



# Chief Executive's Board Report

December 2023

---

# Contents

---

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Patient Flow and Access	2
Financial Performance	4
Safety and Quality Indicators	5

---

## CLINICAL CARE AND IMPROVEMENT

Clinical Governance and Patient Experience	5
Integrated Care	7

---

## SERVICE UPDATES

Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol (MHDA)	8
Primary and Community Health (PACH)	8
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service	8
Health Counter Disaster	9
Protection and Response to Violence Abuse and Neglect (PARVAN)	9

---

## OUR STAFF

People and Culture	10
Nursing and Midwifery	10
Medical Services	12
Allied Health	12
LGBTIQ+ Strategy	12

---

## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Research	13
Kolling Institute	13

---

## DIGITAL HEALTH AND COMMUNICATIONS

Information, Communications and Technology	14
NSLHD Communications	15

---

## PHILANTHROPY

NORTH Foundation	17
------------------	----

---

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## NSLHD Overall Performance

Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) remains at Performance Level 0 – ‘No Performance Issues’.

This is the highest Performance Level attainable, in accordance with the NSW Health Performance Framework.

### Patient Flow and Access

#### Overall Performance (October 2023)

In October 2023, there were 19,172 presentations to NSLHD Emergency Departments, a decrease of 1.7% (19,500 presentations) when compared to October 2022.

Emergency Treatment Performance (ETP) for admitted patients in NSLHD (excluding NBH) was 34% in October 2023 against the overall target of 50%. This demonstrates an increase of 1% when compared to October 2022 (33%). Improvement action plans include patient flow initiatives to support access to ED accessible beds such as early discharge, and private hospital utilisation. To facilitate discharges, improvement action plans include increased utilisation of the transit unit, and daily discharge huddles to engage medical staff to support discharge planning. In addition, there has been additional hospital and executive oversight to review delays and support early escalation of issues.

Overall Transfer of Care (ToC) for NSLHD was 88% in October 2023 against the target of 90%. Improvement action plans include enhancing Emergency Department (ED) models of care to support bed capacity in ED such as ED Short Stay and MAU, implementation of an ambulance offload to the waiting room protocol, enhanced utilisation of virtual models of care including HITH/virtual care services and Ambulance direct referral to Geriatric outreach services.

NSLHD had a total of 283 patients overdue for planned surgery at the end of October 2023. This is a decrease of 455 patients from January 2023, this equates to a 38% reduction in overdue patients. NSLHD have seen an improvement in ESAP performance across all three (3) urgency categories compared to the October 2022. This is a result of a decrease in overdue numbers.

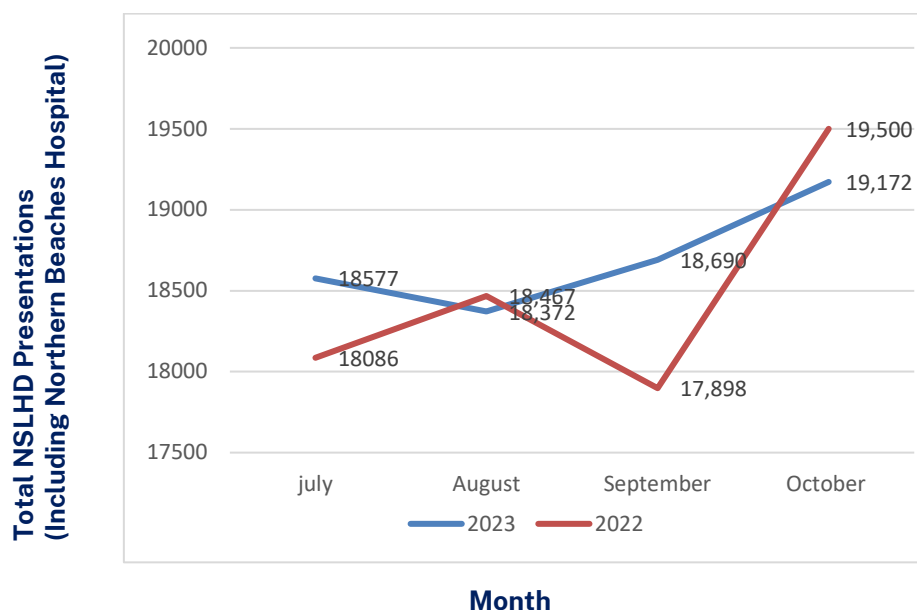
#### Emergency Department (ED) Presentations Results (By Hospital)

Hospital	ED Presentations October 2023		Change from October 2022
RNSH	7,133 presentations	↓	7,165 (0.4%)
HKH	4,013 presentations	↑	3,994 (0.5%)
Ryde	2,448 presentations	↑	2,543 (3.8%)
NBH	5,578 presentations	↓	5,798 (3.9%)
TOTAL	19,172 presentations	↓	19,500 (1.7%)

