved in the celebrations. It was wonderful to see the service, and its iconic building, honoured over two weeks of celebrations, which included historical tours, talks and staff awards.

It was also very exciting to finally hold the first round of The Pitch, a new quarterly event series aimed at embracing, encouraging and supporting a culture of innovation through a challenge. Staff are asked to submit their ideas for improving the system, with Sydney Local Health District making $240,000 available in the next year to bring the winning ideas to fruition.

In the first round, two winners shared the first $50,000 available with Balmain Hospital granted $33,000 to create a therapy garden for rehabilitation patients, and Allied Health taking $17,000 to buy a mobile fiberoptic endoscopic evaluation of swallowing machine to test patients’ ability to swallow, reducing the risk of aspiration pneumonia.

Congratulations to our winners and to all entrants for taking part. It is exciting to see so many great ideas out there and I look forward to the next event.

We also held our second annual Yaralla Open Day, with more than 20 health information stalls, a barbecue and jumping castle. The Yaralla Estate Community Advisory Committee has also issued its draft management plan and we are keen for feedback.

Dr Teresa Anderson
Sydney Local Health District
Chief Executive

Dr Teresa Anderson
Sydney Local Health District
Chief Executive

The Hon. Ron Phillips
Sydney Local Health District
Board Chairman
Riders across the District are gearing up for Ride to Work Day 2014 in October. The annual event celebrates the benefits of the increasingly popular commute choice – with more than 180,000 NSW residents in greater metropolitan Sydney riding to work every day.

Regular riders can help show support for the event and be counted by registering at www.ride2work.com.au.

Ride to Work Day, on October 15, also plays an important role in encouraging new riders to become involved. There will be events at most sites across the District as well as cycling skills courses for beginners at select locations.

2014 Ride to Work Day events are being held at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Concord Hospital, Balmain Hospital, Canterbury Hospital, Sydney Dental Hospital, Croydon Community Health Centre, Marrickville Community Health Centre, and Redfern Community Health Centre.

The Sydney Local Health District Health Promotion Service is also working with the City of Sydney, the University of Sydney and the Chris O’Brien Lifehouse to further encourage riding in the RPA and Camperdown precinct. A Cycling Information Day for staff on Tuesday 16 September (11.45am – 1.45pm located at the end of Johns Hopkins Drive) – will give staff an opportunity to see how bike commuting could work for them or even sit and ride on a bike if they always wanted to but didn’t know how.

Cycling skills courses for rusty riders are also planned through September (17, 18, 22, 24, 25) for staff at RPA and the University of Sydney. The courses are provided free by the City of Sydney and can be booked at http://sydneycycleways.net/get-riding/free-cycling-courses-sydney.

Yaralla Day another success

Sydney Local Health District’s second Yaralla Estate Open Day, held in August, proved a hit, despite the rain, with visitors engaging in fun family activities and gathering important information on maintaining health and wellbeing from our many stalls.

Visitors were also able to review the draft Yaralla Estate Management Plan, recently developed by the Yaralla Estate Community Advisory Committee.
Getting to the heart of it

The Genetic Heart Disease Clinic at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital will hold its first patient day in September for people suffering from a range of inherited conditions.

The event, to be held at the Charles Perkins Centre auditorium on September 13, will include sessions on the latest research on genetic heart diseases, the basics of genetics, genetic testing and family screening.

There will also be specialised sessions on conditions such as hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, Long QT Syndrome and Brugada Syndrome, and the role of implantable cardioverter defibrillators.

Patients and their families and friends will have the opportunity to meet researchers and clinicians and engage in a question and answer sessions.

For more information on the day, go to https://www.facebook.com/heartregistry or contact Laura Yeates on 9565 6187 or l.yeates@centenary.org.au

Last month, Australia also played host to the inaugural International Clinical Cardiovascular Genetics Conference, held in Brisbane.

The scientific program included the diagnosis and detection of cardiovascular genetic disease; risk stratification and management; novel therapeutic approaches; molecular testing and the role of next generation sequencing; new research developments; and multidisciplinary models of care.

The two-day conference focused on major disease themes of cardiomyopathies such as hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, inherited arrhythmogenic disorders such as long QT syndrome and sudden unexplained death in the young, familial dyslipidaemias such as familial hypercholesterolaemia, arteriopathies such as Marfan Syndrome and congenital heart disease.

