We will remember them

Thousands of people gathered at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway for a special dawn service to commemorate the centenary of Anzac. See page six for a full story and more photos.
We are very excited that Concord Hospital will become home to the nation’s first comprehensive care centre for returned servicemen and women and their families as part of a $150 million redevelopment by the NSW Government.

The NSW Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, made the announcement in the hospital’s Kokoda Track Memorial Rose Garden, where she revealed the centre will be named in honour of the late Godfrey ‘Rusty’ Priest AO, the long-standing president of the NSW Returned and Services League.

A new multi-storey building will feature floors dedicated to acute aged care, sub-acute rehabilitation, psycho-geriatric care, acute medical, surgical ward and ambulatory care.

Also at Concord, we welcomed more than 3000 people to our special pre-Anzac Day dawn service last week at the Kokoda Track Walkway. The event featured 5000 poppies and the world premiere of an original composition titled “Meeting the Sun”.

Earlier this year, we welcomed 91 new doctors and 226 nurses to the District for 2015. It’s an exciting time for them and we wish them well on the next stage of their careers with us.

We’ve also welcomed 18 Aboriginal administration trainees and I know they will add enormous value to our hospitals and services.

RPA became our third hospital to welcome therapy dogs into the wards. Two dogs will visit patients on our aged care and neurosciences wards weekly and assist with patient recovery. The difference they are already making to the lives of our patients and staff is immeasurable.
Executive Messages

Concord Hospital will become home to the nation’s first comprehensive care centre for returned servicemen and women and their families as part of a $150 million redevelopment by the State Government.

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, made the announcement in the hospital’s Kokoda Track Memorial Rose Garden, where she revealed the centre will be named in honour of the late Godfrey ‘Rusty’ Priest AO, the long-standing president of the NSW Returned and Services League.

The Chief Executive of SLHD, Dr Teresa Anderson, said the redevelopment would include a new multi-storey building with floors dedicated to acute aged care, sub-acute rehabilitation, psycho geriatric care, as well as an acute medical and surgical ward and ambulatory care.

“It is fitting that Concord, with its more than 70 year history of caring for veterans, should be the site of Australia’s first comprehensive centre providing an integrated model of care for defence force personnel, treating the whole person’ and their loved ones.”

The general manager of Concord Hospital, Dr Tim Sinclair, said it was fitting that Mr Priest’s tireless advocacy for veterans and deep connection to Concord Hospital would be honoured in this way.

“As we prepare to mark the centenary of Gallipoli and the beginning of the Anzac legend, I can think of no better way to reaffirm Concord Hospital’s commitment to the health of our servicemen and women, and our broader community,” Dr Sinclair said.

“The new centre of excellence will be a national and state centre for trauma-related disorders for veterans who serve at home and abroad.”

Commitment to caring for Diggers

Some of you may be familiar with the warm and disarming human interest tales on the *Humans of New York* website.

A few months ago, we decided to bring our own humans to life within Sydney Local Health District with our new, and highly successful, *Our People* series on our Facebook page.

Our most popular interviewees have been cleaner Mounir Bakkour and security officer Sandy Watson, both generating plenty of positive feedback. Cleaner Raymond Blackadder, volunteer Andrew Dang and patient Andrew Sinclair were also clear favourites with readers.

So far, we’ve uploaded 22 stories on our staff and they have proven such a hit with our Facebook audience that we are soon to launch a new website featuring all interviewees.

“I love these heartwarming stories because they illustrate the sense of family and community we all feel working across Sydney Local Health District,” the Chief Executive, Dr Teresa Anderson, said.

“I always knew our staff were proud to work here, but it is lovely to read that in their own words.”

The stories can be found on our Facebook page under Sydney Local Health District.
It’s showtime

Sydney Local Health District’s third annual Innovation and Research Symposium will be the largest showcase of groundbreaking work throughout the District yet, with more than 700 people attending to hear dozens of expert presentations.

The symposium has grown remarkably in three years and exceeded all expectations.

“The symposium is not just a fantastic platform for sharing and promoting this District’s innovation and research, it is also an incubator for ideas and collaborations between some of the most brilliant medical minds of our time,” Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson said.

“It is so exciting to watch clinicians and researchers from completely separate fields approach each other between presentations to discuss how they would work together.”

This year the symposium’s overall theme is “where can innovation take us?” and presentations will be divided into the following seven categories:

- The Wonder Years: From birth to young adults
- Collaboration: partnering for patients
- Obesity, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease: A big future
- Culture and clinical care: healthcare for everyone
- Patient and Family Centred Care: the heart of everything we do
- Ideas for the future: shaping healthcare
- Information Communication Technologies

The debate topic this year will be “Is the day of the hospital over?” following last year’s debate topic “Is real innovation one big step or a series of small steps?”