#### Average Length of Stay (ALOS) (Rolling 12 Months)

Hospital	Target	October 2023
RNSH	5.33	5.33
HKH	4.51	4.22
Ryde	4.37	5.45

### Emergency Department (ED) Presentations Results (Total NSLHD)



### Emergency Treatment Performance (ETP) Results

Hospital	ETP October 2023		Change from October 2022
RNSH	25%	↓	1% decrease (26%)
HKH	49%	↑	10% increase (40%)
Ryde	44%	↓	5% decrease (49%)
NBH	15%	↓	7% decrease (22%)

### Transfer of Care (ToC) Results

Hospital	ToC October 2023		Change from October 2022
RNSH	79	↓	2% decrease
HKH	93	↑	2% increase
Ryde	99	↑	1% increase
NBH	89	↓	8% decrease

### ED Triage Results

Hospital	Triage Category Results				
	Category 1 (target 100%)	Category 2 (target 80%)	Category 3 (target 75%)	Category 4 (target 70%)	Category 5 (target 70%)
NSLHD	100%	86%	82%	84%	92%
RNSH	100%	82%	75%	79%	92%
HKH	100%	91%	85%	87%	95%
Ryde	100%	89%	92%	89%	90%
NBH	100%	83%	75%	80%	91%

#### Legend

● Hospital on or above target

## Financial Performance

### General Fund

#### Overview

The District’s Net Cost of Service (NCOS) for November 2023 was \$5.0m (-5.27%) unfavourable, resulting in \$15.4m (-3.07%) unfavourable position YTD. This unfavourable position incorporates costs associated with the higher level of activity, increased overtime costs, increase utility charges and CPI adjusted price increase for consumables. The District will address this deficit by working collaboratively with each hospital and service and closely monitoring their financial KPIs to ensure financial sustainability, as we continue to unwind from COVID-19 and return to business as usual.

Furthermore, the District is currently facilitating and providing support to each hospital and service to develop and execute Efficiency Improvement Plans (EIPs).

#### Total Expenses

Total Expenses were \$5.17M (-2.9%) unfavourable for the month and \$13.64M (-1.53%) unfavourable YTD. The un-favourability for the month is being driven by FTE and G&S costs mainly at RNSH and Hornsby due to clinical activity.

The District will remain vigilant to limit financial pressures as FTE levels and activity returns to pre-pandemic levels.

District Finance will continue to direct effort to EIPs and engage with each service to reduce this deficit throughout the financial year. \$11.2m of EIPs have thus far been submitted to the Ministry, with several additional plans being finalised.

Full year Expense forecast for the District is expected to be \$30.0m unfavourable

#### Revenue

Total NSLHD Own Sources Revenue is \$1.2m (0.31%) favourable YTD, a result that is exceeding expectations, due in part to several Intrahealth Revenue and external user charges. However, meeting the overall Revenue target will continue to present as a challenge to the District in the new financial year.

In response, the District’s Revenue team in conjunction with Facility based Finance teams will lead various Revenue generating initiatives such as increasing Private Health Insurance conversions, improvements in staff specialist billings and improving ineligible patient billings.

Full year Revenue forecast for the District is expected to be \$10.0m unfavourable

#### Other item/s

The end of November 2023 general fund bank account balance held at Westpac was \$8.5m. Under the Ministry of Health Cash Management Reform initiative, all Health Entity’s outgoing payments are paid centrally by Healthshare. The Ministry of Health sweep Health Entity’s general fund bank account to zero on a fortnightly basis.

## Safety and Quality Indicators

Safety and Quality (November 2023)	MONTH				YEAR TO DATE			
	T	Target	Actual	Var	T	Target	Actual	Var
SA-BSI <sup>1</sup> *		≤ 1.0	0.0	1.0		≤ 1.0	0.6	0.4
ICU CLAB Infection Rate <sup>1</sup> *		= 0.0	0.0	0.0		= 0.0	0.0	0.0
Incorrect Procedures: OT		= 0	0.0	0.0		= 0	0.0	0.0
MH: Readmissions within 28 Days <sup>1</sup>		≤ 13.0%	12.8%	0.2%		≤ 13.0%	12.0%	1.0%
MH: APDC Follow Up Within 7 days <sup>1</sup>		≥ 75%	86%	10.6%		≥ 75%	84%	9.4%
Unplanned Hospital Readmissions <sup>#</sup>		5.9%	5.8%	0.1%		6.0%	5.9%	0.1%

<sup>1</sup>Data 2 month delay

<sup>#</sup>Unplanned Hospital Readmissions targets are prior year actual.

## Clinical Care and Improvement

### Clinical Governance and Patient Experience

#### Consumer Engagement

The assessment of NSLHD Safety and Quality Consumer and Staff 2023 Forum, as reflected in the evaluation survey results, reveals that 62 participants successfully completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 40%. Among them, 46 were staff members, and 16 were consumers advisors, consumer peer workers or volunteers. The feedback gathered indicates that all presentations received high ratings, with attendees expressing strong engagement and acquiring new knowledge. In particular, 85% of survey respondents indicated they learned about new co-design initiatives. The feedback received from attendees highlighted the need for more time to be allocated for questions, suggesting a need for extended interactive sessions. Furthermore, while a Mental Health Drug and Alcohol (MHDA) consumer shared their personal story, there was a suggestion that additional presentations by consumers would have been beneficial.

