

## Celebration as Concord new build opens early



### Concord fast tracks new building for COVID patients.

Sydney Local Health District is stepping up the fight against COVID-19, fast tracking Concord Hospital's \$341.2 million redevelopment project to provide dedicated care for patients with COVID-19.

*See more on pages 6 and 7*



## Message from the Chief Executive



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

**The last few months, although challenging, have seen some incredible milestones reached and shown us the power of coming together. As a District, we have administered more than one million vaccinations to the people of NSW, 20 per cent of the state's vaccination which is a mammoth achievement.**

I could not be more proud of our staff who have worked tirelessly to ensure everyone in the community has access to the vaccine, in particular our vulnerable populations, but also to our staff who are day in day out caring for those who need our services.

It was great to see the opening of \$341.2 million Concord redevelopment, two months ahead of schedule. This would not have been possible without the many hundreds of workers and staff committed to completing this construction, so that we can utilise this amazing space to manage the COVID-19 patients and increase capacity to care for our community.

I am so proud of everything that we have achieved and although the pandemic is not over yet and there is still more work to be done, we are starting to see a little more light at the end of the tunnel.

Until next time, stay healthy.

## Message from the Chair, District Board



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

**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, and in particular, the past two months.**

In my short time as Chair of the Board, I have already been blown away by the commitment of our staff to ensure they are continuing to provide the community with world class care.

Although in unprecedented times, the District has continued with its commitment to key capital works projects and we have been able to mark a new chapter in the history of Concord Hospital with the opening of the \$341.2 million redevelopment.

The eight-storey clinical services building is key to providing care to the NSW community, with cutting-edge facilities to be utilised by generations to come. I know our staff have long looked forward to moving into this new space and the people of the inner west will be justifiably proud of this jewel in the state's healthcare crown.

A massive congratulations and thanks to the team for working tirelessly to make this four-year project come to life.

And again, thanks to our staff and the community for everyone's ongoing role in the fight against COVID-19.



## Care packs from Epworth Hospital

**There's nothing like a thoughtful gift to make your week better.**

And this one has put quite a few smiles under masks after a very difficult few weeks.

This hamper arrived for our Concord ICU team from colleagues at the Epworth Geelong and Epworth Freemasons hospitals in Victoria.

The card read: "As a gesture of our caring and support, please accept this hamper to share amongst your ICU staff."

"We can relate to the stresses you are currently feeling in caring for COVID patients – you've got this."

Thank you, Epworth Hospital. Your kindness is very much appreciated. Together, we'll get through this.



## RPA ICU staff adding a comforting touch to care

**Intensive Care Units can be an unfamiliar environment for patients and their families, with staff working around the clock, providing lifesaving care to some of our most vulnerable and sickest patients.**

A group of ICU nurses, social workers and medical staff at RPA established the 'ICU End of Life Committee', to develop ways of providing patients and their families a caring and more comfortable environment, ensuring dignity and respect.

In keeping with Sydney Local Health District's approach to Patient and Family Centre Care, the committee partnered with the group, Knit4Charities, who donate knitted blankets for patients' beds to provide a more personalised, comfortable environment.

Knit4Charities generously donate around 120 knitted blankets a year



*A sample piece crocheted by Clinical Manager, Dr Judith Dixon on display in the ICU waiting room to recognise those who have contributed towards the program.*

to RPA ICU, with several staff also being inspired during COVID to make blankets for the patients.

"ICU is a very clinical environment which can be rather unsettling for patients and their families. Placing a knitted blanket on patients' beds is just one way we can bring comfort to their care", said ICU Clinical Nurse Consultant, Elaine McLoughlin, one of the founders of the program.

In line with hygiene control measures the blankets are single use, with the option for patients or families to keep the blankets.

The group has also been resourceful and 'green', making bags from donated and recycled materials to provide a more personal touch when ICU staff hand patients' possessions back to their families after a bereavement, instead of using the plastic patient belonging bags.

The group are looking to implement some other new ideas with patients and their carers, but they are currently on hold due to visitor restrictions.





