



2018 Muswellbrook 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.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.



## Year at a Glance

Muswellbrook has had a very exciting and busy 2018. The Muswellbrook Stage 2 building progressed, and staff and patients saw the results of Excellence in action through improvements in staff and patient satisfaction.

Throughout 2018 Muswellbrook Hospital welcomed a number of new staff, and farwelled others.

We are working hard to grow our own future staff, and gained three school-based trainees - two in nursing and, for the first time, one student in administration.

We were re-accredited as a Baby Friendly Hospital and underwent a major work health and safety assessment.

We have continued with our focus of *Excellence: 'every patient, every time'*, Hunter New England Health's planned approach to delivering patient-centred care. *Excellence* ensures patients and families are well informed and involved in their care, and

that there is effective communication within the healthcare team.

## Muswellbrook Hospital Stage 2 Redevelopment



MUSWELLBROOK  
HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT  
*Supporting healthcare locally*

Muswellbrook Community is very much looking forward to the opening of the new health services building in the coming months. The redevelopment has been a major focus for us and a talking point for visitors and patients as it has taken shape.



*Health Service manager Wendy Hordern reviews building plans with Anthony Gambrell, from project builders Stephen Edwards Constructions*

This is the second stage of the Muswellbrook Hospital redevelopment. The \$21.5 million project involves the expansion and refurbishment of the front portions of the hospital and is primarily focused on outpatient facilities. Features include:

- An outpatient centre with five consult rooms, a treatment room and an interview room
- An upgraded hospital entrance, reception and waiting area
- Expanded renal dialysis services, with the number of dialysis chairs increasing from three to six
- Expanded chemotherapy services, up from 3 to five treatment chairs
- A diagnostics zone including medical imaging and pathology collection
- Medical imaging, including ultrasound and general x-ray services
- A day stay unit
- Oral health services, including two dental surgeries providing both adult and paediatric services

Detailed design for the project was done over several years, and our community consulted along the way, including specific forums with our Aboriginal Community, and consultations with the Country Women’s Association, Muswellbrook Shire Council, the Multicultural Support Group, Early Learning Centre and many other community groups.



*An aerial view of redevelopment site works in April 2018*



*Artist Impression of Muswellbrook Stage 2 Redevelopment*

Building began in October 2017 and patients and visitors have watched its progress, including progress on internal works via our electronic noticeboard. You may have also seen stories in our local media as construction milestones have been reached. Our neighbours especially have been kept up to date on the project’s progress.



*An early concrete pour*

Our staff have had the opportunity for walks through the new building, and we are all looking forward to its completion, scheduled for mid-2019.

## Our Health Committee

The purpose or key role of the Muswellbrook Health Committee is to represent the local community on matters relating to health, health service delivery and planning.

It is a collaboration between community members and local health service management.

Each year our local Health Committee commits to a work plan which assists the committee to set key priorities and identifies a key focus. This year our focus mental health promotion for young people in our community.

Other key objectives of the committee include:

- Providing a community perspective to help ensure effective delivery of health services.
- Increasing community knowledge and understanding of health issues.
- Helping to ensure effective promotion of health and health services use in the local community, and
- Preparing and this annual health report for our community and for the Board of the Hunter New England Health.

We welcomed two new members in 2018 - Tony Neate and Elizabeth Howard.



*Muswellbrook Health Committee members Jennifer Lecky (Chairperson), Diana Keating and Pam King*

Muswellbrook Health Committee meets second monthly. Agenda items include reviewing the hospital’s performance indicators, and committee members also give feedback to the health service managers on the views of our local community.

## Our committee

Jennifer Lecky, Chairperson. Jennifer has a long-standing interest in healthcare, and has a background in accountancy and as a councillor on Muswellbrook Shire Council.

Diana Keating

Gail Little

Pam King

Mark Elsley OAM

Elizabeth Howard

Anthony Neate

Health staff members include the Health Service Manager Wendy Hordern, Yvonne Patricks, General Manager of the Hunter Valley Sector, Aboriginal Liaison Officer Amanda Howard, Community Health Manager Annemarie Inder, Dianne Prangley Administration Manager/EA.



Mark Esley and Gail Little

## Our Health Service

Muswellbrook Hospital is a 46-bed facility that provides adult and paediatric acute care; emergency care; general, gynaecology and eye surgery; and maternity services for the people of the Upper Hunter.

Other services include a chemotherapy day unit, and renal dialysis.

Allied health services includes a Community Health Centre, which provides primary health care and an extensive range of allied health and nursing services.

