



2018 Dungog Local Health Report

Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land covering Hunter New England Local Health District and remind people that we live and work on Aboriginal land.

Year at a Glance

During 2018, Dungog Hospital has had significant upgrades and service changes.

We welcomed the permanent recruitment of Site Nurse Manager, Nicola Churms whose keen eye oversaw several improvements to the service provision, storage, room configuration and maintenance schedule.

One such improvement was the recruitment of a clinical nurse educator who monitors staff education needs and keeps everyone up to date with mandatory education or skills. This ensures that policies and procedures are in line with contemporary facilities.

Our staff focus on infection control has been extremely effective in helping to education our staff and the community at large. Another important service change involved discharge planning and providing further support for patients via a follow-up phone call from a clinician the day after they leave hospital.

Major refurbishments are due to start in 2019 following a \$2.5 million hospital improvement grant. Dungog Hospital has a rich, 126-year history, and this work will be the largest change to the facility for at least two decades.

Staff and the Dungog Health Committee have been involved in the upgrade planning, ahead of it being put out for tender. It is hoped the work can start in April or May 2019 with the expectation for a 12-month build.

All clinical spaces in the hospital will be renovated and updated including emergency and wards. This will increase the services

the hospital is able to provide such as podiatry, community health and women's health.

As always Dungog Health Service will continue to strive to meet Excellence in care for the local community, ensuring quality services provided ensure patient safety and appropriate care.



Nicola Churms, Site Nurse Manager, Dungog Hospital

Our Health Committee

Dungog Health Service has welcomed the formation of a new Dungog Health Committee.

The committee, comprising community members and health staff, held its first in March, with local resident Tracy Norman elected as Chair and Robert booth Deputy Chair.

Dungog joins the local health committees (see <http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/about/Pages/Local-Health-Committees.aspx>) across the district which are a cornerstone of the Hunter New England community partnership approach (see <http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/about/Pages/Our-Community.aspx>).

While most facilities across the district have a health committee, this is a first for Dungog Hospital. The new committee has welcomed the opportunity to be able to work with Site Nurse Manager Nicola Churms and Lower Hunter Sector

management around service provision and delivery of care for local residents.

Members come from a range of backgrounds, including a retired medical research scientist and a retired engineer. Our members have an interest in many health areas such as mental health, dialysis and chronic disease. They bring a mix of skills, experience and perspectives that, like all of our local Health Committees, can only help to strengthen and improve our health service.

The committee's formation is timely and members joined their peers from other local health committees at a series of Hunter New England Health Community Partnerships Forums in May and November.

Health literacy and a showcase of work being undertaken by Hunter New England Health and the local health committees featured at both forums.

Members are:

Cr. Tracy Norman, Committee Chair, Mayor of Dungog Shire Council

Cr. Robert Booth, Deputy Chair, Councillor Dungog Shire Council

Anne McDonald, Community Member

Julie Henniker, Community Member

Lesley Wright, Community Member

Di Peers, Lower Hunter Sector General Manager

Nicola Churms, Dungog Nurse Site Manager

Kim Simpson, Lower Hunter Sector, Volunteer and Community Participation Coordinator

Annette O'Neill, Secretariat



New member Julie Henniker joined the Dungog Health Committee in November

Our Health Service



View from Dungog Hospital across the valley

Dungog Health Services includes Dungog Hospital and community health services. We provide:

- Medical and sub-acute care
- A 24-hour Emergency Department
- Allied Health services are provided from Maitland Hospital and Lower Hunter Community Health and include social work, dietitian, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, and speech pathologist.
- Community health nursing services provided by Lower Hunter Community Health.



Dungog Health Committee members: (Standing left) Kim Simpson, Robert Booth, Tracy Norman, Linda Davidson, Anne McDonald (sitting) Lesley Wright, Nicola Churms

Hours of operation

Dungog Community Hospital operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Community Health operates from 8.00am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Visiting hours

Visiting hours to inpatient wards is from 10am to 1pm and then 3pm – 7pm. Visitors are requested to check with staff prior to entering patient wards.

Parking

Free parking is available in the public car park opposite the both the main hospital entrance and Emergency Department entrance.

Disabled access

Disabled parking is available in the public car park opposite the both the main hospital entrance. Disabled entry is via the main hospital emergency entrance.

Main contact numbers

For the hospital phone 4995 7000 or fax 4995 7005.

For Community Health phone: 4995 7060 or fax 4995 7005.

Address



Our postal address is PO Box 94, Dungog NSW, 2420. Our street address is Hospital Road, Dungog.

Location

For a location map or directions to Dungog Hospital, go to <http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/facilities/hospitals/Pages/Dungog-Hospital.aspx>

Partnering with Our Community

Dungog Health Expo a real winner

The newly formed Dungog Local Health Committee recently delivered an outstanding community event to educate the local community on local health services.

The expo aimed to showcase current and future plans for health services in Dungog and the wider Hunter region. With over 60

attendees the event was hailed a great success by the Chair of the Local Health Committee, Mayor Tracy Norman.

