

# HealthMatters

Sydney – it's *your* local health district

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## Leading-edge tech to enhance health outcomes



**Work on an Australian-first cutting-edge health and technology complex on the RPA campus will start soon thanks to a grant of \$143.3 million over four years by the NSW Government.**

The Sydney Biomedical Accelerator (SBA) will be a state-of-the-art biomedical research complex aimed at fast tracking real-world health outcomes by integrating fundamental, clinical and patient-centred research.

It will be located in the Tech Central precinct and will be a partnership between the District, the NSW Government and the University

of Sydney in collaboration with the Centenary Institute.

The SBA will support multidisciplinary collaboration between world-leading teams of clinicians, scientists, engineers, computer scientists, entrepreneurs and research and industry partners – all with a focus on better outcomes for patients.

“Investing in these state-of-the-art facilities will dramatically shorten the time between scientific discovery



and health outcomes for patients and their families, getting people the answers they need faster,” Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson said.

The SBA will also greatly enhance RPA's \$750 million redevelopment. It will be located at the back of the RPA campus, and will physically join RPA with the University of Sydney.

Early works will start this year, with initial occupation occurring from 2026.



*Click here or scan code to watch video of the SBA funding announcement*



## Message from the Chief Executive



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

**It was fantastic to hold Innovation Week again this year as a hybrid event – and to connect with each other to recognise the incredible work being undertaken across our District with our community and patients.**

Thank you to everyone who participated in the events across the week and helped showcase our outstanding health services.

It has been another busy month for the District, not only with Innovation Week but with a number of exciting announcements including the extra \$140 million in funding for the Sydney Biomedical Accelerator, a funding boost

of \$743 million for palliative care across NSW and the start of the revitalisation of the western side of the RPA campus.

This news is exciting as it will ensure we can continue to provide the very best care for our patients and the community, seeing quicker advancements in healthcare, in particular with the collaboration of clinicians, scientists and engineers who continue to push the boundaries of science and become closer to cures for many diseases and health conditions.

We are very excited about what is on the horizon including the continued planning for the RPA redevelopment.

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 of our staff during the double impact of COVID-19 and influenza currently doing the rounds in the community.**

We know it has been challenging but our staff continue to show up to care for our community.

I would also like to congratulate everyone on a successful Innovation Week held at the beginning of the month. I was blown away by the impressive, world-class research and innovative progress being made across the District. It is truly inspirational how

dedicated our staff are to creating change for the greater good.

As the end of financial year approaches, we have had a number of exciting capital works announcements including the funding announcement for the Sydney Biomedical Accelerator, the works commencing for the RPA \$750 million redevelopment, and the start of the revitalisation of the western side of the RPA campus.

It is a very exciting time for the District and the community with the impact of this funding touching both current and future generations.





## Premier's palliative care boost

**Palliative care services across NSW will receive a \$743 million boost, in an announcement made by the Premier Dominic Perrottet at Concord Hospital.**

This will include an extra 600 nurses, allied health professionals, doctors and support staff.

There will also be improved access to pain management services for patients with life-limiting illnesses and services for those with late-stage chronic and degenerative conditions and cancer.

Outpatient and community health services will also be boosted. Plus, more than \$90 million will be used for capital investment to redevelop and refurbish NSW Health facilities, including new dedicated palliative care units at Westmead and Nepean hospitals.

The Head of Department for Concord



Palliative Care, Associate Professor Ghauri Aggarwal, was there at the announcement speaking about the importance of patients and families having access to high quality

compassionate end of life care, along with patient Margaret Harrison, 84, who was there to meet with the Premier's entourage about the exciting announcement.

## Portrait of a wonderful friend

**Colleagues, friends and family of much-loved doctor and former Director of Women's Health, Neonatology and Paediatrics at the District, Robert Ogle, gathered to unveil a specially commissioned portrait to hang in RPA Women and Babies in recognition of his significant contribution to Sydney Local Health District.**

Dr Ogle was one of our most esteemed and beloved staff members who died in April 2020, after a battle with cancer.

The portrait, by artist Paul Newton, was revealed during a ceremony attended by Dr Ogle's brother, Peter; Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson; Clinical Director of Women's Health, Neonatology and Paediatrics Professor Jonathan Carter; former colleagues Professor Jon Hyett, Dr Mona Marabani, Dr Jason Ting, Dr Ritu Mogra and other staff.

"Dr Ogle had a lifelong commitment to RPA and a vision to provide high-quality and equitable care to mothers, their babies and families every day," Dr Anderson said.

