



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

**This report is for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. Financial data has been audited by PKF, Newcastle NSW 2300. This report is available to download from [hunterprimarycare.com.au](https://hunterprimarycare.com.au)**

**Hunter Primary Care is committed to embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the provision of health services. We welcome all people irrespective of ethnicity, lifestyle choice, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity.**

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following Report may contain images of deceased persons which may cause sadness or distress.**

**HUNTER PRIMARY CARE ACKNOWLEDGES THE FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUNTER NEW ENGLAND CENTRAL COAST PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK (HNECCPHN).**

**HUNTER PRIMARY CARE ACKNOWLEDGES ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE AS THE FIRST PEOPLES OF OUR REGION AND WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO THEIR ELDERS PAST AND PRESENT WITH WHOM WE SHARE THIS GREAT COUNTRY.**

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# WHO ARE WE?

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Vision

Good health and wellbeing for all.

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Mission

To deliver integrated health and wellness services that help each person be their best.

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Our unique  
value proposition

By listening to our clients, we design and deliver holistic, integrated health and wellbeing services with care and support. We invest in our people, service innovation and systems to meet the needs of diverse communities.

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How we serve



## Listen

We understand everyone's health care journey is different.



## Care

We deliver quality primary health, mental health and after hours care in partnership with our network of health professionals.



## Connect

We connect clients with services and supports to give them the skills, choice, and control to manage their physical and mental wellbeing.



# OUR REGION

The Hunter Primary Care region is located on the NSW east coast and services the following areas:

Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Maitland, Cessnock, Singleton, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter, Dungog, Great Lakes, Gloucester, Greater Taree, Wyong, Tamworth and Armidale.

Our region covers the traditional Aboriginal nations of Anaiwan, Awabakal, Biripi, Darkinjung, Gaewegal, Kamilaroi, Wonaruah and Worimi peoples.

# AREA OF OPERATIONS



# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

**765**

clients supported by Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Services throughout the year

**10**

appearances in local and national media

**270**

NDIS Participants supported

**45,241**

GP Access appointments

**200**

experienced GP's in the After Hours Access team

**92%**

satisfaction among Psychology Clients

**“HIGH QUALITY SERVICES WITH QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED STAFF.”**

Hunter Primary Care client, 2021.



**“HUNTER PRIMARY CARE HAS GIVEN ME ACCESS TO VARIOUS COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, ENCOURAGED THE DEVELOPMENT OF MY GOALS AND ADVOCATED FOR MY DESIRE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY”.**

Hunter Primary Care client, 2021.

**1,050**

external IT Support clients

**3**

Innovation Challenge  
ideas funded

**25,000**

Psychology session hours delivered

**27**

clinical algorithms to guide the  
management of an unwell person  
residing in the aged care facility



# OUR STRATEGY



We design, deliver and continuously improve coordinated care in response to the needs and expectations of our clients.

- Listen and engage
- Easy access
- Inclusive
- Continuous improvement

## HEALTHIER CLIENTS

*By listening to our clients, we design and deliver holistic, integrated health and wellbeing services with care and support. We invest in our people, service innovation and systems to meet the needs of diverse communities.*



## STRONG BUSINESS

Our strong business fundamentals ensure we can continue to serve our community in the long term.

- Sustainable growth
- Investment in systems
- Working in partnership

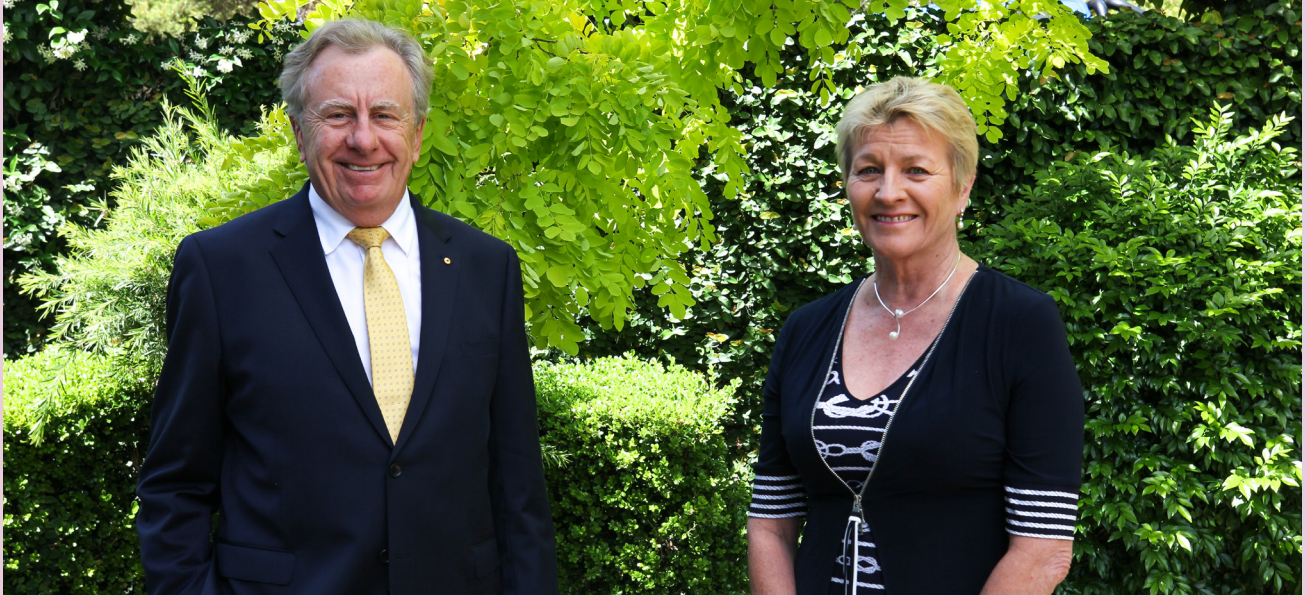
## ENGAGED WORKFORCE

We invest in creating a culture where our people are empowered, engaged and focused on the client.

- High performing staff
- Embrace learning
- Innovation mindset



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR AND CEO



What a year it has been; from watching our local communities open back up and get back to what we somewhat called 'normality', to falling right back into regional lockdowns followed by mandatory vaccinations for health workers.

To say we are proud is an understatement. This past year brought many challenges to the staff of Hunter Primary Care. The year wasn't business as usual, rather a time of great stress and uncertainty in our communities, and a moment in time when the work we do was most critical. Even in the darkest days of the pandemic, Hunter Primary Care rallied together for the sake of our clients, and our work continues to make a real difference to our community. We value and appreciate the efforts of our team.

In early 2020, COVID-19 saw most traditional face-to-face service delivery methods pivot to digital methods overnight which continued throughout the year. The team continues to adapt to the change in service delivery models, as well as NSW Health public health orders and control measures, while coaching and advocating to improve access to services to minimise impact during the pandemic for our clients.

Our GP Access After Hours continued providing the community of the Lower Hunter with access to an after-hours GP service in a number of locations. This is particularly important at a time when hospitals are reporting a significant increase in the number of presentations to emergency departments resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The service took over 65,000 calls, over 45,000 patients were seen in clinics, resulting in estimated savings to the public health system of over \$15.6m. The Aged Care Emergency Service (ACE) also managed 2,831 calls throughout the year, and continued to coordinate multi-organisation interagency meetings inviting 41 Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) to join the established Hunter New England region Community of Practice (COP).

The year also saw an expansion of our Allied Health services across both the NDIS and Care Coordination and

Supplementary Services (CCSS) team, with an additional Accredited Practising Dietitian joining the team and the introducing of OT services in the Northern NSW Kingscliff area. We also saw further expansion of our Specialist Support Coordination team, and the introduction of a revolutionary way of managing chronic disease and staying connected during COVID-19 with online Shared Health Appointments for clients.

The CCSS team developed and delivered the Yantiin Kalabara – '5 ways to a healthier you' program in March 2020, as a 'Closing the Gap' initiative funded through the HNECCPHN's Healthy Weight Community grants. The program included a rotating pitstop station-based model delivered through regional primary and high schools with a large percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments. The program won the 'Closing the Gap' Award at the 2021 HNEHPHN Primary Care Quality & Innovation Awards. This is awarded to a service provider that demonstrates being responsive to the diversity of, and differences in, our communities to address health inequalities. Lee Fong, Senior Clinical Director of GP Access also won the Primary Care Leader Individual Award at the ceremony.

The Way Back Support Service team featured in an ABC News story with NSW Health and the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, Bronnie Taylor, promoting the initiatives being funded as part of the Towards Zero Suicides strategy. The story aired on ABC's 7pm bulletin across every state on Sunday 6th June 2021, which [you can watch here.](#)

Hunter Primary Care's Psychology services continued to be delivered via Telehealth and face-to-face where possible due to the impact of COVID-19. This enabled continuity of service delivery, particularly in the context of times when the community experienced significant psychological distress. 92% of clients reported satisfaction or high satisfaction with the service they were receiving.

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR AND CEO

Despite being over 80% busier than the national average for headspace centres, headspace Newcastle's clinical outcomes and client satisfaction continued to be equal or above the national average. The service also coordinated a number of wellbeing, vocational and community support events and programs throughout the year.

For almost 10 years, Hunter Primary Care has demonstrated a solid commitment to reconciliation. Our vision for reconciliation is to build strong, sustainable and mutually respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. We have achieved this by developing and implementing strategic Reconciliation Actions Plans that foster a journey of reconciliation through shared cultural knowledge, equity and equality, trust and mutual respect. During the period of our Innovate RAP 2019-2021, we delivered on numerous actions in our plan and implemented initiatives in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Hunter Primary Care made a public statement endorsing the Uluru Statement from the Heart. With the support of Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), we hosted a private screening of the documentary film, *Black Divaz*, with a special guest Jojo, one of the stars of *Black Divaz* and RuPaul's *Drag Race Australia*. Hunter Primary Care also partnered with local businesses, Tomago Aluminium, THIRTY3SOUTH Films and Snap Programs to support an Indigenous men's basketball team, Karuah Kinnections throughout the year, and celebrated a number of events including Closing the Gap Day, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. Funded through Round One of the Department of Health Indigenous Emerging Health Priorities grant, Hunter Primary Care's health awareness campaign was also developed throughout the year for launch in 2021/2022, which encourages young Aboriginal people to have an annual health check.

Hunter Primary Care is committed to innovation. We encourage our staff to think outside the box, contribute ideas, and explore opportunities to ensure Hunter Primary Care is not only keeping pace but leading the way in providing good health and wellbeing for all. In 2020 we held our inaugural Innovation Challenge to encourage staff to address a specific issue within our business and service delivery environment. The Challenge proved to be an outstanding success with funded projects including a mobile phone crisis card for Psychology clients, customisable digital documents/forms for care coordination, and the Pool Party Story Song to engage young people with drug and alcohol services. The Story Song achieved over two million impressions across social media platforms. Following on from this we launched the 2021 Innovation Challenge.