## Prestigious award for RPA surgeon

**Congratulations to RPA transplant surgeon and research lead for transplant services at RPA Institute of Academic Surgery, Associate Professor Carlo Pulitano who is the recipient of the 2021 Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) John Mitchell Crouch Fellowship.**

RACS' most prestigious award, the John Mitchell Crouch Fellowship recognises a fellow who is 'making an outstanding contribution to the advancement of surgery' with Associate Professor Pulitano being recognised for his contribution to scientific research in the field organ assessment and repair.

Dr Pulitano and the team at the RPA Transplant Institute are currently working on several research projects using new technologies for the repair and modification of organs before transplantation. Most notably, the research using an Extended Organ



Perfusion System that is first of its kind. This technology can extend the survival of liver up to 10 days (compared to the standard <24 hours) with the potential to see an increase in the number of livers suitable for transplant.

The award funding of \$150,000 will go towards supporting his research

into organ assessment, repair and optimisation through supporting a bioengineer for 3 years and for the purchase of some key components.

Congratulations on this well-deserved award, we are looking forward to seeing more of the work being done by Dr Pulitano and the team.

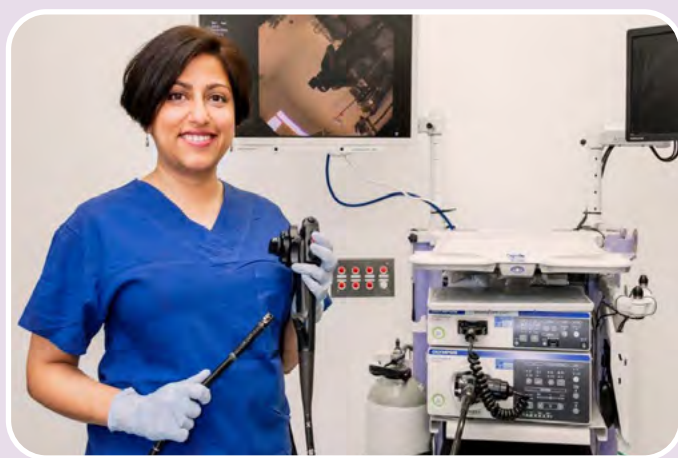
## An Australian first for Barrett's esophagus sufferers

**Clinical researchers at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital have published an Australian first study looking into the feasibility, safety, and long-term efficacy of Hybrid-argon plasma coagulation (Hybrid-APC), a new technique used to treat Barrett's esophagus.**

Barrett's esophagus is a condition caused by stomach acid wearing away at the lining of the esophagus and is usually seen in patients who are long time sufferers of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Left untreated these patients are at an increased risk of developing esophageal cancer.

Gastroenterologist Associate Professor Payal Saxena has used Hybrid-APC to treat 11 patients at RPA as part of the research study. Using a commonly used application, Argon plasma coagulation (APC) technology and a high-pressure injection, this technique ensures that only the pre-cancerous cells, or dysplasia, are destroyed, leaving no damage to the layer underneath.

"Hybrid-APC is a more affordable procedure with the patients showing great results. Currently these patients presenting are



monitored for dysplasia through endoscopy check-ups and either offered RFA or surgery to remove the malignant cells, so Hybrid- APC is a great alternative treatment", she said.

RPA is currently the only centre in Australia offering this treatment.





## Meals to those in need



### Health care isn't just about looking after your medical issues.

During this lockdown, we've home delivered more than 350 ready-made meals to vulnerable residents who have found it hard or unsafe to go grocery shopping.

The free service was the brainchild of our Aged Health, Chronic Care and Rehabilitation Team based at Concord Hospital.

It was set up in March last year and delivered more than 4,000 meals to older residents, or those living with disability, who were unable to access food during the pandemic.

"This time, many residents already had support services in place, but our team has stepped up again to provide meals for those people who need them," says Julie-Ann O'Keeffe, the team's Operations Manager.

Over the past month, about 15 households have received the frozen meals, delivered by staff from our Kalparrin Day Centre.

Kalparrin usually provides respite care for people with dementia and their carers, but has had to close its doors for now.

Staff follow strict food safety measures and COVID-safe guidelines are also in place.

A big thank you to everyone for working together to care for vulnerable members of our community.

