



2018 Walcha Local Health Report

Acknowledgement of Country

Hunter New England Local Health District respectfully acknowledges the Dunghutti people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land in which our health facilities are located, and pay respect to the Elders, community members and the community-controlled sector who partner with us to improve the health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our District.

Year at a Glance

From the Chair

Our Local Health Committee has had a productive year, however it is with sadness that we recently farewelled our Chair and long serving member, Gerry Moran. Gerry has been a member of the Committee for more than 20 years, and was instrumental in the planning and construction of this wonderful facility that we enjoy as a community today.

On behalf of the Committee and the Walcha community, I would like to thank Gerry for the enormous amount of time and enthusiasm he contributed to the health service over such a long period of time. Gerry is passionate about health service delivery for our community and has achieved many great outcomes during his time as a member and subsequently Chair of this Committee.

We have been fortunate to welcome a new Service Manager and Visiting Medical Officer this year. Two very dedicated professionals- Mr Douglas Bellamy relocated from Newcastle, and Dr Deng Abiem has moved from Queensland. The Committee and community have warmly welcomed them and are extremely grateful for their commitment of time and care towards patients, residents and staff.

As a Committee, we were thrilled that our Annual Report was named as one of three finalists at the 2018 Hunter New England Health Excellence Awards. We celebrated this with a morning tea with the residents, community groups and staff.

We also joined with the staff to celebrate a Biggest Morning Tea, raising much needed funds for cancer research, while enjoying time with community members and residents.

Our Committee also joined with the local community and staff for a flag raising ceremony and morning tea for NAIDOC Week.

The support the Walcha MPS receives from the local community is nothing short of amazing. The residential aged care dining and lounge area is currently being extended thanks to a very generous donation from the Hogan family.

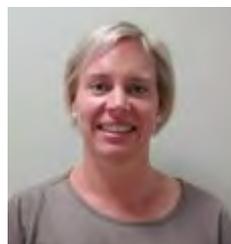
The Walcha Hospital Auxiliary and Community groups donate thousands of dollars every year to buy additional equipment for our hospital. This makes Walcha MPS the envy of others throughout the region, and a facility that the Walcha community is very proud of.

I would like to thank Douglas Bellamy and all of the staff for their dedication and care for all who enter the facility.

I am extremely grateful for the support and enthusiasm that the members of the Local Health Committee have for ensuring we maintain such high quality services in a caring environment.

Our Health Committee

Anthea Macpherson (Chair)



Our committee performs a key role in liaising with the Walcha residents and providing feedback to and from the community on health issues and services available in Walcha.

Our community is extremely fortunate to have such a wonderful health facility with dedicated staff. This is complemented by the large number of volunteers who give so freely of their time—whether it be singing with the residents, doing puzzles, having a cuppa and a chat, or tidying up the gardens. The Walcha Multipurpose Service is an integral part of the Walcha community.

As a committee, we work hard to ensure services are maintained for our residents, and we look for any gaps that can be filled in health provision. I believe it is important for our small, isolated community to be able to maintain the quality health services we enjoy today.

I wish to thank all involved for their commitment and dedication in making this a reality.

Ange Berry



When asked to join the Walcha Health Committee, it was an honour for me and I felt it was a wonderful way of giving back to this vibrant, happy and positive community.

Walcha is fortunate to have such a state of the art facility, dedicated staff and this great committee to assist them. I am so proud and passionate to be a part of this wonderful organisation.

Caring for someone's loved ones is a very emotional time and I appreciated the work and commitment from all the health professionals and wonderful staff.

Gary Bloomfield



I have been employed as the Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer (AHLO) at Walcha MPS for the past 22 years.

The AHLO role at Walcha MPS, provides support for Aboriginal inpatients from admission to discharge. My purpose is to work within a team of other health professionals to help Aboriginal people gain access to, and increase awareness of, available health services.

The AHLO advocates to promote services that are delivered in a culturally sensitive manner.

As an AHLO I also provide case coordination and management to assist people with access to specialist care when required.

As the AHLO, I am able to discuss with the committee any issues pertaining to the Walcha community, with particular focus on service delivery for Aboriginal people. My goal is to improve the health outcomes and promote awareness of health related issues for Aboriginal people.

Eric Noakes



Since being elected to Walcha Council and subsequently Mayor, I was offered a position on the Walcha MPS Committee.

