



2018 Wee Waa Local Health Report

Acknowledgement of Country

Wee Waa Community Hospital respectfully acknowledges the Gamilaroi/Kamilaroi people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land in which our health facilities are located.

We pay our respects to the Elders, community members and the Aboriginal services who partner with us to improve health outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our district.



Year at a Glance

2018 has been both a challenging and exciting year at Wee Waa Community Hospital. It has seen staff changes with the arrival of new members and the departure of long-serving staff. Other staff received recognition for 25 and 40 years of service.

Exciting collaborative efforts between the local community and our volunteer committees has seen the hospital benefit from quality projects that have brought improvements to patient care and the patient experience. These include the emergency department upgrade, The ED Transfer project, the Serenity Room, the Change Culture project, the Port-a-Cath service, the Pharmacy Improvement project and the Tidy Office project, all aimed at improving the quality and service for both patients and staff at Wee Waa Hospital.



Wee Waa Hospital

Wee Waa Hospital has seen the departure of two doctors and several new weekend locums arrive. We have farewelled Dr Annamalai who has relocated to Werris Creek and Dr Sivanathan has resigned after 15 years of service to the hospital. We thank him for the many years of service he provided.

Northwest Health was the successful tenderer for the GP rooms at the Wee Waa Hospital. Dr Ian Kamerman, Dr Vasuki Annamalai, Dr Safwat Khalid, Dr Arkadi Bronstein and Dr Merran Auland service the hospital on weekends. We have been very appreciative of Dr April Armstrong who has been the locum over the Christmas and New Year period. The STAH doctors (Small Town After Hours) have assisted via Telehealth when needed. The doctors on the STAH team include Dr Deane, Dr Saad, Dr Fisher, Dr Hungerford, Dr Ojah, Dr Ling, and Dr Moroney. The teamwork between these doctors and our skilled nursing staff have provided continual patient care until the recruitment for a permanent VMO is completed, and both their help and this program has been invaluable to the hospital and the provision of medical services.



Wee Waa Hospital

Nursing staff who have been farewelled include Maree Trow, Sharon Taylor, Trudy Schatz, Peter Whan, and Helen Cathcart. We wish them well in their new ventures. Congratulations to Samantha Smith for her appointment as clinical nurse educator for the hospital, Trent Crosara as the new maintenance person, security officer and fire officer, Kay Pynor as the new IPLN (infection control nurse) and Jacinta Kasprzak as the successful post graduate nurse for 2018. Congratulations also go to registered nurses Rebecca Lovegrove and Peter Whan for their successful completion and accreditation for FLEC (First Line Emergency Care).

We also have to thank the excellent agency nurses who have filled vacancies while recruitment was under way, and we cannot forget the administration staff and Health Share staff who all work together to create the great team at the hospital with the focus on quality patient care and the patient journey.

Community health nurses continue to service Wee Waa, Burren Junction, Gwabegar and Pilliga each week. A new port-a-cath service has been a welcome addition. Provided by the community health nurses, the service ensures community members do not have to travel out of town to receive this care. We continue to provide a child and family health service with universal home visits, women's health, midwives outreach clinic and Aboriginal midwife services, alongside all the allied health services that visit on a regular basis. These include palliative care, dietitian, speech therapy, occupational therapy, drug and alcohol and mental health. The addition of wifi and the provision of a new portable video unit has enabled the NMEC-RAP (northern mental health emergency care – rural access program) that has been rolled out and used on several occasions.



Wee Waa Health Service Manager Jocelyn Palmer

We continue to use the Excellence tools provided by HNE Health to ensure we maintain quality and safety; patient and staff rounding, monthly traffic light report, follow up phone calls, safety huddles, site walks and hazard inspections, hourly rounding, care boards and our standards of behaviour to name some of the tools.

Our local committees are integral to our standards with the Health Advisory Committee and hospital auxiliary seeing some changes. Long-time committee member Pam Callachor relocated to Toowoomba after many years of service. New members Marika Deacon and Liz Burgess have been warmly welcomed to the Health Advisory Committee alongside other long standing members Annie Weekes, Maxine Booby and

Ron Lowder. The ladies of the Auxiliary continue to provide equipment and resources – including the kitchenette in the new serenity room for family and carers to stay with a patient.