Royal Prince Alfred’s Professor Chris Semsarian said the specialty event brought together a range of people including cardiologists, geneticists, counsellors, psychologists, public health researchers and forensic pathologists.

“Genetics is a growing area. It involves many specialties leading to a multidisciplinary model of care. There are currently over 40 different cardiovascular diseases directly caused by underlying genetic mutations,” he said.

“On a personal level, I was excited about the sessions related to the latest genetic technologies, such as whole exome and whole genome sequencing – where we can now sequence all 22,000 genes in the human body. This has meant a better understanding of genetic causes of heart disease.”

Professor Semsarian said.

“We see events such as this as an opportunity for further education, sharing knowledge and bringing together clinicians and allied health professionals with the goal to ultimately improve the care of patients and families with genetic heart diseases.”

New ethics agreement

Sydney Local Health District and the University of Sydney have made an agreement allowing researchers conducting multi-site research at both university and hospital sites to obtain a single ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee at either RPA or Concord.

This development is testament to the strong institutional relationships between Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Concord Repatriation General Hospital and the university, demonstrating the collective commitment to fostering and facilitating research.

This development is particularly significant for researchers at the Brain and Mind Research Institute and the Charles Perkins Centre. Prior to this agreement, SLHD ethics committees were only responsible for research conducted at SLHD sites. This meant that multi-site research conducted at both SLHD and university sites was subject to dual review by the SLHD and university ethics committees.

The agreement will minimise duplication of ethics review and streamline processes for more efficient, effective ethical oversight by a single responsible committee.
State first at Concord

The Concord Centre for Mental Health has launched a NSW first with the roll-out of a multi-ward electronic medication management module in August.

An electronic medication management (eMM) system enables a facility to manage prescribing, supply and administration of medicines electronically. It has the potential to improve patient safety, and quality and efficacy of prescribing.

Across NSW most medications are prescribed using the paper-based National Inpatient Medication Chart. This roll-out at Concord Centre for Mental Health – following a trial in five aged care wards at Concord Hospital – involved clinicians in the decision-making processes and the ongoing development of the system.

Laptop computers mounted on mobile trolleys, colloquially called COWS (computer on wheels), as well as an extensive wi-fi network has been put in place to provide maximum flexibility to clinicians on the floor.

Mental Health Operations Director for Sydney Local Health District, Dion Puru, said the trial was a positive development.

“This is the biggest roll-out of a multi-ward and multi-clinical stream electronic medication management system in NSW involving 170 beds across 11 units,” Mr Puru said.

The system will also have fixed protocols for certain medications that are built in to help increase safety, as well as incorporating a patient photo identification system.

Registered nurse Zohaib Memon with a computer on wheels unit.

Kids Go4Fun at healthy family program

The healthy Go4Fun program is now open for families to register for next school term with three programs across Sydney Local Health District. The fun and free program is for children aged 7-13 who are above a healthy weight.

The program helps children build self-esteem and confidence in a supportive environment, as well as helping to set in place long-term healthy habits for the whole family.

The mother of a Go4Fun participant, Allison Yee-Brogan, said the program had helped give their family the tools to improve nutrition as a family.

“Information was targeted at the whole family and that helped us to make decisions as a family, and helped us focus on the technical side of nutrition. It also gave us the language to use at home from things like processed and unrefined, which helped us to sort out what we were purchasing,” Ms Yee-Brogan said.

“For the kids it was also good to connect with other kids who might be in a similar situation, having the program being a normal and fun part of their week,” she said.

The program runs after school on school days and on Saturdays during the school term, and gives children and their parents a positive chance to learn about health and nutrition as well as participating in fun games and activities.

Go4Fun is held at three locations in Sydney Local Health District at Strathfield, Marrickville and Lakemba. Next term Go4Fun will also launch a program for Arabic speaking families in partnership with the Lebanese Muslim Association in Lakemba.

Since the program began in 2011, more than 2500 families in NSW have successfully participated in Go4Fun, providing sustained benefit to the health of families through increased physical activity and improved nutrition.

Parents can quickly check if their child is overweight online at www.go4fun.com.au or by calling 1800 780 900.