"He provided strong and supportive leadership at RPA and our District during his career and it's a fitting tribute that his portrait will now be hung in RPA Women and Babies in his memory. He was a wonderful friend and colleague. We miss him greatly."





## Innovation Week:

**Connection. Collaboration. Dreaming big for a bright future.**

**Innovation Week is a special time in Sydney Local Health District – when everyone comes together to thank staff, highlight services and share ideas about new ways to deliver compassionate, high-quality, patient-centred care.**

The theme for Innovation Week in 2022 was **Connection.**

**Collaboration. Dreaming big for a bright future.**

This year, hundreds of staff took the opportunity to register for each of the events, attending in person and virtually – many gathering for the first time since the District's pandemic response began.

Over five days, the District hosted a series of major events featuring more than 100 presenters whose contributions showcased the exemplary care staff provide for patients, their families and the community.

The week began with the **People Matter – Cuppa with a Colleague** initiative, which focussed on staff health and wellbeing, with many staff able to pause for a chat over a cup of tea.

“

Innovation Week brings together our staff, clinicians, researchers, industry partners, patients, families, consumers and the wider community and is an opportunity to highlight our services, network and collaborate

”

—Dr Teresa Anderson,  
District Chief Executive



**Highlights:**  
**Innovation Week 2022**  
*Click here or scan to view our featured picks*

The **Patient and Family Experience Symposium** focused on the experiences of the District's LGBTIQ+ communities and the people who support them.

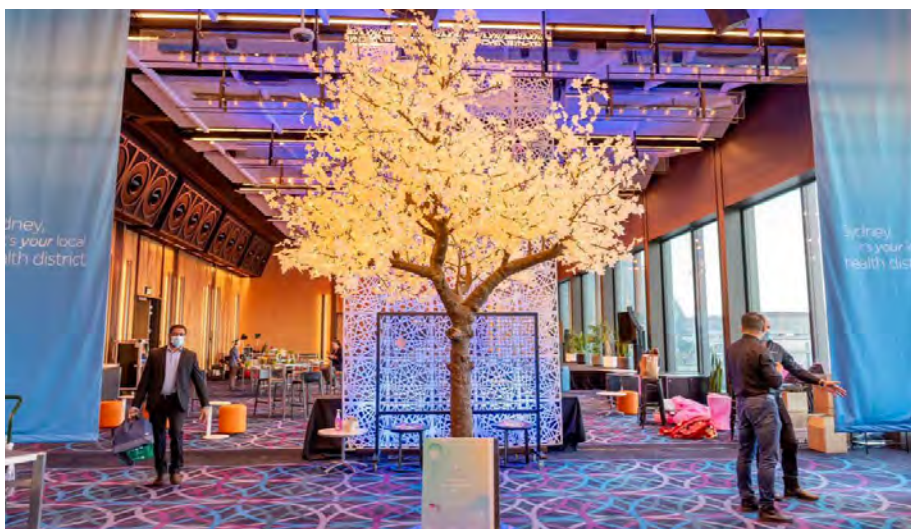
At the **Women's Leadership Breakfast**, NSW Health Secretary Susan Pearce shared uplifting stories from her 30-plus years in healthcare.

The **Care in the Community Forum** highlighted the depth of our partnerships with the District's communities, the **Clinical Trials Showcase** explored the development of new treatments and cures while **The Big Idea** spotlighted the drive of staff to transform healthcare.

Day Two of the **Sydney Innovation and Research Symposium** capped off the week, with lively discussion about the role of technology in healthcare, key note addresses about next generation psychiatric treatment and the recovery from COVID-19 and **The Pitch**.

People were also able to explore the SydneyConnect and Exhibition Centre.

As the symposium drew to a close, the Chair of the District's Board John Ajaka told staff: "I want to thank you for all of your care, your strength and your empathy. For the way you all came together to help each and every one of us".







## Innovation Week: snapshot!



## Robotics summit

**We've always led the way in robotic surgery.**

In 2015, RPA was the first public tertiary referral hospital in Australia to have this state-of-the art technology available and we also opened the Southern Hemisphere's first robotic training institute for surgeons.

Now, we run the second biggest multidisciplinary surgical robotics summit in the world and the only one of its kind in Australia.

More than 500 delegates gathered at the Sydney Masonic Centre to listen to leading national and international robotic surgeons on the latest advancements.