Our people play a key role in achieving our accomplishments and furthermore are central to the ongoing success of the organisation. The HR People and Culture Plan 2021 – 2025

developed in 2019 will enable the organisation to support our people to be their best. The plan focuses on four core pillars: Health, Safety and Wellbeing; Recruitment and Retention; Leadership and Development; and Rewards and Recognition. In February 2021, we took the next step in our plan by signing and implementing a new Enterprise Agreement (EA) to reinforce our company values of Respect, Excellence, Integrity and Recognition, attract and retain quality employees, and recognise and reward employees for their contributions and support employees to develop personally and professionally. Our bi-yearly Staff Culture Survey was also implemented throughout the year.

In March 2021, we embarked on a planning process to develop a Strategic Plan that enabled Hunter Primary Care to sustainably achieve greater health and social outcomes in the communities we serve. The Strategic Plan 2025 provides the framework for us to take the next steps in our targeted business growth, and increase our service provision and reach to assist more communities, regional and remote.

The Plan encompasses three strategic domains that are mutually reinforcing in a 'virtuous cycle'. The virtuous cycle recognises that we improve our capacity to support client health when we learn from them, and invest in the organisation so we may support our workforce to perform - escalating our impact over time.

We look forward to delivering the Strategic Plan from 2021 onwards, and more information and the Plan can be found on [our website](#).

Finally, when we moved to our Warabrook building in early 2018 we had over 20% spare office space capacity to accommodate growth in staff numbers. This growth has resulted in having to modify our space, and construction of an additional building named 'The Annex' in Warabrook commenced in May 2021. We also commenced implementation of a Client Management System to streamline our processes and improve our client and employee experience, and introduced an internal intranet for staff resources and news.

These were exciting steps forward for Hunter Primary Care, as we grow and plan for the future.

Stay safe, stay well.

**Brenda Ryan - Chief Executive Officer**

**Richard Anicich AM - Chair**



# GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT



**Hunter Primary Care Executive team: Primary Care Executive – Keith Drinkwater, Mental Health Services Executive – Katrina Delamothe, CEO – Brenda Ryan and Corporate Services Executive – Jack Hanson**

Our CEO is responsible for overseeing the operations of the company to ensure activities align with and meet the strategic objectives and direction of the organisation as determined by the Board. The Constitution of Hunter Primary Care Limited (ACN 061 783 015) sets out the responsibilities of the Board and gives it the power to govern the organisation in order to achieve its strategic objectives. The Board, at 30 June 2021, has eight members – four Member-nominated Directors and four Board-nominated Directors.

## **The Board is responsible for:**

- Corporate governance;
- Setting the strategic direction for the company and goals for management;
- Monitoring the performance of the company against the strategic framework and goals;
- Ensuring compliance with statutory responsibilities;
- Monitoring financial performance;
- Overseeing risk management.

Hunter Primary Care manages the governance of the organisation through its Board, policies and four Board sub-committees.

## **Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee**

Assisting the Board to effectively discharge its responsibilities for financial reporting, internal and external audit functions, risk management, internal control and compliance framework and its external accountability responsibilities.

## **Clinical Governance Committee**

Providing advice on issues relating to clinical safety, quality and scope of practice for Hunter Primary Care and its services, including:

- Developing Board policies pertaining to clinical governance for approval by the Board;
- Reviewing and reporting complaints and clinical incidents; and
- Providing advice to management and/or the Board regarding operational or strategic issues related to clinical governance.

## **Nomination and Remuneration Committee**

Assisting the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities to members of Hunter Primary Care on matters relating to the Constitution of the company, the composition, structure and operation of the Board, CEO selection, and remuneration. The Nomination and Remuneration Committee also assists the Board by recommending Board policy and nominations that require Board approval.

## **Information, Communication and Technology Governance Committee**

Assisting the Board to ensure IT governance in providing effective safeguards and controls, providing guidance on proposed IT initiatives and projects prior to the approval process and providing governance oversight by monitoring progress on major IT projects.

We also utilise advice and feedback from a number of program related advisory groups, reference groups and consortia to provide guidance and direction on service delivery and program priorities. A number of collaborative projects are also undertaken with the Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD).



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## **Mr Richard Anicich AM, Chair BCom, LLB, FAICD**



Elected in November 2015 and re-elected in November 2018, Richard is Chair of the Board and also Chair of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee.

Richard is a consultant to Sparke Helmore Lawyers. He is Chair of the Committee for the Hunter and a past President of the Hunter Business Chamber (2011 - 2014). Richard is also the Chair of Rural and Remote Medical Services Ltd.

He is a Honorary Professor in the School of Law at the University of Newcastle and a member of the Advisory Boards for both the Faculty of Business and Law and for the School of Law.

In 2018, Richard was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to the community of the Hunter, to business development and medical research, and to the law

## **Dr Milton Sales OAM, Deputy Chair MBBS, Dip RANZCOG, FRACGP**



Elected in November 2012 and re-elected in November 2016, 2017 and 2020, Milton is Chair of the Clinical Governance Committee.

Milton is a Practice Principal and GP in the Newcastle region, as well as a supervisor for medical students for the University of Newcastle and GP Registrars for GP Synergy. He is also the current Programme Committee Chair and previous Chair of the Hunter Postgraduate Medical Institute (HPMI).

Over the past 38 years, Milton has been following a passion for improving health care through continuing professional health education program delivery via HPMI.

## **Mr Steven Adams, AdvDip Bus Man, FAICD**



Appointed in February 2012, elected November 2015 and re-elected November 2017 and 2019, Steven is a member of the Clinical Governance Committee.

Steven is a proud Kamilaroi Man and Hunter business owner with a background in engineering, construction, defence industry, vocational education, health and community enterprises and currently also serves on the Boards of WentWest PHN, NSW Aboriginal Housing Office and President of Itji-Maruu Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Steven was a founding Director of the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and has served on numerous Boards, Committees and Ministerial Taskforces over the past 20 years.

Steven ensures that Aboriginal perspective and input are included at the highest level of governance and decision making and brings an understanding and working knowledge of the Federal health reforms currently being implemented nationally such as 'Closing The Gap' initiatives.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## **Dr Sarah Bayley, BMed, BN, FRACGP, GAICD**



Elected November 2019, Sarah is a member of the Clinical Governance Committee.

Sarah is a practice principal and GP in Raymond Terrace in the Hunter region. Sarah studied Medicine at the University of Newcastle and completed her internship and residency in Newcastle working at The John Hunter, Mater and Maitland hospitals.

She spent eight years working as a medical educator in the Vocational training of specialist GPs.

Sarah has a special interest in Governance and served as Chair of the Board of Valley to Coast (VTC) – General Practice Training for 8 of her 10 years at VTC.

## **Ms Jennifer Hayes, BBus, MBus, CPA, GAICD**



Elected November 2015 and re-elected November 2017 and 2020, Jennifer is Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee. Jennifer has over 20 years' experience in Executive and Non-executive positions in a diverse range of sectors including fast moving consumer goods, utilities, primary health and tertiary education.

Jennifer is Chief Financial Officer of Hunter Water Corporation and formerly held corporate leadership positions with Mars Incorporated as Finance Director Central Europe, Group Financial Controller, Australia/ New Zealand and CFO New Zealand.

Jennifer is a Board member of Regional Development Australia (Hunter), Chair of Cessnock City Council Audit Committee and a former member of the University Council of Charles Sturt University. Jennifer is also co-founder of the City2City Community Foundation, raising funds for Albury Wodonga Health.

## **Dr Peter Hopkins , MBBS(Hons), MMedSc(EPI), FRACGP**



Elected November 2014 and re-elected in November 2016 and 2019, and was Chair of Hunter Primary Care Board from 2015-2018. Peter is a member of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee and a member of the Information, Communication and Technology Governance Committee.

Peter is the owner of Marketown Health. He was the founding Chair of the Hunter Division of General Practice and then for the Hunter Urban Division of General Practice. He continued on that Board throughout its existence and was on the Board when it became the Hunter Medicare Local until 2012 and was re-elected in 2014.

Peter was on the Board of GPNSW (then the Alliance of NSW Divisions of General Practice) from 2001 to 2007. He was Chair of that group from 2003 to 2005.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## **Mr Scott Puxty , BCom, Dip Law, MBusAdmin, GAICD**

Elected in November 2015 and re-elected in November 2018, Scott is a member of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee.



Scott is a partner of Cattle, Carmichael Legal and is a lawyer with 20 years' experience working in the areas of commercial dispute resolution, workplace relations, compliance and risk management.

Scott was previously a partner of two national law firms for almost 10 years. Throughout his career, Scott has worked with a diverse range of local and international corporate clients in the areas of health and disability services, hospitality, IT, infrastructure, manufacturing and engineering, mining and property development, as well as state and federal government agencies and NGOs.

Scott presently serves as a Public Officer for the Barkuma Neighbourhood Centre, a Hunter based Aboriginal NGO.

## **Mr Laurence "Ben" Wilkins , BPharm, AACPA, FAICD**

Elected in November 2012 and re-elected in November 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2020, Ben is Chair of the Information, Communication and Technology Governance Committee and a member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee.



Ben is a registered pharmacist in Newcastle, a former proprietor and has experience in business management as well as clinical pharmacy services. Ben's appointments include the Pharmacy Board of Australia and the Board of Hunter New England Local Health District.

Ben has an interest in the use of technology to improve health outcomes and provides Clinical Reference Lead services for the Australian Digital Health Agency.

Ben is passionate about preventative health measures around lifestyle while improving the community's wellbeing, particularly via Hunter Primary Care services.



# OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Hunter Primary Care has a strong commitment towards reconciliation, and we are focused on building relationships based on mutual respect and trust between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

Hunter Primary Care acknowledges the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across Australia, and the importance of providing culturally sensitive services that meet community and individual needs. Our reconciliation journey is an important step towards creating a more inclusive and respectful nation – where the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures are valued.

Throughout the year, Hunter Primary Care has worked towards the completion of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) July 2019 - July 2021 that has provided a framework for us to realise a vision for reconciliation. The RAP demonstrates our commitment to implementing and measuring practical actions that aims to build respectful relationships and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. To strengthen and expand on our commitment towards reconciliation, we are developing and implementing programs for cultural learning, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and supplier diversity.

Hunter Primary Care's Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group consists of a diverse group of people from multidisciplinary backgrounds across all areas of the organisation. Seven Aboriginal staff are active members of the current working group. Through the RAP commitments and Hunter Primary Care's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service programs, Hunter Primary Care is recognised as an organisation that is progressing and making a difference in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes and working towards 'Closing the Gap' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's life expectancy.

Our journey of reconciliation continues as we commit to a Stretch Rap 2022 to 2025.



# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

## Black Divaz

With traditional large-scale NAIDOC Week celebrations on hold in 2020, Hunter Primary Care proudly acknowledged NAIDOC Week in style with the support of Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). A private screening of 'Black Divaz' – a one-of-a-kind documentary celebrating drag performance as an art form through the lens of Australian Indigeneity – was hosted on Tuesday 10th November at Event Cinemas Kotara. We welcomed special guest, a star of the film, Jojo Zaho, to perform for us on the night. Following the screening of Black Divaz Jojo joined a Q&A session, which gave the audience a candid insight into the documentary and Jojo's experiences as an Aboriginal drag performer.