“I have no doubt that in the future we will trace many improvements in healthcare delivery and patient care back to these meeting of minds.”

The third annual Innovation and Research Symposium will take place at the Australian Technology Park, Eveleigh, from 8.30am-5pm on Friday, 29 May, 2015.


Symposium launches awards and scholarships

For the first time, this year’s Innovation and Research Symposium will include a range of prizes and scholarships recognising excellence across a broad range of fields.

The Sydney Research Awards and Scholarships Program includes three recognition awards, a basic science and two funded scholarships.

“Our recognition awards are based on achievements over the past 12 months and bring to focus not only research excellence but those who support, guide and mentor such achievements,” said Chief Executive and Chair of Sydney Research Dr Teresa Anderson.

These include the Research Excellence Award for the overall best publication in a high impact journal, the young researcher award for outstanding performance as an early career researcher, and the supervisor award for outstanding effort as a postgraduate research supervisor.

The Annual Health Research Infrastructure Award will provide $10,000 to one person with high basic science research potential to assist with research equipment or infrastructure needs.

The Clinician Researcher Scholarship is designed to encourage and support clinicians who want to pursue a clinical research career. It will provide up to $40,000 per year for up to three years to buy out dedicated workplace time, allowing the clinician to undertake further education and research.

The Health Informatics Research Scholarship aims to encourage research into how clinicians, academics and researchers can improve care by working with health information and communication technology, providing support of up to $40,000 per annum for three years.
The guardians of vascular health

Professor Matthew Vadas and his colleagues at the Centenary Institute have identified a gene that could revolutionise the treatment and prevention of a wide range of vascular diseases.

Professor Vadas will present these findings at this year’s Innovation and Research Symposium along with more than 40 other medical experts.

“When this gene is absent, or its function decreases, it allows blood pressure and lipids to take a greater toll and you get widespread vascular disease including atheroma and aneurysms,” Professor Vadas said.

“This is major step forward in the way we look at cardiovascular disease and health.”

He said the breakthrough would allow clinicians to examine how the body protected itself against cardiovascular stresses in chronic and active way, rather than simply identifying and managing risk factors.

“This is one of two genes so far identified that are the guardians of the vascular tree, maintaining the integrity of our blood vessels,” he said.

“The study of them will allow us to identify people at risk and eventually lead to the development of chronic protection. This won’t happen overnight, but we have never understood vascular disease this way before.”

Sydney Health Partners among best in the world

The Australian Government has recognised Sydney Health Partners as one of the world’s leading centres for translating research into enhancements in patient care and health.

The partnership includes Sydney Local Health District, Western Sydney Local Health District and the Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network, Northern Sydney Local Health District, the University of Sydney, and their affiliated medical research institutes.

An international panel and the National Health and Medical Research Council named the partnership one of four Australian centres of research excellence with recognition as a ‘NHMRC Advanced Health Research and Translation Centre’.

Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson said the announcement was testament to the tireless efforts of countless individuals and the collective strength of the partnership.

“This designation recognises Sydney Health Partners as among the world’s best research and translation centres,” Dr Anderson said.

“It not only acknowledges the first class research we are undertaking, but also our ability to harness that research evidence to directly benefit patients by improving care.”

Sydney Research Program Manager Nobby Alcala said the achievement was possible thanks to an enormous effort from all members of the partnership.

“The collaboration between the local health districts and network, research institutes and the university has been inspiring and puts us in a really exciting position for the future,” Mr Alcala said.

“Not only are we able to improve patient care by accelerating research translation, but we will also have a positive impact on healthcare costs by ensuring that the most cost effective treatments are available as quickly as possible.”
UPDATE

Tresillian

We will be holding our second Team Building Day for all staff and the Tresillian Council, on Friday, 5 June. Again, this event will be held at the Waterview Function Centre, Sydney Olympic Park, which proved extremely popular last year. The day, led by CEO Robert Mills, provides staff with the opportunity to update their knowledge on the strategic direction of Tresillian, and to get to know those working in other centres. Featuring this month at the Willoughby Council Chambers in Chatswood is a tribute to the history of Tresillian Willoughby, one of our two north shore centres. This historical display tells the story of this grand old building after it was purchased by the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies (Tresillian) in 1927. Crocheted booties, teddy bears and black and white photos of nurses in large starched hats are a highlight. Tresillian will be sponsoring a trophy at the Mother’s Day Classic on Sunday, 10 May. The event, in aid of breast cancer will be held in both the Domain and Parramatta and Tresillian is working on getting a team together to participate in both events.