NSLHD Consumer and Patient Experience team in collaboration with Mental Health Drug and Alcohol, initiated a challenge to capture 160 Tales of Kindness from across the district, aiming to celebrate the impact kindness can have on people and places. To facilitate this initiative, Kindness works here cards were created in the NSLHD compliment portal for staff to access. Exceeding the target, NSLHD received 167 tales over the week from across all services. The collected tales of kindness will be used by the NSLHD Consumer and Patient Experience (CAPE) Team to create promotional material for staff. This material aims to further integrate the power that kindness holds as an enabler for staff well-being, person-centred care, and happy workplaces.

#### NSLHD Drug and Therapeutic Committee and NSW Formulary

There is ongoing work to build visual indicators for formulary and non-formulary medicines at point of prescribing in eMR. A set of different icons will be added to differentiate unrestricted and restricted items at point prescribing. A Medication Protocol template has been designed to streamline development of NSLHD protocols, which will support utilisation of restricted medicines on the NSW Health Formulary. The

NSLHD Drug and Therapeutic Committee continues to review and endorse updated medicines related guiding documents in line with the Formulary implementation. Promotion of the ‘Go live for NSW Medicines Formulary occurred across NSLHD during Medication Safety Week (23-27 October).

### **ACHS Quality Improvement Awards**

The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) held the Quality Improvement (QI) Awards on 23 November 2023. The QI Awards are an annual recognition of achievement and encouragement for quality improvement activities, programs or strategies that have been implemented by healthcare organisations nationally. Of the three award categories, Northern Sydney Local Health District team initiatives won two awards and one highly commended. Winners and runners-up teams were announced to all staff via a CE Message emailed on 27 November 2023 and via the ACHS website.

The winners were:

#### **Non-Clinical Service Delivery Award**

*From words to images: Implementing Video Interpreting, NSLHD Executive Operations*

#### **Healthcare Measurement**

*Parkinson Inpatient Experience (PIE) Project, Royal North Shore Hospital*

Highly Commended:

#### **Healthcare Measurement**

*Spinal Plastics Service – Nothing About Us Without Us, Royal North Shore Hospital*

### **Voluntary Assisted Dying**

From 28 November 2023, Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) became accessible for a small group of eligible patients who are at the end of their life and have unbearable suffering. NSLHD has established and is hosting the new NSW VAD Support Services (NVSS) for the state which includes the Care Navigator Service, the statewide VAD pharmacy service and the Access service which consists of authorised VAD VMOs. NSLHD has also established a local VAD support team to support NSLHD staff and patients in relation to VAD.

At the time of writing, the NVSS had completed its first day of activity and managed a number of calls from patients and clinicians. No notable issues were identified on the first day of operation and it was reported that the systems and processes established functioned as designed and as was hoped. The NSLHD Local Support Team has received its first referrals, primarily via HammondCare’s palliative care service.

In preparation for the operational date, on 27 November, a traditional Aboriginal smoking ceremony was conducted in the NVSS office to cleanse the premises and prepare it spiritually for the work ahead. This was attended by all VAD statewide staff and was led by the Chief Executive and the directors of Aboriginal Health (Peter Shine) and the new NVSS (Julie Letts).

## **Clinical Network Monthly Highlight - Surgery & Anaesthetics**

### **Perioperative Medicine Steering Committee**

Facilitate enhancing the service provision for Perioperative Medicine across NSLHD with a focus to leverage opportunities through the NSLHD Strategic Plan, NSW Health value-based health care and the ANZCA – a framework for perioperative care principles.

### **Day Surgery Models of Care**

The Ministry of Health has requested all Districts to transition to same-day surgery as the default for clinically appropriate cases to enhance patient care, streamline processes, and align with the increasing demand for high bed availability. NSLHD has commenced with two procedures in October - Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy and Hernia Surgery with planned go live in November for Tonsillectomy, Septoplasty, and Functional Sinus surgery.

### **Surgery Demand and Capacity Dashboard and Operating Theatre (OT) Scheduler.**

NSLHD and CCLHD were the pilot sites to transition Districts to two new tools available within the Patient Flow Portal. The Operating Theatre (OT) Scheduler replaces how we allocate theatre sessions and provides a consistent and easy view to book theatre sessions. The information in the OT Scheduler will provide the capacity information in the Surgery Demand and Capacity Dashboard. The Dashboard provides the ability to identify early if there are upcoming mismatches in capacity/demand to ensure patients have their surgery within their clinical required category timeframe. The OT Scheduler went live for User Acceptance Testing on 8th November 2023 and the Dashboard is scheduled for the 15th November 2023.

### **Planned Surgery – ‘000’ by 31 December 2023**

NSLHD Planned Surgery Project team continue have met fortnightly since March 2023 to address and improve NSLHD’s performance in meeting the planned surgical access performance and to achieve the Ministry of Health target for 31 December 2023. NSLHD has outsourced over 600 patients under Collaborative Care agreements with 11 private providers. Excluding January 2023, NSLHD continue to treat all urgent patients within their clinical urgency timeframes. The Project has also supported change in practice, through ‘transfer of care’ to other surgeons within the same team or to another surgeon at a different facility. NSLHD is predicted to have 55 overdue patients by 31 December 2023. NSLHD continues to have a targeted focus to reach ‘000’ by 31 December 2023.