Go4Fun was recently featured on Prime 7 News. You can see the whole story at https://au.prime7.yahoo.com/v1/news/a/-/national/24532972/tackling-childhood-obesity-video
Aboriginal Health
Sydney Local Health District’s Aboriginal 48 hour follow up program improves the health outcomes of Aboriginal patients with chronic disease. Aboriginal patients will be identified on admission and followed up within 48 hours of discharge from an acute hospital facility. This follow up, usually in the form of a phone call, will be made by the 48 Hour Aboriginal Health Worker to ensure appropriate links to GPs, Aboriginal Medical Services, specialists, and/or other services to provide care post discharge. Follow-up covers issues such as medications (knowledge and access), referrals (booked and transport arranged) and general wellbeing. With consent patients should also be referred to the Chronic Disease Management Program for further follow up.
To be eligible for enrolment in the program Aboriginal patients will need to be aged 15 years and older with the following chronic diseases: renal (except those patients on haemodialysis), cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and diabetes.
The patient does not need to be admitted to hospital specifically for one of these chronic diseases to be eligible for the program.

Centre for Education and Workforce Development
The Centre for Education and Workforce Development is leading the implementation of the new Statewide Learning Management System for Sydney Local Health District.
This new system, called HETI Online, will completely replace the current LMS (TotalLMS) and will be accessible through the CEWD website. Following extensive consultation with HealthShare and HETI, we have achieved a significant increase in functionality in this new LMS.
Report writing capabilities will increase with cost centre managers being given access to report writing for their services. It is anticipated that this will assist with the management of compliance related training and activities that are pertinent to accreditation processes.
The new LMS is expected to go live in October once pilot testing has been completed. We will be rolling out training in all facilities to introduce staff to the new LMS.

Since 1904 Sydney Dental Hospital has provided vital care to hundreds of thousands of patients across NSW and trained some of Australia’s finest dentists and dental staff.
The hospital recently marked its 110 year anniversary with two weeks of celebrations including a cocktail party, award ceremony, historical displays, tours, a lecture series and the launch of a commemorative book.
Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive, Dr Teresa Anderson, said the hospital had made an immeasurable difference to the health of the local community and the State over several generations.
“Throughout its history the hospital has been a key driver in shaping oral health and dental care in Australia and it has maintained its commitment to provide everyone with access to this vital care,” Dr Anderson said.
“Of course, it is the people who have made this hospital so special to the patients who have received care here.
“At a time when employees spend an average of less than five years with any one employer, we are proud to acknowledge the 163 Oral Health Service staff members who have given between 15 and 40 years of continuous service.”
Clinical Director of the District’s Oral Health Services, Dr Sameer Bhole, said the hospital now provided care for between 600 and 700 patients every day and maintained an incredibly important role in the provision of dental care and education.
“While we are a historical institution, the hospital has the most modern evidenced based approach to clinical service provision in our state of the art facilities,” Professor Bhole said.
“We provide continuing education support to our staff and have an innovative approach to creating local oral health champions through our specialist mentor program.”
Associate Professor Norton Duckmanton, who recently concluded his 66 year long career with the hospital, outlined the history of the institution at the anniversary ceremony and said that everyone who has been a part of that history should be “justifiably proud”.

110 years of Sydney
Drug Health

A key priority health group for Drug Health Services is people who inject drugs, especially those who are reluctant to engage with health care services. The nurse-led primary health care service, embedded within the Redfern needle syringe program for more than five years, has proven to be a ‘gateway’ and has had great success providing health care to this cohort. The service has been nominated for several quality awards for innovation and efficiency and its work has given rise to a number of publications.

Blood borne viruses are a recognised complication of injecting drug use and Sydney Local Health District has recently established a ‘drop in’ outreach liver clinic program to enhance the primary health care service. Patients are referred from several nearby services for hepatitis C treatment and numbers have been growing quickly.

Drug Health Services is working with the Aboriginal Medical Service Limited Redfern to organise an Aboriginal Drug Summit on 5 November 2014, following the success of last year’s Drug Forum for workers in Redfern, Waterloo and Darlington. Key themes being considered for discussions are methamphetamines, alcohol and cannabis with an identified increase in methamphetamine use in the Redfern area.