CEWD

CEWD is collaborating with SLHD Workforce Development Services to coordinate an Aboriginal Administration Trainee Program. Participants in this program will be employed in administrative officer positions across SLHD including one participant who will be located at CEWD. Trainees will complete a Certificate III in Health Administration while working full time in SLHD, all education and training will be provided by CEWD. This program is the first of its kind for SLHD and will mirror the successful Aboriginal Assistants in Nursing Program. A total of 31 candidates applied for the program, and 23 were interviewed for 17 available positions. This program commenced on Monday 13 April with a two-week intensive face-to-face program at CEWD. Following this, participants began in their place of work, attending CEWD on a fortnightly basis for ongoing education. Participants have been assigned a support person in the workplace and Aboriginal mentors will also be provided.

Concord Repatriation General Hospital was proud to help stage a special dawn service for more than 3000 people at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, near the hospital a week before the centenary of the ANZAC landing at Gallipoli.

The event’s highlight was the world premiere of an original composition titled “Meeting the Sun” featuring the Royal Australian Navy Band and more than 100 members of the Sydney Children’s Choir.

The piece was composed by leading Australian composer Elena Kats-Chernin, draws inspiration from the poems of Australian diggers.

A lighting of a giant, illuminated poppy, made of 5000 individual poppies was the finale to the service, where 100 doves were released.

The poppy project, commissioned by Canada Bay Council for the Dawn Service, was the work of artist Angela Pasqua and was lit up by 32 Hundred Lighting, which is also responsible for the Vivid Sydney festival.

The chairman of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway Board, John Haines, offered his sincere appreciation to everyone who had worked to bring the event to life.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community groups who have come together to help us honour this historic occasion,” Mr Haines said.

“Without the police, SES, Sydney Local Health District, Concord Hospital, Rotary, Salvation Army, and the City of Canada Bay Council none of this would be possible.”
Art in surgery

Clinicians are often asked to illustrate the interventions they are describing and, though perfectly comfortable performing lifesaving operations, many are at a loss when it comes to drawing pictures and diagrams.

To bridge this divide between art and science, the RPA Institute of Academic Surgery has established a series of three-day Art in Surgery workshops, including drawing classes from the eminent artist and academic Professor Mike Esson.

Professor Esson is a former artist-in-residence at the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh and a specialist in teaching art to surgeons.

The workshops include a range of activities and exercises to help participants’ perceptual abilities, observational skills and consideration of the patient’s point of view.

Junior doctor takes honours

Emily Deck has been named the most outstanding junior medical officer at Canterbury Hospital for 2014.

Dr Deck was presented with the Geoff Walker Memorial Award for excellence, an award named after the first physician to work at Canterbury Hospital, and establish a specialist practice outside Macquarie Street.

Dr Walker’s move to Canterbury made it easier for patients to access specialist medical services and he was renowned for his compassion and dedication throughout his 30 year career at the hospital.

Dr Deck, in her second year of training, said the award has a “huge honour”.

“I feel quite humbled by it, especially seeing the calibre of the other residents and interns who have been nominated,” she said.

Dr Deck was nominated by Allan Kelly who said she “inspired calm and confidence in those around her”.

“Emily’s clinical work was excellent. She was always thorough and clear in her assessments, appropriate in her investigations and management, and meticulous in her documentation,” Dr Kelly said.
**Community Health**

Community Health will continue its program of community education in May/June 2015. Coming up are a range of health education events. Our bilingual/bicultural Health Education Officers have coordinated a series of events including a Laughter Yoga workshop for the local Chinese-speaking Community on World Laughter Day (4 May). Laughter Yoga combines unconditional laughter with yogic breathing and is considered an effective de-stress therapy. A series of Positive Parenting workshops will be delivered for the local Korean-speaking community under the banner of ‘Achieving School Success’. A series of health information sessions will be delivered for the local older Chinese-speaking people and their carers on: dementia; osteoporosis; NSW Ambulance Service; arthritis; back pain; stroke. Our statewide Heterosexual HIV Service has coordinated a forum on HIV treatments and community pharmacy dispensing, to be delivered to men and women living with HIV in western Sydney on 30 July. New patient information brochures have been developed for our Aboriginal Sustained Health Home Visiting Program (Yana Muru), our Young Parents’ Team and our Child and Family Health Nursing Service. A service information poster will also be displayed in various community settings and includes a QR code for direct link to the Community Health website.