## **Integrated Care**

### **Collaborative Commissioning and Urgent Care Services**

Recruitment to critical roles in the Rapid Geriatric Outreach services has been positive despite the challenging environment. Expansion to after hours during the week (8pm) and across the weekends is being planned for early 2024 with 12 of the 16 FTE needed have already been recruited or have already started.

NSLHD is also progressing work with the Ministry of Health seeking funding from the Commonwealth Government to support the program for 5 financial years. Should the request be successful, there would be an additional and significant investment in proactive primary care services for frail and older people in the Northern Sydney region via the Commonwealth. The funding and focus on frail and older people are important for Northern Sydney’s 176,460 people aged 65 and over – a group that’s expected to grow 27.5% over the next 10 years.

### **HealthPathways**

Usage of the site remains higher than pre-COVID with significant interest in ante-natal care and non-urgent ENT, urology and mental health review in adults. Work is ongoing on critical pathways say such Voluntary Assisted Dying, which is expected to be completed a week before the go-live date. The pathway will provide a critical source of localised information for Northern Sydney clinicians, in particular, General Practitioners, looking for more information on the VAD pathway.



## Service Updates

### Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol (MHDA)

MHDA held or partnered in a number of very well attended workshops including:

1. The Suicide Care Pathway Workshop with multiple internal and external partners. The outcome will be a NSLHD Suicide Care Pathway Plan.
2. The Recovery Orientated workshop was well attended with a focus on Co-Design and Service Provision: Can they Co-Exist? The key take home message was “Nothing about us, without us”. An action plan will be forthcoming.
3. The joint NSLHD MHDA and SNPHN Regional Leadership Workshop which will see actions supporting the Regional Leadership Plan.

MHDA Services presented three Person Centred Initiatives at the Nursing and Midwifery Person Centred Showcase which were well received eg. SafeWards at Macquarie Hospital.

The Ryde Consumer Participation Network celebrated 30 years of people with a Lived Experience of Mental Health Issues partnering with the mental health service.

### Primary & Community Health (PACH)

The PACH Recognition were held in November. Several staff received time in service awards for 25 to 35 years' service. NSHNS Nurse Manager, Nicola Holloway was the deserving winner of the awarded inaugural Director’s award.

During World Kindness Day PACH launched the Kindness Bags as part of a suite of initiatives to support staff wellbeing.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service

The NSLHD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce manager, facilitated the Muru Dali Gili Gili Network Day at Royal North Shore on the 24th November 2023. The Muru Dali Gili Gili Network Day provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff within NSLHD to come together to network, discuss career progression opportunities and participate in cultural activities.

With the launch of NSW voluntary assisted dying in NSW, the NSLHD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service contributed to the organisation of a smoking ceremony for the NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Support Services at Royal North Shore in Building 36 on November 27<sup>th</sup>.

The NSLHD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service held the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Morning Tea Health Check at Hornsby Hospital on the 30th November 2023. The morning allowed opportunity for community engagement and to participate in various health checks. Breast screen was in attendance providing screens for women eligible. Women were also able to access the GP unit along with Bungee Bidgel.

The Executive Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Workforce attended the 90 year celebration from the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital on the 1st December 2023

The NSLHD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service is currently facilitating two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men’s groups weekly. These groups allow the

opportunity for men within the community to actively engage in men’s business, whilst participating in activities to improve their social and emotional wellbeing.

The NSLHD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service is conducting interviews on the 5th December 2023 for the Aboriginal Liaison Officer. The Aboriginal Liaison Officer position will be located onsite at Royal North Shore from Thursday until Monday.

## Counter Disaster

The NSW Emergency Management Forum 2023 detailed the strategic vision for the NSW Healthplan and Emergency Management minimum standards. The day involved group participation in a number of workshops to provide assurance associated with both policy, education and incident coordination to ensure they are fit for purpose and be applicable to the internal health audience and the broader key stakeholder groups.

The National Critical Care and Response Centre conducted an AUSMAT National Engagement Day to which accredited AUSMAT team members were in attendance. Emma Tan, Occupational Therapist, showcased how Allied Health brings a valuable skillset to the AUSMAT capability. The engagement day provided opportunity to observe the journey of continual improvement and professionalism of the AUSMAT arrangements.

## Prevention and Response to Violence Abuse and Neglect (PARVAN)

### 16 Days of Activism against Gender based violence

PARVAN Services presented a series of six webinars, and partnered with acute facilities to hold information and awareness raising stalls across the district during these 16 Days of Activism 25<sup>th</sup> November to the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023. These events invite staff to stand together *united* in saying no to any form of domestic or gender-based violence and to build their skills and knowledge in identifying and responding to domestic and family-based violence. Recognising domestic and family violence as a public health issue is critical and supporting women and their children, who have experienced violence makes a significant difference to their health outcomes across the lifespan.

