

# HealthMatters

Sydney – it's *your* local health district

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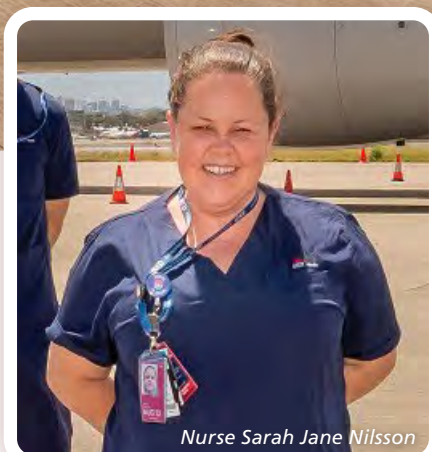
## Farewell to the airport



**After 608 days of providing screening and testing to returned travellers, and later, vaccinations for airport staff, our COVID-19 team bid farewell to Sydney Airport.**

For the past 15 months, nurse Sarah Jane Nilsson has been a member of the NSW Health COVID-19 response team at Sydney Airport.

"It's been such a great experience working with our dedicated staff. There've been such long hours. It's been an amazing opportunity. Probably once in a lifetime and I think it will always be the highlight of my career," she said.



Nurse Sarah Jane Nilsson

Sarah Jane was a Child and Family Health nurse before the pandemic, but in July 2020 she stepped up to become a Health Commander at the airport.

Since beginning operations at the airport in March 2020, the District screened more than 107,000 people at the domestic terminal, while more

than 300,000 were screened at the international terminal. Enormous effort by all those involved and one of the key measures that was put in place at the beginning of the outbreak to ensure the safety of the community.

Great work, everyone. And thank you.



## Message from the Chief Executive



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

**After another challenging year it is great, coming into the warmer months, to see that we have businesses reopening and very high vaccination rates – thanks to the community coming forward to get vaccinated.**

As we look to the months ahead with restrictions easing, we are excited to welcome back staff who were redeployed to the vaccination clinics and other pandemic response teams. It has been an amazing effort by everyone pulling together to get the incredible vaccination rates that we have across the state.

We also farewell and thank those who came on board from other industries to assist us in rolling out a world class vaccination program.

Although the pandemic is not over yet, we are looking to resume several of our services and adjust our focus. October was a month of celebrating numerous awards for our well deserving staff and I could not be more proud of what we have all achieved over the last few months.

Until next time, stay healthy.

## Message from the Chair, District Board



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

**It has been amazing to see the efforts of the staff and community over the past months to get us to the position we are now in to start easing of restrictions.**

Having opened the Concord redevelopment to accommodate COVID-19 positive patients, the District is now looking to decant wards into the new building by February 2022.

The redevelopment at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital is also moving ahead with planning well underway and construction work imminent.

We also have the new state-wide Parents and Baby Unit at RPA on

track to be finished by early next year, providing an acute care mental health service for new parents. Work is fast progressing on this and the team is ready to move in and start providing this fantastic new service for our community.

I would like to acknowledge the incredible work and thank our dedicated staff for the care and compassion they have shown to our community over the course of the pandemic, in particular the last two months. In my short time as Chair of the Board, I have already been highly impressed by the commitment of our staff to ensure they are continuing to provide the community with world class care.





## Commonwealth Bank collaboration

We've collaborated with the Commonwealth Bank to help our culturally and linguistically diverse community get the information needed to get vaccinated.

About 300 Commonwealth Bank staff speaking 43 languages are donating their time to our COVID-19 support line team, and can be contacted to assist callers who feel more comfortable speaking a language other than English.

The support centre receives about 1,700 calls a day from people wanting to book vaccinations, get their vaccination certificates or find directions to our many vaccination clinics, and while we also use our own Sydney Health Care Interpreter Service, this



generous assistance from the Commonwealth Bank makes it even easier for us to communicate quickly with our community.

A huge thanks to our Commonwealth Bank volunteers – and to our team at RPA for all the amazing work they are doing.

## Security team recognised with outstanding award

**Our amazing security staff have been named the 2021 Outstanding Security Team at the Australian Security Industry Awards.**

They're integral members of our care teams, providing help when many people are having their worst day due

to being unwell or anxious over a sick, injured or dying loved one.

During COVID-19, the team has stepped up to support services at our hospitals, vaccination centres, testing clinics and Special Health Accommodation.

They've faced many challenges as the pandemic has evolved, but have worked together to implement innovative solutions.

An independent judging panel selected the winners, saying it was tough competition, but our team shone through.



Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson accepted the award at the virtual ceremony and thanked our security staff for their professionalism, kindness and dedication.

Great work and thanks for always keeping everyone safe.





## Cardiologist receives top honours

**Concord and Canterbury cardiologist Sonali Gnanenthiran has become the first in her field to win a prestigious research medal awarded by the Thrombosis and Haemostasis Society of Australia and New Zealand.**

The THANZ Medal is the society's highest honour and has been awarded for Dr Gnanenthiran's research on blood-clotting and cardiovascular risks in older people.