**Allied Health**

The Social Work department at RPA is hosting a symposium on Wednesday 13 May, entitled “Social Work Across the Lifespan” in the large conference room in the Kerry Packer Centre. It will feature two very experienced guest speakers – Kim Hobbs from Westmead Hospital and Debbie Horsfall from UWS. This is an opportunity to showcase the outstanding work being done by the Social Work staff at RPA, and a chance to educate other members of the profession, both within and outside the metropolitan region. Topics covered will include: Working with substance-use parents; the social work role in Haemophilia services; ethical challenges around the right to die; and sex and drugs and geriatrics, among others. All presentations will examine the contribution of the profession to clients at various stages of the life cycle, including a strong emphasis on theory and ethics. The total cost for the day is $30 for social workers and $15 for students. The cost of admission includes morning and afternoon tea as well as lunch. Details of the program for the day are available on the intranet and enquiries are most welcome. Please contact Anabelle.Lynch@sswhs.nsw.gov.au for further information.

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**Celebrating our nurses and midwives**

Nurses and midwives are among society’s most valued professionals and Sydney Local Health District will show its appreciation for all they do with a series of events to mark their international day of recognition on 12 May.

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital is kicking off its festivities with a bake off and morning tea at on 5 May, followed by an ‘Amazing Race’ event testing nursing skills on 7 May, a pizza delivery for night staff on 11 May and an award ceremony and staff barbecue on 12 May. A trivia competition will also be held from 2pm to 3pm on 5-8 and 11 May with the winner announced at the award ceremony.

Concord Hospital will begin the day on 12 May by serving a cooked breakfast for night staff, followed by a Centaur Service at 10.30am. A lunch will be served on the green to accompany a ‘Concord’s Got Talent’ competition and at 2pm awards and scholarships will be presented at afternoon tea. Afternoon staff will then be treated to a buffet dinner in the hospital cafeteria.

Balmain Hospital will hold a trivia competition, staff barbecue and pizza delivery night, and will also present the peer nominated Sian Williams award for nursing excellence. The winner will receive a monetary prize and their name will be engraved on a commemorative plaque in the hospital’s foyer.

The annual bed making competition will return at Canterbury Hospital along with a staff barbecue and the presentation of the Kevin Stewart Memorial Award and the Rotary Nurse of the Year Award.

All nurses and midwives across the District are invited to attend a masquerade themed celebration at Dockside in Darling Harbour from 7pm on Saturday, 16 May.

Tickets are $110 and can be purchased by contacting Helen Goldsack on 9515 57258.

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**The science of ageing well**

Nathan De Vos has spent the best part of a decade studying how to improve the health of older people through exercise and has now taken the helm at Balmain Hospital’s Centre for STRONG Medicine.

The first of its kind in Australia, the centre uses exercise-based medicine to treat everything from arthritis and depression to heart disease and diabetes, and is a leading researcher in several age-related conditions.

Completing his PhD in geriatric exercise science while studying the progress of STRONG participants, Mr De Vos is pursuing his passion for geriatric health.

“This is a unique facility and service as one of the only places that offers medically supervised exercise individually prescribed for frail and disabled people,” he said.

The general manager of Balmain Hospital, Dr Genevieve Wallace, said Mr De Vos was continuing the work of former STRONG coordinator Theodora Stavrinos.
Healing our homeless youth

Megan Koroitamana works at the coalface of community health.

As a youth health nurse, she visits local homeless refuges and cares for some of the most vulnerable young people in Sydney.

“These kids have lots of unique health care needs; there are drug and alcohol issues, mental health issues, sexual assault, unwanted pregnancies, contraception, domestic violence and trauma,” she said.

“A lot need dental referrals because some have never seen a dentist and many have skin conditions from sleeping rough.”

Sydney Local Health District Community Health launched the Nurse2U program in March to reach young people who were not visiting the Youthblock centre.

“We realised that I had a better chance of seeing them if I visited the refuges on a weekly basis so the kids would get to know me and trust me in their safe space,” Megan said.

Giving back

Talya Goding has a rare genetic condition that has required countless surgeries over the past six years, with some admissions lasting more than three months.

Her long admissions to RPA have been eased with support by the Youth Team, which provides young patients with advocacy, educational resources and connections to other services.

Now Talya is giving back by volunteering her professional skills as a graphic designer to design the new RPA Youth Team logo.

“I really wanted to show my appreciation for all the support I’ve received here. Some of the staff have become good friends,” she said.

The Youth Team includes a Clinical Nurse Consultant, an Occupational Therapist and a Transitional Care Coordinator. The service also provides a Youth Chill room, where patients can meet friends, and play foosball and other games away from the hospital environment.

The Youth Team’s Clinical Nurse Consultant, Cat Fung said she was touched by Talya’s generous contribution.