### Adult Survivor Program (ASP)

The Ministry of Health advised that NSLHD Adult Survivor Program expression of Interest was successful. The success of the EOI will result in the temporary recruitment of 1 FTE Social Worker level 4 ASP Group Work Clinician and a 0.8 ASP Peer Worker from January 2024 to June 2025. These positions will be employed by PARVAN Services and will work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and the Mental Health and Alcohol and other Drug Services to ensure tailored group work programs are created and available for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. This will be the first PARVAN Peer Worker position piloted.

### Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Crisis Model Project

NSLHD PARVAN Service have been asked by the Ministry of Health to contribute to the development of the statewide Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Crisis Model. PARVAN Services will receive funding for an additional day per week for six months for two of the PARVAN Doctors to collaborate in the development of a planned bookable integrated psychosocial medical/forensic clinic for victims of domestic violence.

## Our Staff

### People and Culture

#### Exceptional People Awards

Planning is underway for the 2023 Exceptional People Awards, with nominations having opened 20 November. It is anticipated that the event will be held in March 2024.

#### Kindness Week: 13-17 November 2023

NSW Health’s Gathering of Kindness is celebrated annually during November, using World Kindness Day to continue a conversation about kindness and compassion in healthcare. NSLHD recognised the kindness and compassion of our people as we celebrated the Gathering of Kindness 2023 between 13-17 November. People and Culture sponsored a variety of events and initiatives which were held across the week, with a focus on fostering and spreading kindness across the organisation to elevate the human experience for all.

During the Gathering of Kindness Week, NSLHD launched a new initiative called Kindness Kits. These are, in essence, psychological First Aid Kits to support staff. Each item in the Kindness Kit has been carefully chosen with the intention of complimenting a range of strategies staff should be encouraged to consider during challenging times including EAP, meditation, exercise, healthy eating, debriefing with a colleague or manager.

#### Learning and Development Community of Practice

The NSLHD Learning and Development Community of Practice will officially launch in December 2023. The Community of Practice will create a space where like-minded professionals can come together, share knowledge, exchange ideas, and collectively enhance their expertise in learning and development. People and Culture are actively promoting the Community of Practice to all district staff in the lead up to its launch.

#### District Health Safety and Wellbeing Steering Committee

The new District Health Safety and Wellbeing Steering Committee convened for its inaugural meeting in November. A number of projects are underway and on the agenda for the new year, that aim to further strengthen the health safety and wellbeing of our people in the workplace.

#### New Working in the Community Duress System

To further strengthen safety and support for staff, NSLHD will be implementing a new working in the community duress system across the district, following a successful pilot.

### Nursing and Midwifery

#### Nursing and Midwifery Operations

On 17 November 2023, the Nursing and Midwifery Directorate hosted the NSLHD Person-Centred Care Showcase in the Kolling Auditorium, RNSH.

The forum provided an avenue for nurses and midwives to showcase activities, initiatives and strategies that involved, promoted and celebrated person-centred care. The keynote speaker was Professor Brendan McCormack, Head of Susan Wakil School of Nursing and Midwifery (incorporating Sydney Nursing School) & Dean, The University of Sydney, Faculty of Medicine and Health, who gave a captivating insight on the Person-Centred Care.

The best presentation was awarded to Katie Kelleway, Transitional Nurse Practitioner & Brett Mace, Consumer, Intensive Care Unit, Royal North Shore Hospital with a wonderful

example of how patients can truly partner with clinicians to provide a positive experience for all. The best poster was awarded to Alanna Brown and Esther Ng from Ryde Hospital, Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, Ryde for their collaboration with clients to improve outcomes.

### **Practice Development, Quality & Safety Team**

47 Nursing and Midwifery Unit Managers have completed the Nursing and Midwifery Leadership Program for 2023. Graduation ceremonies will be conducted at Mona Vale, Ryde, and Macquarie Hospitals for these graduates. Mona Vale and Hornsby ceremonies will showcase a variety of quality improvement projects these staff have implemented using key learnings from the program.

### **Patient Access and Logistic Service (PALS)**

Collaboration with rehabilitation providers are allowing development of electronic filtering of Rehabilitation Services by Service Providers. This will form the basis of electronic referrals going forward.

Ongoing development of a District Patient Flow Proposal with engagement from other LHD’s to benchmark and ongoing stakeholder engagement.

A 12-month review of Ambulance Matrix adjustments in collaboration with NSW Ambulance allowed reviews from NSLHD and NSW Ambulance data. Presentation and recommendations to the NSW Ambulance Matrix Steering Committee is due at the December Meeting.

### **Connecting, listening, and responding: A Blueprint for Action – Maternity Care in NSW**

Maternity services across NSLHD continue to work towards implementation. The Ministry of Health is now collaborating with key stakeholders to develop an implementation plan for first phase of priorities of the Blueprint. Mapping is an important first step to understand the different models of maternity care provided and planned for across NSW. This will assist the Ministry to understand the range of models available and highlight opportunities to share and inform ways of providing maternity care into the future. NSLHD have submitted the requested information that highlights the contribution midwives have in supporting women with continuity of carer.

