

NSW Premier's award for vaccination centre



Sydney Local Health District has been recognised at the 2021 NSW Premier's Awards, for setting up and managing the NSW Health Vaccination Centre at Sydney Olympic Park, as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The District was named the winner in Putting the Customer at the Centre category for its entry, *Welcome to the NSW Health Mass Vaccination Centre*.

The District-managed NSW Health Vaccination Centre at Sydney

Olympic Park is capable of vaccinating up to 10,000 people every day.

Its operation involves more than 400 staff and collaboration with other Local Health Districts, government agencies, universities, private health services and companies.

The District would also like to acknowledge its finalists in other categories.

Congratulations to all those involved, for this well-deserved recognition.

Putting the Customer at the Centre

WINNER Welcome to the NSW Health Mass Vaccination Centre

Excellence in Digital Innovation

FINALIST Turning the other cheek on COVID-19 quarantine testing

Tackling Longstanding Social Challenges

FINALIST Innovations in Sydney District pregnancy family conferencing



Message from the Chief Executive



Dr Teresa Anderson AM
*Chief Executive,
Sydney Local Health District*

We have celebrated many milestones and achievements throughout November with numerous awards given to our staff and departments for their ongoing dedication to providing world class healthcare.

This included world class honours for our ICT services, Concord and RPA stroke teams; and national recognition for our leading researchers Professor Paul Bannon and Professor Georgina Long.

Also a big congratulations to our District chair, The Hon John Ajaka, who has been awarded The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays

with Rosette from the Japanese Government. The award was given in recognition of his work promoting Japan-Australia relations whilst in politics and as a member of the NSW Legislative Council.

Next month is the Annual General Meeting on Thursday 4 December, which we are hosting virtually. I am looking forward to celebrating more amazing achievements from what has been another challenging year for our staff and community, but also a very rewarding year, seeing us all pull together to get our lives back to how they were pre-pandemic.

Until next time, stay healthy.

Message from the Chair, District Board



The Hon John Ajaka
*Chair, Sydney Local Health
District Board*

What a month we have had, from receiving numerous international awards for excellence in healthcare to farewelling our Qantas colleagues who assisted us in the fight against COVID-19.

I am looking forward to the much-anticipated AGM next month where we can celebrate the great work and achievements of our staff and the enormous efforts being put in by the District to keep our community safe.

With the further easing of restrictions in November due to the high vaccination rates, I cannot thank the staff enough

for the enormous amount of work they have done to get NSW to where we are.

It has been great to hear the feedback from staff and patients about the Concord Hospital redevelopment and I am looking forward to our other capital works projects which are continuing to build momentum, including the RPA redevelopment tracking to start major construction in early 2022, and the Parents and Babies centre at RPA nearing completion.

Hope everyone keeps safe and I am looking forward to celebrating at the AGM with you all next month.



Farewell Qantas staff



This is Tom Payne. For the past 13 months, he has worked in our Sydney Olympic Park COVID-19 vaccination centre as a concierge, helping the public navigate queues and check in systems.

But Tom is not your regular concierge.

He's a Qantas pilot who flies A380s between Sydney, Singapore, London and Los Angeles, and was one of more than 350 Qantas staff employed by us after they were stood down early last year when international borders closed.

So, it was a very special moment for Tom and his peers to see QF 12 touch down in Sydney from Los Angeles at 6am, the first commercial flight in after borders reopened.

"I'm incredibly grateful for the lifeline from NSW Health. And so proud to have had the opportunity to be part of the vaccination program," he says.

"A special call out needs to be made to all the health workers at Sydney Local Health District for the amazing job they have done delivering the vaccine. They have worked long hours and, at times, under trying conditions, and it has made a huge difference to a lot of people."

Tom returned to Qantas a few weeks ago to undergo additional training and expects to be back in the air early next year.

Thanks so much, Tom. And to all our amazing Qantas staff who have been by our sides in this battle for almost two years. We are so grateful for your support and will miss you greatly.

Visit from the Health Minister

Thanks to Health Minister Brad Hazzard, and MPs Jo Haylen, Sophie Cotsis and Mark Coure MP for visiting Canterbury Hospital to view all the amazing work undertaken by our staff during the pandemic.





Leading researchers recognised



Professor Paul Bannon and Professor Georgina Long – best in their fields, says The Australian's review of top professional journals

Two Sydney Local Health District clinicians have been named as the best in their fields in *The Australian* newspaper's annual deep dive into 250 fields of research.