Mental Health

Severe mental health problems often present with disturbing and risky behaviours, causing concerns for the person, their family, and the broader community. These present a challenge for the public mental health teams to provide optimal treatment in a safe and least restrictive manner. Often this means that the person either remains untreated for long periods or ends up in the criminal justice system before they receive the treatment.

The Forensic team at Concord Centre for Mental Health runs a consultation service for the inpatient and community mental health teams to provide specialist support for the patients with problem and risky behaviours. This service offers phone consultation, file review, risk assessment and management opinions, and in-service education sessions. This is a unique initiative of Sydney Local Health District in providing specialist support to the mental health clinicians in providing the best possible care in a safe and effective manner to mitigate adverse outcomes for patients and staff.
Community Health

Community Health marked the centenary this month of the first Early Childhood Health Centre in Australia, at Alexandria Park. About 100 people attended the celebration at the Alexandria Park Community School. Our Child and Family Health Nurses visit more than 8,000 newborn babies/mothers each year in their homes to provide health assessments, education and support. Our clinical services are also delivered from a centre conveniently attached to the school.

Community Health will be marking Multicultural Health Week from 1-7 September with the NSW Get Healthy at Work Program addressing modifiable risk factors for chronic disease. Our bilingual/bicultural Health Educators will be distributing multilingual resources and participating in a range of community events.

The new Sydney Health Care Interpreter Service, provides interpreting in community languages and Auslan for patients accessing health services in Sydney Local Health District and South East Sydney Local Health District. This service is critical to ensure that our culturally and linguistically diverse patients have equal access to our health system.

Allied Health

Social workers Sarah Firman and Madeleine Hayes have received $5000 funding through Sydney Local Health District’s Carers’ Grant Program to create an interactive “carers room” on 8W1 Acute Aged Care Ward.

This project will provide a carer-friendly environment with access to education, resources and information.

The aim is also to further strengthen the relationship between the staff of 8W1 and our carers through the creation of an education/information board and carer information packs. One of the goals is to empower carers by raising awareness of their most important role in patient care and wellbeing. The room will also provide a quiet ‘space” for carers in what is otherwise a busy ward.

The project will also address the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable carers, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The room should be completed within 12 months and it is hoped that this will be a model for future projects focussed on carers across the District.

100 years of child health

For young mum Graziela Ciuciunsky it was a chance to say thank you. For early childhood nurses it was a chance to pay tribute to decades of change and for Sydney Local Health District it was an opportunity to celebrate the centenary of the Alexandria Early Childhood Health Centre, the first free government baby and child health clinic in NSW and the southern hemisphere.

The first centre opened at 22 Henderson Rd, Alexandria on 24 August, 1914, at a time when infant mortality in Australia was high due to poor water, hygiene and sewerage systems. It later moved to the Alexandria Park Community Centre and is now one of more than 500 centres across NSW providing an invaluable service to parents, such as the toy library, mothers’ groups and advice from experienced staff.

The District’s Acting General Manager of Community Health, Miranda Shaw, paid tribute to the staff in all the District’s centres who provide home visits, health, development and well being checks for children as well as support, education and information on all aspects of parenting.

For Aboriginal elder Allen Madden, who delivered the Welcome to Country, the event held special significance. His 10 children, 27 grandchildren and one great grandchild have all attended Alexandria Park Community School. He also spent four years living at 22 Henderson Road, after the centre moved.

“This is where my heart is,” he said.

For more information on Early Childhood Centres, go to http://www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/CommunityHealth/EarlyChildhood/default.html

Cot donation for Balmain

The Rotary Club of Balmain donated $5000 to Balmain Hospital to buy a much-needed new paediatric cot for the General Practice Casualty.

Rotary held a dinner in March of this year to fundraise for a variety of organisations, including Balmain Hospital.

Rotary was pleased to honour the memory of the late Stewart Patterson (formerly an active Rotarian) by naming the cot the ‘Patterson Family Cot’.

An afternoon tea was held in July to thank the Rotary Club of Balmain for their contribution.
A second chance at life

Robert Mihalic doesn’t remember arriving at RPA. In a state of delirium from end stage liver failure, the then 36-year-old had just spent four days in Bankstown Hospital after collapsing in pain at his printing business.

Born with Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis, or malformed bile ducts, he had been managing his condition well since being diagnosed at 21, but always knew he was living on borrowed time.

