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ABOUT US
Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) provides a range of public health services to the Riverina and Murray regions of NSW, Australia.

We provide services across a geographic area of approximately 125,561 square kilometres, and around 240,754 residents live within District. People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage make up four per cent of the population.

As the largest employer in the region, with over 3,800 healthcare staff working across 33 hospitals and 12 primary health care centres, we are supported by hundreds of volunteers who make an invaluable contribution to enriching the lives of people in our care.

Our services are provided through:
• 1 Rural Referral Hospital
• 1 Base Hospital
• 8 District Health Services
• 5 Community Hospitals
• 16 Multipurpose Services
• 2 Mercy Care Public Hospitals
• 12 Community Health Posts
• 1 Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service

PUBLICATION
We would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land covering MLHD and remind people that we live and work on Aboriginal land.

Welcome to the fifth issue of Murrumbidgee Matters Magazine.

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FRONT COVER
Mental Health Recovery Unit, Wagga Wagga
Photo by Jacki Cooper, Jack of Hearts

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OUR VISION
Wellness is our Goal
Excellence is our Passion
Our People are Our Future
Mental Health & Recovery

A personal recovery journey...

With the end of the year and the festive season fast approaching, now is often a time of reflection on an area of your life that you’d like to change in the New Year. For some, these steps can be bigger than others.

“As the Mental Health Recovery Unit enters its sixth year, it’s the perfect time for us to reflect on the program, its successes and challenges for the future,” said Manager Paul Templeton.

Since it was established in 2013, the program has evolved,” said Paul. “We take on the feedback provided by our participants and the program gets better and better each week.”

If you need to make some changes in your life, now is the perfect time to consider joining the program and taking that first step toward recovery.

Paul says the program caters for people with a range of mental health issues, from depression and anxiety to more complex needs.

“It’s about resetting and that first step in the right direction.”

“Despite everything that I have been through in my 31 short years on this planet, by far the most difficult part was making the decision to walk through the doors of this unit...

Patient Journey

“Despite everything that I have been through in my 31 short years on this planet, by far the most difficult part was making the decision to walk through the doors of this unit. Years of derogatory self-talk, chronic depression, Generalised Anxiety Disorder, and suicidal ideation had caught up with me and I found myself merely going through the motions of life.

I came to the unit numb, raw, battling almost constant suicidal ideation and with no notion of what it really meant to like myself, let alone love myself. All I knew is that I wanted to be the absolute best father, husband and human I could possibly be, and I needed major help.

Feeling worthy of breathing is such a new sensation to me. It feels surreal to be able to reflect on the events in my life with pride instead of shame. I am proud to be smiling, living and existing without that black dog constantly following me. I know there will be tough days, but I also know that I have the ability to get through them. I am proud to hold my head high and give to others without taking from myself first.

...thank you to the other consumers who I have had the privilege of sharing this journey with - be it for one week or many. Thank you for allowing me into your journeys and meeting me on an even level. Thank you for the validation that melted away the years of self-deprecation. Thank you for listening”.

“...
FACILITY IN FOCUS:
MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY UNIT

The Mental Health Recovery Unit is large, modern and comfortable and located on the grounds of Wagga Wagga Base Hospital.

Features include:
- Single bedrooms with ensuites and courtyard views
- Large dining and living areas
- Outdoor areas and courtyard
- Large windows for natural light
- Unisex, female & male areas
- Gym, relaxation room, kitchen, gardens & basketball court

The Recovery Unit celebrates the diversity and achievements of participants. Our goal is to empower consumers to be leaders in their own recovery journey.

STAFF
The unit is staffed by nurses, medical staff, occupational therapists, peer workers, rehabilitation assistants, diettitian, psychiatrist, psychologists and a social worker.

RULES
- No drug or alcohol use in the unit
- Consumers have freedom of access but must be back in the unit by 10pm
- All reasonable standards of behaviour are expected
- Active participation and attendance in group activities is expected

Recovery Program
The Recovery Program is an eight-week residential course of education, practical living skills, care coordination and support. Peer workers “walk beside” participants in their journey to recovery. They offer support and insight that only someone who has lived experience of mental illness can offer.

Participants have a support team identified on admission who provide 1:1 assistance, with meetings, paperwork and discharge planning. Participants are central to everything that happens in the program. They decide the content of the group sessions, they run their own review meetings and write their own weekly summaries.

The program subjects are:
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Assertiveness
- Self Esteem
- Distress Tolerance
- Living Skills
- Healthy Eating
Award-winning

Wagga Wagga’s Mental Health Inpatient services scooped two awards at the 2018 NSW Health Awards in Sydney recently.