Knowing the high esteem this facility is held in at Walcha, I saw it as an honour to accept this position. Being in constant contact with the people of Walcha makes it easy for me to liaise between the MPS and local residents.

I have lived in Walcha most of my life, and having raised a family here, I understand the broad health needs of our community.

Farming towns come with their own health issues as many men are reticent to obtain medical advice. Being one of these farmers, I feel that I can be a conduit between these men and the MPS, as to what is available and what would be of benefit to meet their needs.

Our MPS carries an excellent and well-deserved reputation in our area. Its management and dedicated staff turn what is an exceptional building, into an exemplary facility.

Local residents repeatedly tell me of the care and service they have received, often during challenging times in their lives. Complementing this is the dedication to ongoing training and student placement.

I feel it is an honour to be a part of this Committee and look forward to serving our MPS into the future.

Our Health Service

Walcha Multipurpose Service (MPS) is a 27 bed facility which opened on the 4 June 2007.

Clinical services include emergency, general ward, residential aged care and community health.

Walcha Community Health offers a range of community-based health services to the community, including:

- Aboriginal Health
- Aged Care Assessment and dementia support

- Alcohol and other drugs
- Community nursing (including asthma, early childhood, diabetes, audiometry, home nursing, immunisation, and palliative care)
- Diet and nutrition
- Occupational Therapy
- Podiatry / foot care
- Health education and promotion
- Social work service
- Speech pathology
- Physiotherapy
- Dental
- Ambulance station
- Women's Health

Hours of operation

- Walcha MPS (Emergency Department / Acute / Aged Care) - operates 24 hours per day, seven days a week.
- Visiting hours are 11am – 8pm daily.
- Community Health operates from 8.30am - 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Parking

Free parking is available in the public car park adjacent to the hospital main entrance.

There is disabled parking located in the public car park, adjacent to the hospital main entrance. There are several disabled entry points around Walcha MPS buildings.

Address

11s Middle Street, Walcha, NSW, 2354
Postal: PO Box 73, Walcha, NSW, 2354

Main contact numbers

Telephone: 6777 4200
Fax: 6777 1458



Partnering with Our Community

Biggest Morning Tea

We held our annual Cancer Council Biggest Morning Tea in early May this year. Community members enjoyed morning tea in the front foyer of the facility.

This year, staff member Sandra Partridge and volunteer Brenda Walker, took to the streets of the town to take plates of goodies around to local businesses.

Our local Telecottages are known for enjoying their morning tea and cakes, so there were lots of smiles on their faces when Sandra and Brenda delivered a huge morning tea.

The staff are to be congratulated on their massive baking effort, which saw many staff contribute home baked goods.

As a result of the morning tea, \$770 was raised for the Cancer Council.



(L to R) Brenda Walker and Sandra Partridge taking home-baked goodies to Kylie Dunn from the Walcha Telecottage



Table of goodies in the front foyer for everyone to enjoy

Walcha Hospital Auxiliary

Over the past 12 months, the Walcha Hospital Auxiliary, made up of 46 members, have donated \$12,404.21 worth of equipment to our facility, have volunteered 1088 hrs and have held eleven meetings.

The Regional representative, Lesley Croft, attended the Annual General Meeting in July. Lesley had the honour of presenting

President Phillipa Lawrence with a 30 year service award, and retiring treasurer Peter Mclvor with a 15 year service certificate.

Our Auxiliary do various fundraising events throughout the year, including catering at ram and bull sales on local properties, catering at wakes, working on the gate at the local rodeo and participating in any other community event that they asked to help with.



Phillipa Lawrence with Lesley Croft



Peter Mclvor and Lesley Croft

The Auxiliary has donated the following equipment to the facility; a bariatric recliner chair, two bariatric shower chairs, an observation machine and a telescopic ratchet branch lopper (to assist with ground maintenance).

As well as the many pieces of equipment that the Auxiliary donate to the facility, they also provide magazine subscriptions and christmas presents for residents, baby bundles for new mothers in the community and toiletries in toilet bags for emergency admissions.

We are very grateful for these huge efforts and we know that it is greatly appreciated by the recipients.

Carer's Week 14 - 20 October 2018



Carers Week was held the 14 - 20 October, and Walcha MPS took the opportunity to promote the week with a small display in the front foyer. The display was used to promote 'Carer

Awareness' in recognition of the amazing contribution carers make to patients and residents in the facility and those that are caring for someone at home.