Her work, conducted at Concord's ANZAC Research Institute, could pave the way for age-specific treatments.

"As a clinician, this has been the most challenging research project I've ever undertaken, she said.

"My supervisors Professor Len Kritharides and Associate Professor Vivien Chen and all of the scientists at the vascular biology laboratory supported me and my growth as a researcher throughout the project."



Professor Kritharides said Dr Gnanenthiran's win was well-deserved.

"It's a singular honour for Sonali. But it's also a testament to the excellent collaboration between

the haematology and cardiology departments under the auspices of the ANZAC Research Institute at Concord Hospital," he said.

Great work.

## NHMRC funding for SLHD researchers

**Congratulations to Clinical Director of Drug Health Services and Gastroenterologist, Professor Paul Haber and Associate Professor Kirsten Morley who received a \$5 million synergy grant from the NHMRC and announced by the Hon Greg Hunt MP.**

Professor Haber and Associate Professor Morley are the chief investigators on the study looking into research into linking clinical and basic science discovery to find new treatments for alcohol use disorder.

More than a million Australians meet criteria for an alcohol use disorder, making it a leading cause of death, injury and many diseases. Current treatment is often ineffective, and research receives limited attention with no new medications in 20 years.

Synergy grants are given to support outstanding multidisciplinary teams of investigators to work together to answer major questions that cannot be answered by a single investigator.

The District also had Professor Warrick Britton secure an Ideas Grant for his project titled "Defining the impact of chronic lung disease on COVID-19 and developing effective therapies" and Professor Steve Nucic secured an Ideas Grant for his project titled "Mechanisms underlying cortical hyperexcitability in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis".

Congratulations to all those who received grant funding. This will help support the research for our community and directly impact the lives of our patients.



Professor Paul Haber

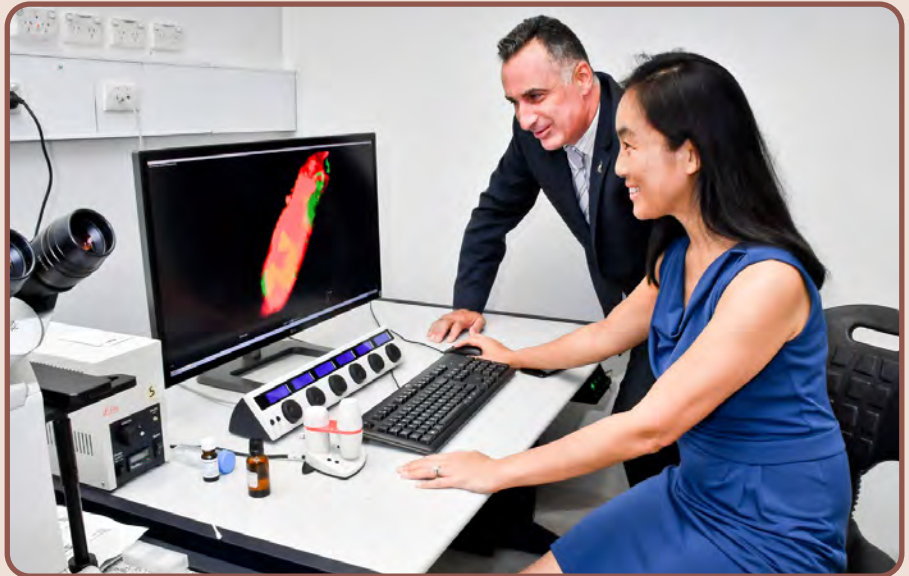




## Doctor's work to prevent rare blood clotting from vaccination

Concord Hospital's Dr Vivien Chen was instrumental in saving the lives of those who developed a rare blood clotting syndrome associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

When reports of the condition appeared overseas, she moved quickly, pulling together clinicians from across the country to develop Australian assessment protocols and treatment guidelines before the first cases even presented here.



## Poet's Corner welcomes Premier



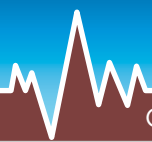
Thanks to our fabulous team at Poet's Corner in Redfern for showcasing their work for Premier Dominic Perrottet, Health Minister Brad Hazzard, Minister for Families, Communities and

Disability Services Alister Henskens and NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant.

Our staff have been on the ground in Redfern for several weeks providing COVID-19 vaccinations

and testing to residents, with fantastic community support.

They've also been delivering care packs and food hampers to those in need. Great work, team.



## Concord teams up for better care

**Clinical Nurse Consultant Mary Sweeney is dedicated to making a difference. She provides care, support and information for women with metastatic breast cancer from the time they receive their diagnosis and throughout their cancer treatment pathway.**

As Sydney Local Health District's first McGrath Metastatic Breast Care Nurse, Mary looks after patients whose cancer has spread from its origin in the breast to other parts of their body.