Tracy opened the event and talked about her reasons for supporting the health committee, which she feels is a 'real' way of getting to know the health system. Speakers provided interesting topics that were well received including planning for care for people at the end their lives and an update on the New Maitland Hospital.

Nicola Churms, Dungog Hospital Site Nurse Manager announced a grant of \$2.5 million from the Rural Health Infrastructure Program and Rural Health Minor Works Program. The money will be used to modernise the hospital and improve health services for the Dungog community.



Dungog Health Expo a real winner

Local health service providers took part in the expo and provided flyers, information and support for Dungog residents. Charmian Bridge from Active Over 50's provided a lesson on 'chair aerobics' for participants.

Feedback was very positive and the general consensus from attendees was to provide the expo annually.

Ladies Auxiliary keep us cool

Due to the generosity of the local community and the hard work of the Ladies Auxiliary, Dungog Hospital was able to make some much needed alterations to the front of the hospital.

This included the tinting of all the windows to reduce glare and heat. It allows patients and their families to sit in the veranda area all day in comfort. An extra element of privacy has also been added for the patients.

New blinds have also been fitted as part of a general upgrade of the facility.

Patients report that it is 'marvelous' that they can now sit and look at the view across the valley from dawn to dusk if they wish.

Thank you ladies!

Dungog nurse romps home in the annual camel race

A very brave Greg Luxton of Dungog Hospital did himself and the hospital proud when he competed in the Annual Dungog Show Camel Races.

Hospital staff sponsored the camel in line with our annual tradition.

Four staff volunteered to ride the beastie but Greg was ultimately selected for his agility and sense of fun!

Greg's strategy? "Hold on as tight as possible!"

Cheered on by his colleagues, Greg came a very respectable third in his heat and secured a cash prize which he immediately donated to the staff Christmas fund.

A great day was had at the Show which showcased local riding and dressage talent, and craft wear, and also included a demolition derby.

Promoting best hand hygiene practice

Promoting good hand hygiene to prevent sepsis was a focus for us this year.

Once commonly known as blood poisoning, sepsis is a potentially life-threatening complication of an infection. Sepsis occurs when chemicals released into the bloodstream to fight the infection trigger inflammatory responses throughout the body. Without quick and proper treatment it can be debilitating and potentially fatal.

To help us, we approached the Seaham Community Preschool director to see if they could help out with some 'hands' to decorate the hospital to promote hand washing for all. They were very keen to get involved and have since used this a quality project for their students and families to increase hand washing from a young age.

Staff created a display board for Dungog Hospital encouraging ALL staff and visitors to wash their hands using either soap or water, or an alcohol-based hand rub. Everyone at Dungog Hospital - patients, staff and visitors - have access to our hand washing stations so they can wash their hands as required, and the less mobile patients are provided with small individual bottles of the hand rub.

Our staff joined in a hand hygiene quiz, ultimately won by Vicki Moore.

The display board was also taken to the Dungog Health Expo for future promotion to the community outside of the hospital and health service.

REACH out for help

Have you been to Dungog Hospital and seen the REACH posters or received information in your admissions pack?

REACH is a patient and family activated program developed by the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission that alerts patients and carers if they see a deterioration in their loved one.

REACH was devised with significant input from patients, families and carers. It is designed to improve early recognition and response to clinical deterioration.

REACH empowers patients and families to escalate care if they are concerned about their clinical condition or deterioration or of a loved one. REACH provides a graded approach to patient and family activated escalation.

First talking to staff at the bedside.

If your concerns are not addressed, asking the nurse in-charge for a clinical review

If you are still concerned make a "REACH Call" by dialing the dedicated number on the poster near your bedside to speak with a REACH responder.



REACH helps keep our patients safe

REACH helps to 'cast the safety net further' and conveys an important message that patients, family and carers are valued as partners in improving safety and quality.

REACH is available in all Hunter New England Health hospitals. You can find out more on the Local Health District's website at <http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/Feedback/Pages/REACH-patient-and-family-activated-escalation.aspx>

NAIDOC week celebrations at Dungog Hospital

NAIDOC week is a great opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to support our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

This year all Dungog Hospital staff were invited to get involved in activities that included a children's colouring competition, Aboriginal place name competition, colours of the Flag Day, and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women celebration and afternoon tea.

The children's colouring competition was judged in three categories by a local retired arts teacher who was very impressed with the quality of the work submitted.

Hunter New England Local Health District



Highlights

Dungog Trauma Training

Staff working at Dungog Hospital were lucky enough to attend trauma simulation training during the year.

Twelve staff including our visiting GPs and School Based Trainees were able to participate in this vital training opportunity and all walked away with new knowledge and ideas on how trauma care can be improved.

Many patients who sustain injuries while working on properties or travelling attend our Emergency Department, so our staff have to be ready to deal with anything and everything.

Further training opportunities have been requested – specifically in paediatric care and transferring seriously ill or injured patients to larger hospitals.

The training was kindly supported by Glencore, John Hunter Trauma Education Service and the team from the Hunter New England Health Simulation Centre.



Staff Trauma Training thanks to a Grant from Glencore

The gift of saying goodbye

After 60 years of marriage, a couple from Dungog were able to say one final goodbye thanks to the care and compassion of our staff and the Hunter New England telehealth team.