## Raising money for a good cause

**We are excited to announce that our Step Up for Cancer Survivorship challenge for Concord Hospital's Sydney Cancer Survivorship Centre reached over \$51,000 in donations.**

Held through the month of August, the challenge raises money to support exercise physiology programs to help cancer survivors increase their fitness, strength, and quality of life.

Top fundraisers were the Survivorship Superstars, a group of dedicated nurses and doctors all working with our cancer patients (pictured) who raised over \$8,000.

But a big shout out also to our community teams which have walked more than 1,430km to support the campaign. And let's not forget the Poo Walkers from the hospital's colorectal department, Boobs on the Run, Strathfield Symphony, Coco the Dog and Plato the Dancing Cat.







## Message from the GM



**Dr Genevieve Wallace**

*General Manager,  
Concord Hospital*



*Scan to enjoy  
a time lapse  
video of the  
redevelopment*



*Check out the  
new COVID-19  
wards at  
Concord Hospital*

**As Concord Hospital celebrates 80 years of providing healthcare to the community, we mark the next chapter in our history with the opening of our new clinical services building.**

The new clinical services building opened its doors to patients in September, just over four years since the NSW Government announced the \$341.2 million stage one redevelopment funding.

Since that announcement, dedicated teams, together with our clinicians and Health Infrastructure, have set their sights on the future, with the common goal to provide the very best health care services and experience for our aged health and rehabilitation and cancer patients.

We decanted services, relocated staff, demolished old buildings and designed purpose-built facilities. We opened the nation's first integrated care service for veterans, the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare.

And as our health care system and our staff continue to respond to the COVID pandemic and Delta outbreak, our lives have been interrupted and with it, our plans for this building have temporarily pivoted too. But what hasn't changed, is our commitment to provide the very best for our patients and community.

After working with our partners Health Infrastructure and building contractor

Roberts Co to accelerate the remaining works, patients in the hospital's COVID-19 wards became the first to experience the beautiful healthcare facility.

Our COVID patients – and in time, our aged health, rehabilitation and cancer patients – will benefit from larger, single-bed rooms, the latest in healthcare technologies and equipment and sweeping views of the Parramatta River. The modern design of the wards will provide our staff optimal line of sight to patients along with enhanced staff amenities and areas to take breaks and greater clinical collaboration spaces

Our planning continues for the relocation of our aged care and rehabilitation wards and our outpatient and cancer services into their new areas, for the new radiation oncology service and the opening of new drop-off zones for patients. The National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare will also move into its purpose-built area with a gym and courtyard to compliment the Fussell House accommodation facility for veterans receiving treatment at Concord Hospital.

I would like to thank the clinical teams for their commitment to their patients and our community over the past four years. With the relocation of these services, we will also look forward to the building's formal opening celebrations and marking this fantastic milestone in Concord's history.





## Redevelopment welcomes first patients

**Sydney Local Health District has marked an important milestone with Concord Hospital's new eight-storey clinical services building opening its doors to patients.**

Since the project was announced in 2017, dedicated teams from the District and Health Infrastructure, together with clinicians, have set their sights on providing the very best health care services and patient experience for the community.

The new clinical services building is an incredible healthcare facility offering a centre for aged health and rehabilitation for inpatients and outpatients. It has specialist clinic spaces, assessment and therapy areas, rehabilitation gyms, psychogeriatric medicine, and a wellness centre.

The Comprehensive Cancer Centre will increase capacity for day and inpatient oncology and haematology services and will provide the first public radiation oncology and PET scanning service in Concord. A new STRONG service will deliver medically supervised resistance training to improve the quality of life and health, strength, endurance and independence of older people.

Several wards in the new building were opened early due to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide care exclusively for COVID-19 patients.

"As we open the doors of our new clinical services building and welcome our first patients, we reflect on the enormous effort made by so many over the years and I would like to thank the redevelopment team, all our clinicians and Health Infrastructure for steering this project over the past four years," said general manager Dr Genevieve Wallace.

"Their combined efforts will now not only serve those patients in the future, but many more colleagues and members of the community who need our support right now."