### **Nursing and Midwifery Research**

On 14 November 2023, the inaugural University of Technology Sydney and NSLHD research showcase was held in the Kolling Auditorium. Over 120 nursing and midwifery staff registered to attend the event. The event profiled leading NSLHD nursing and midwifery researchers. Following the showcase, five NSLHD nursing staff submitted an EOI to undertake doctoral studies aligned with the strategic outcomes of NSLHD.

A/Prof Merrick (Director of Nursing Research) announced the Mary Chiarella Medal for clinical nursing and midwifery research. The medal will be an annual award supported by the NSLHD Nursing and Midwifery Directorate to recognise sustained outstanding work that has directly impacted patient outcomes and wellbeing. The Mary Chiarella Medal will be an ongoing competitive annual award that will profile NSLHD as a national leader in applied clinical research.

Associate Professor Naomi Hammond has been recognised by The Australian as Australia’s leading researcher in the field of critical care. A/Prof. Hammond is a registered nurse and is the clinical research manager in intensive care at RNSH. A/Prof. Hammond and her team have profoundly impacted global intensive care outcomes and illustrate the importance of investigator-led research.

A comprehensive program of educational opportunities has been announced for 2024. These courses and online resources are intended to support clinician researchers in developing research protocols, obtaining ethical approvals, and securing competitive research funding. Enrolments opened on 5 November 2023.

Professor Margaret Fry (Professor Emergency and Critical Care Conjoint Clinical Chair) provided the invitational address at the International Conference for Emergency Care at Linneaus University, Sweden, on 19 October. Prof. Fry reviewed current Australian research within emergency care and showcased the oncology model of care and HIRAID studies (conducted at NSLHD).

## Medical Services

Facilities across NSLHD are preparing for the implementation of the Voluntary Assisted Dying program. Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital’s Bungee Bidgel GP Unit celebrated its 50th Anniversary on 24 November 2023. The International Medical Graduate Clinical Readiness Program based at NSLHD, has led to several medical support officers successfully securing a JMO position within NSW Health for the upcoming clinical year.

## Allied Health

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability released their final report in October 2023. They held 33 hearings between September 2019 and September 2023. Recommendations made after Public Hearing 4: Health Care and services for people with cognitive disability were highlighted in the final report. Important issues raised for NSLHD include the use of supported decision-making (talking first to the person with disability, assuming they can make decisions until proven otherwise); adjustments for people with cognitive impairment so they experience equity of access to health services; staff education/training on the needs of people with cognitive impairment; review use of restrictive practices; and review use of psychotropic medication. The NSLHD Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) Committee will discuss implementation of relevant recommendations and will share advice with NSLHD Executive and senior managers.

New resources supporting staff to make reasonable adjustments include a review of the NSW Health Responding to Needs of People with Disability during Hospitalisation Policy Directive (PD2017\_001) and the Disability, Accessibility and Adjustments intranet page.

## LGBTIQ+ Strategy

The LGBTIQ+ strategy implementation project is underway with the dedicated Project Officer, Jemma Clifton, arranging meetings with the NSLHD Executive and managers of key services across the District. Jemma has been planning and organising in-services at executive meetings to create awareness of her role. She is working to establish an executive LGBTIQ+ steering committee for the District, as well as strategic groups at each of the hospitals to assist with the implementation of the strategy. Jemma is also preparing to submit the Health and Wellbeing Equality Index (HWEI) as a benchmark for how the District is performing in LGBTIQ+ inclusive service provision. Key short-term initiatives will be the development of an intranet page with LGBTIQ+ health resources, updating the health pathways for LGBTIQ+ healthcare, and developing an LGBTIQ+ work plan.

## Research and Innovation

### Research

NSLHD met the Ministry of Health defined metrics for ethics for Q3 2023. 100% of the projects submitted for ethics review were approved within the 90-day timeframe, with the average total approval time, 40 days. With 31 ethics submissions, the NSLHD HREC has the second highest number of ethics applications in NSW.

Similarly, NSLHD met the Ministry of Health defined metrics for governance for Q3 2023. 94% of the projects submitted for site specific authorisation (SSA) were approved within the 60-day benchmark. With 47 applications in Q3, NSLHD received the second highest number of applications.

### Kolling Institute

The inaugural Kolling Institute Research Symposium was held on 23 Nov at the Northside Conference Centre in Crow's Nest. The symposium was themed around collaboration, innovation, and wellbeing with a focus on our early- and mid-career researchers and a strong nod to engagement with consumers, industry, and government. Many thanks to the many attendees who were able to join us to celebrate the breadth and depth of our research community who are dedicated to bettering the health outcomes for all. The Institute very much appreciates and acknowledges the tremendous support of and from the joint venture partnership between the Northern Sydney Local Health District and the University of Sydney.

On 10 November Kolling, University of Sydney and NSLHD researcher Professor Gemma Figtree featured in a Channel 9 new story regarding her leading work in the causes of cardiac arrest amongst people with no obvious risk factors.