As HSM I wish to thank Fiona Lysaught, Meg Ross and Alysse Pownall for acting in the role of health service manager to allow me to have three months leave this year. I also wish to thank every staff member for their valued service to the hospital and community throughout the year. It is a privilege to work with such a caring team.

Our Health Committee

The Wee Waa Local Health Committee consists of motivated and dedicated volunteers working in partnership with the Health Service Manager of Wee Waa Health Service. The committee helps to ensure the effective delivery of health services and represents the community on matters relating to health. They meet bimonthly and new members are always welcome. They have a commitment to ensure the community has a voice in regards to health care.

A key focus of our committee is to ensure Wee Waa and surrounding areas have an effective health service that meets the needs of the local population. This year, the local health committee members have been engaged and consulted on Wee Waa health service report.

The Wee Waa Health Committee said farewell to Pam Callachor who was a long-serving member for approximately 12 years and welcomed two new members Mareka Deacon and Liz Berger. We wish Pam all the best for the future and a big welcome to Mareka and Liz.



Local health committee member Anne Weekes



Local health committee member Liz Berger



Local health committee member Mareka Deacon



Local health committee member Maxine Booby



Local health committee member Ron Lowder

Our Health Service

Wee Waa Community Hospital is a 17-bed Hospital within the Mehi Sector of Hunter New England Health. Wee Waa Community Hospital services the town of Wee Waa, the villages of Pilliga, Gwabegar and Burren Junction, and surrounding district. The catchment population is 5000 people living in the Walgett and Narrabri Shire local government areas.



Administration staff (Left to right) Wendy Vankuyk, Mary Jones, Kristy Schwager

The Wee Waa Community Hospital Emergency Department provides a 24 hour per day, 7 day per week service. Clinical care is managed and provided by registered and enrolled nurses with the support of the on-call general practitioner visiting medical officer (VMO). There are two registered nurses licensed as remote x-ray operators which allows a limited service of x-raying extremities.

After-hours medical care for inpatients is provided by the VMO. The nurses also have a clinical emergency response system in place if a clinical review is required for a patient that is deteriorating.

On presentation to the emergency department, patients are triaged by a registered nurse and treated by the VMO on call for the day. The patient's journey is determined by the severity of their diagnosis and the priority and level of care required.

Patients are triaged according to the national triage scale categories 1-5. Category 1 is the highest urgency, Category 5 being the lowest. The majority of people presenting to the ED are triage category 4 and 5 who are discharged directly from the ED. Those who require a higher level of care than can be provided at Wee Waa Hospital are transferred to a rural or tertiary referral hospital.



Health services staff (left to right) Sue Sadler, Wangina Lyons, Angie Hurrell, Michelle Collett

Wee Waa Community Hospital also admits patients for low complexity paediatric care. Palliative and respite care is also provided.

On discharge patients are serviced on a needs basis, by referral, to community health staff or referred back to their GP.



Maintenance staff Trent Corosa

Community health is staffed by registered and enrolled nurses who provide community nursing services in Wee Waa five days per week and Pilliga, Gwabegar and Burren Junction weekly.

Community health staff also provide early childhood services, basic foot care, asthma education, cardiac rehabilitation and audiometry.

Visiting services include; Aboriginal maternal and infant health service, Aboriginal child and family health service (OATSIH), speech pathology, dietician, social worker, aged care assessment team, dementia support, mental health, podiatrist, diabetic educator, palliative care nurse consultant, women's health nurse and occupational therapist and population health services. These are provided from Narrabri and other Hunter New England community health services.

Partnering with Our Community

Once a fortnight our Wee Waa community health nurses go and visit the Wee Waa Men's Shed & the ladies HACC group at their facilities. On these visits the members of the men's shed and ladies HACC group get free blood pressure and blood sugar level checks.

Carols by candlelight is an annual event which sees the community come together to sing along to christmas carols. This event is held between the hospital grounds and Weeronga, which is a convenient location so patients of the Wee Waa Hospital and Weeronga can be involved in this community celebration.

This year we received a generous donation from the Wee Waa Fishing Club in helping with the completion of our Serenity Room. The Serenity Room is a community named room and a major project for Wee Waa Hospital this year. Community and the hospital auxiliary have raised funds to upgrade this room with a homely feel. Families and carers can stay with their family member who is unwell. The Fishing Club donation was used for purchasing paint for this room. This room is almost complete and an opening is planned with the hospital auxiliary for March 2019.