**Concord Hospital  
Stage One  
Redevelopment  
opening**

COVID-19 lead Professor Matthew Peters said meticulous planning had been undertaken ahead of the move to ensure there is no interruption to clinical care.

Respiratory specialist Associate Professor Lucy Morgan said the spacious environment allowed staff to deliver best practice care with two-thirds of inpatient beds in single rooms, providing more space to isolate and care for patients with COVID-19.

The comprehensive cancer centre, aged health care and rehabilitation services and dedicated veterans' health service scheduled to move into the new building for now will continue to operate from the existing facilities while the COVID-19 response arrangements are in place but plan to move into their new premises early next year.







## A month to celebrate

**August has been a big month for the District, not only did we celebrate our staff having administered one million vaccinations across the Sydney Olympic Park, Bicentennial Park, RPA, Canterbury Hospital and Sydney Airport clinics but we saw some healthy competition for Super Sports Sunday with record numbers attending the day.**

It was great to see the community pull on their favourite sporting teams colours for Super Sports Sunday with a record 12,000 people rolling up their sleeves to get the jab. Several of the community jumping at the opportunity to have a photo with the vaccination cup.

The Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs visited our Sport Super Sunday vaccination event at Canterbury Hospital with Football Legend Terry Lamb, CEO Aaron Warburton and chair John Khoury taking time out of their day to meet our staff and patients and hand out Bulldogs merchandise to those stepping up for the jab.



We also saw a 20 per cent increase in one week of vaccinations being administered at Olympic Park which is an amazing effort. We couldn't have reached these numbers without

all our staff who have worked tirelessly to set up and running of the clinics but also to the community who have come forward to be vaccinated.

## Waterview donation

**Sydney Local Health District is grateful for Waterview's Managing Director Theodore Drivas and his family who donated the venue to NSW Health to be utilised as a open a pop-up vaccination clinic for the community.**

Located in Bicentennial Park, the Sydney Local Health District team have been able to administer COVID-19 vaccinations to further boost our capacity to protect the tens-of-thousands of people living around the area.

"In order to have the state back up and running and to get back to normality we've got to accept the fact that we've got to work together. And, working together means we've all got to do our bit and that's what we've done here at Waterview," Mr Drivas said.

Mr Drivas was the first in line to get the jab when the clinic opened its doors in August.

**"Everything was fine. Very professional. Very well organised. Went without a hitch."**



"Everyone who gets vaccinated is making a difference. We're ready. Come and get vaccinated. Let's get back to doing the things we love," said Jessica Pavlidis, Nurse Manager at the new clinic.

Thanks again to the Waterview family for providing us with the venue so we can continue to drive up vaccination numbers in our community.



## Koori clinic success

**More than 560 people have rolled up their sleeves for a COVID-19 jab at a special pop-up vaccination clinic for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families.**

The Koori Vaccination Clinic was set up by Sydney Local Health District in partnership with the Aboriginal Medical Service Redfern and held at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence.



**Watch our video from the Koori Vaccination Clinic**

In a show of support, Federal Labor MP Linda Burney, a proud Wiradjuri woman and the Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians, visited the clinic to urge people to get vaccinated to protect themselves, their family and the community.

The three-day clinic, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 12 and above, is the latest collaborative project between the District and AMS Redfern in response to COVID-19.

"We've been working closely with AMS Redfern since the pandemic began. Getting vaccinated is the best way to ensure our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is protected against COVID-19," Dr Teresa Anderson, the District's Chief Executive, said.

Prominent members of the Aboriginal community have thrown their support behind the clinic, including Virgin Australia's first Aboriginal Boeing 737 captain, Kali Belleair, who's keen to return to the skies.



### **Protecting the community**

*Redfern Aboriginal elder Mick Mundine wasn't convinced he needed a COVID-19 vaccination. But, seeing so many people "getting very sick" spurred him into action. Mick stepped up for the jab at our Koori clinic at The National Centre of Indigenous Excellence. Great work, Mick.*

"We've all got to do our bit to keep each other safe. ...Get vaccinated so I can have the honour of flying you home to visit family on country," he said.