View Jojo Zaho's performance and Q&A session by [clicking the here.](#)



## Karuah Kinnections

In February 2021, Hunter Primary Care partnered with local businesses, Tomago Aluminium, THIRTY3SOUTH Films and Snap Programs to support the Indigenous men's basketball team, Karuah Kinnections. A launch event for the team was held at Karuah Mission in February 2021, and attended by community supporters, Member for Port Stephens, Kate Washington MP and Mayor of Port Stephens, Ryan Palmer. [Watch it here.](#)



# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

## Yantiin Kalabara – 5 ways to a healthier you

Yantiin Kalabara is an Aboriginal Awabakal phrase that means - Everyone Shining Bright. In March 2021, Hunter Primary Care delivered the Yantiin Kalabara program to five primary schools in the Hunter region with a large percentage of Indigenous enrolments. Aimed at educating young people in regional areas to make healthy living choices, the program focussed on bringing good health and wellbeing messages to young people that included traditional Indigenous games and a dance and song produced by local Aboriginal dancers and musicians.

The series of “Pit Stop stations” involved 30-minute presentations and interactive engagements with local health providers in an effort to ‘Close the Gap’ to create better health awareness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous communities. The hands-on sessions were directed at healthy thinking that included eating habits, increased physical activity and decreased screen time.

The Yantiin Kalabara program took out the coveted prize of ‘Closing the Gap’ award at the inaugural HNECCPHN Innovation Awards in 2021. [Click here to see more information.](#)



A subsequent Bush Tucker program was delivered by the Hunter Primary Care team, who visited K-6 Students at three schools to have a yarn about bush tucker. Students were invited to get hands on as they touched and tasted different traditional bush foods. Students were shown a rainbow of ingredients as they assembled and created delicious healthy meals.

## Strong Mob Healthy Community

Funded through Round One of the Department of Health Indigenous Emerging Health Priorities grant, the health awareness campaign encourages young Aboriginal people to have an annual health check. Over the 2020/2021 financial year, Hunter Primary Care worked in collaboration with local Aboriginal communities to better understand some of the needs, wants and barriers young people have to addressing their health and wellbeing. Throughout Hunter Primary Care's research and engagement with the community, it was identified that youth wanted to hear from their community influencers about the need for a health check, better understand what is involved when having a health check, and where to get one.

The final Strong Mob campaign features a series of videos of four key Aboriginal influencers, Kobie Dee, BIRDZ, Naomi Wenitong and Dr Joel Wenitong (The Last Kinection), who are well-established in the Australian Aboriginal hip-hop music scene. In the videos, influencers share their personal stories regarding the importance of their health and wellbeing, their connection to country, culture and community.

The Strong Mob campaign launched in July 2021 and [more information can be found here.](#)



## National Reconciliation Week 2021

Hunter Primary Care hosted a staff event that included a guest speaker presentation by local Elder, the late Uncle Bill Smith. We also showed a screening of the documentary film 'In My Own Words', that follows the journey of adult Aboriginal students and their teachers as they discover the transformative power of reading and writing for the first time in their lives.



# IN THE MEDIA: Hunter Primary Care

## Is work a pain in the neck? Tips for a healthier workstation

This article was published in the Newcastle Herald on April 23, 2021 and discussed how taking time to set up your workstation correctly is an investment in your health. The article was contributed to by Jess Ryan, an Occupational Therapist at Hunter Primary Care.

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*“If your workstation’s not correctly set up for you specifically, lots can go wrong”*

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## Community Kinnections keep Karuah-based Indigenous basketball team on court for another season

This article was published in the Port Stephens Examiner on March 4, 2021 and highlighted how Hunter Primary Care teamed up with Tomago Aluminum, THIRTY3SOUTH Films and Snap Programs to support the Karuah Kinnections men’s basketball team.

## Staying connected key to overcoming COVID mental health challenges

This article was published in the Newcastle Herald on October 16, 2021 and discussed the many barriers people have had to overcome during the COVID-19 lockdown. It explores ways to physical and emotionally connect with family, friends and the community.

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*“Talk to people you trust about how you’re feeling - social contact is important.”*

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*“Since the team was formed Karuah Mission has not reported a single suicide attempt and the general mental health of the young players has improved.”*

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## Slow start for COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Hunter general practices

This article was published in the Newcastle Herald on March 22, 2021 and was written by reporter Anita Beaumont. Hunter Primary Care’s Senior Clinical Director was asked to make a comment.

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*“There was so much enthusiasm to get COVID-19 vaccinations”*

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## Black Divaz on show for NAIDOC Week

This article was published in the Newcastle Weekly on November 2, 2020 and detailed Hunter Primary Care’s NAIDOC Week Event. HPC hosted a private screening of Black Divaz – a one-of-a-kind documentary celebrating drag performance as an art form through the lens of Australian Indigeneity. They took comments from CEO, Brenda Ryan.

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*“We are committed to embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the provision of health services”*

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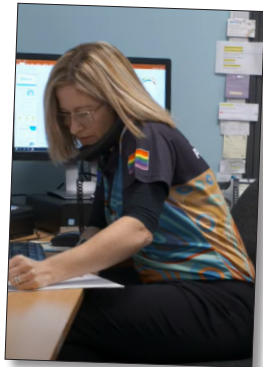


# Radio and Television

## MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ARE PLAGUING WORKERS, BUT THIS CONSTRUCTION SITE IS PAYING ATTENTION

Danielle Adams and The Way Back Support Service team were invited by NSW Health and the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, Bronnie Taylor to participate in an ABC News story with Conor Duffy promoting the initiatives being funded as part of the Towards Zero Suicides strategy.

The story aired on ABC's 7pm bulletin across every state on Sunday 6 June 2021.



## GET READY TO GO VIRAL! ANIMATED MUSIC VIDEO MADE IN NEWCASTLE

Hunter Primary Care was featured on ABC Radio's Mornings with Kia Handley on December 11, 2020.

They discussed Hunter Primary Care's StorySong entitled 'Pool Party' was co-written by Ms Wendy Munro and Dr Kylie Bailey who have over 20 years' experience in drug and alcohol health. The story is based on their clinical experiences with young people.

The animation and the final production of Pool Party was co-designed with the sta-

ff and recent graduates from the School of Creative Industries, University of Newcastle.



# Links Below:

## Articles:

- [www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7465693/adapting-to-the-challenges](http://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7465693/adapting-to-the-challenges)
- [www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7215566/is-work-a-pain-in-the-neck-tips-for-a-healthier-workstation/?cs=5597](http://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7215566/is-work-a-pain-in-the-neck-tips-for-a-healthier-workstation/?cs=5597)
- [www.portstephensexaminer.com.au/story/7143856/community-kinnec-tions-keep-team-on-court/](http://www.portstephensexaminer.com.au/story/7143856/community-kinnec-tions-keep-team-on-court/)
- [iview.abc.net.au/video/NU2157Ho46S00](http://iview.abc.net.au/video/NU2157Ho46S00)
- [www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7177135/slower-start-for-gps-covid-vaccine-rollout-in-hunter/](http://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7177135/slower-start-for-gps-covid-vaccine-rollout-in-hunter/)
- [newcastleweekly.com.au/black-divaz-on-show-for-naidoc-week/](http://newcastleweekly.com.au/black-divaz-on-show-for-naidoc-week/)

## Radio interviews:

- Byron Williams from headspace Newcastle – 'Safe on Socials' webinar interview with ABC Newcastle August 2020
- Dr Melissa Kang on behalf of headspace Newcastle – 'Consent' webinar interview with ABC Newcastle June 2021
- Pool Party Story on ABC Newcastle: [www.abc.net.au/radio/newcastle/programs/mornings/newcastle-made-animation-about-binge-drinking/12974684](http://www.abc.net.au/radio/newcastle/programs/mornings/newcastle-made-animation-about-binge-drinking/12974684)

## Television:

- ABC News Story- Towards Zero Suicide Strategy: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD4jos3fIUk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD4jos3fIUk)

# ABORIGINAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Hunter Primary Care's Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing services include:

- Care Coordination and Supplementary Services (CCSS)
- Yudhilidin
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Aftercare Services

**'IT'S BEEN QUITE A COMFORTABLE FEELING  
TAKING OWNERSHIP OF MY LIFE WITH MY  
YUDHILIDIN CARE COORDINATOR POINTING ME  
IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. I'M LOOKING FORWARD  
TO LIVING LIFE KNOWING THAT I HAVE A RIGHT TO  
LIVE JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE'**

- Yudhilidin Participant, 2021

**459**

CCSS participants supported

**31**

CCSS referrals per month

**250**

Yudhilidin clients supported

**800**

Aftercare service contacts



# CARE COORDINATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES

The Care Coordination team has delivered the Integrated Team Care service, known by the community as the CCSS, for the tenth consecutive year. The service supports National 'Closing the Gap' initiatives by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with long-term conditions which may include: diabetes, respiratory or lung disease, cancer, cardiac or heart disease, renal or kidney disease and mental health conditions.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

- 459 participants were supported
- An average of 31 referrals per month were received
- Aboriginal Health Workers supported over 216 people
- Aboriginal Health Workers saw an average of 18 referrals per month
- 42 Shared Health Appointments were provided to our clients

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Our model of care continues to focus on lifestyle health and capacity building skills and supports, known as lifestyle medicine. These include the introduction of additional health and wellbeing support groups (lifestyle peer-to-peer) meeting weekly and focusing on healthy lifestyle capacity building skills. In this series of consecutive consultations in a supportive group setting, clients are listening to, interacting with, and learning from each other. The COVID-19 pandemic required the team to pivot immediately from planned face-to-face groups to a virtual group platform environment. To support our clients to navigate this enormous change, the team introduced a Social Outreach role to focus on coaching clients capacity and ability to access email and connect with the online platforms by using their own device.

The team continues to focus on collecting Patient Reported-Outcome Measures (PROMs) and Patient Reported-Experience Measures (PREMs) from clients. Their experiences and health and wellbeing outcome results provide the team with feedback to inform service improvements.

The team were finalists at the inaugural HNECCPHN Quality and Innovation 2021 Awards in two categories:

- Supporting Patients Through Technology Award
- Primary Care Innovation Award for our work in the Virtual Shared Health Appointments and Response to Social Isolation

The team accepted an invitation by the NSW Government Strategic Reform and Planning Branch to contribute to their new NSW Health Virtual Care Strategy. This was following a presentation at the 2021 Aboriginal Chronic Conditions Network Conference regarding our "revolutionary way of managing chronic disease in primary care through Virtual Shared Health Appointments and Social Outreach Support."

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Our Aboriginal Health Worker team continues to be supported through workplace training, education and development towards their Aboriginal Health education qualifications. They anticipate to complete their studies and qualify for APHRA registration during the 2021/2022 period. This will further expand their scope of practice as Aboriginal Health Practitioners within the service for the local community.