The Patients as Partners Award for the Mental Health Recovery Unit program empowers consumers to take control of their own recovery journey, and the Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Award for the acute unit helping consumers reduce weight gain while an inpatient via a variety of healthy living strategies.

The wins follow hot-on-the-heels of the 2018 Lived Experience Participation and Leadership Award bestowed on the Mental Health Recovery Unit earlier in the year.

The Mental Health Recovery Unit is located on the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital campus. The unit facilitates an eight-week mental health program accessible to all residents of MLHD. The program’s vision is to support individuals’ unique and personal journeys to wellness. This is achieved by providing individuals with diverse and varied opportunities for engagement in therapeutic and regenerative activities; adopting an optimistic and positive approach when supporting people with mental health issues to live, work and participate in their community; and planning and delivering care in partnership with key service providers, consumers, families and carers.

A key feature of the Mental Health Recovery Unit program is the attention it places on individual goals. Staff’s key objectives are to assist individuals to determine their goals, and then to work towards achieving them. Partnering with staff enables consumers to brainstorm and explore options, to be self-determined in a safe space, to find purpose and meaning, and to actively engage with family and carers.

The program prides itself in incorporating feedback it receives from consumers and attributes both its development and success to the partnerships developed with participants.

2017 NSW Health Volunteer of the Year, Belinda White, is a volunteer in the Mental Health Recovery Unit. Belinda facilitates a creative writing group each week and in doing so, also supports consumers to write their own story. Program participants have an opportunity to share their story with their peers at the end of the program. This is a powerful and cathartic experience for those who participate.

RU ready for recovery?

Mental Health Recovery Program
MURRUMBIDGEE LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

call 5943 1820 to find out more
What is Palliative Care?

The holistic care of people who have a life-limiting illness, their families and carers. It aims to improve quality of life by addressing physical, practical, emotional, spiritual and social needs. Also known as supportive care. It is not just for people who are about to die, although it does include end-of-life care.

In addition to her work directly with patients and their families, Jenny has proven to be an innovative leader.

Jenny is an active member Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) and Nurse Practitioner Consortium. Her work at ACI demonstrates great innovation in policy development. Jenny has been able to look beyond normal discharge barriers to allow patients to die at home in rural locations if that is their wish.

“Jenny has empowered our nurse-led service to lead palliative care in the region. She does not hold onto information but shares knowledge so that her colleagues can do the best job possible,” said MLHD’s Executive Director of Nursing & Midwifery Karen Cairney.
2018 NSW Health Awards

Nurse Practitioner Jenny McKenzie won NSW Health’s Staff Member of the Year for her outstanding work in providing quality palliative care to patients living in rural parts of the State.

The Wagga Wagga Hospital’s Mental Health team scooped two awards: the Patients as Partners Award for a program empowering consumers to take control of their own recovery journeys and the Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Award for helping patients prevent weight gain during their admission.
ABOUT US

CSU’s Three Rivers University Department of Rural Health was established to help health students live, study, work in rural Australia.

We aim to improve the recruitment and retention of nursing, midwifery, dentistry and allied health professionals in rural and remote areas within the Riverina and Central West region of New South Wales. This area is part of the Wiradjuri Nation area, which has been described as ‘land of the three rivers’.

As well as providing support for students, we also provide information and support for rural health clinicians working with students.

FIND OUT MORE

Website: http://three_rivers.csu.edu.au
Phone: 02 6051 9177
Email: ThreeRiversUDRH@csu.edu.au
Follow Us: @ThreeRiversUDRH

Three Rivers improving recruitment and retention of rural health professionals

The Three Rivers University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) is a new alliance bringing together the unique geographical knowledge and expertise of Charles Sturt University (CSU) and its university consortium partners. With an aim to improve the recruitment and retention of allied health, nursing, midwifery and dentistry professionals in rural Australia, its footprint encompasses the Murrumbidgee and Western Local Health Districts and Primary Health Networks.

The staff at Three Rivers UDRH are committed to adding value to processes already in place to attract health professionals to rural areas, with a focus on developing innovative ways to continue the growth of this workforce. The four work streams the Three Rivers UDRH broadly covers are:

- Increasing the number of rural origin health students
- Assist in the provision of effective rural clinical training (placements) for health students
- Supporting rural health professionals to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
- Progressing an evidence-based rural health research agenda

The clinical educators at Three Rivers UDRH are dedicated to building a rural health workforce for the future that is sustainable and desirable. This will be accomplished not only by increasing the number and quality of undergraduate rural health placements, but also through community engagement and providing leadership in innovative training solutions.