Cardiothoracic surgeon and Co-Chair of the RPA Institute of Academic Surgery, Professor Paul Bannon is the cardiothoracic head of department at RPA and was this year named the leading researcher in cardiology in Australia.

Oncologist and Co-Medical Director of Melanoma Institute Australia, Professor Georgina Long also took out a top spot as leading researcher in oncology.

The national honours were based on the number of citations for papers published in the top 20 journals in their field over the past five years, showcasing the excellence of their research and its impact.

The University of Sydney was also named as the top research institute for 15 categories in health and medical sciences.

World first in heart valve replacement

The development of transcatheter aortic valve implantations, or TAVIs, has been life-changing for many RPA patients with leaking or damaged heart valves.

This minimally-invasive procedure involves inserting an artificial valve via a catheter in a patient's groin, and deploying it like an umbrella once in place to take over the job of the patient's own malfunctioning valve.

RPA's Associate Professor Martin Ng spoke with *Nine News* about how in a world-first, our doctors have now developed a way to make the procedure safer using a personalised algorithm which determines the exact pressure the valve needs to be deployed within the artery to prevent rupture or leakage.

Congratulations to the team for continuing to pioneer in research and continuing to evolve the care we provide our patients.





Digital health on top



Sydney Local Health District has received global acknowledgment, named in the top 20 per cent in the 2021 CHIME Digital Health Most Wired survey.

Each year, CHIME – the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives – survey more than 36,000 organisations to identify, recognise, and certify the adoption, implementation and use of information technology by healthcare providers.

The District has earned certification at level seven (of 10) for demonstrating dedication to excellence in digital health.

“The recognition goes to everyone who uses our District’s digital health systems. Everyone’s willingness and flexibility to adapt to new and changing technology means we’ve genuinely had a positive impact on patient experiences. It’s an important part of our mission to deliver excellence in health and health care for all and I’m really proud to be able to support our District community with a digitally enabled health service benchmarked against our peers internationally,” Richard Taggart, the District’s Chief Information Officer, said.

The District ranked highly for excellence in categories such as telehealth, clinical monitoring, and end-user experience monitoring.

Special recognition went to the bespoke, digital end-to-end COVID-19 testing and vaccination management system as an example of excellence in remote access and management of data in non-conventional environments.

The District’s Chief Executive, Dr Teresa Anderson said the recognition was well-deserved.

Angels awarded



Two of our hospitals have received global recognition with the World Stroke Organisation awarding RPA platinum status and Concord gold status in its 2021 Angels Awards.

Only two other hospitals in Australia have been awarded platinum status.

RPA offers 24/7 endovascular clot retrieval for ischaemic stroke patients from across NSW.

ECR is a complex emergency procedure and involves a team including an anaesthetist, neuro-interventional radiologist, neurologist, intensivist, radiographers and specialist nursing staff.

It can be done up to 24 hours after the onset of a stroke.

In 2020, 176 patients received ECR, including 126 transferred to RPA from across NSW.

At Concord, 300 patients received stroke care with 24 treated with special clot-busting medication.

More than 27,000 Australians experienced a stroke for the first time in 2020, and more than 445,000 were living with the effects.

As part of the awards process, training, protocols and performance were assessed.

RPA and Concord’s stroke services met or exceeded international benchmarks, demonstrating excellence for outcomes including optimum time to treatment, coordinated care, appropriate scans and screening, and ensuring patients are discharged from hospital on medications to minimise the risk of further stroke.

Great work, everyone.



rpavirtual delivers

Most days Mirtha Martinez is on the road.

Mirtha is one of nine staff who've been redeployed to the new Wearables Team in rpavirtual, formed to support its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first virtual hospital in NSW, rpavirtual has provided clinical care to more than 12,000 COVID-19 positive patients isolating at home or in Special Health Accommodation since March 2020.

The Wearables Team is responsible for delivering care kits – which include a device to measure health and wellbeing and essential information about COVID-19 symptoms and deterioration – to the homes of COVID-19 positive patients.

The device, called a pulse oximeter, monitors patients' oxygen levels and pulse rate which helps the patient and their clinicians to identify changes in their condition and to



know when they need to be transferred to the Emergency Department.

So far, the Wearables Team has delivered more than 3,500 kits, driving to up to 150 homes across the District each day.

Well done to this passionate team doing everything they can do to make sure the community receives the best possible care

Helping hand from OTs

Fiona Manning and Hannah McManus are part of our Positive Central service providing comprehensive care and support to people living with HIV, their families and carers.