Oral Health

Our Special Care Dentistry department will be hosting a free oral health education workshop on training of staff working in group homes and within the community with dependent people living in their family homes. The workshop will be run by Dr Natalie Oprea, Head of Special Care Dentistry Department, and will feature several keynote speakers on topics including comprehensive oral hygiene care, keeping gums healthy, protective diet, desensitising patients and improving their cooperation to care and effective oral care products. The workshop will be held on Wednesday 24 June from 8.30am until 1pm at Sydney Dental Hospital. Please visit the hospital website for more information about the workshop or would like to RSVP for the event. The hospital’s Aboriginal Research and Development Unit recently commenced the 2015 Hub and Spoke Outreach Program in partnership with Bourke Aboriginal Health Service in rural NSW. The program supports the employment of dental teams made up of an experienced dental officer and dental assistant who complete three 12-week rotations in one of the clinics each year. Spoke clinics specifically foster partnerships with Aboriginal Health Services that provide limited or no dental services within their facility. This practice removes barriers to accessing dental services and provides clinical services in a timely manner to Aboriginal Australians.

Population Health

Two Aboriginal Health Promotion Officers attended a two-day forum conducted by NSW Quitline. The forum aimed to increase referrals of Aboriginal people to the Quitline service. An Aboriginal Health Education Officer has also provided expert advice to NSW Kids and Families Advisory Committee for the ‘Yarning about quitting’ DVD project currently being filmed. This DVD will use real life examples to assist Aboriginal women in the community to make a quit smoking attempt. The Healthy Beginnings team is developing an app, so that this innovative program can increase its reach. Advances in mobile phone technologies have opened new possibilities for innovative health service delivery and public health interventions. Aimed at first-time mothers, this program consists of eight home visits from community nurses according to milestones of child development in the first two years of life. Although effective, funding constraints limit its potential reach, an app has the potential to change that.
For more information about the symposium, visit the night to further discussion and networking. The day will finish with a cocktail event opening with a number of clinicians pushing the boundaries. will also feature a constructive debate between winners announced on the night. The symposium and compete for the $50,000 at stake with the pitchers will present a solution to an identified need – no matter how big or small – to improve our delivery of healthcare and minimise waste. Six system, improve the patient experience, enhance idea – no matter how big or small – to improve our Pitch empowers all staff to ‘pitch’ their innovative of research and snapshot sessions showcasing the latest work of more than 30 of the District’s leading Performance and Monitoring

Sydney Local Health District will host its third annual Innovation and Research Symposium on 29 May at Australian Technology Park, Eveleigh. The symposium will bring together clinicians from across the state to discuss the challenging question – Where can innovation take us? The day will consist of research and snapshot sessions showcasing the latest work of more than 30 of the District’s leading experts in surgery, clinical trials, research and integrated care. SLHD’s innovation challenge, The Pitch will also be a feature of the symposium. The Pitch empowers all staff to ‘pitch’ their innovative idea – no matter how big or small – to improve our system, improve the patient experience, enhance delivery of healthcare and minimise waste. Six pitchers will present a solution to an identified need and compete for the $50,000 at stake with the winners announced on the night. The symposium will also feature a constructive debate between with a number of clinicians pushing the boundaries. The day will finish with a cocktail event opening the night to further discussion and networking.

For more information about the symposium, visit the Innovation website www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/innovation and register your interest to attend.

Community and Consumer Participation

Our Community and Consumer Advisory Council Action Plan is coming along and should be signed off in the next month. This is great news for all of our consumer reference groups and networks at our facilities. One of the main functions this year will be to review and release a new Consumer and Community Participation Framework – which will lead on from the current plan, ending in 2015. This framework sets the scene for how we involve consumers across all levels of our health district – from bedside to boardroom and beyond. It outlines our commitment to partnering with consumers to drive change and innovate how we do things. If you would like to get involved in this review, contact us. We have some vacancies for consumers and community representatives on our council, which we are filling. If you think someone would be perfect to represent certain community groups including young people, those with mental health issues, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Our consumers have been busily working with the District on a number of projects, including way finding, waiting room and signage projects, In Safe Hands at Balmain Hospital, gardening activities at Concord and Harmony Day celebrations at Canterbury.

Reflections on the late Dr Don Child, who served as RPA’s General Superintendent from 1967 to 1987 from the former Senior Rheumatologist and former Chairman of RPAH Medical Board, Dr John Hassall.

During Don’s stewardship, RPA underwent remarkable changes in its structure, function and culture. Some of these were evolutionary and some revolutionary; some were welcomed as long overdue, others were resisted quite ferociously.

The era of specialisation brought with it the need for special units and specialised full-time salaried staff. Academic headship of departments and units was gradually accepted and research activity began to flourish.

He worked closely with Professor Ruthven Blackburn on the project planning committee that was responsible for changes in the landscape, including E Block which opened in 1982. During his recent admission to RPA Don noted he was being treated in the building he had helped to plan.