Three Rivers’ Major Sites

In association with:

The University of Notre Dame Australia
UNSW Sydney
Western Sydney University
MLHD BRINGS HOME TOP STATE GONG!

MLHD’s Thomas Glanville has picked up one of the State’s top awards, winning the 2018 Premier’s Award for Public Service for Improving Service Levels in Hospitals.

The 32-year-old took out the category for his work in developing “ED NOW” - a real-time dashboard which provides clinicians with a snapshot of what’s happening in EDs.

The new system, which has been scaled across NSW hospitals, helps clinical employees to get patients through the ED in less than four hours, one of the Premier’s key priorities.

The Award category recognises those who have worked on programs, initiatives, innovations or improvements that lead to more patients going through EDs within four hours, supporting the Premier’s aim to achieve 81 per cent of patients through EDs within four hours by 2019.

This new system provides information for clinical employees in EDs or on mobile phones to assist in improving patient flow, getting patients through the ED in less than four hours and returning hours of clinical time to patient care.

Thomas says the dashboard was developed specifically to empower the health system to understand EDs delivery of care in real time, locally, across LHDs and the whole state.

“This dashboard is a major advancement in the improvement in patient flow through EDs,” said MLHD Chief Executive Jill Ludford.

“It is the first successful state-wide use of electronic patient medical records for automated real-time reporting and analytics.

“A key benefit is reducing manual reporting time to enable staff to focus more attention on patient care, as previously clinicians were required to take time off the front line to undertake this reporting.

“We are immensely proud of Thom, and this award is just recognition for his innovative work in this field,” Ms Ludford said.

The three clinical educators located in the Murrumbidgee LHD are

• Brent Smith (Albury)
• Rebecca Barry (Griffith)
• Elyce Green (Wagga Wagga)

There are also two clinical educators located in the Western LHD

• Cathy Maginnis (Dubbo)
• Tabitha Jones (Orange)

The areas covered by the clinical educators are shown on the map. (left)

Continued from page 8

The win is another accolade for Thomas who was last year named Staff Member of the Year at the NSW Health Excellence Awards.

The Premier’s Awards recognise excellence in the delivery of public services to the NSW community by the public sector, not-for-profit organisations and private businesses.

This year, NSW Health has finalists in nine of the 12 Premier’s Award categories with a total of 18 finalists. This is more than any other public sector agency and NSW Health entries represent 33 per cent of this year’s finalists.
Christmas is a time of celebration when family and friends come together to relax and catch up while bringing in the New Year. It can however also be associated with overindulgence in alcohol and risk-taking behaviour. It is also a time when some young people can be at risk of making unsafe choices.

Young people and the community in general can avoid dangerous and potentially life-threatening situations by remembering a few important things:

- **Look after your friends** – if you are out as a group, look after one another. Stay with people you know and trust. Be aware of what’s happening around you, be confident and assertive and if you pick up “bad vibes” from someone or someplace, trust your instincts, tell someone and leave safely.

- **Intoxication can increase the risk of alcohol-related violence.** Look out for friends and if there’s a risk of a person’s behaviour becoming aggressive move away and / or seek help. Remember one punch can kill or cause serious harm.

- **Too often incidents can happen when someone is left behind in a bar or pub, or wanders off by themselves.** Stick together and make sure you all have a good time.

- **Ensure your phone is charged** - if an incident does occur you are prepared and can call 000.

- **If you are concerned about a friend’s health and safety due to intoxication or fear they may collapse, do not hesitate, call 000 immediately.** While waiting for the ambulance, lay the person on their side in the ‘recovery’ position to maintain their airway and stay with them.

- **Celebrating at home:** DO NOT let your friend/s “sleep it off”. Check on them periodically to make sure they are conscious. If in doubt about someone’s condition call 000 immediately.

- **If arguments arise, walk away,** as spending the night in police custody is not the right choice.

- **Plan your journey home** – never drink and drive or get in a car with someone who has been drinking. Plan how you are getting home at the start of the night – know the times of public transport or pre-book a taxi and remember to keep money aside for the fare.

“This Christmas, plan ahead and look out for your friends so everyone can celebrate and enjoy this year’s festive season,” Ms Ludford said.

For immediate assistance or advice about mental health concerns, please see your doctor or phone the MLHD Mental Health AccessLine on 1800 800 944.
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS REMAIN OPEN 24 HOURS DURING HOLIDAY PERIOD

Hospital Emergency Departments across MLHD will remain open 24 hours, seven days over the Christmas and New Year period.

Emergency Departments never close and emergency care continues around the clock.

People with minor conditions are urged to see their GP or seek other health advice in the first instance and to keep the ED for emergencies during the festive holiday period.