## Digital Health and Communications

### Digital Health Services (DHS)

#### **Name Change**

Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) has changed its name to Digital Health Services (DHS). This change is because we are evolving to meet the demands of the District’s strategic objectives, Digital Health Strategy and the eHealth Digital Strategy. Our vision is to create a customer focused, modern, mobile, intelligent, innovative service. Our skilled team of professionals will strive to enhance user experience, enable digital functionality and provide value. We will do this through the delivery of digital technology solutions, transparently prioritising work with the District and providing high quality support through well-resourced and capable teams.

Digital health is transforming the delivery of healthcare with rapidly growing new and innovative technology, enabling optimal patient experience. The benefits include reducing physical distance and time barriers to access health care services for patients and carers, empowering people to participate in their own health and wellness and improving the quality and efficiency of information sharing across the health system.

#### **Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare**

A National Policy Roadmap for Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare was launched on the 22nd of November at the inaugural AICare conference hosted by the Australian Institute of Digital Health, with more than 260 of Australia’s top digital health experts present (NSLHD’s Chief Digital Health Officer, Chief Information Medical Officer and Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer among the delegates attending).

Priority areas included:

- AI Safety, Governance, Quality, Ethics and Security.
- Workforce (implementation of AI, education and training).
- Consumers (education and training to safely use AI).
- Industry (partnerships and supporting innovations).
- Research (current research often has a digital component).

Potential partnerships have started to be identified, for example agencies like CSIRO eHealth, Digital Health CRC, RMIT and Macquarie University.

DHS will develop a comprehensive framework for the LHD to follow ensuring all elements are covered early in 2024. A NSLHD AI Clinical Council will be commissioned in Q1 of 2024.

#### **Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) Care Navigator Service and Pharmacy records**

Change Management and education activities continue for the electronic medical record (eMR) solution and Telephony system for the VAD Care Navigator Team and Pharmacy Service. Digital Health services team will be onsite to support the service for the first two weeks of go-live.

#### **Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR)/eMR**

Final contract negotiations have been completed with the vendor, EPIC. The announcement was made public by the Minister for Health on the 19 October 2023. It was announced that NSLHD will be in the first stage of roll out of the SDPR and new eMR following the successful pilot at Hunter New England Local Health District.

## **Cyber Security Strategy and Roadmap**

Aligned with the NSLHD Cyber Security Strategy, DHS is actively working to mature the Districts Cyber Security posture by implementing several solutions and risk mitigators to strengthen our ability to defend against vulnerabilities.

October 2023 was the official Cyber Security month. ICT collaborated with eHealth NSW to develop an awareness campaign which was distributed across the District using email and newsletter contributions with information on protecting the Districts assets, staff, and patient information.

## **State-wide Data Centre Reform (SwDCR)**

This DHS project will be completing in November 2023. It represents a successful collaboration between eHealth NSW and DHS, to migrate District applications and servers from on-premises environments to Government Cloud (Microsoft Azure), in line with the NSW Government mandate.

The project team successfully migrated 81% of both in-scope applications and servers, with zero impact to end users, tracking towards the Government’s mandated target of 25%. In addition to the migration effort, the team successfully decommissioned 28 applications and 161 servers.

eHealth NSW will be formally disengaging from the project in November 2023. The DHS Server Operations team will employ the same proven migration processes utilised during the project, for any additional servers or applications identified as candidates for Cloud. DHS is participating in eHealth-facilitated Benefits Realisation workshops with eHealth NSW to provide feedback on the project.

## **NSLHD Communications**

### **Internal Communications**

- Announcement on winners in the Australian Council of Health Standards Quality Improvement Awards 2023
- Chief Executive email on supporting the campaign of 16 days against gender-based violence
- Reminder to staff of changes to the Public Interest Disclosure Act
- Chief Executive announcement of Exceptional People Awards
- Board Chair communique to Royal North Shore Hospital staff on the hospital’s master plan
- Two NSLHD News publications have been published

### **External Media**

- *Channel 9* filmed Royal North Shore Hospital’s Party Program for a story to air on car safety over the festive holiday break
- *Channel 9* aired a story on the opening of the chemotherapy day unit at Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital
- *North Side Living* published a feature on the introduction of voluntary assisted dying services at Northern Sydney Local Health District
- *Channel 9* featured RNSH cardiologist and Kolling Institute Professor Gemma Figtree on a study into why patients without typical risk factors suffer from heart attacks and disease.
- *Pittwater Life* published a feature on Northern Beaches Hospital turning five.



## Projects

- Developed communications to support the staging of the Ryde Hospital redevelopment
- Assisted with the development of an educational video for International Day of Disability
- Finalised production of the NSLHD Year in Review
- Assisted with the promotion and organisation of Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital’s 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- Assisted with the coordination of the Total Body PET scanner official opening at RNSH
- Supported Mental Health Drug and Alcohol with development of promotional material of services

## Social Media

Platform	November 2023	% Change from October 2023
Facebook	41,491 followers	0.1% (41,425 followers)
LinkedIn	15,026 followers	-1.1% (15,194 followers)
Instagram	1,500 followers	1.8% (1,473 followers)
Twitter	2,244 followers	0% (2,242 followers)

## Upcoming events

- International Day of Disability staff webinar (Friday, 1 December)
- Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital’s 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary (Friday 1 December)
- Annual Public Meeting (Friday, 8 December)
- RNSH Festival of Music (11- 15 December)

## Philanthropy

### NORTH Foundation Update

#### **Bequests**

The NORTH Foundation has recently established a new partnership with Safewill, an online Will writing platform. Targeted campaigns across NSLHD will commence in early 2024.