Mary's position is a partnership with the McGrath Foundation to strengthen support for metastatic breast cancer patients, enhancing the hospital's existing cancer services for patients and their families.

The McGrath Foundation fund McGrath Breast Care Nurses, like Mary, across the country.

With more than 35 years of nursing experience, Mary is now supporting local families experiencing metastatic breast cancer and a vital link between patients, families and specialists, offering support face-to-face,



via Telehealth appointments and over the phone.

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Mary and fellow team member Cole Deguchi have a key message about breast health – be breast aware.

"Women need to look, feel and learn about their breasts. If they know their breasts, and are familiar with what's normal for them, it'll be easier to tell if

something has changed," they said.

The McGrath Foundation, in collaboration with McGrath Breast Care Nurses, suggests women follow this simple process once a month look, feel and learn.

McGrath Metastatic Breast Care Nurses and McGrath Breast Care Nurses provide support free of charge and a doctor's referral is not required.

## Hip hip hooray

**Concord Hospital has been recognised for excellence in caring for patients with hip fractures.**

The multidisciplinary orthogeriatric service has been named in the top 10 performers in Australia by the Australian and New Zealand Hip Fracture Registry as part of its inaugural Golden Hip awards.

Sydney Local Health District's Clinical Director for Aged Health Associate Professor John Cullen said being a finalist was



well-deserved acknowledgement of Concord's team. Concord was one of three hospitals in NSW named in the top 10.

Although there has been a steady decline in hip fractures due to bone density medications, the registry estimates there are about 22,000 new cases in Australia per year.

Concord's team works closely to help patients regain their independence through mobilisation post-surgery, improved nutrition, rehabilitation, osteoporosis management and discharge planning.

The registry judged each hospital's performance against the Hip Fracture Care Clinical Care Standard which covers emergency department care, timely access to theatres, shared care between geriatrics and orthopaedics, early mobilisation and secondary fracture prevention.





## Vaccination team in the media

**Our vaccination team members, Lainie Anderson and Sven Nilsson, spoke with Channel 7 News about our big push to get vaccination rates even higher.**

And Theodore Drivas from Waterview in Bicentennial Park spoke to the news about handing his function centre over to the District in the past few months.

We've provided more than 18,000 vaccinations at Waterview but will be packing up soon to let Theodore and his family go back to doing what they do best.

We're very grateful for all our wonderful partnerships that have helped us make the community safer this year.



## Big boost for palliative care

**Former Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet announced an \$83 million investment over the next four years for Palliative Care.**

Chris O'Brien Lifecare patients will be one of the beneficiaries of this budget announcement.

This is a great boost for Palliative care in NSW.





## National Emergency Nurses Day

**It's no walk in the park working in an emergency department at the best of times.**

On 13 October we celebrated National Emergency Nurses Day, and saying thank you to these amazing humans.

During the pandemic, it's been even more challenging for our staff, who have been wearing masks, goggles, gowns and gloves to ensure the safety of all. But throughout it all, our ED nurses have remained strong, resilient and compassionate.

## Police Awards

**It's always lovely to get recognised for your hard work.**



And this award from the NSW Police Force is a special one.

Eva Fares and Shane Goodwin worked with police this year, ensuring as many as possible could be vaccinated against COVID-19.

It was a monumental effort coordinating their availability, but well worth it.

Thanks to Superintendent David Driver for acknowledging their "significant contribution and dedication to the NSW Police Force COVID-19 Vaccination Program".



*Check out our appreciation video here!*

## Allied Health Professionals Day

**On 14 October we celebrated Allied Health Professionals Day – a day we recognise what an extraordinary team of allied health professionals we have in our District.**

We have more 1,050 of these amazing people assessing, diagnosing and treating our patients, helping them improve their quality of life, refocus and return to life after illness or trauma.

During the past two years, they've demonstrated their adaptability and resilience by becoming an integral part of our COVID-19 response.

Thank you for all that you do and happy Allied Health Professionals Day.

## Farewell Frank

**After working for us for 38 years Frank Macri is hanging up his hat and retiring.**

Frank worked in cardiology for 14 years as an operation assistant before moving to the mailroom on the ground floor of the King George V building, handling the thousands of letters and packages that arrive daily.



Friendly Frank has always made a point of remembering everyone's names, even writing down the names of new starters so he can greet them personally every time with his usual beaming smile and ever helpful attitude.

As he says, "I have a lot of old friends here but you never know who could become a new friend". We wish you all the very best, Frank, and will miss you greatly.

## World Pharmacy Day

**This year, our pharmacy team were a linchpin in our vaccination program.**

They have reconstituted about 215,000 vials of COVID-19 vaccine and drawn the contents into more than 1.5 million syringes.

Throughout the pandemic the team developed procedures for complex cold chain vaccine storage including the use of ultra-cold temperature freezers; created a staff training program for vaccine preparation in collaboration with our biomedical engineering staff; and in partnership with ICT, implemented a closed loop medication system, meaning every step of the vaccination process can be tracked – believed to be an Australian first.