Many Australian institutions, including its teaching hospitals, have traditionally suffered from male domination and a blokey image. Don sought to soften this by promoting women – always on merit and not by unearned discrimination. He was successful in doing so, and set an example for others to follow.

Don valued and enhanced his hospital’s reputation as a centre of excellence for patient care, the training of its staff and research; he ensured that it kept pace with advances in technology but was committed also to the wider aspects of community welfare. RPA was among the first in Australia to have departments of Community Medicine and Drug and Alcohol services. Don was proud of the fact that many of RPA’s successful sons and daughters moved on to serve in similar establishments, able to fulfil the early promise shown and nurtured during their time here.

When he retired from the hospital in 1987, he could look back on a distinguished career during which he guided the hospital through an exciting and often difficult period of its history. He remained in every sense a Prince Alfred man, his loyalty to the institution matched only by his intimate knowledge of its affairs and its contemporary history.

I would like to emphasise the family’s gratitude to members of the medical and nursing staff involved with Don’s care. With the kindness and loving care shown to him by the nursing staff at RPA, Don may well have felt that any outstanding debt owed to him by the hospital has been repaid in full.
New program welcomes 18 Aboriginal trainees under a new program, which is the first of its kind for the District

Participants in the Aboriginal Administration Trainee Program will be employed as full time administration officers across the District while completing a Certificate III in Health Administration.

The Director of the District’s Centre for Education and Workforce Development, Mira Haramis, said participants began the program with two weeks of intensive face-to-face training at the centre before taking their positions across the District.

“Participants will return to the centre on a fortnightly basis for ongoing education and will also be assigned a workplace support person and Aboriginal mentors,” Ms Haramis said.

One participant, Laurel Kelly, 22, (centre) will be working in Community Health at RPA after several years in childcare and hospitality and can’t wait to join the “supportive family” of NSW Health.

“I’ve always had an interest in health as my mum is an indigenous health worker in Bateman’s Bay, where I grew up, and I’ve seen her educating people on healthy living.”

Sydney Local Health District has welcomed 18 Aboriginal trainees under a new program, which is the first of its kind for the District

Natalie Carr-Mundine, 45, will work in outpatient services at Canterbury Hospital and cannot wait to help “in every possible way”.

“This traineeship means everything to me. It is opening a new chapter in my life. I will not only be able to help people in my own culture, but also non-indigenous people, and I really want to learn more about other cultures because when you understand people, it reduces the communication blocks.”

 “[The boxer] Anthony Mundine is my brother and he converted to Islam, but I want to learn as much as I can for myself.”

Rebecca Abraham, 40, (above right) has already had experienced working in aged care and is keen to start work at Marrickville, Croydon and Redfern health centres.

“When I started out in aged care I knew I’d found my passion. I was at the Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care Program in Redfern and had worked my way up from cleaner to cook, before completing my Aged Care Certificate III and IV, and two years of my nursing degree at the University of Technology, Sydney,” she said.

“I decided to do this traineeship because I want to show the positive side of indigenous culture. So often people see the negative, but there’s so much we can bring to health – and life.”

UPDATE

Inner West Medicare Local

The Can Get Health project, a joint collaboration between IWSML and Sydney Local Health District, has been working with two local community organisations to deliver a community based physical activity and healthy eating program in Arabic language for people living in the Canterbury area. The Muslim Women Association and Tripoli and Mena Association in Lakemba will host a free six week healthy eating and physical activity community education course beginning in May. The multi-session course will be delivered by an Arabic speaking health worker from the Sydney Local Health District Multicultural Health Service. This program will raise awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity and empower people to make healthy choices.

The Can Get Health project is also pleased to be relaunching the radio campaign ‘The greatest gift you can give your family is your health’ in May, targeting the Arabic-speaking community. The campaign will promote healthy eating habits, encourage people to return to their traditional diet, and to be more physically active. The campaign will be broadcast on two Arabic radio stations: 2ME (1638 AM) and The Voice of Islam (87.6 FM). For more information please contact Beba Ostrugnaj on 8752 4909.

Health Centres

Croydon Health Centre is hosting a study from Royal Prince Alfred Hospital already helping smokers to quit. It is based on a specially prepared video to encourage quitting. All participants will also receive tried and tested counselling techniques to help them quit. We are trialling a new audio-visual based method for quitting smoking. We are looking for men and women over the age of 30 who are smokers and want to quit. Participants must be married or in a long-term relationship with a partner who is a non-smoker. The first treatment session will be 1-2 weeks after the initial enrolment visit. You will watch a video along with a brief interview and questionnaires – both before and after the treatment. The second treatment session will involve a rescreening of the video and further counselling. In the weeks following we will stay in touch with you with regular phone calls (of about 10 minutes) to provide continuing support and motivation. There will also be three further brief follow-up sessions at three, six and 12 months. If you are interested in joining or to find out more. Please contact Robin May, study coordinator, on 9462 9177.