Four days after being brought in by ambulance, Robert was in the Intensive Care Unit recovering from a liver transplant – and in receipt of a second chance at life with his wife and son.

“Thinking about what would have happened if I had not received a donor liver still makes me emotional,” he said.

“My wife wouldn’t have a husband and my son would have lost his father. There is no way to say thank you enough for that second chance.”

Last month, Robert generously helped Royal Prince Alfred Hospital announce it will have the first dedicated organ donation and transplantation unit in Australia, aimed at increasing donation rates across NSW.

The new unit is the brainchild of Sydney Local Health District, working in conjunction clinical experts from RPA, other districts, overseas, and the NSW Organ Donation and Tissue Service.

The unit was outlined in Sydney Local Health District’s strategic plan, Organ Donation for Transplantation Plan 2014-2017, which also includes the creation of the nation’s first dedicated academic position for organ donation for transplantation, a conjoint appointment with the University of Sydney; the re-establishment of a SLHD organ and tissue donation steering committee; and additional staff to provide 24/7 coverage throughout the hospital.

The Chief Executive of Sydney Local Health District, Dr Teresa Anderson, said the District was committed to being an Australian leader in organ donation for transplantation, yet it was clear that significant progress was needed to achieve that goal.

“We have come a long way but there is still much to be done to ensure that Australia’s organ donation for transplantation system meets the nation’s present demand for organ transplantation and its future needs,” she said.

UPDATE

Oral Health

August has seen staff and students from all departments and specialities across Sydney Dental Hospital come together to celebrate the hospital’s 110th Anniversary. This momentous occasion was marked by an opening ceremony on Wednesday 6th August, featuring keynote speakers Professor Christopher Peck from the University of Sydney, long serving staff member Associate Professor Norton Duckmanton and SLHD Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson. Also on offer were historical tours of the hospital and oral health information stalls.

On Thursday 14th August, a ceremony was held acknowledging the outstanding commitment and dedication of 163 SLHD Oral Health Service staff members who have offered continuous service of 15 years or more. A heart-warming address was given by Sister June Cassidy, who has served SLHD Oral Health Service for an incredible 43 years. The 110th Anniversary culminated in a celebratory party on Thursday evening.

Although the 110th Anniversary is now behind us, clinics and services continue as ever at SDH. Notably, October marks the planned opening of the Voluntary Dental Year Graduate Program clinic on level six. A refresh of SLHD Oral Health Services website is also due to for completion in September/October.

Population Health

Increasing HIV testing is a priority for the District and our partnership with ACON (formerly the AIDS Council of NSW) is key to engaging our local community. Together we are rolling out the NSW Ending HIV campaign in the local area including street posters and banners as well as online social media advertising promoting HIV testing and our services. This innovative partnership work was presented at the International AIDS Conference in Melbourne recently.

During HIV Testing Week (14th-20th July) the Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service, together with partnering organisations, launched a HIV testing campaign targeting Chinese gay men. Campaign posters were placed at sexual health clinics, key venues and community hotspots. An online fact sheet is also available on our website.

The MHAHS also developed the key messaging of the NSW Ending HIV campaign into 18 community languages, including Arabic, Indonesian and Spanish. This work provides a platform for an ethnic multimedia campaign that is generating strong interest among key community media outlets.
Community and Consumer Participation

Accreditation is fast approaching Concord and Canterbury hospitals. We have been gaining consumer feedback on patient handouts or brochures developed locally at each facility.

Gaining consumer or patient feedback on patient handouts or brochures will help ensure that patient publications are easily understood, have a standardised way of displaying information and meet the information needs of the community.

Later in the year, we hope to pilot an online source for various templates and guides where brochures and handouts can be submitted for review.

The SLHD Community and Consumer Council has elected a co-chair – Karen Price. Karen joins us from ACON and brings with her a passion and significant experience with community engagement.

Finally, the Inaugural Consumer Conference which will take place on November 25 at Callan Park.

Performance and Monitoring

In May, Dr Teresa Anderson and Charlie Farah were invited to present the findings and progress of the STARS reporting tool at the third annual NSW Health Symposium – Caring Now and for the Future: Health System Sustainability.

The event brought together health policy experts and clinicians from across NSW to discuss, debate and share ideas on health system sustainability and how care can continue to be improved.