Healthdirect provides free health information and advice online and over the phone. It is available 24 hours, seven days: by phone on 1800 022 222 for advice from a Registered Nurse. The nurse can also connect you to an emergency service if necessary. You can also visit www.healthdirect.gov.au

In an emergency call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.

CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

Murrumbidgee Local Health District wishes you a safe and happy holiday!

In the hustle and bustle of holidays, often the last thing we think about are our medications or first aid supplies.

It doesn’t take much time to check, but forgetting them could ruin your holiday.

Remember your doctor could be going on leave and your scripts may run out.

With this in mind, MLHD offers you a handy “Holiday Checklist”.

This list of common medications and first aid needs can be used as a reminder for getting your supplies early before the holiday break or to prepare for your trips away from home

- Sun Screen
- Insect Repellent
- Creams for insect bites
- Medications for minor pain (ie: paracetamol)
- Pain relief for children
- Antiseptic wash
- Antiseptic Cream
- Adhesive Dressings
- Bandages
- Triangular bandage
- Asthma Puffer
- Diabetic Medications
- Heart Tablets
- Other prescription drugs
- Ambulance Cover is up to date

Jill Ludford

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- Triangular bandage
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- Diabetic Medications
- Heart Tablets
- Other prescription drugs
- Ambulance Cover is up to date

Murrumbidgee Local Health District wishes you a safe and happy holiday!
With temperatures in some parts of the region expected to reach into the 40 degrees this summer, MLHD is urging people to take the risk of heat-related illness seriously.

Director Public Health Tracey Oakman said while heat-related illness may affect anyone, certain groups are particularly vulnerable. These include the over 75s, infants and children, people with a chronic medical condition and people who live alone.

“The heat has arrived early this summer and this can have a bigger impact on wellbeing as people are not yet acclimatised,” Mrs Oakman said.

“Every year hot weather and heat waves cause illness, hospitalisations and sometimes even deaths.”

During hot weather, it is very important to stay in regular contact with your elderly friends, neighbours and relatives, and to look out for other vulnerable members of your community.

“Heat puts a lot of strain on the body and can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. It can also make underlying health conditions worse. However, being prepared and taking some simple precautions can reduce the risk of heat-related illness,” said Mrs Oakman.

These simple precautions will help people minimise their risk of heat-related illness:

- Drink plenty of water, and remember to carry some with you when you’re out and about
- Avoid alcoholic, hot or sugary drinks
- Plan your day around the heat. Stay indoors between 11am and 5pm and minimise physical activity
- Keep the sun out of your house by shading windows with an awning, shade-cloth or plants. Shutting curtains will also help.
As we move towards the end of the year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff for the excellent health care you have given patients and residents throughout the year. Your dedication and compassion has not gone unnoticed. 2018 has been the year of awards for Murrumbidgee. How exciting it is to read on Facebook and Twitter each week of the many awards that have been bestowed on our staff. It does make me so proud to be Chair of the MLHD Board.

It is not only award winners that need praise but all staff, as the award recipients are only the “tip of the iceberg”. Underneath them are many other individuals and teams who excel in what they do. Murrumbidgee staff work tirelessly to improve the health care they deliver.

As we move into December, we think about Christmas and time with our family and friends. I am aware that for many staff members this year Christmas Day will be a work day. I offer you my personal thanks as you play a vital role on Christmas Day.

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MLHD Board Chair Gayle Murphy

Meet Our Board

The MLHD Board works to ensure effective clinical and corporate governance frameworks are established to support standards of patient care and services. They set and ensure implementation of the Strategic Plan for the District.

The Board is made up of local people who are committed to the region. Directors bring a wealth of skills, experience and local knowledge to the management of our District. Our Board is dedicated to providing safe quality care and strives for service improvement through innovation and research.

Board Chair’s Message

As we move towards the end of the year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff for the excellent health care you have given patients and residents throughout the year. Your dedication and compassion has not gone unnoticed.

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT:
Board Director: John Harding

Since moving to Wagga Wagga with his family in 1973 to become Regional Director of a government department, MLHD Board member John Harding feels his life and work experience has prepared him for the challenges involved as a Board member. His region covered almost the same area as MLHD does now.

John served on Wagga Wagga City Council for 21 years, including as Deputy Mayor and Mayor, taking particular interest in community development and finance. He was Chair of Wagga Wagga Mutual Credit Union for eight years, a member of the regional Cancer Council Advisory Committee, is a Life Member of the Riverina Conservatorium of Music having served on the Board for some 25 years, and was Chair of the Independent Retirees group.