The team will continue to develop the content in our suite of Shared Health Appointment service offerings using feedback from clients experience of the program, and through our continued collaboration with the Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine and HNECCPHN.

# YUDHILIDIN

Yudhilidin, an Aboriginal word meaning 'guidance,' is a Care Coordination service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with severe and complex mental illness that has an impact on their daily lives. The service provides Care Coordination to people to ensure they receive a holistic, culturally-appropriate and recovery-orientated service, delivered by mostly Aboriginal staff, enabling high levels of engagement of Aboriginal people.

The service focusses on connection to supports, particularly those that meet immediate psychosocial needs and mental health treatment requirements. The team will have a yarn to help identify health and wellbeing goals, provide information regarding culturally appropriate supports in the local community, and attend appointments as required to facilitate connection. The team will remain involved for a period of up to six months to ensure facilitation to services has been successful.

Through the provision of guidance and support, the Care Coordinator's role is to ensure that at the end of an episode of care the person has the confidence and capacity to manage their own health and wellbeing.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

The service was provided to over 250 people across the Greater Newcastle, Hunter and Mid Coast Regions with service durations varying from four to six months. This allows time to assist people and build their capacity to manage the supports they required.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Strong connections were established with a number of service providers and participants able to make some resilient connections to family and health services. Participants and services have attributed Yudhilidin with successful outcomes for participants and helping people take ownership of their lives.

One participant who has completed the service said 'It's been quite a comfortable feeling taking ownership of my life with my Yudhilidin Care Coordinator pointing me in the right direction. I'm looking forward to living life knowing that I have a right to live just like everyone else'.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Continue to provide culturally appropriate support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with complex and multifaceted mental health needs in this program, with the addition of Clinical Care Coordination and Suicide Postvention Services from October 2021.





# ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFTERCARE

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Aftercare provides culturally safe support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people after a suicide attempt, and to those at risk of suicide.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

The service received 56 referrals during the year and, on average, was supporting 14 people each month. The average waiting time for first attempted contact was less than one day, ensuring the service could provide proactive support during this risky period. Safety planning was part of the support provided to all participants. Support was provided to the client and their support people in person, by phone, email or messaging totalling more than 800 service contacts throughout the year.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Previously an additional pathway to The Way Back, this year the service commenced operating as a standalone service, named Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Aftercare. While it continues to work closely with The Way Back, the service is staffed by an identified Aboriginal Support Coordinator and has its own distinct referral pathway that is accessible to all members of the community. The model of support has a focus on cultural safety and connection with community.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Aftercare is looking forward to working closely with the upcoming commencement of an Indigenous Suicide Postvention Officer, to offer the community culturally tailored support across the entire spectrum of suicide prevention.









# DISABILITY AND WELLBEING

Hunter Primary Care is an accredited NDIS provider, delivering a range of services that assist people who have significant health issues. This includes Support Coordination, Specialist Support Coordination, Psychology, Improved Health and Wellbeing through Dietetics, Exercise Physiology or Occupational Therapy and therapy supports including assistive technology.

**“HIGH QUALITY SERVICES WITH QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED STAFF.”**

**720**

NDIS participants supported

**30%**

of respondents with a disability also had a mental health condition

**70%**

satisfaction with disability support services



# NDIS SERVICES

Hunter Primary Care is an accredited NDIS provider, delivering a range of services that assist people who have significant health issues. This includes Support Coordination, Specialist Support Coordination, Psychology, Improved Health and Wellbeing through Dietetics, Exercise Physiology or Occupational Therapy and therapy supports including assistive technology. Our team consists of a range of health professionals and qualified Support Coordinators.

Our NDIS services also includes a team specialising in mental health, with a range of qualified staff to assist with any coordination needs for psychosocial disability. In addition, Hunter Primary Care is increasingly sought as the provider for Specialist Support Coordination for people with additional complexities, significant mental health concerns, or who are undertaking significant life transitions. We deliver high quality services with qualified and experienced staff.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

Hunter Primary Care gained accreditation to commence the provision of Behaviour Support Planning and to increase staff skills to include Behaviour Support Practitioners.

NDIS participants were supported to navigate through specialist and mainstream health services.

Hunter Primary Care developed and maintained positive working relationships with a wide range of quality NDIS service providers and provides NDIS services in the greater Newcastle, Port Stephens, Lower and Upper Hunter Regions.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- NDIS Services provided to over 720 people with a disability
- The team witnessed people making significant changes in their lives with the benefit of NDIS funded packages
- Supported many people who are accessing the NDIS for the first time to understand and effectively use their NDIS funding
- Expanded our Occupational Therapist NDIS support and now providing these supports to Northern NSW – Pottsville and the surrounding regions
- Expanded our Allied Health team with additional NDIS Dietitian staff
- Further expansion of our Specialist Support Coordination team.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Hunter Primary Care will continue to work with clients to reach their goals and aspirations in supporting them with their NDIS plan and implementation, and will increase the suite of services in 2021/2022. This will include employment of Behaviour Support Practitioners to commence Behaviour Support Planning, and further expansion of the NDIS Allied Health team to meet demands of the community, including Exercise Physiologists and Psycho-social Occupational Therapy.







# GENERAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Hunter Primary Care's General Health and Wellbeing services include:

- Care Coordination
- GP Access After Hours
- Aged Care Emergency Service

**“JOINING THIS GROUP HAS  
MADE ME FEEL WONDERFUL.”**

- Care Coordination Participant, 2021



**78%**

would recommend CCSS to family and friends

**24**

Hour ACE telephone service

**45,241**

GP Access appointments

# CARE COORDINATION

The Primary Care Coordination team provides NDIS and chronic disease management services for participants in capacity building supports across the Hunter through:

- Support Coordination: providing quality assistance to participants and their networks to link to mainstream services and navigate the NDIS to utilise the funding to meet their needs and goals
- Health and Wellbeing: providing tailored exercise and nutritional plans to manage NDIS participants' disability, health and wellbeing;
- Daily Living: prescribing assistive technology and providing support in daily living skills and plans to assist the participant to maintain their independence; and
- Care Coordination and Supplementary Services (CCSS): a chronic disease management program for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, operating for its tenth consecutive year.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

The CCSS team continues to embed evidenced based Lifestyle Medicine interventions in their chronic disease programs. Our interdisciplinary team of Nurses, Allied Health Professionals and Aboriginal Health Workers are passionate about how lifestyle improvements can create measurable and sustainable change in the health and wellbeing of the community. The team has introduced Virtual Shared Health Appointments (SHA) along with lifestyle skills support in areas such as healthy cooking, reading food labels and moving more. This work continues in collaboration with the Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine and HNECCPHN.

Participant feedback:

*"Joining this group has been wonderful for me and seeing other people, I feel like I'm not the only one going through this stuff. I look forward to it every Tuesday".*

*"This program and the support in my lifestyle change have helped me lose 20kg over 12 months. The change in diet from this program has been my biggest helper - high fibre and having breakfast, more fruit and less chips, lots of water and less soft drink."*

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Yantiin Kalabara

We continue our commitment to enable and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to live healthy and prosperous lives. The CCSS team developed and delivered Yantiin Kalabara – '5 ways to a healthier you' program in 2020, as a 'Closing the Gap' initiative funded through the HNECCPHN's Healthy Weight Community grants.

Yantiin Kalabara is an Aboriginal phrase that means 'everyone shining bright'. The program included a rotating pitstop station-based model delivered through regional primary and high schools with a large percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments. Aimed at educating young people in regional areas to make healthy living choices, the workshops involve a number of interactive stations that provide information about positive health impacts including; making healthy eating habits, choosing water as a drink, increasing physical activity and decreasing screen time. Through our 'Closing the Gap' initiatives, we are focusing on the early intervention and prevention of illness and chronic disease.

Five primary schools across the Hunter were provided a full school day of Yantiin Kalabara activities as part of the development curriculum.

### NAIDOC Week

As part of NAIDOC Week celebrations, Hunter Primary Care's CCSS team provided a fun-packed day at both Karuah Primary School and Merewether Primary School. Students from kindergarten to year 6 were provided a day to focus on yarning about Bush Tucker. Students got hands on as they touched, smelt and tasted different traditional bush foods. Students also chopped a rainbow of colours with fresh vegetable ingredients as they assembled and then tasted a delicious modern family meal using kangaroo, lemon myrtle and finger lime. Slow cooked kangaroo wraps... yum! It was such a great day seeing the children enjoying themselves.

## Integrated Team Care (ITC) Services

Hunter Primary Care delivered the CCSS program across the whole of the Hunter region. This includes Newcastle, Maitland, Lake Macquarie, Greater Taree, Forster, Dungog, Cessnock, Gloucester, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter, Singleton and Port Stephens LGAs. Our CCSS service matches people who have long-term illnesses with an experienced Care Coordinator with a wide range of knowledge about local health services, and can assist clients to manage their own health and wellness. The service is also provided by Aboriginal Health Workers who support individual clients to engage with Aboriginal communities. The objectives of the ITC activities are to assist people in accessing better treatment and management of their chronic conditions, and foster collaboration and support between mainstream primary care and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sectors. In all of our Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing services, Hunter Primary Care staff are continually aiming to improve the capacity of mainstream primary care services to deliver culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In providing the CCSS program to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the team has delivered:

- over \$88,822 funded medical aids
- over 34,753 occasions of service provided by the Care Coordination team
- over 1,128 allied health services either brokered or purchased
- over 938 specialist health services either brokered or purchased
- over 2,093 transport services either brokered or purchased

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant risk to our clients. The team adapted service delivery to include video consultations and virtual online group support as an option, to ensure clients remain engaged and have access to our supports and services.

Our CCSS clients told us...

- 69.57% agreed and 30.43% strongly agreed the Hunter Primary Care CCSS service has helped them to identify what they needed to do to manage their condition
- 78.26% agree and 21.74% strongly agree they would recommend this service to their friends, family and other people

Participant feedback:

*"Thank you for providing this service to people in need. Just amazing people. Thank you"*

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

COVID-19 saw traditional face-to-face service delivery methods pivot to digital methods overnight. The team continue to coach and advocate to improve access to services to minimise impact during the pandemic and associated lockdown periods. The team will continue to adhere to NSW Health public health precautions and control measures and will continue to offer clients the option of virtual Telehealth services.

The team continue to develop their knowledge and expertise in trauma-informed care and in understanding how trauma and poor access to services can negatively impact health and hasten the development of chronic disease and/or disability.

We remain focused on responding to our community needs. This year and next, will see our Allied Health NDIS/Chronic Disease Management team and associated supports expand.



# GP ACCESS

GP Access After Hours (GP Access) is an Approved Medical Deputising Service that provides comprehensive after-hours primary care to the Maitland, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie regions of NSW. GP Access has served the community for over 20 years and is led by a dedicated management, administration and Clinical Directorate team. GP Access is staffed with Registered Nurses, Administrative personnel, and a cooperative of over 200 experienced GPs from over 80 local General Practices. GP Access Clinics are integrated with local EDs with agreed protocols for transfer of patients between the ED's and clinics.