Community Donation

An extremely generous donation from the Hogan family, allowed for extensions of our aged care facility.

The Hogan Family are pleased to provide something ongoing and useful for the community, which assists the staff and residents. Costing over \$100,000, it is one of the largest gifts to a local institution by a local family.



Hunter New England Local Health District



Highlights

Walcha MPS named finalist in Annual Awards

On Monday 16 July 2018, Walcha MPS hosted a morning tea to celebrate our Local Health Report being named a finalist at the 2018 Hunter New England Health Excellence Awards, in the category of Board Chair's Award for Best Local Health Report.

The winner of the category was announced at an awards night, which was held on the 23 August 2018 in Newcastle. Chairman Gerry Moran and committee member Eric Noakes attended the event, but unfortunately did not come away with the award. They enjoyed a lovely evening catching up with many other worthy recipients of Excellence Awards.



Crystal Alexander and Vicki McIvor enjoying a cuppa at the morning tea



Kerry Hollis, Dulcie Holt and Marie Marshall reading our Local Health Report



Bella Howarth with daughter Narelle Gehrke and Sheree Noakes



Local Health Committee members Angie Berry and Eric Noakes with Mary Moran

Community Health Highlights

NAIDOC Celebration

NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each year in July to recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life. The week is a great opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to support the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Mr Gary Bloomfield, Walcha MPS, Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer, invited the community and staff to a NAIDOC week flag raising ceremony and morning tea.



Gary Bloomfield and Sue Green

WALCHA/MPS Hospital
NAIDOC Celebration

BECAUSE OF HER, WE CAN!
 8-15 JULY 2018

NAIDOC Week 2018 celebrates the invaluable contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made- and continue to make- to our communities, our families, our rich history and to our nation. This artwork portrays the courage and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. From the ripples of fresh water and salt water, across the travel pathways and song lines of our traditional lands and skies.

I would like to invite staff at Walcha Health Service to attend our Annual NAIDOC Week Flag raising ceremony, followed by morning tea.

Where: AHLO Room Walcha MPS Hospital
 When: 10.00am on Wednesday 11th July, 2018

NSW GOVERNMENT Health
 Hunter New England Local Health District



Katrina Bloomfield, Sue Green and Gary Bloomfield raise the flag



Michael Martin, Gary Bloomfield, Douglas Bellamy, Peter Murray, Leanne Marshall, Mary Kuhr, Jackie Byrne, Julie Chew and Sandra Partridge



Community and Walcha MPS staff members

Our Medical Leaders

Dr Deng Abiem joined Walcha MPS as the Visiting Medical Officer in January 2018 and works between the MPS and a local general practice. Dr Abiem has been welcomed to the MPS and the community, with many people expressing their appreciation of the help he has been able to provide to them as their doctor.

Since moving to the Walcha community, Dr Abiem has enjoyed becoming part of the community, including playing in the local basketball competition. Dr Abiem has found this to be a great way to meet people and connect with the community.

Following high school in Kenya, where Dr Abiem performed extremely well in his exams, he moved to Australia and completed a Medical Science degree at the University of Canberra.

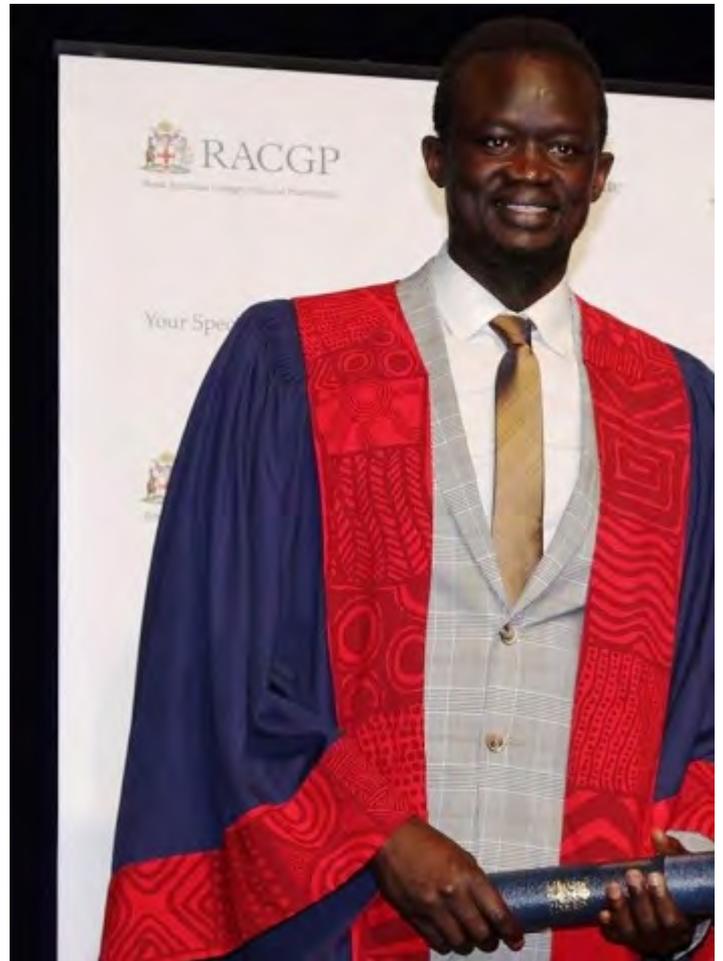
After his graduation, Dr Abiem worked for two years as a Medical Scientist before completing exams for entry into Medical School.