Wee Waa Fishing Club donation John Tully and Jocelyn Palmer



Serenity Room: Mareka Deacon, Lisa Derwent, Maxine Booby, Anne Weekes, Ron Lowder, Jocelyn Palmer

The United Hospital Auxiliary along with Wee Waa child and family health nurse have developed a program to support new parents to help develop language skills for all new babies. All new babies seen within the Wee Waa Burren Gwabegar and Pilliga district receive a recommended book, donated by the auxiliary and given through the child and family health service nurse at their first visit. The importance of reading to your child can not be emphasised enough and simple books are designed to teach word names right from birth. This program commenced in December 2018 and has received positive feedback from the new mothers.



Support a book for newborns Anne Weekes, Ben Deacon, Pam Callahor, Tahnee Hibbens, Lenny Hibbens, Helen Haire

This year has seen the development of the Wee Waa Community Hospital official Facebook page where regular updates, information, highlights and education are posted to let the public know what is happening at our hospital.

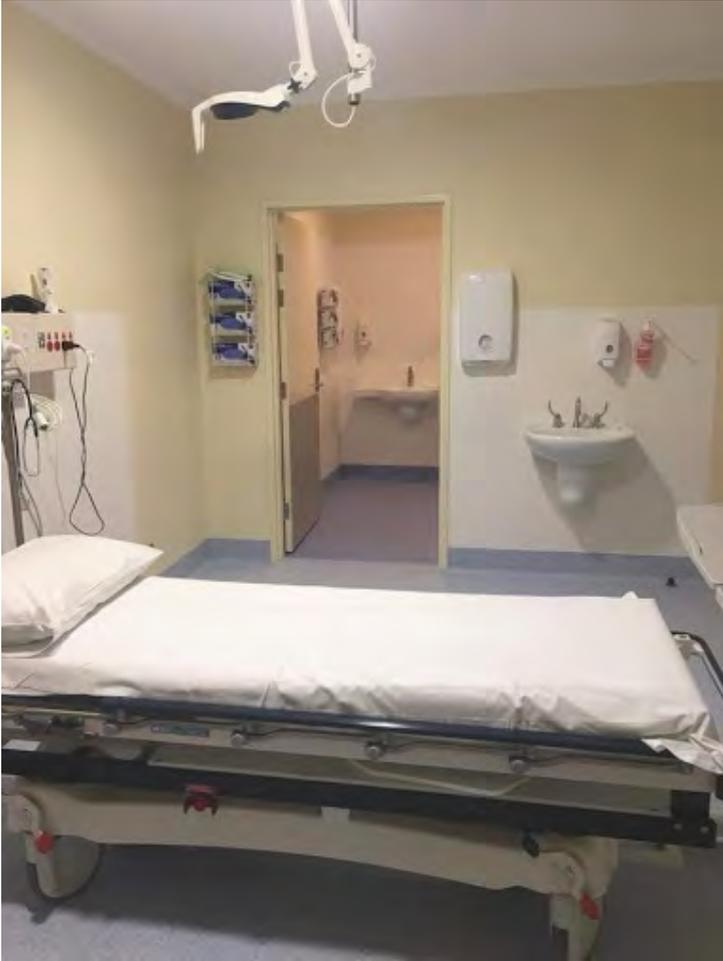
Hunter New England Local Health District