The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council's CEO, Nathan Moran, said vaccination is crucial to being able to gather face-to-face again.

It's a view shared by the CEO of the NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation, John Leha, who said getting vaccinated was key to restrictions being eased.

## Nurses play key role in COVID-19 research

**Nurses Ann Marie Vande More and Stephanie Hunt are members of a team from Sydney Local Health District who are involved in a collaborative, Australia-first research study into the way people develop immunity after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.**

The Vaccine, Infection and Immunology Collaborative Research Group will receive more than \$4.5 million in funding from the NSW Office of Health and Medical Research over three years.

It's the first move into research for both nurses – with Ann Marie having worked at Marrickville Community Health Centre, while Stephanie worked at Balmain Hospital.

They're now based at the District's COVID-19 Vaccination Research Unit set-up within the NSW Health COVID-19 Vaccination Centre at RPA recruiting and with the study investigator and medical lead, Professor Ian Caterson AM.

So far, nearly 500 people have volunteered to participate in the

study which involves collecting and analysing their blood samples over the next five years.

The District's Director of Research, Professor Warwick Britton AO, is a member of the VIIM Collaborative Research Group Steering Committee overseeing the study.

"Our District has a proud history of being at the forefront of innovation and research. We're partnering with vaccine, infection and immunology experts from across Sydney to help inform future policy decision-making

about COVID-19 vaccines," Professor Britton said.

The VIIM Collaborative Research Group includes experts from Western Sydney Local Health District, Sydney Children's Hospital Network, NSW Health Pathology, the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, the University of Sydney's Marie Bashir Institute, the University of NSW, Westmead Institute of Medical Research, the Centenary Institute, and the Kirby Institute.



## 10,000 jabs for Canterbury Hospital



**It was a milestone day for outpatient Rebecca Lee who was the recipient of the 10,000th COVID-19 vaccination delivered at Canterbury Hospital in August.**

The team at Canterbury Hospital have been working hard with the community over the past few weeks and are now closing in on 20,000 vaccinations.

A big thank you to our dedicated team, led by Rita Nop and Shona Hanson, and to our community for rolling up your sleeves.



*See the  
Canterbury  
Hospital team  
in action*







## Patients share heartbreaking COVID-19 stories

**Respiratory specialist Dr Lucy Morgan is working at the coalface of the pandemic seeing patients presenting to hospital with COVID-19.**

"One of the things that has been really extraordinary in looking after these patients is some of their experiences with some of the stories were really heartbreaking," Dr Morgan, a Senior Staff Specialist at Concord Hospital's Respiratory Medicine Department, said.

Construction worker Fawaz Dandan, 50, is one of those patients.

"Today, I am really bad. My fever, my headache, my breathing," he said, from his bed at the hospital.

His whole family has COVID-19.

"I was very careful with where I went and what I did. I don't know how I caught this virus. It's not a game, it's for real. So, please get vaccinated," he said.

Another patient, pharmacy worker Ramona El-Nachar, 30, laments the impact on her family.

"All I can think of is my children who I haven't seen in a very long time," she said.

"It takes a toll on you physically and mentally, this virus. I've had two kids and a major operation, but I've never had to push myself to recover mentally this much," she said.

She had one dose of vaccine but got the virus before her second.

And, Osama Ahmad, 35, a tradesman from Lakemba, has spent more than a week in hospital. His wife has been in

intensive care and his children have been admitted to Westmead Hospital.

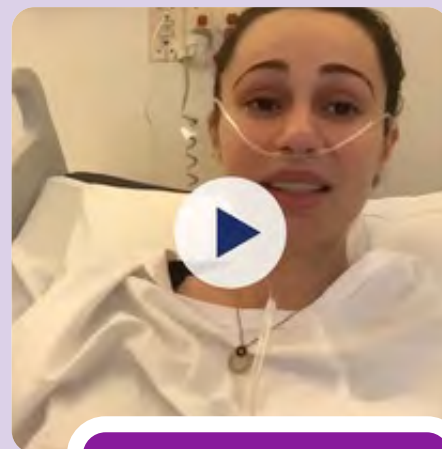
When asked to describe how he felt at his worst he said, "It was close to death. Pretty sick. It was a combination of things you don't want to experience."