Dr Abiem completed his training at Flinders Medical Centre in Adelaide, before doing his internship at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. He then worked at the Royal Darwin Hospital in a range of fields including emergency, obstetrics, medicine and surgery.

It was in the Northern Territory that Dr Abiem gained first hand practical experience in a remote setting, working on Tiwi Island for six months. In this role, he performed on-call duties after hours at the hospital.

Dr Abiem encountered many health challenges for the residents on the island and it was here that he was introduced to many small community health programs. This experience inspired his interest in rural health care and his passion to become a General Practitioner. Whilst working in Darwin, Dr Abiem commenced his studies to become a GP.

After 15 years of study and training, Dr Abiem graduated as a qualified General Practitioner from GP Training in Queensland. Dr Abiem says it is a privilege and an achievement to graduate from this course which is globally recognised, meaning he can practice as a GP worldwide. We are very fortunate that he has chosen to practice in Walcha.



In the Spotlight

New Manager at Walcha MPS

Staff at Walcha Multipurpose Service (MPS) welcomed new Health Service Manager Mr Douglas Bellamy, at the start of this year.

Douglas is thoroughly enjoying our small community, having moved here from Newcastle. When Douglas came to us, he was on secondment from his role at the Calvary Mater in Newcastle where he had been working for many years.

Douglas has also worked as a District Cancer Clinical Nurse Consultant in Newcastle and has a particular interest in how we can help older people who are suffering from cancer in rural areas.

Douglas is two years into his PhD research project on this topic. He is particularly focusing on what people have to do to manage their cancer, the support they need, medication management and how we can assist them with this.

Douglas is also interested in photography, so he has been enjoying local walks and capturing the beauty of Walcha and its surrounds during his time here.

Douglas is happy to say hello and have a chat with locals to get to know people in the town.



Douglas with staff members (L to R) Kerry Hollis, Pam Bullock, Millie Kuhr, Barb McHattan and Sandra Partridge



1,379

patients presented at our emergency department



94.5%

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



1,318

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



21.68

Full-time equivalent staff



\$4,575

Expenditure budget[^]

Feedback & Acknowledgements

As the Health Service Manager at Walcha MPS, I would like to acknowledge the following people:

The Walcha community – we thank you for your pride in our facility, your commitment and your support, which makes our Multipurpose Service one that others strive to emulate.

Our staff – for your dedication to provide the highest level of care and service.

Dr Abiem – who provides outstanding patient care, compassion and support, which never goes unnoticed.

Our Hospital Auxiliary – for your invaluable assistance in providing those special touches that make Walcha Health Service so unique.

All our volunteers and community fundraising groups- thank you all for your time and hard-work. It is greatly appreciated.

Walcha Central school students – for your commitment and dedication in allowing us to “grow our own staff” through the school-based traineeship program. Having young, enthusiastic staff makes our service very unique and special for all patients and residents.

We receive many cards and messages from our patients and patients’ families and this recognition is much appreciated.

Feedback

We also thank the members of the community who take the time to tell us how we can improve our Health Service.

We would like to hear from you!

Please send your comments to:

Walcha Local Health Committee
PO Box 73
WALCHA NSW 2354

OR

Contact Douglas Bellamy
6777 4254
douglas.bellamy@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au