Convened by RPA urological surgeons Dr Scott Leslie and Dr Ruban Thanigasalam, the Surgical Robotics and Innovation Summit not only featured some of the newest systems on the market, but also 3D printing, augmented reality, and immunofluorescence technology, all now being more broadly used across surgery.



Nine surgical robots were on display – some for the first time – providing delegates with a hands-on experience never offered before.

The summit featured programs on orthopaedics, upper GI, colorectal, thoracic, cardiac, nursing, head and neck/ENT, gynaecology and urology.

Six surgeons from the USA, UK, Singapore and Korea joined our local faculty of 92 to share their knowledge and experience in robotic surgery, along with 29 international surgeons joining in virtually.

"The unique multidisciplinary aspect allows us as surgeons to share ideas and data from the latest research in surgical robotics and learn from other specialties

on technique and approaches," says Dr Thanigasalam.

And there is much more on the horizon, says Dr Leslie.

"These things are no longer science fiction. With these additional technologies, we'll offer even more benefits to our patients."





## World-first trial sounds rich



**In a world-first trial, eight hearing impaired patients having Cochlear implants at RPA also underwent gene therapy to regenerate nerve fibres in their ears.**

Those fibres then grow toward the Cochlear implant electrodes, giving patients a richer sound experience. And it's changed their lives. Early follow ups with this patient group are looking very promising thanks to the research and work being done by both RPA's Professor Catherine Birman and researchers on the trial. Thanks to Professor Birman (pictured) for this amazing work and all those involved in the trial. We are excited to see what is to come.

## Rewarding the x-factor



**The Sydney Institute for Women, Children and their Families held its inaugural Seed Funding Program hosted by Professor Andrew Baillie.**

Taking out first place was the Head of Obstetrics at RPA, Dr Brad De Vries, who hopes to improve outcomes for mothers and babies by reducing the use of medications to induce labour with his study "The EASE-Out Trial: EASing oxytocin in Early labour: OUTcomes for mothers and babies".

Grants of \$20,000 were awarded by the Institute to assist innovative research projects, with Dr De Vries given a surprise boost of \$10,000 on the day from Dr Teresa Anderson AM, the District's Chief Executive.

Other winners included second place winner, Dr Arianne Sweeting, Staff Specialist in Endocrinology at RPA, for "Low carbohydrate breakfast for improved gestational diabetes mellitus management".

And a tie for third place went to Dr Sarah Taki, Coordinator at the District's Population Health Research and Evaluation Hub for "Taking health literacy and cultural context into consideration in developing a web-based healthy Beginnings program for CALD communities".

Joint winner Dr Sylvia Lim-Gibson, Staff Specialist Psychiatrist and the Director of the Parent and Baby Unit and Acting Clinical Director of the District's Mental Health Service, and

team for "Piloting an intervention to promote social connections amongst culturally diverse women with identified vulnerability in the perinatal period".

There was also a people's choice award given to Dr Amelia Fernandes, Advanced Trainee Endocrinology at RPA for "The impact of pre-conception weight loss on ovulation, micronutrient status and time to pregnancy in women with ovulatory dysfunction, PCOS and overweight/obesity – implications for clinical practice: the PreBabe fertility study".

"It was incredibly hard to select the winners," said the Institute's Director, Dr George Johnson.

The event showcased research proposals from nine finalists who are institute affiliates working in the District.

All participants were asked to present the "X-Factor" in their pitch, in front of a distinguished judging panel, which included Dr Adrienne Gordon, Institute Co-Chair, and Professor Sameer Bhole AM, the Clinical Director of Oral Health at Sydney Dental Hospital, who was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2022 Queen's Birthday Honours.

This event was an opportunity to showcase the Institute's role in the District and the expanding research capabilities for staff and affiliates.

The institute is a central hub for research, evaluation, education and policy focused on the health and wellbeing of women, children and their families.





## Queens Birthday honours

**Members of Sydney Local Health District and the wider NSW Health family have been named in the Queen's Birthday 2022 Honours List in recognition of their outstanding service or exceptional achievement.**

Head of Respiratory and Environmental Epidemiology at the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, Professor Guy Marks, has also been appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his distinguished service to respiratory medicine and research, and to tertiary education.

The District would also like to acknowledge Clinical Professor Sameer Bhole, Christina Efthymiades and David Kenyon who have each been appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

Clinical Professor Bhole has been the Clinical Director of Oral Health at Sydney Dental Hospital since 2005 and has been recognised for his significant service to dentistry, to

education and research, and to professional associations.

Ms Efthymiades has been involved in The Bloody Great Committee which raises funds for the Haematology Clinical Research Unit at Concord Hospital and has been recognised for her significant service to charitable organisations, and to the public relations industry.