Dr Morgan said the first symptoms of the virus include headache, a sore throat and cough with some people also having a fever and muscle aches.

Dr Morgan explained the importance of anyone experiencing breathlessness or dizziness to call an ambulance, ensuring that care is free and that people should not avoid seeking assistance due to a potential language barrier.

No one Dr Morgan has been caring for in the past few days has been fully vaccinated.

"Two doses of COVID-19 vaccination will be your suit of armour. It will protect you from getting sick from COVID-19, from needing admission to hospital and from ending up in ICU," Dr Morgan said.



Watch the patient videos here

## Pharmacy students use skills to help

**A shout out to the 90 pharmacy students from the University of Sydney who have been working at our vaccination centres at Sydney Olympic Park and RPA hospital over the last few weeks.**

The group of students have been preparing about 240 doses each a day – saving lives one syringe at a time.

It has been great to have them as part of the team. Thank you all, for your support in the vaccination roll out.





## STEPtember



### **We're stepping up for STEPtember to help improve the lives of people living with cerebral palsy.**

Cerebral Palsy is the most common physical disability in childhood. It's caused by damage to the developing brain during pregnancy or soon after birth.

We're challenging our staff to take 10,000 steps a day during September.

"It encourages our staff to be active, stay connected and fosters team work. We've found it has a positive impact on health and wellbeing," says Cath MacKay, from RPA's Workplace Health and Safety team.

Rachael Casey, Tarryn O'Loughlin and Dave Lindsay (pictured left to right) from RPA's Patient Quality and Safety

department along with several other departments across the District have been out there pounding the pavements to raise money for this great cause.

Concord Hospital occupational therapists and social workers Eva ten Brink, Sharon Hung, Brianna Williamson and Matthew Higgs managed to notch up more than 121,000 steps in their first few days and recreate the Beatles' Abbey Road album cover in the process.

Teams are aiming to raise \$40,000 which will go towards early intervention therapies, technology and equipment and ground-breaking research.

Great work, everyone!

## Little wonders

### **Big thanks to Little Wonder for spoiling our neonatal nurses with some cupcakes to help lift spirits.**

Little Wonder is a parent fundraising and support committee for Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Our neonatal nurses have an incredibly important job, working around the clock to keep our tiniest patients safe and we're very grateful for their exceptional skills and dedication.







## Farewell to several long serving nursing staff

In August we farewelled a number of long servicing nursing staff from across the District include Marianne Weston and Janet Candido.



After 45 years as an integral member of Sydney Dental Hospital and Oral Health Services, Marianne Weston retired leaving behind a legacy. Marianne joined SDH in 1975 holding several positions including her recent role as Operational Nurse Manager which she has remained in since 2008.

In this role Marianne was the backbone of the operational requirements of the hospital and took on additional roles and responsibilities with enthusiasm and skill.

The District also farewells Janet Candido who leaves Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Hospital after 44 years of service. Joining as a registered nurse in the 1970s, Janet spent many of years as the Clinical Nurse Consultant for the Anorectal Clinic at RPA.

Janet had a way of making her patients feel comfortable and at ease and was much loved by all those that worked with her. She would always bring cheer to those around her.



Both vital staff members, they will truly be missed.

We wish them all the best in retirement.

## R U OK? Day



*Enjoy a sweet story about a footy over the back fence*

**Held on Thursday 9 September, R U OK? Day was established as is a suicide prevention day to encourage people to have a conversation, reinforcing 'a conversation could change a life'.**

In the current climate of lockdown in a pandemic this day is more important than ever to encourage us all to take note of the signs of mental health struggle amongst those that we are closest to.

To acknowledge the day, the District hosted a Staff Information session with SLHD Director of Psychology, Dr Lil Vrkleviski who explained some of the signs of burnout and fatigue as we enter 18 months of the pandemic. Our healthcare workers are experiencing the most challenging times being front line workers and our community are experiencing lockdown fatigue.

Although as healthcare workers we are programmed to care for others, it was a day for us to check on our colleagues and ourselves to ensure that they are asking about mental health, being listened to, and encouraged to seek help if needed.