External visiting medical specialists and surgeons also hold outpatient clinics at the hospital. These include cardiology, general paediatric and paediatric surgical, audiometry (hearing), podiatry, cancer oncology, vascular and endocrinology clinics.

Telehealth clinics and consultations are regularly conducted including mental health, neurology, oncology, fracture clinic and general specialist appointments for the communities of the Upper Hunter.

## Contact details

Address:

Brentwood Street  
Muswellbrook NSW 2333

Location: <http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/facilities/hospitals/Pages/Muswellbrook-Hospital.aspx>

Muswellbrook Hospital: Phone 6542 2000

Upper Hunter Community Health: Phone 6542 2050

## Partnering with Our Community

### Muswellbrook midwives leading the way with quality care

*Grateful acknowledgement: this story first appeared in the Muswellbrook Chronicle in May 2018*

MUSWELLBROOK Aboriginal Maternal Infant Health Service (AMIHS) staff Charli Thomas and Mandy Hendy are “bridging the gap” the best possible way.

The pair plays a crucial role in the relationship between an expectant indigenous mother and her midwife.

And the local service is one of the longest running of its kind in NSW, since its formation in 2009.

In 2016-17, they provided care to 68 families.

According to Muswellbrook Hospital health service manager Wendy Hordern, on the eve of International Day of the Midwife, the work of the duo was invaluable.

“They are the ones building and maintaining the strong rapport throughout the patient journey,” she said.

“Without them, the program would not be a success.

“The service is built on the model of stability of care; following women through from early pregnancy until the baby is eight weeks of age.

“It also allows midwife Mandy and Aboriginal health worker Charli to form connections with the mothers and the families, which is a key to breaking down barriers.

“It’s a great model and one that has made a difference to Aboriginal women.

“Since 2011, 361 families have been cared for under the AMIHS.”

Ms Thomas, who chalks up five years with the service in June, said her job was very rewarding.

“I love helping the women through their journey – and giving them cultural support,” she said.

“It’s important they see a familiar face.”

Her sentiments were echoed by Ms Hendy, who’s been with AMIHS for the past 12 months.

“I enjoy the continuity for the mums,” she added.

“Not seeing different people makes them feel relaxed, too. They don’t have to keep repeating their story to someone new, which can be hard for some women.”

Mrs Hordern said the Muswellbrook Hospital outreach program was also a vital component and incorporated three Hunter Valley birthing hospitals - Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone.

"This covers mothers in places such as Merriwa, Denman and Broke," she explained.

"Many Aboriginal women don't like traditional medical settings and transport can be quite difficult for many, so the outreach program ensures they all receive the required antenatal and postnatal care.

"Following the outreach antenatal care, most mothers give birth in the culturally-inviting Muswellbrook Hospital Maternity Unit with 'their' midwife present.

"With a maternity wing detached from the main building, Aboriginal artwork features at the entry of the unit and the entrance door adorned in words written in the Wanaruah language, it is a far cry from any preconceived ideas of a hospital environment.

"Women can also have their partners or someone they trust stay with them in hospital locally, which is important."

## Look Good Feel Better

In 2018, our chemotherapy day unit staff conducted four Look Good Feel Better sessions.

The program is dedicated to teaching cancer patients how to manage the side effects caused by cancer treatment that might affect their appearance. Women participate in a practical workshop which covers skincare, make up and headwear demonstrations, and come away feeling more empowered and ready to face their cancer diagnosis with confidence.



Our patients love getting together in a non-clinical environment and in a social way, sharing stories, along with delicious food kindly donated by Hope 4 Cure.

Staff are considering options that could be offered to male patients.

## Trauma Bears

Red Cross kindly donated beautifully hand-knitted teddy bears for any children coming into our wards or emergency department. Our young patients have loved receiving the bears, which provide a little touch of warmth in a sometimes a stressful situation.



*Wendy Hordern, Sharon Eriksson, Doreen Scriven and Diana Keating*

## Partnering in Aboriginal healthcare

Architecture and artwork throughout the hospital is a reminder to staff, visitors and patients of the importance and connection the health service has with the local Aboriginal community, and our collective efforts to close the gap in health outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

The design and artwork invites Aboriginal patients and their families into a welcome and safe space that will work with them to meet their health needs.

Aboriginal maternal health worker Charli Thomas and Aboriginal Liaison Officer Amanda Howard bring a connection to culture within the health service. They are true advocates for Aboriginal people and provide outreach services to the local Aboriginal community.