The GP Access service comprises the following elements:

## **A Patient Streaming Service (PSS)**

The PSS is a nurse-led telephone based service that triages incoming calls and directs callers to the level of care that matches their immediate medical need. The PSS can provide "over the phone" clinical advice from a Registered Nurse or GP; make an appointment for the caller at a GP Access clinic; or advise the caller to access other care appropriate to their needs, e.g. call Triple Zero, attend their nearest ED, access a chemist, or to see their own GP the next day. The PSS also provides:

- Management of ACE calls in the after-hours period, providing advice and clinical support to Aged Care Facility residents and staff
- Call Managed Services for GPs who work outside the GP Access footprint, to minimise after-hours disruption
- Support for the Community Acute Care/Post Care (CAPAC Service)
- Management of time critical after hours pathology results for participating GPs.

The PSS operates from Monday to Friday evenings 5:30pm until 8:00am the next day; Saturday 12:00pm until 8:00am Monday, and 24 hours on Public Holidays.

## **GP Access Clinics**

There are five GP Access clinics; four are co-located with hospital EDs (Belmont, John Hunter, Calvary Mater Newcastle and Maitland hospitals) and the fifth is located in the Westlakes Community Health Centre at Toronto. Each clinic is staffed by an Administrative Officer, Registered Nurse and GP. The clinic service operates:

- Monday to Friday evenings 6:00pm until 11:00pm
- Saturday 1:00 pm until 11:00pm
- Sundays and Public Holidays 9:00am until 11:00pm

On-call GPs provide phone advice, home visits and RACF visits as required and provide back up to the clinic GPs when required. A free transport service is available to transport patients to and from clinic appointments, if clinically appropriate, and if the patient is unable to attend the clinic due to lack of transport.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

During the 2020/2021 financial year, GP Access clinic appointments totalled 45,241, a decrease of 3,792 on the previous year. This is a pleasing result given the difficult and challenging year the service has experienced due to COVID.

GP Access staff and the Management team are to be commended for their adaptability, flexibility and dedication during these challenging times, ensuring that the service is operational and the community continued to access a quality after hours health care.

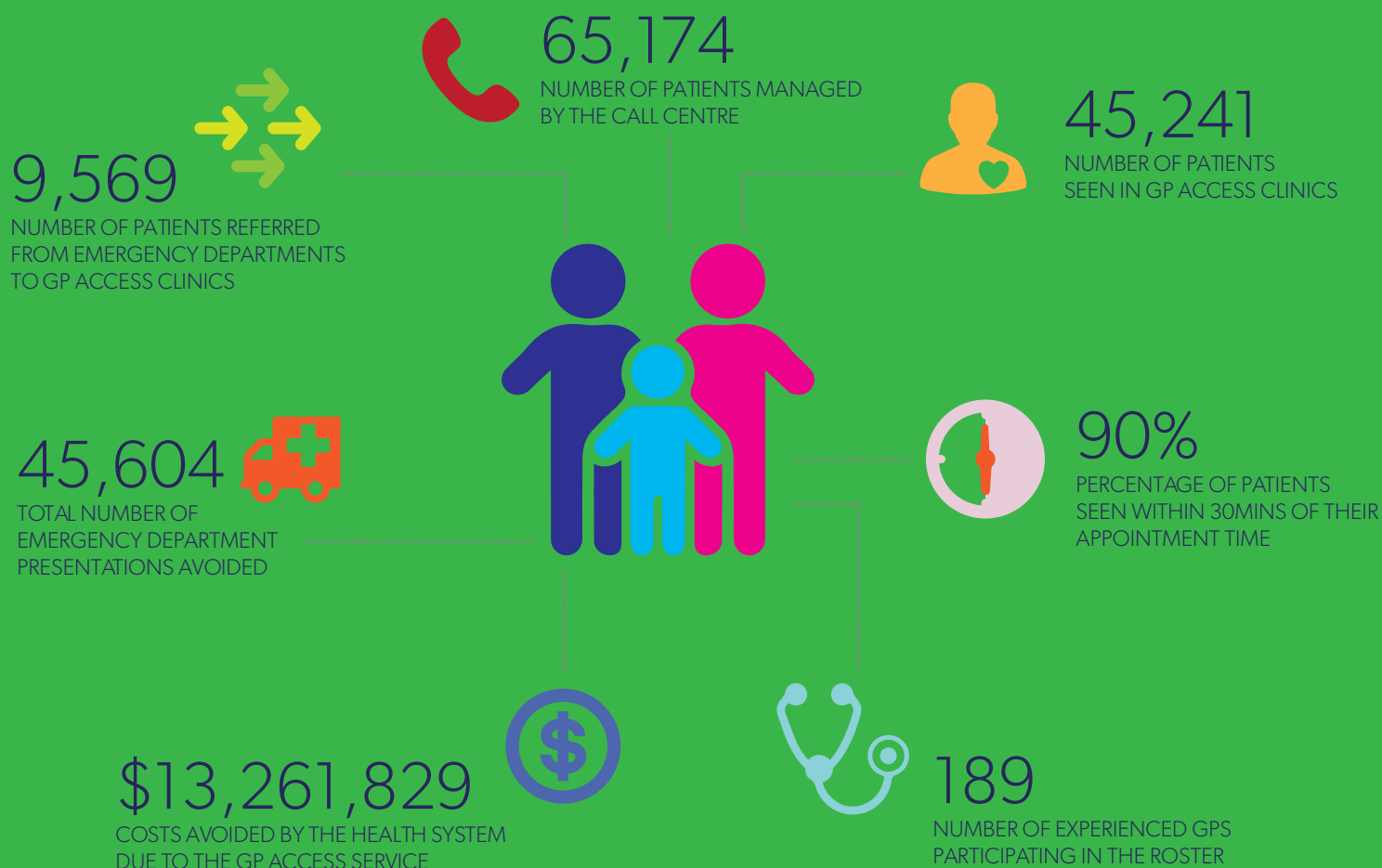
Activity has gradually increased during 2020/2021 period after a rapid decline to the service as a result of COVID-19.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Service continuation and sustainability during the pandemic
- Maintaining staff employment during the pandemic
- Providing quality health care through different forums such as Telehealth
- Successful Deed application to remain in service as an Approved Medical Deputising Service
- Ongoing membership and active participation in the GP Deputising Association (GPDA)

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Continuing to work with our funder and key stakeholders to ensure the long term future of the service.
- Review and assess the current GP Access business model to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our community.



# AGED CARE EMERGENCY (ACE) SERVICE

The ACE service supports Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) staff to provide the right care, at the right time and in the right place for their residents when they become unwell.

The ACE service provides consultancy, clinical support, and advice for RACF staff. The ACE service is a model of care that has a multi-faceted approach. At the centre of the model is the resident.

The following steps are in place to support Residential Aged Care Facility staff with decision-making:

1. The use of evidence-based algorithms to manage common health issues within the RACF.
2. A 24-hour telephone consultation service, supported by Registered Nurses, for RACF staff to access clinical guidance.
3. Identification of clear goals of care prior to transferring to an Emergency Department.
4. Proactive case management within the Emergency Department.
5. A Community of Practice (COP) which empowers residential RACF staff's decision making through linkages to clinical experts, focus groups, and educational workshops.
6. The evaluated success of the ACE service has been the collaboration of all people involved in the care of residents when they become acutely unwell.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant challenge for Managers and staff caring for people residing in RACFs. The ACE service coordinated a multi-organisation interagency meeting where 41 facilities on the Central Coast were been invited to join the established Hunter New England region COP.

The ACE Interagency COP group now includes representatives from 171 RACFS, HNELHD, including the Public Health Unit (PHU), Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network (HNECCPHN), NSW Ambulance (NSWA), Central Coast Local Health District (CCLHD), GPs and practice nurses, community nursing organisations, educational institutions, and nursing agency groups. The interagency meeting has been a place to share and support Managers and staff of RACFs by sharing COVID-19 outbreak preparation information, initiatives and resources, and an opportunity for Facility Managers to access specialist health personnel key to the COVID-19 pandemic response. The interagency meetings remained online during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ACE service facilitated 37 meetings during this financial year.

### ACE education

The ACE service provides ongoing education to RACF staff that incorporates the ACE process, using the tools and guidelines, recognition of deterioration, and the Identification, Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation for Aged Care (ISBAR4AC) clinical handover. The service has facilitated 20 education sessions this year.

### RACF Video Telehealth education

The ACE service has been successful in securing a variation to the contract to provide RACF video Telehealth education to facilities in Armidale, Wyallda, Tenterfield, Cessnock and 41 facilities on the Central Coast. Four education sessions have been completed in the New England region. These sessions include recognition of deteriorating residents using the generic ACE clinical algorithms, clinical handover and video Telehealth.

## Telehealth

The ACE service continues to collaborate and support the implementation of Telehealth research between local hospital EDs and RACFs.

HNELHD has been successful in its application for a Translational Research Grant utilising Telehealth. The research is titled “Enhancing aged-care emergency services by incorporating Telehealth visual assessment and handover for acutely unwell people living in residential aged-care”. Hunter Primary Care has supported the implementation of the project by co-facilitating education to 5 RACFs involved in the project.

## ACE support line

During the after hours period including weekends and public holidays, the ACE line is monitored by the GP Access Patient Streaming Service.

The Patient Streaming Service managed 2,831 calls, with 1,204 calls resulting in the resident’s illness being managed by the staff at the facility. When a resident requires transfer to an Emergency Department, a clear and concise handover prior to the arrival of the resident in the ED can streamline the resident’s journey.

# HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

## ACE Pathways and Manual

The ACE Clinical Health Pathways are revised every 3 years. Each algorithm is reviewed by the relevant clinical streams and networks within HNELHD to ensure they reflect the latest evidence-based practice. The revised pathways were released in March 2020 and a generic hard copy manual was developed and printed in November 2020.

The hardcopy ACE Manual includes 18 clinical sections, 4 process algorithms and 27 clinical algorithms.

## ACE Interagency COP

The COP group has been a successful support to RACF managers and staff navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Guest speakers from HNELHD, CCLHD, and the PHU, a Hunter Primary Care General Practitioner and psychologist, and many RACF managers have provided information, innovations and support to all RACF managers and staff in outbreak preparation and management. The meetings are well attended and feedback is positive.

## RACF Video Telehealth education

The Hunter Primary Care ACE service has been successful in securing a variation to the contract to provide RACF video Telehealth education to facilities in Armidale, Warralaba, Tenterfield, Cessnock and 41 facilities on the Central Coast. The education sessions have been well received and evaluated.

## Data reports

The process for ACE data collection, analysis and reporting has been streamlined by the development of data merging and report development by HNELHD. The ACE service has two data sources; Hunter Primary Care and HNELHD, and combining the data enables timely, informed decision-making and aids strategic targeted interventions for priority sites. Hunter Primary Care and HNELHD continue to collaborate on reports generated to enhance evaluation of the ACE service.

# FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Exploring enhancements to the ACE service model that supports the acute clinical needs of the Residential Aged Care population.
- Investigating the use of video Telehealth opportunities in RACFs to support residents when they become acutely unwell. Visual assessment facilitates higher levels of communication thus contributing to the right care, in the right place and at the right time.



37

ACE INTERAGENCY COMMUNITIES  
OF PRACTICE MEETINGS



4,119

ACE AFTER HOURS CALLS  
SUPPORTING 81 RACF'S



20

ACE EDUCATION SERVICES



20

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT  
IN THE LOCAL HUNTER NEW  
ENGLAND LOCAL HEALTH  
DISTRICT



171

RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE  
FACILITIES



27

CLINICAL ALGORITHMS TO GUIDE  
THE MANAGEMENT OF THE UNWELL  
PERSON RESIDING IN THE AGED CARE  
FACILITY



# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Hunter Primary Care's Mental Health and Wellbeing services include:

- Hunter Psychosocial Support Service
- Continuity of Supports & National Psychosocial Extension
- The Way Back Support Service
- Transitional Care Packages
- Clinical Care Co
- Headspace
- Psychology

**“THIS IS A VITAL SERVICE...  
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D DO  
WITHOUT IT.”**

- HPSS Client, 2021

**6700**

Hours of Clinical Care Coordination Support .

**85**

Headspace community engagement activities.

**92%**

Satisfaction among Psychology clients.

**5500**

Psychology referrals.



# HUNTER PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICE

The Hunter Psychosocial Support Service (HPSS) is funded by the HNECCPHN to assist people with a severe mental illness, who have reduced psychosocial function and are not eligible for the NDIS. The program recognises the relationship between mental wellbeing and other social factors that impact on a person, and is designed to build living skills and connect them with the right services based on individual participant's goals. HPSS focuses on building capacity and stability in people's lives by helping them identify goals and strategies, and support to work on these for up to nine months, as well as assistance to apply for the NDIS.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

Participants have been engaged in HPSS to build their social skills, manage daily living needs, increase family connections, build on physical wellbeing, financial management and budgeting, maintaining a home, managing drug and alcohol issues or increasing vocational skills and education. Participants have been assisted to link in with a wide range of services to meet their needs.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The service has been well received by the community since its inception in early 2019, and assists those where there is an identified gap in the systems of available support. The service has increased the number of people that have been supported significantly in the areas of Newcastle and Port Stephens, and Hunter Valley clusters.

One participant who recently completed the service said *'This is a vital service...without this support I don't think I could keep going. This service doesn't just impact my life, it impacts my daughter's life and my grandchildren's lives. I really don't know where I would be without it.'*

Another participant's family member stated *'I cannot thank the Skills Facilitator enough. He has done an amazing job offering access to various community activities, encouraging the development of goals, assisting to follow up on paperwork, and advocating for the desire to live independently'.*

Participants have been engaged in HPSS to build their social skills, manage daily living needs, increase family connections, build on physical wellbeing, financial management and budgeting, maintaining a home, managing drug and alcohol issues or increasing vocational skills and education. Participants have been assisted to link in with a wide range of services to meet their needs.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Hunter Primary Care secured an extension to the HPSS contract and will continue the service until end of 2021. We are hoping to secure the funding to continue to provide this valuable service.

# CONTINUITY OF SUPPORTS AND NATIONAL PSYCHOSOCIAL EXTENSION

Continuity of Supports (CoS) and The National Psychosocial Extension (NPS Ext) are funded by the HNECCPHN for people previously provided a service by Partners In Recovery (PIR). With PIR wrapping up in June 2019, all remaining clients were initially transferred into NPS Ext, where they were supported to apply for an NDIS plan and if successful, support is continued according to their plan. If they are found ineligible for an NDIS plan, they can move into CoS where they can continue to be supported. Both services are for people with a severe and persistent mental illness, and focuses on building capacity through identification of goals and strategies, and connection to a wide range of services to meet their needs. While engaged in CoS, participants are assisted to re-test eligibility for the NDIS if this remains a goal.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

During this period, participants have been engaged to build their capacity and connect to services, linking to a wide range of services to meet their needs. CoS clients have been encouraged to reapply for the NDIS, and are assisted to do this if previously found ineligible. Groups have been developed in co-design with clients to deliver a person-centred group option as well as connection to other services. A large number of participants in NPS Ext have now made the transition to NDIS, and are continuing on with the support of a NDIS plan.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Participants have been supported in these programs to achieve goals and work towards testing eligibility for NDIS. Clients engaged in these programs have been supported to access groups and work on building social skills, and build on capacity for achieving goals. Many clients have been supported to access the NDIS where there had been barriers or difficulties or where they had become disconnected from appropriate support services.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

CoS and NPS Ext are funded until July 2022 and December 2021 respectively, during which time all clients will be assisted to apply or reapply to the NDIS if identified as a goal to ensure ongoing support until that time.



# THE WAY BACK SUPPORT SERVICE

The Way Back Support Service (The Way Back) is a Beyond Blue initiative that delivers person-centred, non-clinical care and practical support in the critical three months after a suicide attempt through assertive outreach. The service aims to prevent repeat suicide attempts and suicide deaths.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

Throughout 2020/21 The Way Back received 601 referrals which represents a 29% increase on the previous year. This significant increase has been achieved through the expansion of referral pathways to include all mental health inpatient units, as well as maintaining a close collaboration with Calvary Mater Newcastle.

As part of providing community support, the Way Back Support Coordinators provided over 165 phone calls and over 65 visits each month, as well as support through video, email and messaging. The service aims to be proactive in its support with contact attempts commencing within one day after leaving hospital for 99% of people referred to the service and 98% of clients were supported to develop safety plans.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The service has implemented the new The Way Back Service Delivery Model as part of the national rollout. It remains as one of the largest The Way Back sites in the country.
- The Way Back staff have continued to upskill in suicide prevention with staff receiving specific Beyond Blue training in The Way Back model, as well as additional training in suicide risk assessment protocols including STARS Protocol and Safeside Risk Formulation.
- Hunter Primary Care was featured in a multimedia national ABC News feature story on Towards Zero Suicide Initiatives supporting people after a suicide attempt. The story aired on national news on Sunday 6th June 2021.
- Client feedback: *"I never knew there was support in the Community. What an amazing service. I recommend this service to all who need support."* - Female 45-54 years

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Way Back is participating in a national evaluation of this model and this will continue into 2021/2022.

# TRANSITIONAL CARE PACKAGES

The Transitional Care Package Program (TCP) is a pilot initiative supporting people with complex psychosocial needs who are transitioning to primary mental health care following a brief hospital presentation. The program provides coordinated clinical care for people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties, which are exacerbated by multiple psychosocial factors and/or complex comorbidities. Referrals for the TCP program are received from Maitland Hospital Mental Health Unit and Emergency Department.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

The TCP program received 63 referrals with clients remaining involved on average for 57 days. One of the goals of TCP is to support people to address their mental health and prevent further mental health admissions. In the three months following referral to TCP, only 9% had a further admission – meaning 91% were able to remain supported in the community.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The pilot initiative received strong positive support from an independent evaluation of the program.  
Client feedback:

- *"It's the helping hand/guidance that I've longed for, for so many years"* Male participant, 35-64 years
- *"I absolutely love the support. I cannot tell you how much I have benefited from this service, it's been brilliant"* Female participant, 35-64 years

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The service has progressed beyond the pilot phase and will continue into 2021/2022 as part of Hunter Primary Care's Clinical Care Coordination service.

# CLINICAL CARE COORDINATION

Clinical Care Coordination provides clinical mental health care for people diagnosed with complex and enduring mental illness, who can be supported within the primary health setting. The service provides mental health assessment, intervention and coordination of supports to improve the overall wellbeing of the person. Evidence-based care is delivered via a trauma-informed and recovery-focused approach aiming to empower the person to take an active role in optimising their mental health and wellbeing.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

Over the course of the year, the program delivered more than 7,600 hours of client-related support including assessment, clinical interventions and coordination of care. Support is provided for up to twelve months with progress and goals reviewed every three months.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Throughout 2020/2021, Clinical Care Coordination continued to build its staffing complement and develop service delivery across the Hunter Region.
- Client feedback: *"The staff were amazing and I finally got help and support that I needed in the community rather than ending up in hospital again and again with nothing changing. Hunter Primary Care helped me so much when there is a large gap between hospital for crisis and paying for therapy."* Male 18-34 years

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- In 2021/2022 Clinical Care Coordination will work closely with TCP to deliver mental health care coordination to the community and enable smoother transition to longer-term support where this is needed.
- The program is also looking forward to forging closer partnerships with Yuhilidin as it transitions to a Clinical Care Coordination and Peer Service delivery model.

# HEADSPACE NEWCASTLE

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation program providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds, along with assistance in promoting young people's wellbeing. This covers four core areas: mental health, physical health, work and study support, and alcohol and other drug services. headspace Newcastle was established in 2013 and services a wide range of regional, urban and rural areas across the Hunter region.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

headspace Newcastle received 2,169 referrals in 2020/2021, and provided services to over 600 individuals each month. Despite being over 80% busier than the national average for headspace centres, clinical outcomes and client satisfaction continues to be equal or above the national average. The additional program for young people with complex mental health needs was maintained in the Port Stephens and Lake Macquarie areas, working in close collaboration with public Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

headspace Newcastle's Community Development Officer has worked tirelessly across the community to promote young people's wellbeing, with the following community activities undertaken with a wide range of people:

- 42 activities for all young people
- 32 activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People
- 35 activities with Culturally And Linguistically Diverse young people
- 38 activities with LGBTQIA+ young people
- 6 activities for Youth at Risk
- 33 Youth Reference Group activities
- 10 webinars with Family and Friends /Parent and Carers groups
- 85 engagement activities with stakeholders

In a year highly disrupted by COVID-19, the headspace Newcastle team has continued to engage with significant numbers of young people. The team has been able to support these individuals using innovative approaches to engaging the youth community and headspace stakeholders. For a summary of our recent events, please visit the headspace Newcastle Facebook page ([link](#)).

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### **Waves of Wellness**

During 2020/2021 headspace Newcastle and Waves of Wellness continued their partnership with 2 programs being facilitated. The program engaged young people from Big Picture School, Alesco School and other services including CAMHS.

### **Winged Mural**

The Winged Mural Project aims to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in creating an artwork to be hung on the headspace Newcastle waiting room. The mural workshops were run through the Aboriginal Education Unit at Newcastle High School. The young woman attending the workshops were a part of the Sista Speak Program. The Sista Speak program is a ten week program for young Aboriginal women, and is designed to assist girls in developing positive relationships, teaching them to respect themselves and others around them, and be proud of their Aboriginal identity. The Winged Mural Project engaged the services of local Indigenous artist Liam Begnell. Liam facilitates Aboriginal Dance and Music workshops throughout Newcastle, and has provided cultural guidance and leadership

### **Unity in Diversity Festival**

During 2021, the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community hosted the Unity in Diversity festival at Newcastle Foreshore. The event attracted over 500 community members and included stalls, performances, and food. headspace Newcastle contributed to the event by working at the Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre stall running art and craft activities.