## Father's day

**Father's Day was a bit different this year.**

But if lockdown has taught us anything, it is the importance of love and connection – and valuing the small moments with those who matter most.

For new dad, Jayde, that meant a morning of cuddles with son Raiden, born nine weeks early at RPA – marking a very special Father's Day for them both.

Although it was challenging this year due to COVID-19, we hope you were able to reach and wish your father or loved one a great day and perhaps be gifted with a dad joke in return.

And to those who no longer have dads, we're thinking of you.



## District achieves carer-friendly Australian first

**Sydney Local Health District's support for carers in the workplace has been recognised, with the District becoming the first employer in Australia to achieve level two accreditation as a carer-friendly organisation.**

The District reached the accreditation milestone this month after demonstrating it has progressive and embedded practices in place to support staff carers, under the Carers + Employers Program run by Carers NSW.

The Carers + Employers Program is the first initiative in Australia to formally accredit carer-friendly employers.

It's estimated about 12 per cent of the District's 14,000 member workforce

balance their roles at work with carer responsibilities at home.

A carer is anyone who provides informal support or care to a family member or friend with a disability, mental illness, drug and/or alcohol dependency, chronic condition or is frail and aged.

Kim Brauer, the Manager of the District's Carers Program, said gaining the accreditation is an acknowledgement of the District's work to build on workplace rights for staff carers.

"The Carers + Employers Program defines best practice standards for organisations like ours who want to support staff carers. Most importantly, it's a way to raise the profile of our staff carers who provide excellent care – to patients and their loved ones," Ms Brauer said.

The District has flexible working arrangements for staff, uses surveys to understand staff carers' responsibilities and has a Staff Carer Support Service.

The District's Chief Executive, Dr Teresa Anderson said the District is committed to supporting staff, and helping them balance work and commitments outside of work.

"Our Flexible Working Guidelines provide a framework for discussions about reasonable adjustments to allow staff to find balance across their commitments.

"I'm so proud of our staff who have found ways of working that can meet everyone's needs – whether staff member, patient or loved ones," Dr Anderson said.

Carers NSW Chief Executive Officer, Elena Katrakis, thanked the District for its commitment to supporting carers in the workplace.

"To become the first employer to gain Level Two accreditation is a tremendous achievement. We look forward to continuing to work together with Sydney Local Health District on achieving positive outcomes for carers in the workplace," she said.







## Recognition for our hard-working nurses

**This year more than ever, it's important for us to recognise the outstanding contributions of our nurses and midwives.**

We would like to congratulate our finalists in the 2021 Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery Awards.

A big congratulations to the following finalists.

**MIDWIFE OF THE YEAR** Claire Devonport, Canterbury Hospital who has driven to challenge and change models of care to better meet the needs of our women and babies with the development of the Canterbury Antenatal Postnatal Service.

**NEW TO PRACTICE NURSE/MIDWIFE OF THE YEAR** Carmen Huang, Canterbury Hospital who last year completed the NSW Health GradStart program and is working as a registered nurse with Canterbury Hospital's Drug Health Service.

**NURSING/MIDWIFERY TEAM OF THE YEAR** Special Health Accommodation Nursing Team, Sydney Local Health District who have played a pivotal role in the COVID-19 pandemic response.

**ABORIGINAL NURSE/MIDWIFE OF THE YEAR** Brendan Gentles, Camperdown Community Mental Health. Brendan is a Registered Nurse who is a strong advocate for delivering culturally appropriate mental health care for Aboriginal consumers and has outstanding commitment and dedication to achieving the best health outcomes.

*Congratulations to all our finalists. Winners will be announced in early 2022.*

## Care packs and hampers for our community



**Walter Towney and Karinya Belleair along with Aboriginal Medical Service Redfern colleague, Scott McNaughton delivered food hampers to those in need, thanks to the donations from Foodbank, and City of Sydney.**

They are part of our new dedicated Aboriginal Cultural Response Team providing additional support to those impacted by the latest COVID-19 outbreak.

We have one of the biggest urban Aboriginal populations in NSW, and many have underlying health conditions putting them at a higher risk of becoming very unwell with COVID-19.