The 2014 Symposium focused on consolidating the gains of the past three years and discussing new and emerging health system models.

SLHD, with the ABF taskforce, co-presented “Supporting Clinicians and Managers to Drive Change Together: Unlocking Data” on the Symposium’s centre stage.

The focus was on how SLHD has been able to unlock the abundance of data within the system using STARS to drive change and performance with a key focus being clinical variation.

Computers were set up in the main lobby to demonstrate the STARS system to any interested parties. There was a lot of interest from a range of attendees and the feedback on the useability and advantages of the system was extremely positive.

To view the presentation, go to: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sustainability/Pages/Presentations.aspx

New life for trainees

Twenty-one Aboriginal trainees have stepped into a new career path in health as part of Sydney Local Health District’s Aboriginal Assistant in Nursing program.

This is the first time the District has provided a targeted program for Aboriginal trainees. The District commits to employing the trainees from across Sydney for two years, while they complete a certificate three in Health Service Assistance.

According to the Centre for Education and Workforce Development’s Manager of Operations, Rose Meiruntu, the students have progressed well through their first weeks of clinical placement.

“We have 21 trainees in the program which is the largest cohort of Aboriginal trainees Sydney Local Health District has undertaken to recruit in one program. They are employed at RPA, Concord, Canterbury and Balmain Hospitals as well as one in Community Health,” Ms Meiruntu said.

“The focus is on keeping them in one ward so they become a part of a team and are supported in their work. The District is also looking at administration positions in the future,” she said.

Program participants Tiffany Saunders and William Taylor are excited to be part of the program.

“You really understand so much more about the processes and what is involved on a ward and how much work goes into caring for patients. Every new day it’s like information overload, but every day I go home with a smile on my face,” Ms Saunders said.

“The support has been great from all the staff, not just within our team but from everyone in other departments, managers and cleaning staff and that’s appreciated and important.” Mr Taylor said.

The program is run in partnership with Yarn’n Aboriginal Employment Services – an innovative Aboriginal owned and operated enterprise dedicated to building the capacity of Aboriginal people and changing lives.
Gift to inspire donors

Donor kidney recipient Miguel Lopez this week made a donation of his own, giving a painting by Sydney artists, Gillie and Marc, to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

It’s not the first time he has been though the hospital doors. Mr Lopez first had an essential kidney transplant in 1975 at RPA, only two years after the hospital performed its first living donor transplant.

“When I came to Australia I was one of the first people to receive a live kidney transplant and in those days it was very much a pioneering thing,” Mr Lopez said.

“It’s almost like a family, knowing so many of these doctors who have been around all through my time like Dr Tiller and Dr Roy who was my doctor in 1975,” he said.

Mr Lopez’s first two kidney transplants came from his mother (1975) and sister (1985), with the third most recent kidney coming from a deceased donor (2011).

“I hope this painting can help people think about donation and how important it is for someone to receive that gift of life,” Mr Lopez said.

The work by Sydney artists Gillie and Marc Schattner is part of a 2005 series called “Life Can’t Wait”, which features works and portraits telling the stories of 12 people who were in urgent need of donated organs.

“Every month, we’d meet with a hopeful candidate at their home,” Gillie Schattner said.

“We’d then paint their second chance at life – what they would do after their transplant,” she said.

The General Manager of RPA, Deborah Willcox, thanked Mr Lopez for his generous donation helping to raise awareness about organ donation.

“Miguel has a long and continuing association with RPA and is much loved by all of the staff. Receiving this artwork to the Transplantation Unit with Mr Lopez.

The painting will be installed in the Medical Foundation Transplantation Unit Ward 9 east.

HERDU established

The Sydney Local Health District, in collaboration with the UNSW Centre for Primary Health Care and Equity, has established a Health Equity Research and Development Unit.

The centre’s Director, Dr Elizabeth Harris, said the unit would “give Sydney Local Health District the support to be a national leader committed to a quality local health system for everyone”.

The unit will work with units within the Local Health District and external sectors to create healthy environments, and increase access to health and social resources to tackle the underlying determinants of health, to improve population health and reduce inequity.