The final years of his professional life found John as the head of the International Division at Charles Sturt University, growing his marketing skills and understanding the many other cultures increasingly appearing in our local population.

As a cancer survivor and an insulin dependent diabetic, John is now living in a retirement village with his wife Lin. This has helped focus his interest in the health and social needs of our increasing older population, which of course is very much a challenge for the health district. He appreciates the opportunity, along with our multi-skilled Board, to help provide support and strategic advice to the very professional and dedicated staff at MLHD.
HUMANS OF THE HOSPITAL

meet ‘Mac’

‘My name is Thomas McRae Guest but everyone calls me Mac. I will be 92 years young in December.

I am also the oldest patient to receive dialysis at the Griffith Base Hospital Renal Unit and one of its longest running patients. I have been receiving treatment for nearly a decade.

I know the new unit is only temporary but it is so great. I am here three days a week so I know the other renal patients and the staff really well.

I like to meet the managers at the hospital because I like to look at the bigger picture of things.

I am proud to say I have five sons, seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Life must always carry on despite the ups and downs it presents. I lost my first wife, Dorothy to polio after only being married for six months. It was such a crushing blow I wandered around Australia very unsettled for a while and then I went overseas with my uncle to see the world. I came home and married my second wife, Mettie, who I had five sons with and to whom I was married for 21 years. Tragically Mettie died of bowel cancer. I have been with my partner Vilma for a number of years now.

At such a great age, life to me is about hard work, faith and determination. Despite the hard times, life has to continue.

I hope I live long enough to see the new hospital built. What a great thing it will be for Griffith.

I have been invited to say a few words at the official opening of the new temporary Renal Unit.

It is such an honour and I am really looking forward to thanking everyone involved in changing people’s lives for the better.’

Thomas McRae ‘Mac’ Guest
Renal patient at Griffith Base Hospital

Kidney & Renal Services

We support individuals with diagnosed kidney disease who have been referred by their doctor.

The service aims to maintain maximum kidney function and prevent disease progression, provide care, education and support.

For referral to the Renal Stream Service call the Community Care Intake Service on 1800 654 324.

As the temperatures continue to soar this summer, the Cancer Council is urging local residents to be sun smart.

“We encourage people to remember to protect themselves and their children from the sun to prevent burning and reduce their long-term risk of skin cancer,” said Cancer Council’s Community Programs Coordinator Melissa Nixon.

“Recent major variations in temperatures are a reminder that we need to be aware of the risk from day to day. At work, at school or at play, no-one needs or wants a bad sunburn,” Ms Nixon said.

“We all know we should seek out shade, wear a hat and apply sunscreen regularly but sometimes it is easy to forget or be caught short,” MLHD’s Manager Health Promotion, Christine May, agrees.

“Sun protection is vital to reduce the chance of skin cancer and to protect yourself from the sun,” Ms May said.

“Most people don’t apply enough sunscreen, resulting in only 50 to 80 per cent of the protection stated on the product,” Ms May said.

BE SUN-SMART THIS SUMMER

For best protection, the Cancer Council recommends a combination of measures:

- Slip on some sun-protective clothing that covers as much skin as possible
- Seek shade, especially between 9 am and 5pm when UV levels are most intense
- Slap on a hat that protects your face, head, neck and ears
- Slide on some sunglasses
- Slop on broad spectrum, water resistant SPF30+ sunscreen. Put it on 20 minutes before you go outdoors and every two hours afterwards. Sunscreen should never be used to extend the time you spend in the sun.

Also see the Cancer Council’s free Sunsmart program for primary schools and early childhood at www.cancercouncil.com.au/cancer-prevention/sun-protection
Murrumbidgee PHN awarded for its after-hours crisis support campaign

An after-hours mental health crisis support campaign by Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN) and Juntos Marketing was recently crowned a winner at the 2018 Australian Marketing Institute Awards in Sydney.

The campaign was a joint initiative of the Murrumbidgee Mental Health Alliance.

The award was received in the not-for-profit marketing category at the 2018 Australian Marketing Institute Awards in Sydney in October.

MPHN CEO Melissa Neal said she was thrilled to receive the award for such a necessary campaign for the region.

“It was fitting to celebrate the award on World Mental Health Day for a campaign in our local region that has increased awareness around mental health and the various services and sources of information available to people who often find themselves isolated, both geographically and socially,” Ms Neal said.

“In our region we know the incidence of self-harm and alcohol use requiring hospitalisation are significantly higher than national and state averages. Even more so for those who are living in rural area, or identify as LGBTI, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background or from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

“Yet mental health, drug and alcohol concerns are often taboo. Many people don’t seek help because of the associated stigma and when people look for help, options can be confusing or hard to find, and more often than not, they are in need of support after regular working hours, so online and 24-hour telephone support are critical.