Mr Kenyon is a supporter of medical research projects through the Centenary Institute, based at RPA, and the Chris O'Brien Life House Foundation.

And the District would also like to acknowledge John Gatfield, Jack Hawkins, Jennifer Jones, Dr Sarah Maguire and Brian Myerson who have been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).

Elizabeth Koff, who was NSW Health Secretary from 2016 to 2022, was also recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her



*Distinguished service to the people of NSW: a well-deserved honour for Dr Kerry Chant AO PSM*

significant service to public health administration and governance, and to professional organisations.

NSW Health Chief Medical Officer Dr Kerry Chant PSM, has been appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for her distinguished service to the people of NSW through public health administration and governance, and to medicine.

They are among almost 1,000 Australians recognised on the Queen's Birthday 2022 Honours List.

## Artwork to inspire and heal

**RPA patient Rosemarie Slater was a strong woman.**

"Her doctor gave her three to six months to live. She lasted seven. She was a fighter," says her sister Gail Daylight.

Rosemarie, a proud Kamilaroi woman, died from lung cancer – the most common cause of cancer death in Aboriginal people.

But our Aboriginal Cancer Services Working Group is collaborating with local communities, the Central and Eastern Primary Health Network, BreastScreen NSW, our Public Health Unit and the Aboriginal Medical

Service Redfern to develop strategies to improve cancer outcomes.

And we're continuing to make culturally safe spaces for Aboriginal patients and their families to receive care.

As part of that, an artwork depicting Rosemarie's cancer journey has been officially unveiled during a special ceremony.

"It represents her experience with the health care system and the support she received from her family during her journey," says Gail.

"It's about connection. She's gone, but she's still around us all.



"Aboriginal patients will know that the District is supportive of them and will care for them throughout their diagnosis and treatment."

The painting will hang in the Infusion Centre at RPA.



## Celebrating International Cleaners Day

**Environmental Services staff are the backbone of patient and family centred care in Sydney Local Health District.**



In June, we celebrated International Cleaners Day, which is an opportunity to recognise and show appreciation for the more than 430-strong Environmental Services staff who work in

hospitals, services and facilities across the District.

The Environmental Services team has a direct impact on each patient's healthcare journey, ensuring hygiene and safety is maintained daily, including Metchie Cano and Salome Overs (pictured), who joined the team two years ago.

Thanks for all our Environmental Services staff.

## A strong foundation for RPA HealthOne

**If you live around Green Square, you may have noticed our RPA HealthOne facility taking shape.**

The ground floor concrete slab is down – which means we are another step closer to bringing a little bit of RPA to Zetland.

The two-storey building, at 944 Bourke Street, has been designed by our clinicians to ensure it can deliver a range of specialist health services to the community without the need to travel to Camperdown.

We'll provide care across the spectrum from prevention to early detection and chronic health management.

And we're working with the University of Sydney and the Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network to contribute to research which improves services and patient outcomes. We are excited to see the start of this exciting new health facility.



## Vaccination Centre closes its doors



**It has been 16 months since we opened the doors to one of the nation's first COVID-19 vaccination centres at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.**

On that day, then prime minister Scott Morrison praised the "meticulous health planning" that had gone into the new centre on Mallett Street, Camperdown.

Since then, the RPA team has delivered more than 325,000 vaccinations – an incredible effort.

But all good things must come to an end... so a morning tea was held to recognise the incredible work of all staff – from nurses and doctors to security staff and administration officers – who joined forces to work tirelessly to protect our community.

You are all amazing and we are so grateful for your hard work.

## Crazy socks for Docs

**Healthcare workers can find it particularly difficult to look after their own mental health when they focus every day on putting others first.**



But mental illness impacts us all and we can't help others if we are distressed or drained.

So on Crazy Socks 4 Docs day, we raised awareness of the mental stressors on our medical staff, and checked in with all our colleagues across our hospitals and services.

Let's normalise talking about our mental health and ensure we can all seek the care we need without fear of judgement, losing our jobs or missing opportunities.

Let's keep having each other's backs.

## A new space for students to enjoy

**About 240 students a year are on clinical placements at RPA.**

Thanks to some amazing work from RPA's executive and engineering teams, plus staff and students from the University of Sydney Central Clinical School, we now have a refurbished, improved common room in our Kerry Packer Education Centre. The space was officially opened by our Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson along with the Head of Medical School and Dean, Professor Cheryl Jones.