Nicky Churms, Site Nurse Manager at Dungog Hospital, sat with the wife of a man who was kilometres away at the John

Hunter Hospital and was deteriorating rapidly. It was clear that he did not have long to live.

A few calls to the telehealth team made last goodbyes possible.

“She got to say goodbye and tell him she loved him one last time,” Nicky said. “After 60 years of marriage, they both deserved that opportunity.”

“It was a privilege to spend the time with her while she was on the call and she was so very grateful for the opportunity.”

“What a wonderful service we work for when we can facilitate such wonderful care, compassion and communication for our patients and their families at pivotal moments in their lives.”

This is a wonderful of example of how compassionate care combined with Hunter New England Health’s huge investment in telehealth technology can improve the health experience for both patients and their families.

Thank you to all the staff, particularly Nicky, Ashley and Jenny from telehealth who worked together to give this patient and his family the opportunity to say goodbye.



Celebrating International Nurses Day

International Nurses Day was celebrated in style at Dungog in 2018. All nursing staff were thanked for their wonderful service to their community – with special mention to those that had been nursing for over 25 years.

In particular Carol Dowling for her 56 Years’ service with Hunter New England Health. Carol has experienced many changes in nursing and at Dungog Hospital during this period. Carol recalled a time when she was involved with nine baby deliveries in one day – and all went home safe and well.

Carol has had many roles while working at Dungog including the Director of Nursing, and continues to adapt to the ever changing system and ensure she maintains her skills and knowledge.

Congratulations - and thank you to all our wonderful nurses.



Staff Celebrations and recognition for International Nurses Day



Nurses receive special recognition of their achievements

Community Health Highlights

Nurses become palliative care specialists

Maitland-Dungog Palliative Care service celebrated the success of three of their nurses whose experience, leadership and skills saw them become qualified clinical nurse specialists in palliative care.

It was a great achievement for Shann Duffield, Sharon Williams and Deborah-Lee Wells.

Maitland-Dungog Palliative Care is proud of their dedicated efforts to achieve this high level of expertise. And to have three Clinical Nurse Specialists in a small team is highly commendable.

We congratulate all three nurse specialists. Well done.

Dietetics done differently

Dietitians at the Lower Hunter Sector's East Maitland Community Health Centre have partnered with Dungog Hospital to improve timeliness and access to dietetic services for local patient's.

The dietitians visit Dungog Hospital once a month but aimed to improve service by providing bedside telehealth consultations for patient in between the visits.

A quality improvement project led by dietitian Sharon Lawrence and strongly supported by Dungog site nurse manager Nicky Churms led to a significant increase in the number of referrals for dietetic assessment from the hospital and activity with patients'.

The project showed telehealth to be an effective and viable way of delivering service in addition to the face-to-face visits, and took out third place in the Sector's 2018 Excellence Awards.

In the Spotlight

Donation for Orangutans

Dungog Hospital recently donated unused equipment to assist veterinarians on the island of Borneo who are working to save native orangutans.

The equipment and supplies were sent to an orangutan rescue centre located in the central Kalimantan region.

In return, the hospital received a photo of the rescue centre's elated staff and a letter thanking Dungog staff for the donation.

"Thank you very much for the donation of medical supplies for the orangutan rescue centre in Central Kalimantan, Borneo. The vets were overjoyed to receive the materials brought by members of the group, including myself, as everything there is in short supply"



2,117

patients presented at our emergency department



91.2%

of patients presenting to the ED were admitted or discharged within 4 hours*



1,023

patients accessed services (like blood tests, clinics & community nursing) but were not admitted



N/A

Babies were born



N/A

Day only surgical procedure were performed



N/A

of Category A patients received their elective surgery within the 30 day timeframe^φ



N/A

of Category B patients received their elective surgery within the 90 day timeframe^φ



N/A

of Category C patients received their elective surgery within the 365 day timeframe^φ



18.42

Full-time equivalent staff



\$3,248

Expenditure budget[^]

Orangutans are great apes native to Indonesia and Malaysia. Now a critically endangered species, they are currently only found in the rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra.



Feedback & Acknowledgements

With compliments

Our staff strive every day to provide wonderful care for our patient's, and our patients and their families appreciate all that they do.

We would like to share just one of the compliments we have received lately:

To Management of Dungog Hospital

I would we to acknowledge three staff of Dungog Hospital. Eve and Greg on night shift and Jadeon day shift. DR B was also very good.

It was the worst time in my brother and sister's life knowing our mother was palliative but their nursing professionalism and care helped ease our pain a little. I have lost both my mother and (another) to cancer, both at Dungog Hospital.

Dungog Hospital has a team that it can be proud of, and I will remember always.

Kind regards

MD

Congratulations to our excellent staff and volunteers

Our congratulations to Dungog Hospital staff and volunteers who were nominated for individual awards for their outstanding contributions in the 2018 Lower Hunter Sector Excellence Awards. They included:

- Annette O'Neill
- Jane Levick
- Kerrie Taylor
- Pam Lawrence
- Ronda Tyne, and
- Charmian Bridge.