“This campaign was developed and guided through very
Healthier food options, meal deals and healthy product placement will feature in our food and drink outlets this summer.

This means vending machines, cafeterias and cafés will only be able to sell the healthier options to staff and visitors from 1 January 2019.

Eating and drinking too many unhealthy options is a major contributor to the 62 per cent of Murrumbidgee adults and one in five children in NSW is overweight or obese.

“As a health service provider, MLHD (and NSW Health) needs to set a good example,” said Health Promotion Coordinator, Brendan Pearson.

“In fact, I suggest our community would expect that from us.”

That’s why the NSW Ministry of Health has developed the Healthy Food and Drink in NSW Health Facilities Framework for Staff and Visitors.

“The framework sets out changes and guides for all health facilities, including ours, to follow,” Brendan said.

Healthier drink options have been available in MLHD health facilities since 2017. The further changes will involve making healthy food and drink normal in our facilities by increasing healthier choices and decreasing unhealthy options. Monitoring of the changes will be done to ensure MLHD complies with the framework.

The MLHD working group consisting of members from Health Promotion, Dietetics, Wellbeing Team, Property Services, Business Services, Oral Health, Communication, United Hospital Auxiliary and LHAC members are working together to introduce the new framework.

“Our suppliers have all received information about the changes and are on-board to meet the deadline,” Brendan said.
Using virtual reality to distract paediatric patients and a video to help educate patients after amputation are two staff initiatives which have won new incentive awards at Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD).

The Edison Program was initiated by MLHD this year to support staff implement their “bright ideas” to improve patient care.

It is open to all staff who have developed small-scale projects which would benefit from seed funding to provide new health resources.

Two application rounds are held each year and staff win $1000 to bring their ideas to fruition.

Twelve applications were received in the latest round and the two winners were:

- Shane Delves (District Telehealth Manager) – Virtual reality headsets to distract paediatric patients with entertaining videos before and during procedures
- Sonia McMullen (Senior Rehabilitation Physiotherapist, Ambulatory Rehabilitation, Wagga Wagga Base Hospital (WWBH)) – Development of a video to help patients after amputation.

The other finalists were:

- Sally McMahon (Rehabilitation Services Coordinator, WWBH) – Rehabilitation Patient Education Film
- Janine Sutton (Registered Midwife, WWBH) – Online Antenatal Booking System
- Denyse Buttriss (Young Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Consumer Advocate) – Mental Health Walking Group in Young

The applicants had five minutes to present their ideas in front of 100 staff at a recent District forum and convince the judges why their project deserved to take home the $1000 prize.

“We recognised that many of our staff across the District had wonderful ideas to improve the way they work or how services are delivered to our communities,” Chief Executive Jill Ludford said.

“The Edison Program is an innovative way we can enable them to develop, plan and implement their suggestions for the benefit of our patients and clients,” she said.

Applications are accepted in February and June each year.
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Applications are accepted in February and June each year.

VIRTUAL FRACTURE CLINIC

A Virtual Fracture Clinic has been launched at Temora Hospital as part of the MLHD Edison Project.

“The virtual fracture clinic is an innovative rural health service model which improves access to specialist care for Temora locals who have simple fractures,” Physiotherapist for MLHD Annie Nichols said.

The clinic will be held every Friday and patients who are clinically suitable are referred to the virtual clinic for their follow-up reviews with specialists once initial treatment has been undertaken.

“Staff use electronic medical records, digital radiological imaging and electronic booking systems to safely manage the follow up reviews of their fracture,” Annie added.

Ms Nichols pitched the idea for the clinic in early 2018 as part of MLHD’s Thomas Edison Program.

The program supports the development, planning, resourcing and implementation of small scale process improvement initiatives with a $1,000 investment in each winning program.

Why the name?

As an inventor, Edison made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the first “commercially viable” light bulb. When a reporter asked, “How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?” Edison replied, “I didn’t fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps”.

Leeton District Hospital nurse profile with Kerry Maguire

Article courtesy of The Leeton Irrigator, written by Talia Pattison

Registered Nurse Kerry Maguire would love to see more young people take up the profession.

Mrs Maguire has been a nurse for close to 30 years and has worked at the Leeton District Hospital since 1990.

The registered nurse and clinical nurse specialist in the emergency department believes she has been fortunate to work in Leeton.

“I've gained so much experience here ... I've been able to work in many different areas, including as a nurse in the blood bank, radiology, theatre, community and district nursing, acute care and Carramar aged care,” she said.