*Aboriginal Artwork in Maternity Birthing Suite*

One recent project was a collaboration with the Muswellbrook High School Girls Academy, an Aboriginal support group for young women in Years 10-12. The girls were invited to contribute artwork that could adorn the walls of the recently refurbished maternity birthing suite. The final result was inspirational and very well received by the Aboriginal and general community during NAIDOC week.

During the 2018 NAIDOC Week celebrations, our staff participated in a flag raising ceremony, followed by morning tea for the community and special guests. The celebrations also included a walk through the Maternity Unit.

Staff also participated in and a 'decorate your door' competition that incorporated the theme for 2018, Because of Her We Can. These activities continue to raise the awareness of staff of Closing the Gap and other issues.

## REACH out to voice concerns

REACH is another new initiative that is important for any stay in hospital.

REACH recognises that you know yourself or the person you care for best. It empowers you or your family to raise concerns if you feel your condition or that of your loved one is changing for the worse, and you don't feel staff have listened to your concerns.

We encourage patients and families to first raise any concerns directly with their nurse or doctor. However, if you remain worried you can request a clinical review. If you feel your concerns are still not being listened to, you can make 'a REACH call' to a specified number.

The phone number to call is included on posters near each patient's bed.

The REACH patient, family and carer escalation program was one of the main topics of conversation at a Hunter New England Health Community Partnerships Forum in Muswellbrook in November.

More than 100 people attended the forum from across the Hunter and New England regions, including community representatives from more than 30 local Health Committees, health service managers, health executives and members of the Local Health District Board.

Muswellbrook Health Committee was represented by Gail Little and Jennifer Lecky as well as Health Service Manager Wendy Hordern. Highly respected Muswellbrook local Aboriginal Women Aunty Jean Hands conducted the inspirational Welcome to Country.

# Hunter New England Local Health District



## Highlights

### Muswellbrook gets top marks for patient experience

The BHI released the fifth year of results from the Adult Admitted Patient Survey in late October 2018, and we thank all our staff for contributing to the outstanding results.

The collects the experiences of patients in 77 NSW public hospitals and compares them with the previous year's results. The results are used as a source of performance measurement for individual hospitals, Local Health Districts and NSW as a whole.

Individually, Muswellbrook Hospital, along with Singleton and Kurri Kurri hospitals, outperformed the state result for more than 30 questions.

Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD) performed extremely well in the survey. Our District significantly outperformed the state average for 20 or more of the 87 performance questions. The hard work and commitment of staff is helping to ensure that Hunter New England remains one of the best regions to receive healthcare in NSW.

The District continues to focus on improving the delivery of safe, high-quality and patient-centred care, and there are a range of initiatives in place to support these improvements.

Among them is the ongoing engagement with patient's, their families and carers, and with health consumers more broadly with consumers, and listening to their feedback to improve on services. Providing follow up phone calls to patients after they leave hospital; and a focus on technology to improve accuracy and efficiency, and providing better access to healthcare, have also increased patient's experiences of our health services.

The District is also investing heavily in eHealth to continuously improve the quality of care for our patients, whether they are receiving care in our inpatient facilities or using outpatient services to stay well while living independently in their community.

For a full copy of the results from the 2017 Adult Admitted Patient Survey, visit [http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au/nsw\\_patient\\_survey\\_program/adult\\_admitted\\_patient\\_survey](http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au/nsw_patient_survey_program/adult_admitted_patient_survey)

### Tick of baby-friendly approval

Muswellbrook Hospital has again been accredited as a Baby Friendly Hospital.

Baby Friendly Health Initiative was launched in 1991 by the World Health Organisation and UNICEF to help give every baby the best start in life by creating a health care environment where breastfeeding is the norm. Muswellbrook Hospital was first accredited in 2015.

Last September, two independent assessors assigned by the College of Midwives visited the hospital to interview staff as well as pregnant women and those who had already given birth to assess how well the hospital complied with the 'Ten steps to Successful Breastfeeding'. The assessment also scrutinised of

our policies and procedures and the education given to our staff.

### Troy a welcome addition

We welcomed Troy Stewart into the role of Drug and Alcohol Clinical Services Transitional Nurse Practitioner.

This position provides access to specialised drug and alcohol services for the Upper Hunter community.



Troy's focus is working with patients who have complex physical issues and chronic diseases related to their drug and alcohol use. Troy works in conjunction with other health services and non-government organisations to ensure holistic patient care is provided for those in need.

### Celebrating midwives everywhere

May the 5th is the internationally recognised day for highlighting the work of midwives.