As occupational therapists, they assess a client's function and cognition, support them in managing everyday living and advise on ways to increase their safety and independence.

"We work with many of our clients long-term and we can assist them to address their goals at their pace,

building meaningful working relationships," says Hannah.

We have about 150 occupational therapists across our District, and in Occupational Therapy Week, we're saying thank you.

"Our occupational therapists collaborate with other health professionals to assess, diagnose and treat our patients," says Sarah Whitney, the District's Director of Allied Health.

"During COVID-19, they've stepped up by developing innovative ways to provide care for our patients and



their families, while also supporting the Special Health Accommodation, vaccination centres and testing clinics."

Thanks to all of our occupational therapists for playing such a vital role in our District.



Remembrance Day

On 11 November 2021, we paused to remember all those who have died serving our country.

To recognise the 103rd anniversary of the signing of the Armistice ending World War I, representatives from Concord Hospital and the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare laid wreaths at our special service to honour those who have lost their lives and pay our respects.

Lest we forget.



Celebrating our vaccination staff

It's been a long 20 months, but it was time to take stock and celebrate with a (COVID-safe) party at Qudos Bank Arena for our NSW healthcare heroes who have worked tirelessly in our vaccination centres and hotel quarantine services.

In the face of great uncertainty and even greater risk, these people stepped up to protect our country from COVID-19.

The evening was hosted to recognise the hard work of all the vaccination staff, to thank them for their tireless efforts to get our state vaccinated.

Congratulations to Concord colorectal nurse Tenagne (Tanya) Melkameu, who has been working in our Special Health Accommodation, for winning tickets to the new year's eve fireworks, thanks to KIISFM.

Thank you to all our staff who were part of the vaccination effort.





Cop that, COVID

A big thanks to our friends at Inner West Police Area Command who have visited our Mallett Street vaccination clinic at RPA for their booster.

The District has started the roll out of booster shots to those who had their second dose of COVID-19 vaccination over six months ago.



Donations for our staff

The pandemic has taught us so many lessons – but none more valuable than the importance of human connection.

For almost two years, the simple pleasure of sharing a cuppa, a biscuit and a laugh with colleagues has been challenging for our staff as we've limited gatherings to keep everyone safe.

And we've been a tad busy.

But we've now received some special gifts that will help our very tired people reconnect with each other.

Arnott's Biscuits has donated Tim Tams and Scotch Fingers to staff across the District, while Nestlé has given us cans of Milo, plus an array of flavoured coffees. More than 17,400 biscuits and 17,000 drinks were handed out to RPA staff today to stock ward tearooms and office kitchens.

It's been a very long battle and we are so grateful for this support.

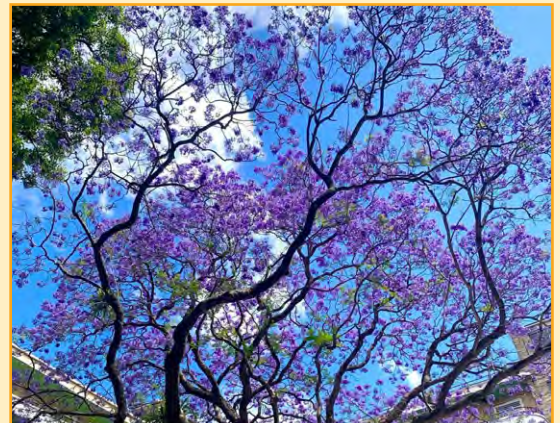
Spring has sprung

Rumour has it that Sydney is awash with purple each November because a hospital matron would send all new parents home with jacaranda seedlings.

We've never been able to establish which hospital was behind the delightful concept, but at RPA we heartily embraced it by painting the campus jacaranda purple so we can enjoy its beauty year round.

This month, please take some time to view our spectacular trees on the Gloucester House lawn and at the front of the Kerry Packer Education Centre at RPA, or the unofficial Jacaranda Alley near the palliative care unit at Concord Hospital.

And remember, the magical weeks of the jacaranda's purple haze always mark the crest of a Sydney summer.



Gene masters

They may not be wearing capes, but these people are quiet heroes.

They're part of our genetic counselling team, embedded in services across the District from infertility and prenatal to neurology, cardiology, paediatrics, adult medicine, and many more.

Scientific wizards one and all, they provide information and guidance to our patients with inheritable conditions, helping them make informed choices about genetic testing.

Genetic Counsellor Awareness Day is held on 12 November and is a day to celebrate these wonderful people and to say thank you.