### Relationship with Adamstown Rosebuds Soccer Club

The project Mental Health Aware with Adamstown Rosebuds Soccer club was run in partnership with CALM (Community Activities Lake Macquarie). This involved consultations with the club culminating in a series of workshops with players from every age group.

In March 2020 headspace Newcastle was successful in adding an Individual Placement and Supports Program, with funding from the Department of Social Services and supported and managed by headspace National. This program allows for intensive vocational supports to young people engaged at headspace Newcastle.

This year and the impact of the pandemic resulted in many individuals and groups wishing to support headspace Newcastle. The following groups supported headspace Newcastle with donations in 2020/2021, and their donations were gratefully received:

- The Push Up Challenge
- Maryland Tigers
- Genesis Gym
- Merewether High School
- Newcastle Dragon Boat
- Newcastle Ladies Golf

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- The community development focus is towards building capacity in local communities to support the mental health of their young people. This will be through delivering training and information to groups such as sporting clubs, parents and carers.
- headspace Newcastle is proud to announce implementation of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program in 2021/2022 to provide intensive supports to young people seeking employment and vocational supports
- Further initiatives continue to support youth impacted by COVID-19 and continue to be developed, particularly for young adults impacted by unemployment and travel/social restrictions. In the current environment, the headspace Newcastle team aims to further embrace new technologies and digital platforms to engage the community.
- Continuing to look at additional options for supporting young people in geographically isolated areas in our region, including physical outreach and greater implementation of Telehealth solutions.



# PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

Hunter Primary Care Psychology Services provide accessible, effective, and responsive mental health and drug and alcohol counselling services for people across the Hunter and Mid Coast regions, including residents of Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs). The services provided also focus on priority groups in the community including Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples, children and young people, women in the perinatal period, older adults and people experiencing self-harm or suicidal ideation.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

### Primary Mental Health Access (PRIMA) - Referral Activity

- The PRIMA Service received over 10,000 primary mental health referrals across the HNECC footprint, led by Hunter Primary Care in conjunction with partner organisations HealthWise in the New England region, and Coast and Country Primary Care on the Central Coast.
- Of the overall referrals received, the Hunter and Mid Coast region received 5,500 referrals. This was approximately 12% more referrals received compared to the previous year.
- Nearly 80% of the referrals received were forwarded to PHN Commissioned Mental Health Services delivered in the Hunter region, with the remainder referred to services better matched to the person's needs.

### Mental Health Services Programs

- In the Mental Health programs, 3,500 clients were provided with psychological interventions, with over 25,000 session hours delivered in the 2020/2021 year. That equates to 20% more activity compared with the previous year.
- Nearly half of all services were delivered to priority groups in the community, and over 40% of sessions were delivered in a rural region.
- Referrals were received from 65 Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFS) in the Hunter and Mid Coast regions. 350 residents in aged care were provided a service in the year, which is a 48% increase in the number of residents seen compared to the previous year.
- Over 3,000 service contact hours were provided, including providing psychological support to residents, liaising with Residential Aged Care facility staff, families and other services. This was an increase of 10% compared to the previous year.

### Drug & Alcohol Services

- 630 clients experiencing a wide range of substance use and comorbid mental health issues were seen for over 2,500 service contact hours in the 2020/2021 year. This equates to 24% more activity compared to the previous year.
- The 2020/2021 year also showed an increase in activity related to the low intensity MindReach program with 42% more clients and 45% more sessions delivered compared to the previous year.
- 5 postgraduate Clinical Psychology students were provided D&A clinical placement training opportunities as part of the D&A Mentoring program in the 2020/2021 year.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

During the 2020/2021 year, a significant proportion of mental health services has continued to be delivered via Telehealth due to the impact of COVID-19. This has enabled continuity of service delivery, particularly in the context of times when the community is experiencing significant psychological distress.

### Clients reported satisfaction

- 92% reported satisfaction or high satisfaction with the service they were receiving.
- 87% of responses to items on surveys sent to clients following discharge were positively endorsed.
- 62 year old male client "Excellent service...I would not hesitate to return for further visits...certainly enabled me to cope with the situations I face."
- 33 year old female client "Thank you so much for helping during a very hard time in my life. I am the most calm and happy I can ever remember being."

### Growth of service delivery across the region

- Increased number of services delivered across all funded programs, including an increase in the number of clients accessing these services.
- Contributing to the development and growth of Hunter Primary Care's Clinical Care Coordination program.

### PRIMA Review

- Positive feedback from an independent comprehensive review of the PRIMA service conducted in 2020 to assess the effectiveness of the Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) Commonwealth model of mental health triage. Key recommendations from the Review were also implemented throughout the year.

### **Aged Care Program developments**

- Clinical Placement opportunities have been developed in the Aged Care program in partnership with the University of Newcastle to provide opportunities for postgraduate psychology students to develop workforce skills in the provision of psychological services to older people. Three students commenced at the end of the 2020/2021 financial year.
- With the increased number of staff delivering Aged Care services, an inaugural Aged Care Team Development Day was held in early 2021 to support the professional development of new staff and support program expansion.

### **Drug & Alcohol Program**

- Funding of additional Drug & Alcohol services for the Port Stephens region has been offered to expand service provision in this region. Significant promotion has been undertaken to raise awareness of the service, and develop relationships with local service providers.

### **Innovation Challenge Successes**

- The two successfully funded projects from Hunter Primary Care's inaugural 2020 Innovation Challenge were rolled out in the 2020/2021 year; the Crisis e-Card App to support clients experiencing suicidal ideation, and the The Pool Party StorySong to address problematic alcohol use in young people.
- Psychology Services was one of two successful projects to be funded in the 2021 Innovation Challenge, which will see the creation of a protocol and educational resources to provide RACFs with guidance on how to best support residents around alcohol consumption.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

### **Client Management System (CMS) - Profile**

- Psychology Services will transition to the new CMS Profile into the next year. The integration of this new CMS will significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of users as well as capturing and reporting activity, outcomes and experiences of clients.

### **Drug & Alcohol Program**

- The EQULP 12-month certification of the AOD treatment program is underway, to be completed in late 2021. This will be accompanied by review of key resources and processes, which is anticipated will enhance the experience of clients and staff working not only in this program, but also to other programs delivered by Psychology Services.
- New staff with extensive alcohol and other drug clinical experience are commencing, to mentor earlier career staff and students and support program development.

### **Aged Care Program**

- Further exploration of the role of Animal Assisted Services in aged care, and review of the psychological need of community dwelling older adults are planned for 2021/2022.
- Potential increase to the number of Aged Care Clinical Placements for Postgraduate Psychology students, pending the review of the outcomes from the current student pilot.
- The Aged Care Program partnership with the National Aging Research Institute (NARI) will continue to support referrals of aged care residents in the Hunter region to access the Befriendas research trial aimed at reducing loneliness, and review the viability of integration of a Befriending intervention into a Primary Care Setting.

### **Development of low intensity services and Telehealth services**

- Ongoing scoping into developing low intensity psychological services at Hunter Primary Care will continue, particularly streaming referred clients into more low intensity services (and stepping up if required) so as to address the high demand for primary mental health support.
- Ongoing development of Telehealth services to increase access, as well as provide more flexible options for the delivery of psychological services in the community

### **Engaged Workforce**

- Following on from the outcomes with the 2021 Culture Survey, a Team Building Day is being planned for later in 2021. The focus will be on team connectedness and enhancing the strengths of the team, as well as recognising the challenges undertaken by staff working from home and offering Telehealth during the COVID-19 lockdown periods.
- Encouraging staff to continually develop innovative approaches to delivering psychological services in the community and be leaders in the primary mental health field.

# BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

HPC's corporates services team provides support to business units and service delivery. This includes:

- HR
- Finance
- IT
- Marketing

**WE ENCOURAGE OUR STAFF TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX, CONTRIBUTE IDEAS, AND EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES.**

**240**

Internal IT Support Clients

**1,050**

External IT Support Clients

**24/7**

IT Support for GP Access and Telehealth Consults

**3**

Innovation Challenge ideas funded





# HUMAN RESOURCES

Hunter Primary Care's Human Resource Management team provides strategic and operational advice, support, and services to the Hunter Primary Care business units for human resources and Work Health and Safety (WHS) matters.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

- Negotiation and implementation of a new Enterprise Agreement (EA)
- Staff Consultative Group meetings were held to provide input and feedback about the design and implementation of initiatives
- Staff Culture Survey undertaken showing 62% staff engagement across all business units and services
- New Performance and Development system identified, designed and prepared for implementation
- Senior Manager and Executive Leadership Development Program implemented
- Support for Managers and staff during COVID-19 working from home, including the development and implementation of working from home agreements
- Implementation of a HR Business Partner model to better support individual business units.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Successful negotiation of a new Enterprise Agreement with staff resulting in a 77% yes vote with 62% of eligible staff voting
- Approval of the new Enterprise Agreement by the Fair Work Commission without having to provide any undertakings
- Successful implementation of the new Enterprise Agreement with a new Remuneration Framework following approval by the Fair Work Commission
- Successful implementation of inaugural CEO Awards to recognise individual staff and/or teams who excel at demonstrating the Hunter Primary Care values.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Further development and implementation of the integrated People and Culture Plan in line with the strategic direction of Hunter Primary Care, with a number of initiatives to be implemented including:

- Implementation of Salary Progression Procedures for staff covered by the Enterprise Agreement
- Development and implementation of improvement initiatives identified in the 2021 Culture Survey
- Development and implementation of an Employee Wellbeing Program
- Further development of the Leadership Development Program
- Evaluation of functionality and suitability of HR systems.



# IT SERVICES

Hunter Primary Care IT Services team provides technology support including hardware, network and systems for the organisation as well as providing commercial IT services in the Hunter New England region.

In addition to IT support of Hunter Primary Care staff, the IT department also provides Managed IT services to businesses including General Practices, Allied Health and Specialists.

Over the past 12 months, COVID-19 has presented a number of challenges for our clients and as a result we again deferred the annual price increase for Managed IT Support services for the majority of clients. We saw an increase in the numbers of practice closures, buyouts and mergers this year due to a number of factors that were heavily influenced by the impact of COVID-19. The resultant consolidation of practices has for the first time reduced the total number of Managed IT Support clients to 102.

By the end of the financial year, we were supporting 1,050 computers and servers located all over the Hunter region and beyond, from Foster to Redfern and out as far as Merriwa. Our IT team has specialised expertise in primary health care information management and technology systems, including medical record software, security requirements and Telehealth.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

### Internal IT support

- Help Desk support for 240 PCs and 52 servers
- IT support for GP Access clinics and Telehealth consults 24x7
- Providing support for staff working from home
- Annual IT Refresh suspended due to supply chain disruption and lack of available computer hardware.