Health Matters • Sydney – it’s your local health district
**UPDATE**

**Aboriginal Health**

The next cultural event for the district in 2015 will be National Sorry Day. National Sorry Day is an Australia-wide observance held on 26 May each year. This day gives people the chance to come together and share the steps towards healing for the stolen generations, their families and communities. Stolen generations refer to Indigenous Australians who were forcibly removed from their families and communities.

A morning tea will be held at RPA featuring guest speakers, cultural entertainers, and an opening ceremony of RPA cultural garden at the front of Women and Babies. More details will be posted on SLHD intranet closer to the event. NAIDOC is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements and is an opportunity to recognise contributions made to our country and society.

Events are held across the nation in the first week in July each year. In 2015, it runs from Sunday 5 July to Sunday 12 July, and the district’s event will be hosted by Concord Hospital on Wednesday 8 July. The district Cultural Events Committee is planning a range activities for the day which will include a cultural area that is under development at Concord. Further details will be posted on SLHD intranet.

**Lifehouse**

Over the next few months we will be operating on our first patients using the new Leica M530 OHX Surgical Microscope, bringing this cutting edge technology into surgical practice. The microscope, worth several hundred thousand dollars, is so rare Leica borrowed it for a weekend to show to a gathering of the world’s best head and neck surgeons at the Australian Society for Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery annual scientific meeting. It is one of only two in Australia – both at Lifehouse – and is used for head, neck and plastic surgery.

The OHX has FusionOptics and AutoBalance and is designed to ergonomically support surgeons, allowing them to concentrate on the surgery at hand – an absolute must when complete precision is required when operating close to a patient’s brain, eyes, ears or spine. Such operations often last for many hours.

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**District Highlights**

**Flu campaign bigger and better**

Last year Sydney Local Health District’s annual influenza vaccination campaign yielded impressive results with seven per cent more staff receiving free vaccinations at work compared to the previous year.

The biggest improvement was recorded at Community Health Services, where vaccination rates increased by 32 per cent, followed closely by Balmain Hospital with a 29 per cent improvement.

The Director of Public Health, Dr Leena Gupta, hopes to see even bigger improvements this year.

“While the campaign clearly had an impact we really need to see much higher rates of vaccination,” she said.

“Last year’s influenza season was serious, with 8,500 adult hospitalisations due to influenza and 72 deaths reported nationally.”

The District has produced a video debunking the most common myths around flu vaccination, which is available via the intranet and District’s Facebook page.

Mobile vaccination carts will make their way around each facility in the District and free vaccinations are available now at the following locations:

- Balmain Hospital – GPC Level 1
- Canterbury Hospital – Staff Vaccination Centre Outpatients, Level 3
- Royal Prince Alfred Hospital – Staff Health Clinic, Level 7 KGV Building
- Concord Hospital – Staff Health Unit, Level 1, Building 22.

**Whiteboards go electronic**

More than 15 wards across Canterbury and Royal Prince Alfred hospitals now sport state-of-the-art electronic patient ‘journey boards’.

Formerly known as the humble whiteboard, this innovative technology links directly to patients’ electronic medical records, showing real-time information.

At RPA, Nursing Unit Manager Susan Virtue reports the new boards are used by all ward staff, from nurses to doctors, allied health professionals, administration officers, clinical support officers and ward assistants.

By reducing transcription and repetition, she reports the board “saves time for all members of the care team”, allowing them to spend more time at the bedside.

The customised boards were developed in-house by Sydney Local Health District, following a request and a pilot at Concord Hospital. They will continue to be rolled out at Balmain Hospital, Mental Health Services and Concord Hospital throughout 2015.
Making each moment count

Sydney Local Health District has delivered impressive results for all five hand washing moments in a recent national hand hygiene report, doing better than the national and NSW averages.

The moment of washing hands before touching a patient was 12.3 per cent higher than the state average and 13.4 per cent higher than the national average.

Overall compliance with hand hygiene remains above the state and national average also.

“Sydney Local Health District is committed to ensuring that our hand washing is second to none and we take it very seriously indeed,” the Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson said.

Generous Josh visits Gumnut

Canterbury Hospital has opened its doors to a special guest who will be making regular visits to children in the Gumnut Ward.

Josh Reynolds is the new Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs ambassador for the hospital and hopes to make it his second home this season.

Five-eighth Josh made his first visit last month and shook hands on the deal with general manager Ann Kelly.