The day, which has been observed since 1991, is organised by the International Confederation of Midwives to raise awareness of the important job midwives do and the care they provide in the community.



It was a celebration with our midwives, clinical midwifery educators, and our Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health Service that highlighted their pivotal role in providing excellent care to women, their newborns and their families.

The midwives enjoyed a lovely cake that was kindly donated by one of our own nursing staff.

## Staff celebrate with Christmas lunch

Some of our staff took time out to celebrate Christmas together - and another wonderful year at Muswellbrook Hospital.

Lunch including the traditional treats Ham/Turkey and even Plum pudding and Pavlova!

Our food services staff along with managers and nursing, administration, maintenance staff kindly donated their time to help prepare the lunch.

Health Service Manager Wendy Hordern warmly thanked all staff for their commitment and effort during 2018.



## Community Health Highlights

### Bus stop a healthy success

The Healthy Kids Bus Stop health assessment program, run in collaboration with Royal Far West, was held in Merriwa and Muswellbrook over three days during May.

This year, 73 children were assessed and many were given referrals for follow-up for services such as oral health, speech pathology, occupational therapy, and further hearing assessment.

Oral health therapists provided parents with tips and demonstrations on how to care for their children's teeth. The children brushed the "big teeth" and got to know their local oral health therapist. Seeing a familiar face helps when children visit the dental service.

This was the fourth consecutive year that Hunter Valley Community Health and Royal Far West have held the Bus Stop and demand is increasing every year. It was the first time the 'bus stop' program has visited Merriwa.

The Healthy Kids Bus Stop is an integrated 'whole of child' health and developmental assessment program is aimed at children aged 3-5 years and aims to improve the health and wellbeing of children living in rural and remote communities

through the early detection of lifestyle risk factors, delayed development, or illness.

Royal Far West is an Australian not for profit charity that provides specialist medical care and allied health support services for children from rural and remote areas in Australia.

### Specialist baby feeding clinics

Feeding clinics involving staff from numerous health disciplines continue monthly in Muswellbrook.

The clinics provide a one-stop appointment for children with feeding challenges where a dietitian, speech pathologist and occupational therapist comprehensively assess interventions using formula. The paediatric specialists then work in partnership with the parents in a group setting to improve health outcomes for the child.

### Other clinics on offer

Specialist wound clinics occur throughout each week, and medical outreach for clinics for Aboriginal people with chronic disease are also held bi-monthly.

The weekly telehealth fracture clinic continues to save inconvenience and travel time for those who require follow up with the orthopaedic team at Maitland Hospital.

Community Health also has general and specialist nursing and allied health services, and runs the Transitional Aged Care Program, which provides rehabilitation services to older people returning home from a hospital admission.

## Our Medical Leaders

### Doctors' service recognised

Two of our local doctors, Dr Del Mullins and Dr Mark Rikard-Bell, were honoured in December for their long standing medical service to the Muswellbrook Community at the 2018 NSW Rural Medical Service Awards.

Dr Mullins & Dr Rikard-Bell are both part of the Brook Medical Centre Muswellbrook, and provide Visiting Medical Officer emergency care at the Muswellbrook hospital. Dr Rikard-Bell also provides procedural skills in anaesthetics.



Muswellbrook Doctors Dr Del Mullins & Dr Mark Rikard-Bell

Dr Mullins and Dr Rikard-Bell are both mentors to medical students and GP registrars, providing opportunities for our future rural medical workforce to participate in their practice.

## Visiting Medical Officers - Brook Medical Centre

Muswellbrook Hospital is very fortunate to have so many experienced Visiting Medical Officers who are committed to our patient's' journey whilst here in hospital.

Currently there are 7 partners, 6 assistants, 5 registrars and 1 locum doctor, who attend the hospital on a regular basis to provide comprehensive General Practice care, including emergency treatment, obstetric care and surgical services.



*Brook Medical Centre doctors*

## In the Spotlight

### Auxiliary buys up big for cancer patients

Grateful acknowledgement: This story first appeared in the Muswellbrook Chronicle on 23 November 2018



*Hospital Auxiliary members receiving new equipment that will benefit patients*

THE Muswellbrook Hospital Auxiliary has ended 2018 on a high after purchasing a total of \$89,859 worth of medical equipment for the Muswellbrook Hospital.

But it would not have been possible to achieve this goal without the help of the local community, publicity officer Shirley Smith said.