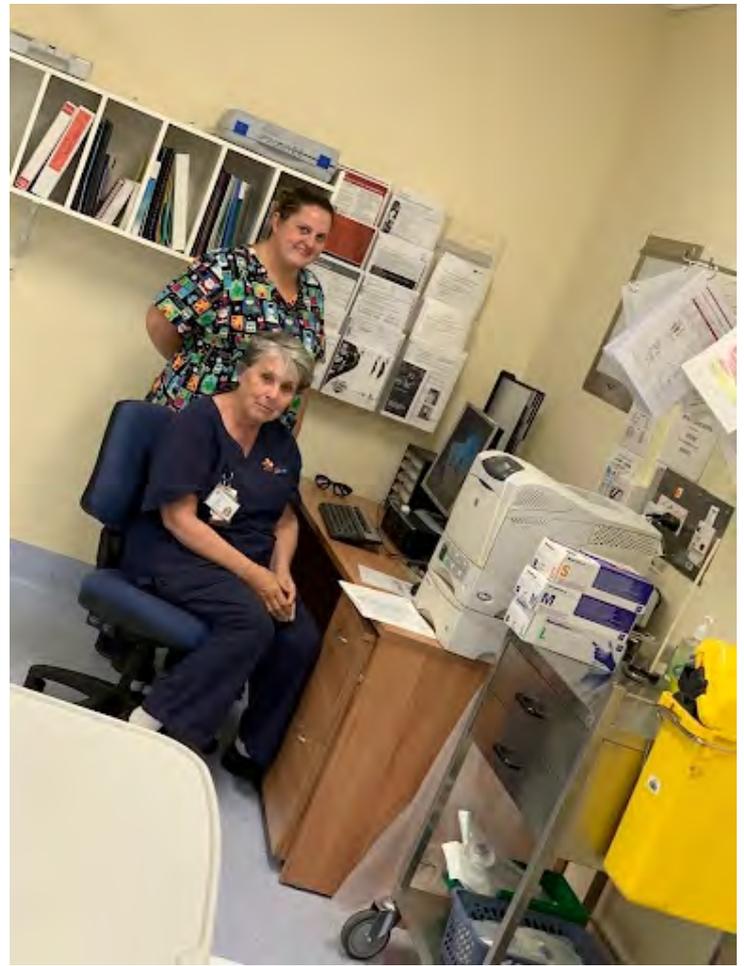
Highlights

Year of upgrades

During 2018 our emergency department (ED) has had a major upgrade of nine rooms. This consists of a new triage room, waiting room, consultation room, two bathrooms, utility room, two new store rooms and a facelift for the main emergency department room. It also includes an improvement to security with the ability to lockdown the ED separate to inpatient unit and nurses station.



ED upgrade



ED upgrade, Jacinta Kasprzak and Kaye Prynor



ED upgrade

The administration office at the main entrance of the hospital and the community health department has had a change in flooring with new lino being laid. This has not only made the area look bright and fresh, it has met the infection control accreditation standards.



Community health flooring upgrade



Front office flooring upgrade

We have been fortunate enough with funding to receive a family and carer room which has been named The Serenity Room. This room is not only for patients who require palliative care, but also for their family members to be able to stay with them. It can be used for remote families to stay with family members when they are unwell, and for paediatric patients who need their family or carer to stay with them during a hospital stay. This room has a basic kitchenette, a lounge, bedding, fridge, TV and has been made to look like a room in a family home.

The Change Culture project has been run in response to a number of issues that were raised in relation to teamwork, support, rostering and team morale at Wee Waa Hospital. In conjunction with HNE human resources, organisational development and learning team, both group and individual sessions were organised with every individual supported to attend to develop and implement a culture improvement plan to improve the respectful workplace environment. At the conclusion of this project HNE executive, management and staff joined together to measure the changes and how to go forward and continue to improve. While change is slow, it is definitely forward and positive, and is being monitored and measured.

Community Health Highlights

Janelle Schwager is the cardiac rehabilitation nurse. In this role Janelle provides follow up care and education for individuals with cardiac related conditions such as heart attack, post surgery coronary artery surgery, stents and valve replacement. Services are available by referral. Appointments are arranged at Wee Waa Community Health with home visits in special circumstances. The cardiac rehabilitation program connects clients to dieticians to assist with meal planning and education regarding diet. Janelle provides medication education, blood

pressure checks and home based exercise. Patients are treated by Dr Smyth cardiologist at Tamworth Hospital.



Janelle Schwager

Meagan Freeman is a community health nurse, her role includes respiratory services. In this role Meagan provides education and support for conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Meagan is also one of the community health nurses who visits clients in their homes, and is part of the wound management referred to community health for ongoing care.



Meagan Freeman

Robyn Allen is also one of the community health nurses. Robyn has an interest in wound care management and provides services to clients who are referred for wound care. These referrals are received by client self-referral, general practitioners and hospital emergency departments as a part of discharge planning. Robyn visits The Men's Shed, the HACC ladies, Burren Junction and Gwabegar each week, as do the other community health nurses. Robyn has also commenced the Port-a-Cath project that now allows patients to have this service in their own home town.