“We value our relationship with the Canterbury Bulldogs and we’re very grateful for all their support,” Ms Kelly said.

“This is their heartland so whenever they visit us, it puts smiles on the faces of not only our patients and their families, but also our staff.”

Josh, who lives in Belmore, has even offered to pay a special visit at short notice to any of our younger patients having a particularly bad day.

“I really feel for kids in hospital, so I’m more than happy to come in to cheer someone up.”

Also visiting the hospital last month was Canterbury Bulldogs legend Steve Mortimer, who stopped by to view the hospital’s new orthopaedic drill set, funded by donations from the Canterbury Leagues Club.

IN BRIEF

RPA gets results

RPA has achieved a 96 per cent pass rate in the recent Network Basic Physician Training Program RACP written examination, which is well above the national 71 per cent and state 73 per cent pass rates. RPA Staff Specialist Peter Lim said this “fantastic result” was “not only a reflection of the ongoing support and commitment to training of consultants in this hospital and all our network hospitals, but support of the executive that allow us to provide the training program that we do, which is renowned and highly sought after not only in NSW, but nationally”.

New computers

The District has recently replaced more than 1300 computers running a soon-to-be-obsolete version of Windows (XP). The desktop and communications team managed the physical upgrades or replacement by auditing 7000 computers over the network to find the relevant machines. This one-off investment has been an overall resource saving for the District, reducing costs while improving performance.

Mobile reception

Over the last six months, the District has been working to improve mobile phone reception throughout RPAl. We have now installed a network of dedicated mobile phone antennae to boost coverage. The infrastructure stage has been completed ahead of schedule and the first carrier, Vodafone, has already connected so those on the Vodafone network should have improved coverage. Telstra and Optus have committed to connect and discussions are underway.

Young leaders with potential

Canterbury Hospital enrolled nurse Brittany Elvy recently attended a week long leadership development program under sponsorship of the Rotary Club of Campsie. This program is open to young people 19-25 who display leadership potential. About 70 young people were taken to Stanwell Tops for leadership challenges.
Maria Cacciotti – Executive Assistant to the General Manager at Balmain Hospital

The best thing about my job is... I work with a fantastic team. There is a lot of respect for each other. I love the variety of the things I do. I never get bored as there are always new things happening.

A typical day at work for me involves... I start the day with the diary, making sure all appointments run to schedule and all documentation required for meetings external and internal are ready. I also attend to phone calls, and assist with inquiries.

When I’m not at work I like to... catch up with family and friends. I love entertaining and cooking traditional Italian food. The best is firing up the woodfire oven, with friends and family for a Sunday roast and pizzas.

My colleagues would describe me as... a pedantic Italian (quote from Les Hillier).

If I won the lottery I would... share it with my family, donate to the Blind Society which I have supported for many years, and travel to Europe, visiting places my husband and I have not been, eg Spain and Portugal. And, of course, return to “la Bella Roma” where I was born.

It’s not fashionable but I love... dancing. Old fashioned dances like the waltz, tango, cha cha and I can’t forget the rock’n’roll.

I’m at my happiest when... I am with my family who are so keen on wanting learn how to make traditional foods and beverages.

My guilty pleasure is... desserts.

I’d love to learn... to make cheese (goes well with vino!).

The best advice I’ve ever been given is... treat others as you would like to be treated yourself – with respect, honesty and love.

Fran O’Brien – Director of Nursing and Midwifery Services, Canterbury Hospital

After finishing school, Fran O’Brien’s first move was to enrol in a computer programming course, having not even considered a career in health, but after a nudge by her father, a systems analyst, she embarked on a degree in nursing at the University of Sydney.

That decision has taken her on a journey covering many roles, leading to her current position as Director of Nursing and Midwifery Services at Canterbury Hospital, and a place on the Sydney Local Health District Board.

She attributes her rise through the ranks to “always having a go, taking opportunities and never believing you are unable do something”.

In her role at Canterbury, she relishes the responsibility to ensure “the right skills and right care are being delivered in the right place” and that staff deliver “safe, innovative and sustainable patient centred care while maintaining a friendly, collegiate and functioning workforce”.

“Once healthcare is in your system, doing anything else is never considered. There is nothing else is as intimate and interesting as witnessing life at its best and worst.”

Now on her second term on the District board, she believes it has been a great opportunity to see the organisation from a different perspective.

“Things work well at Sydney Local Health District for a reason. It is because of the hard work of all the people involved.”

Outside of work, Fran indulges her passion of dragon boat racing, a field where she represented Australia at the 2004 World Championships in Shanghai.

In a sport where teamwork and timing is vital, it comes as little surprise she has reached such heights of success.

“Keep a broad focus, look beyond for inspiration and always be ready for opportunities.”