Other staff include Marilyn Wise, Community Engagement Advisor and Penny Finlay, External Relations Advisor. HERDU will be located at 18 Marsden St Camperdown and can be contacted on 95151243 or via Liz on e.harris@unsw.edu.au.

UPDATE

Inner West Sydney Medicare Local

Inner West Sydney Medicare Local has launched its new website at www.iwsml.org.au. The new site is more user friendly with information on upcoming events, our programs and the services available in our region. You can search for general practitioners and allied health practitioners, register online for Continuing Professional Development events and apply for membership of our Central Sydney General Practice Network, Central Sydney Allied Health Network and Central Sydney Health Community Network.

The national beyondblue roadshow is currently visiting hundreds of communities across the 61 Medicare Local regions across Australia. Inner West Sydney Medical Local worked with local services and beyondblue when they visited the inner west recently, organising visits to Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, the University of Sydney, Glebe Markets, Lakemba Community Centre, Anzac Park in Campsie and Leichhardt Town Hall. The aim of the roadshow was to increase awareness of depression and anxiety and to encourage community members to ‘Take 1 step’ for better mental health.

Redfern, Croydon, Marrickville Health Centres

Croydon and Marrickville Health Centres are working together with Community Health in reviewing the waiting rooms aimed at providing a more welcoming environment. The centres would like to focus on improving the environment of the centres to make them a more patient and family-centred experience. As part of this project, hand sanitisers will be installed to promote good hand hygiene, toys and play equipment options will be explored for the child and family waiting area to improve client experience, promote learning and development for children.

Staff at Croydon, Marrickville and Redfern Health Centres have been working on implementing some important sustainability initiatives. These include promoting energy saving practices through turning off lights and computers after hours. There are also plans to replace light globes from double down lights with single globes, exit lights with regular fluorescent light tubes replaced with LED tubes, and faulty constant-on water boilers with time adjustable boilers.

These initiatives would help to increase efficiency of power consumption, reduce inefficient use of lighting and powered appliances and reduce cost and carbon footprint from inefficient power usage.
Students rise for mental health speaking challenge

Nearly 30 students crowded into a room at Rivendell Child and Adolescent Unit last week in preparation for the upcoming Mental Health Public Speaking Challenge.

The public speaking challenge – to be held on Tuesday 2 September at Fort St School – is a pilot program for year 9 and 10 students at schools in the Canterbury and Inner West area.

For Clinical Nurse Consultant at Croydon Community Health Centre, Danielle Pretty, the inaugural challenge will help support prevention and early intervention in tackling mental health issues.

“Reducing stigma about mental illness among secondary students is an important tool to help the one in four teens with a mental health issue to seek help early – to prevent small problems becoming larger ones down the track. The Mental Health Public Speaking Challenge is the first of its kind in Australia, which will help students start a conversation about mental health in their friend and peer groups,” Ms Pretty said.

The challenge aims to broaden awareness among the students and their peers about mental health and well-being, reduce stigma around mental health issues and promote help-seeking among young people about their mental health.

Clinical Nurse Consultant at Croydon Community Health Centre, Felicity Meehan, says the challenge was based on Ireland’s Mental Health Public Speaking Project, which has run successfully for many years.

“The mental health public speaking project has been running for 34 years in Ireland and we were inspired to bring the successful initiative to run locally here in Sydney. We are excited about the ability of these students to make a positive difference in their student communities in promoting good mental health,” she said.

The program will also help improve public speaking ability and self-confidence for the students.

Concord Rotary has donated funds to purchase a prize for the winning team and school. The Mental Health Public Speaking Challenge is an initiative of Children of Parents with a Mental Illness and School-Link Sydney Local Health District.

Tea party for mental health

The Community Mental Health Service at Croydon Cottage, the Sydney Local Health District Health Promotion Service and Ashfield Council are producing an event to acknowledge Mental Health Month called “The very YOU-nique tea party”.

The event is to coincide with the 2014 theme for Mental Health Month, held annually throughout October, to be YOUnique. It will be held at Ashfield Town Hall on Friday, 10 October from 10am to 2pm. Residents living in the District who have a mental health issue and their carers are invited to attend. Event organisers hope to promote self acceptance and self pride and to celebrate one’s strengths.

Contact Wei Jiang on 9515 9060 or jiangw@email.cs.nsw.gov.au to find out more.
Last month staff at Concord Burns Unit said goodbye – for now – to one of their bravest patients.