“I've been in the emergency department in Leeton since 2009.”

Mrs Maguire had undertaken plenty of training to get to where she is today, including her registered nursing studies through Charles Sturt University in Bathurst.

One thing she would like to see more of is young people taking up the profession.

“I thoroughly recommend a career in nursing,” Mrs Maguire said.
AQUA FITNESS VOLUNTEERS: Are you looking to stay fit this summer? Concerned about the heat? Our fabulous volunteers run aqua exercise classes all across the District during summer. These trained volunteers lead weekly classes for the cost of a gold coin donation. Participants can work at their own pace and the water pressure provides the body with extra support which is great news for those who haven't exercised for some time or are recovering from an injury. On the other hand, those looking for a more intensive workout can use the water pressure as resistance to challenge themselves more than if they were on the land. You don't need to have swimming skills to join the class.

If you're interested in participating please bring a hat, water bottle and a pool noodle if you have one. To find out more visit the Active and Healthy website and search for your town, or email mlhd-exercise@health.nsw.gov.au.

In many households at the moment, there is much excitement about the prospect of starting 'big school'! For children to thrive once they start school, they need to be equipped with some important skills.

We often think about recognising letters and numbers, but may forget to support children to develop their attention, emotional regulation and self-care skills. Preschool educators have a wealth of knowledge and will be able to help you support your child in this time of transition.

Things you can practice at home to support school readiness skills:

**Literacy skills**
- Talk about the sounds that letters make, not just letter names. Play ‘I Spy’ with letter sounds, e.g. ‘I spy something that starts with shhh’.
- Read books together, talk about the words on the page, the characters and the story.
- Children who have difficulties with speech sounds are at greater risk of literacy difficulties, and may need a speech pathology referral.

**Self-care**
- Have a practice school lunch ‘picnic’ at home where your child practices eating from a lunchbox, opening containers and packing away.
- Ensure they are able to toilet themselves independently during the day.

**Emotional regulation**
- Talk about emotions at home. Name your own emotions to help your child, e.g. ‘I feel frustrated because ...’ Develop strategies together; e.g. ‘When I feel frustrated, I’m going to take three deep breaths’. Practice together when your child is calm, and support them to use the strategies in the heat of the moment.

**Behaviour and attention**
- Play board games together to practice turn-taking, rule following and sportsmanship.
- Talk to your child about expectations at school, e.g. that they will have to listen to the teacher and follow the classroom rules.
- Work together to identify the steps in routine tasks e.g. at bathtime: turn on the taps, put some soap in, turn off the tap, hop in, wash, get dry, put pyjamas on.

**School familiarisation:**
- Attend kindergarten orientation if it is offered at your school. Drive or walk past the school and talk about the new routine.

**Fine motor skills**
- Develop fine motor skills through activities such as craft, threading, drawing, tracing and playdough.
CONGRATULATIONS: Mr Baha Mosa was declared Junior Medical Officer (JMO) Manager of the Year at the 2018 NSW Prevocational Training Awards organised by the Health Education and Training Institute. Mr Mosa was recognised for his support, encouragement and consideration of the career aspirations of each and every JMO at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital.

PHOTO GALLERY

RENAL SERVICES (GLIFFTH): Renal Stream Manager Kelly-Anne Marchioni, Thomas McRae (Mac) Guest and Keryl Dallinger Nurse Manager Workforce and Leadership.

RENAL SERVICES (GRIFFITH): Aunty Gloria Goolagong, Aboriginal Health Team Leader Michelle Druiit and Aunty Bev Penrith.

AQUA FITNESS VOLUNTEERS: Are you looking to stay fit this summer? Concerned about the heat? Our fabulous volunteers run aqua exercise classes all across the District during summer. These trained volunteers lead weekly classes for the cost of a gold coin donation. Participants can work at their own pace and the water pressure provides the body with extra support which is great news for those who haven’t exercised for some time or are recovering from an injury. On the other hand, those looking for a more intensive workout can use the water pressure as resistance to challenge themselves more than if they were on the land. You don’t need to have swimming skills to join the class.

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NSW Health is reminding parents and carers enrolling their children for the start of primary or secondary school in 2019 to download their child’s immunisation history statement.

From 1 April this year immunisation requirements in primary schools were extended to include all secondary schools. Principals are now required to request an immunisation history statement when students enrol.
 REGIONAL TRAINING HUBS UPDATE

The Murrumbidgee Medical and Riverina Rural Training Hubs were introduced in the Autumn issue of Murrumbidgee Matters.

There has been considerable progress by both these local hubs in key areas including assisting to create new rural training pathways.