Robyn Allen

Helen Haire is the early childhood nurse and audiometry health nurse, as well as the hospital quality manager. Helen provides support, information and education for mothers and families. Advice can be provided for breastfeeding, settling and parenting issues. Clinics are regularly held and first home visits to new mothers are also available. Helen can provide information and assistance in regards to hearing problems. Helen is able to perform hearing tests which can be arranged by appointment. Helen travels to Pilliga, Gwabegar and Burren Junction playgroups and offers support to mothers and children.



Helen Haire

Kylie Greste is a community health nurse. Kylie has recently joined the community health team after many years of working on the general ward and emergency department. Her many years of service to the acute team is invaluable to the community health team and they welcome her addition.



Kylie Greste

Lisa Derwent is a community health nurse. Lisa has a dual role of working in both the general ward and emergency department, as well as with community health. In a small hospital many of our nurses share responsibilities and help out where they are needed.



Lisa Derwent

Our Medical Leaders

Wee Waa Hospital is advertising for a permanent GP/VMO. Currently medical services are provided by a team of STAH (Small Town After Hours) doctors, weekend locums and on a needs basis a doctor comes from Narrabri mid-week.

NorthWest Health has provided weekend locums to cover the town from Friday evenings to Monday mornings. Dr Ian Kamerman, Dr Vasuki Annamalai, Dr Safwat Khalid, Dr Neil Wearne and Dr Merran Auland have all assisted with our weekend roster.

STAH doctors, working on the phone and clinical camera under a business continuity plan, have provided medical service weekdays. This has seen an increase in the skills of assessment and communication with our highly skilled, trained and dedicated nursing team which initially assess the patient and pass this information onto the doctor for treatment.



Dr April Armstrong



Clinical nurse educator Samantha Smith

In the Spotlight

This year we saw four staff members; Helen Haire, Gaye Anderson, Robyn Allen and Susie Marshall celebrate 25 years service or more to the Wee Waa Community Hospital. This was celebrated by a luncheon attended by staff, management and HNE executive. A gift and certificate were presented to each long serving staff member in appreciation of their dedication to their chosen profession.



Helen Haire, Gaye Anderson, Robyn Allen, Susie Marshall

Other spotlights include the new Port-a-Cath service provided by Robyn Allen in community health, which has had very positive feedback.

Congratulations also goes to Samantha Smith for her appointment to the clinical nurse educator role. Samantha's role as clinical nurse educator is to provide guidance and clinical education at the bedside with students and nursing staff and to implement new and ongoing education programs to maintain staff skill and service delivery.



1,848

patients presented at our emergency department



94.9%

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



5,769

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



20

Full-time equivalent staff



\$4,448

Expenditure budget[^]

Feedback & Acknowledgements

We appreciate all that you do

As Health Service Manager for Wee Waa Community Hospital, I would like to acknowledge:

- Members of the Wee Waa community – we appreciate your pride in and support of our facility. We appreciate your acknowledgement of the great work we do by thumbs up in the Narrabri Courier, receiving of thank you cards and the gift of flowers and chocolates.
- Our staff for your dedication and commitment to providing Excellence in health service provision - Every Patient, Every Time
- The visiting medical officers for their dedication and commitment to the patients in our care.
- Our hospital day centre volunteers for providing invaluable assistance with day centre activities and driving the bus for outings and enhancing the life experiences of community members
- Members of the Wee Waa United Hospital Auxiliary for their ongoing tireless commitment to raising funds for the health service.
- Community fundraising groups
- Donations from community groups patients and family members, these are much appreciated

A huge thank you to Fiona Lysaught, Meg Ross and Alysse Pownall for acting as health service manager while I was on leave.



Fiona Lysaught and Jocelyn Palmer

'Thanks' to medical services

I would like to thank the staff of Wee Waa Hospital and all the local health team including ambulance service.

We do not realise how important these people are until we need them.

Anything we can do to help make sure we keep these services available should be done. One day it might be you who needs them.

**John Reid
Wee Waa**

Thank you from John Reid

THANK YOU

A very special thank you to the entire staff of Wee Waa Hospital.

The Wee Waa community is so fortunate to have you as their health professionals.

We would like to express a heartfelt thank you.

We will be forever grateful for your support and genuine loving care of Edward (TED) Ernest Homer – passed peacefully May 18, 2018.

We will never forget you.

***Forever in our memories and hearts
Ian, Leonie & Karyn.***

Thank you from the late Edward Homer's family