#### **Trusts and Foundations**

The NORTH Foundation is currently in the process of submitting three applications with Perpetual as part of their annual Impact Philanthropy Program.

The Foundation have engaged with a third-party organisation, Strategic Grants which provide alerts to funding opportunities relevant for NSLHD.

**Prospect Research and Data Acquisition:** New Prospect Researcher has started recently. Currently compiling profiles of potential major donors across NSLHD footprint.

#### **Grateful Patients**

While there have been several donations to the program, the most significant donation was gifted to the Spinal Ward at Royal North Shore Hospital. The donor, having received several rounds of treatment, has begun taking their first steps again and learning to walk.

The NORTH Foundation is engaging with various departments and facilities to explain our philanthropic objectives and grow collaboration between clinicians and the foundation to increase grateful patient referrals and identification of potential donors.

#### **Philanthropic Gift to Support Cancer Clinical Trials and Research**

Philanthropists Kay Van Norton Poche AO and Gregory Poche AO have generously gifted \$20 million to the NORTH Foundation. This generous gift will establish a world-leading cancer clinical trials, research and development centre at Royal North Shore Hospital and the North Shore Private Hospital in collaboration with the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre in New York City.

The gift was announced by The Honourable Kevin Rudd AC, Australia’s Ambassador to the United States, at the Cure4Cancer Conference in New York City, with Caroline Kennedy, United States Ambassador to Australia to welcome the donation and global collaboration.

This extraordinary generosity will bring hope to millions of cancer patients through increased opportunities for clinical trials.

## Chief Executive

### **Royal North Shore Hospital Trauma Verification**

On Monday 20 to Tuesday 21 November 2023, a team of verifiers from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons performed a comprehensive review of the Royal North Shore Hospital Trauma Service against an extensive model of care criteria.

I am thrilled to announce that Royal North Shore Hospital has been verified to Level 1 Trauma Centre Status for the first time. This is an enormous achievement and is a testament to the dedication and passion of our staff. I look forward to the continuation of excellence and innovation in the Royal North Shore Hospital Trauma Service.

### **NSLHD Drug and Alcohol Services Research**

I am pleased to advise that Dr Josephine Okurame, Research Officer Drug and Alcohol Services NSLHD has been awarded the prestigious Dr John Yu Fellowship at the University of Sydney. The fellowship brings together multicultural leaders from a wide range of sectors to explore the impact and opportunities of diverse leadership.

### **Budget Roadshows**

Over the past few weeks, I have visited a number of NSLHD hospitals and services with the Executive Director Operations NSLHD and the Director Finance and Corporate Services NSLHD to highlight key achievements from the prior financial year and advise staff of priority areas and the budget for the current financial year.

### **Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

On 1 December 2023, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday with patients, staff and local community members in attendance. The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital community celebrated the history of the hospital that was built in 1923, sharing stories and an archival photo exhibition displaying how the site has evolved over time.

### **Macquarie University and MQ Health**

I recently attended a meeting with representatives from Macquarie University and MQ Health to discuss opportunities to increase collaboration between our organisations.

### **Christmas with Dignity Hamper Drive 2023**

Together with the NSLHD Workplace Giving Program charity partner Dignity, I am pleased to advise that NSLHD again participated in the Christmas with Dignity Hamper Drive for 2023.

Our staff were incredibly generous in their donations at Royal North Shore, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai, Ryde and Mona Vale Hospitals, with an overwhelming amount of food items and new clothes donated. The donated items will be used to create Christmas hampers for those in the NSLHD community experiencing homelessness.

### **Ministry Engagements**

I was pleased to Co-Chair the NSW Health LGBTIQ+ Health Strategy implementation group and also attended the annual rural Senior Executive Forum held in Tamworth.

### **University of Technology (UTS)**

I was also pleased to be appointed an Adjunct Professor in Health at UTS and will commence curriculum development, industry engagement and guest teaching health management in 2024.

A recent meeting between NSLHD and UTS was held to continue discussions around opportunities to increase collaboration between our organisations in sustainability, nursing and midwifery, palliative care, research, allied health and functional wellbeing.

**Close of the Calendar Year**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge all our staff, volunteers and partners for their support and hard work during 2023. I look forward to welcoming all our people and volunteers back in 2024 following a well-deserved rest over the summer.

I would also like to acknowledge our staff who are continuing to support our patients in our hospitals and services over the festive season. Their commitment to the health and wellbeing of our community does not go unnoticed.

Travel safe and sincere wishes for the festive season.



Adjunct Professor Anthony M. Schembri AM  
**Chief Executive**

Date: 8 December 2023