Two of these new rurally anchored training pathways are for specialist training in Anaesthetics and Emergency Medicine. The trainees in these posts, instead of rotating from metropolitan hospitals, will do a minimum of two thirds of their training locally, rotating from this region to the metro hospitals for training not available locally.

"My dream was to become a doctor, and my first choice was Notre Dame. I wasn't wrong, I love it here."

Notre Dame Medicine student

The new Emergency Medicine posted was filled by Dr Louise Gabauer at the beginning of the year. Louise did her medical training at the University of Sydney but left Sydney in 2016 to come to Wagga Wagga as a junior doctor.

Dr Kaitlin Faulkner, who did her post graduate medical training at the University of Wollongong, will fill the Anaesthetics post from the beginning of 2019.

These locally-based training pathways build on the work by rural medical schools including Notre Dame in Wagga Wagga, University of NSW in Wagga Wagga and Griffith and the University of Wollongong in Griffith. They provide excellent rural medical education that fosters interest and opportunity for the subsequent training for junior doctors in the region.

The importance of providing regional medical training at every level cannot be underestimated in retaining, or bringing back to the region, additional rural doctors.

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www.notredame.edu.au/riverina-regional-training-hub

The University of Notre Dame Australia works in partnership with local doctors and health practitioners, Calvary Health Care Riverina, the Murrumbidgee Local Health District, and Murrumbidgee PHN.

Our rural clinical school, located in Wagga Wagga, educates clinical year graduate medical students, and with the Riverina Rural Training hub is working to ensure a stronger rural medical workforce for the future.
The hunt is on for enthusiastic people in the community to join Local Health Advisory Committees (LHAC) across MLHD.

Local Health Advisory Committees were formed in 2012 to provide an avenue for consumer feedback and advocacy for the public health service.

Today, the role of LHACs has evolved to incorporate primary health care as well as involvement in health service planning and development.

“As advocates for their local community, LHAC members are chosen for their passion and ability to represent their town’s health interests, needs and concerns,” said MLHD’s Community Engagement Manager Setchen Brimson.

“Many of our LHACs have a drive and commitment to improving health in their communities that has resulted in some great projects and outcomes.”

In Temora, the LHAC arranged a Health Career Expo to highlight the growing need to inspire young people to explore the variety of careers available in the health sector.

“We know that ‘the growing your own’ concept works and helps retain young people locally, so that was our aim,” said Temora LHAC Chair Dianne Scott. “The day was a huge success with students from local high schools and further afield exploring the range of careers on offer.”

LHACs in Culcairn, Henty and Holbrook banded together to organise the annual Billabong High School Forum to raise youth awareness around mental health, drugs and alcohol. The event had a range of speakers including sportspeople Lauren Jackson and Stuart Baker talking about resilience and the impacts of mental health on themselves and families.

Many of the LHACs worked on cancer screening and awareness projects funded through the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network.

Through their persistence, Culcairn LHAC was able to secure bi-annual BreastScreen van visits as a result of their advocacy efforts.

Other great outcomes achieved as a result of LHACs voicing concerns on behalf of their community include the renal dialysis unit, which was built to provide dialysis services in Deniliquin, and the relocation of the ambulance entrance and emergency department at Finley Hospital.

Griffith LHAC have been exceptionally busy over the past 12 months, organising events and activities to raise awareness on various health issues in the community, and have also been instrumental in providing important feedback for the redevelopment of the Griffith Base Hospital.

“Our LHAC is very active and have a number of projects on the go at any given time,” said Griffith LHAC Chair Margaret King. “It’s incredibly rewarding as a volunteer getting some good results for our community, and ensuring we have a seat at the table to represent community views.”

LHACs have also been instrumental in the progress of work carried out as part of the Multipurpose Service Stage 5 program at Barham, Tocumwal, Holbrook, Culcairn and Tumbarumba.

“The key to being a good advocate is the ability to have your finger on the pulse of your local community and the ability to represent these community needs and concerns when you’re at the discussion table,” said Ms Brimson.

“We are looking for people from all walks of life to be involved and encourage anyone with the time and passion to make a difference to express their interest.”

To become a member of your local LHAC, you will need to complete an application form and have the required screening for your interested activity or group.

More information can be found on the MLHD website: www.mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/get-involved/local-health-advisory-committee-(lhac)

Applications can be completed online at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/JOIN_LHAC or speak with your facility manager for an application kit.
Rural Pathways to Post-Graduate Medical Training

WAGGA WAGGA
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We can:
- Give you the information you need about rural medical training pathways
- Help navigate a rural medical training pathway for your career
- Connect you to career advice from rural specialists

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