“We should also thank Upper Hunter MP Michael Johnsen, Muswellbrook and District Workers Club and Muswellbrook Shire Council for their most generous grants, too,” she said.

“Our appreciation goes to the Muswellbrook Men’s Shed and Regional Australia Bank for their kind donations.

“As well, for the continued and consistent efforts put in by our members on monthly hospital staff salad days, raffles three times a year at the Muswellbrook Marketplace and charity bowls days at Muswellbrook RSL Club.”

Ms Smith said the L-Dex Lymphedema Monitor was an important piece of equipment.

“We were really excited to purchase it,” she explained.

“This will not only be used for the early detection of lymphoedema in the treatment of women following breast cancer operations, but can also be very beneficial to quickly and accurately measure the fluid change in all patients.

“We sincerely hope by being able to have access to this treatment locally, much of the stress caused from having to travel long distances will be eliminated.

“We were also very thrilled to be able to present a cheque for \$28,000 to the operating theatre for the purchase of surgical endoscopy equipment, which is a high-quality digital system that has versatility for greater range of examination, recording and editing, not to mention being much quicker and easier.

“This was a special request from our local doctors.

“And, so with the help of certain grants and donations for which we sincerely appreciate, and all the working behind the scenes, we were only too pleased to be able to provide this equipment for them.”

Auxiliary members were keen to acknowledge the hard work of grants coordinator Pam De Boer over the past six months, too.

“She’s been brilliant, as have all those who have helped us help our hospital – we thank you very much,” Ms Smith said.

“The public support over the past years has assisted us in many areas throughout our local hospital, so we are once again encouraging the community for its backing.

“In 2019, we’ll be returning in full force, working towards a couple of very important larger items that have been chosen from the hospital’s Wish List.”

President Sue Durham thanks all members of the hospital auxiliary for their continued support and hard work over the past 12 months.

“We are always looking for newcomers to join us, even if it’s only to take a turn to sit and sell raffle tickets,” she said.

“You would be most welcome.”



10,224

patients presented at our emergency department



87.1%

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



16,551

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



103

Babies were born



372

Day only surgical procedure were performed



100%

of Category A patients received their elective surgery within the 30 day timeframe<sup>φ</sup>



100%

of Category B patients received their elective surgery within the 90 day timeframe<sup>φ</sup>



100%

of Category C patients received their elective surgery within the 365 day timeframe<sup>φ</sup>



166.34

Full-time equivalent staff



\$26,591

Expenditure budget<sup>^</sup>

## Acknowledgements & Feedback

Muswellbrook Hospital has a dedicated team of volunteers, community members and organisations who continue to support the hospital with financial donations and donations of their valuable time

Each year our wonderful volunteers continue to support our hospital and its patients.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the wonderful volunteers of **Muswellbrook Carelink Inc.** These wonderful volunteers provided support to our cancer and palliative care patients came until their service finished at the end December 2017. The Carelink service began back in February 1988 and the volunteers helped to keep patients in their own homes, delivering equipment such as portable beds, air mattress, bedside tables, shower stools and much more free of charge. All the equipment used was purchased with money donated by the community.

Muswellbrook Hospital staff and management would like to extend our gratitude also to Susie Durham and all the ladies of **Muswellbrook Hospital Auxiliary** for their wonderful efforts this year. Almost \$90,000 has been raised to help purchase many items for the hospital. To you all a big THANKYOU!!



*Hospital Auxiliary members receiving new equipment that will provide relief for patients with lymphoedema*

Thank you to **Godolphin Stud** for their generous donation towards much needed medical equipment.

The **Muswellbrook Pink Ladies** continue to work with the health service to provide inpatient and home care client and family comfort and support. What an amazing group of volunteers.

Muswellbrook Local Health Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank managers and staff for their support and dedication to the health service and the community.

Muswellbrook Hospital would very much like to acknowledge and thank all generous donations from the community and various community groups who have made a difference to our patients stay in hospital.

Thank you to Chairperson Jennifer Lecky, Administration Manager/Executive Assistant Dianne Prangle, Nursing Unit Managers Janelle Alexander and Sharon Eriksson, Clinical Nurse Educator Alex Champion, nurse Jess Dewhirst, and the Muswellbrook Health Committee members for their contribution in preparing this report.

Muswellbrook Local Health Committee would like to hear from you.

Please send your comments to:

Muswellbrook Local Health Committee  
Brentwood Street  
Muswellbrook NSW 2333

Or you can send an email to Health Service Manager Wendy Hordern at [Wendy.Hordern@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Wendy.Hordern@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au)