Theresa Rosales, 16, suffered severe burns to her chest, arms and neck after knocking over a kerosene lamp in her home in the Philippines eight years ago and was so badly scarred she had not been able to move her head, neck or arms since.

The injuries have also prevented her from attending school and the future looked bleak – until she was examined by Concord Hospital’s Director of Burns Services, Professor Peter Haertsch, who was in the Philippines on a humanitarian visit with Interplast Australia and New Zealand.

“She’s a growing girl who was encased in scar tissue, to the extent that her chin was fused to her breast bone and both shoulders were contracted forward so they almost met in front of her,” he said.

“There was no medical help at all where Theresa is from and over the years the scarring was pulling things forward so that her lower jaw was much longer than it should be.”

Sydney Local Health District and the Children First Foundation then joined forces to fly her to Australia and provide 40 days of hospital care and postsurgical accommodation.

“The team we have here at Concord is pretty slick, very experienced and in the first surgery, which took an hour and a half, we got done most of what I thought we could achieve,” Professor Haertsch said.

“After these surgeries she now has a chin, she now has a neck, she now has armpits, and substantial skin grafts on her tummy. Her life will never be the same again. She’s turned around 180 degrees.”

Theresa, who featured on Channel 7 news, will now recuperate at Children First’s rehabilitation farm near Melbourne, returning to Sydney this month for further treatment.

Vietnam veterans’ day service at Concord

This year’s Vietnam Veterans’ commemorative service was held in the 113th AGH Memorial Chapel on August 19th, providing dignitaries, veterans and their families and hospital staff an opportunity to reflect on the service and sacrifice of the men and women who served in the Vietnam War.

Brigadier Phil McNamara CSC ESM OAM (Retd), Vietnam veteran and Director of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, delivered an emotional and moving commemorative address, drawing on his own personal journey experienced during his time of military service.

A highlight of the service was the poignant solo performance by tenor Kent Maddock. The lighting of candles in remembrance of the many Australians who lost their lives during the conflict provided an opportunity for reflection during proceedings.

Vietnam Veterans’ Day recognises those who served in Australia’s longest war. About 50,000 Australians served in Vietnam between 1962 and January 1973, about 3000 were wounded and more than 500 Australians died.

It is an important day of remembrance and recognition for all Australians and it was pleasing to see that the service continues to be well represented by the veteran community.
Staff Spotlight

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2014

Peta Macfarlane

Events Advisor and Marketing Coordinator

The best thing about my job is... The diversity and challenge; the opportunity to express my creativity with different projects and events; meeting new and interesting people from all walks of life.

A typical day at work for me involves... Every day is different, which I enjoy. Any particular day may involve (but is not limited to) following up on numerous phone calls and emails, preparing for upcoming events on the hospital calendar, liaising with members of the community who wish to make a donation or fundraise, supervising any media who come on site, discussing marketing projects – there’s always lots of multitasking to be done.

When I’m not at work I like to... Relax by switching off the phone and spending time with family and friends.

When I was a child I wanted to be... Older and wiser.

A little-known fact about me is... I am a qualified Food Technologist.

The last book I read was... Milat: Inside Australia’s biggest manhunt – A Detective’s Story by Clive Small.

My top three movies are... Silence of the Lambs, Notes on a Scandal and Good Will Hunting.

If I had to describe myself in three words or less they would be... Loyal, determined, caring.

My colleagues would describe me as... Dedicated.

If I won the lottery I would... Share with family and friends, make a sizable donation to charity and maybe look at buying a vineyard somewhere.

It’s not fashionable but I love... Reading true crime stories. Not the most pleasant of reading content but I find them to be fascinating.

I’m at my happiest when... I feel the sun on my back and the sand beneath my toes.

My guilty pleasure is... creamy gorgonzola dolce and a glass of fine red wine (Tintilla Estate of course).

I’d love to learn... To play the guitar. I was given one as a gift when I was younger and never really learnt how to play it, which is a shame.

The best advice I’ve ever been given is... Keep an open mind - It’s the only way new things can get in and to also Live a life with no regrets.

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HealthMatters is all about you. We would love to hear your stories.

Simply email sydneymedia@sswahs.nsw.gov.au