"We're working hard to ensure the health and wellbeing of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters – particularly in Glebe, Surry Hills, Redfern and Waterloo," says Walter.

Those diagnosed with COVID-19, or close contacts of a confirmed case, are offered accommodation in the Special Health Accommodation if they are unable to safely isolate at home, and the team works closely with clinicians at **rpavirtual** to make contact and offer extra support.

The team is also collaborating with the Department of Communities and Justice NSW, The City of Sydney, South Cares, and other community organisations to provide those extras that make life easier.

Hundreds of care bags containing face masks, hand sanitiser, personal care products, and key messages on keeping COVID-safe were distributed.

The District also had five teams visiting 18 social housing blocks in Redfern and Waterloo, offering COVID-19 vaccinations, and testing to ensure every resident was reached with cultural support staff, interpreters and social workers on site.

There was a fantastic community response with almost three quarters of residents in the three Morehead Street towers now vaccinated.

A very special thanks to ozHarvest for generously delivering 200 hampers that were handed out to the residents.

The bags include fruits, vegetables, rice, coffee, long life milk, tuna, chickpeas, pasta, passata, plus face masks and hand sanitiser.

Great work by everyone, keeping our community safe.



## Showered in gifts

**Although a very challenging time for all our staff who are working around the clock to keep the community safe, we have had several generous groups send us some very thoughtful packages to enjoy whilst on shift.**

Thank you to Finlease who donated hundreds of Cadbury bars which have been distributed across our District to our healthcare workers.

The team at RPA Cath Lab welcomed the colourful scrub caps which were donated by Tzu Chi Organisation. The organisation has not only donated 400 scrub caps which have been distributed to Radiology, catheterisation laboratory, central sterile services department (CSSD), delivery unit and NICU across the District, but have also provided 3,500 bottles of hand sanitiser to the pop-up clinics across the District for the community.

The group also generously donated face masks last year at the start of the pandemic.

Another tasty treat was from Southern Cross who generously donated delicious snack hampers for all our covid wards, emergency, and ICU at RPA.

Thank you to all those who have cared for our staff during these challenging times.

## Tablets of connection

**Thanks to Telstra and Samsung who have donated 18 Samsung tablets to RPA and Concord's COVID-19 wards.**

Due to the infectious nature of the virus, patients are unable to have visitors, but these tablets will allow them to reconnect with video calls.

Thanks again, Telstra and Samsung, for the generous donation.

## A comforting thanks

**Staff from fintech company, ZIP have donated three massage chairs to RPA.**

The staff at ZIP pulled together and held a bake sale to raise money to purchase the chairs with the idea coming from a conversation that ZIP's Fraud Officer, Patrick D'Arbon had with a nursing friend. Patrick put a call out to the company group chat to see if his fellow colleagues were keen to support the idea.

Yet to be unpackaged due to the current restrictions, the staff are looking forward to enjoying the electric massage chairs and some much-earned rest and relaxation.

## Annabel Crabb

**Thanks to ABC journalist Annabel Crabb for this lovely feedback.**

And to all our amazing staff across the District who keep smiling through these incredibly challenging times.

annabelcrabb Thank you to the incredibly friendly and competent people who looked after my youngest at the RPA this afternoon when these beauties were involved in the least-original injury imaginable (wear wrist guard thingies, skaterz!) Anyway, could not have been more impressed ... health workers months and months into a pandemic outbreak and still capable of cheer, kindness and patience even with an annoying minor injury. Thank you Joseph, Simon, MK, Eliot, Emily and everyone else who looked after us. Great work RPA and every health or health-adjacent worker who is fed up to the teeth but still smiling and working hard ❤️

## Greek Herald showing their support

**It is great to see our community newspapers spreading the importance of vaccination with *The Greek Herald* visiting our pop-up community vaccination clinic in Belmore and doing the special interview with our General Manager of Population Health, Renee Moreton.**

A huge thanks also to the team at Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Belmore and District "All Saints" who provided the Gymnasium for a clinic to be set up.

We're seeing so many people coming forward to get the jab and we are so grateful.