### External IT support

- Help Desk support for 1,050 PCs and servers
- IT support for 102 external clients
- Providing support for clients working from home and offering Telehealth consults
- Reduced sales revenue due to supply chain disruption and lack of available computer hardware.

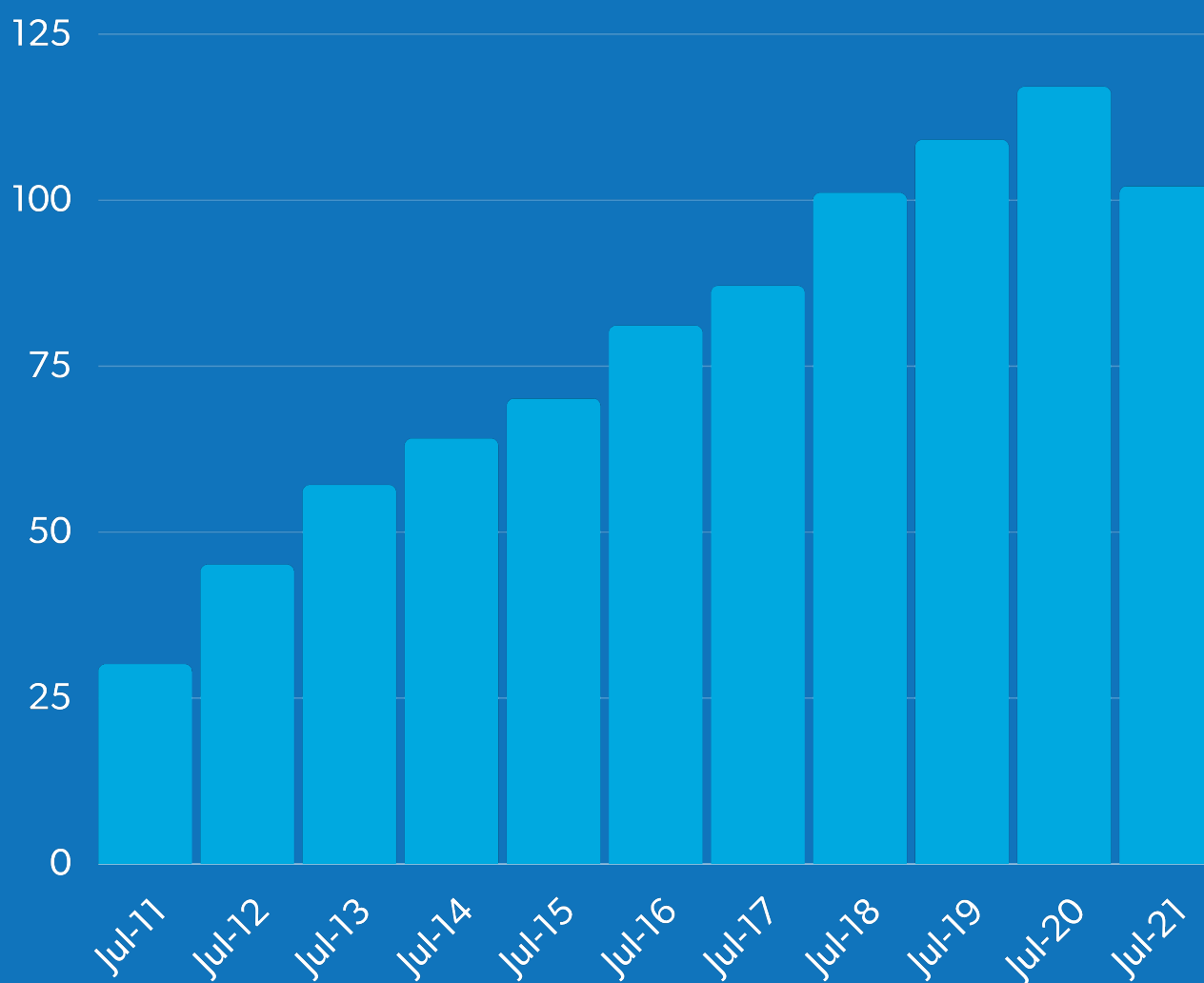
## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Completed business requirements and procurement for Hunter Primary Care's CMS project
- Migration of production servers to a commercial data centre
- Maintained profitability of Managed IT Support service
- Facilitation of Telehealth
- Facilitation of remote workforce.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Completing implementation of central client management system (CMS) across all Hunter Primary Care business units
- Review and scoping of improvements in Human Resource Management systems
- Improving performance of network and internet speeds
- Mitigate risk of cyber threats by increasing security
- Phone system upgrade and implementation of soft phones.

## IT MANAGED CLIENTS



# MARKETING

The purpose of Hunter Primary Care's Marketing & Communications team is to position Hunter Primary Care as a leading health and wellbeing provider in the Hunter region through multi-channel marketing campaigns including both traditional and digital media platforms. The team also provides marketing and communications support to HPC programs and services to assist in achieving service-specific objectives.

## SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

- Ongoing implementation of a multi-channel advertising campaign promoting all HPC services
- Development and implementation of staff profiling video campaign
- Supporting HPC services with promotion, marketing collateral and events
- Strategic communications to HPC members and referral sources
- Event management and attendance
- Ongoing sponsorship of HPPI
- Marketing support for HPC innovation projects.

## HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Agreed creative concept for new multi-channel advertising campaign to commence in 2021/2022
- Marketing support for 'Yantiin Kalabara – 5 ways to a healthier you' and 'Bush Tucker' local schools program
- Attendance at the Hunter Disability Expo 2021 and other smaller-scale local Expo events
- Hosted an internal NRW event with local Aboriginal Elder and planned attendance to NAIDOC week events
- Positive media achieved for a number of HPC initiatives (refer to 'In the Media')
- Targets achieved for website visitation and digital advertising engagement.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Further development and implementation of the Marketing & Communications Strategy in line with the strategic direction of Hunter Primary Care, with a number of initiatives to be implemented including:

- Merging of internal communications tactics into overarching Marketing & Communications strategy
- Creation and implementation of new creative concept for multi-channel advertising campaign
- Introduce Instagram to HPC social media offering
- Investigate opportunity for internal graphic design, photography and videography.



# INNOVATION

Hunter Primary Care is committed to innovation. We encourage our staff to think outside the box, contribute ideas, and explore opportunities to ensure HPC is not only keeping pace but leading the way in providing good health and wellbeing for all. As an organisation, we are working to build and support a culture of innovation to help us evolve and grow. Innovation focuses on new ways of doing things; not continuous improvement of our current practices or systems. We might establish a new service, product or process; test using tools, or explore new technologies.

In 2020 we held our inaugural Innovation Challenge to encourage staff to address a specific issue within our business and service delivery environment. The theme was how can technology be used to achieve better outcomes for the community. As part of the Innovation Challenge process, staff were invited to participate in workshops and training to build capacity and develop new ideas further.

Our first Challenge proved to be an outstanding success, with the following three finalist's ideas selected for further development and implementation:

## **CRISIS E-CARD - CLAIRE NUSSEY, PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES**

What can often help us through difficult times are support from people we trust, health professionals and mental health resources. With COVID-19, e-resources are particularly important. The Crisis e-Card included 24-hour crisis telephone numbers, supportive information and links to other helpful e-resources, including how to create a safety plan. The card included information about suicidal thoughts, warning signs and common triggers and coping skills.

To make the Crisis e-Card accessible and free to access, no download or installation to your phone was required. The Crisis e-Card includes an option for the text to be read out loud. Scan the QR Code or alternatively go to [dropcard.net.au/hpc](https://dropcard.net.au/hpc) and click on the 'Digital Crisis Card' button. For more information, [watch the video here](#).

## **DIGITAL WORKFLOW - PEITA HARPER AND DANIELLE ADAMS, THE WAY BACK SUPPORT SERVICE**

The Digital Workflow pilot developed fillable digital documents that allowed Care Coordinators to complete forms and assessments with clients, then save directly to client records. This proved to save time and efficiencies for staff working in The Way Back Support Service and Mental Health Care Coordination. More than half of the most commonly used forms have now been digitised, including intake and evaluation forms, and are being trialled by staff using hybrid 360 laptops that also function as a touch screen tablet. Further digital forms will be introduced in 2021/2022.

## **POOL PARTY - DR KYLIE BAILEY, PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES**

'Pool Party' was a song story animation with a focus on binge drinking awareness for young people. The project was created by Dr Kylie Bailey, Senior Clinical Psychologist, along with a team of academics and students at the University of Newcastle, through the School of Creative Industries. Find out more [about the campaign here](#).

# FINANCIAL REPORT

Hunter Primary Care Limited operates as a non-profit health promotion charity and community health services organisation. It is an independent public company limited by guarantee registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission.

As a registered public company, Hunter Primary Care undergoes an annual independent financial audit to ensure its compliance with Australian Accounting Standards and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) Act 2012.

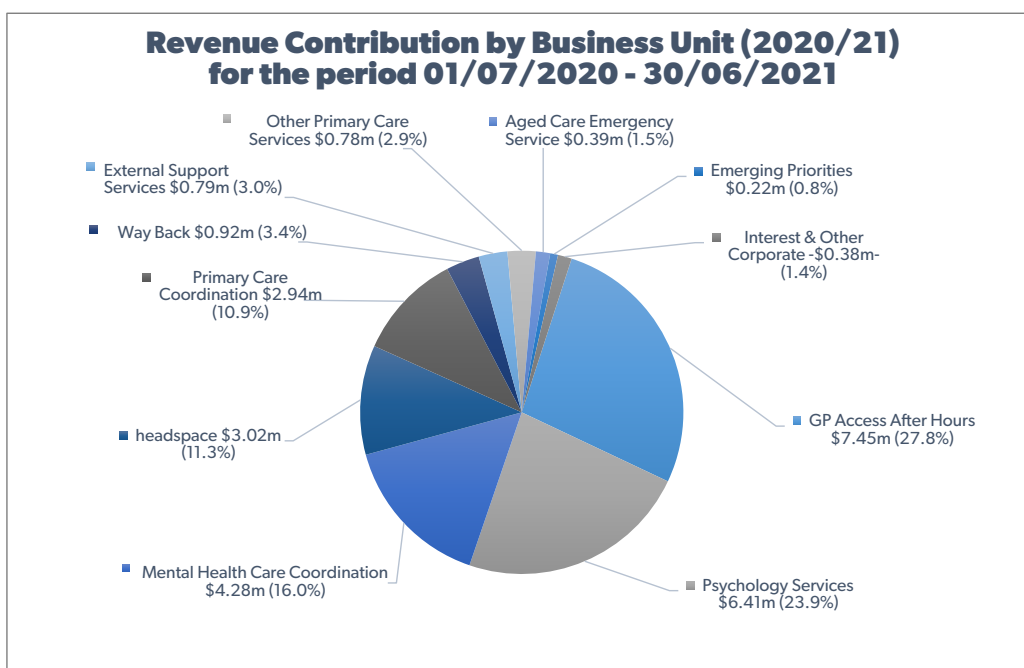
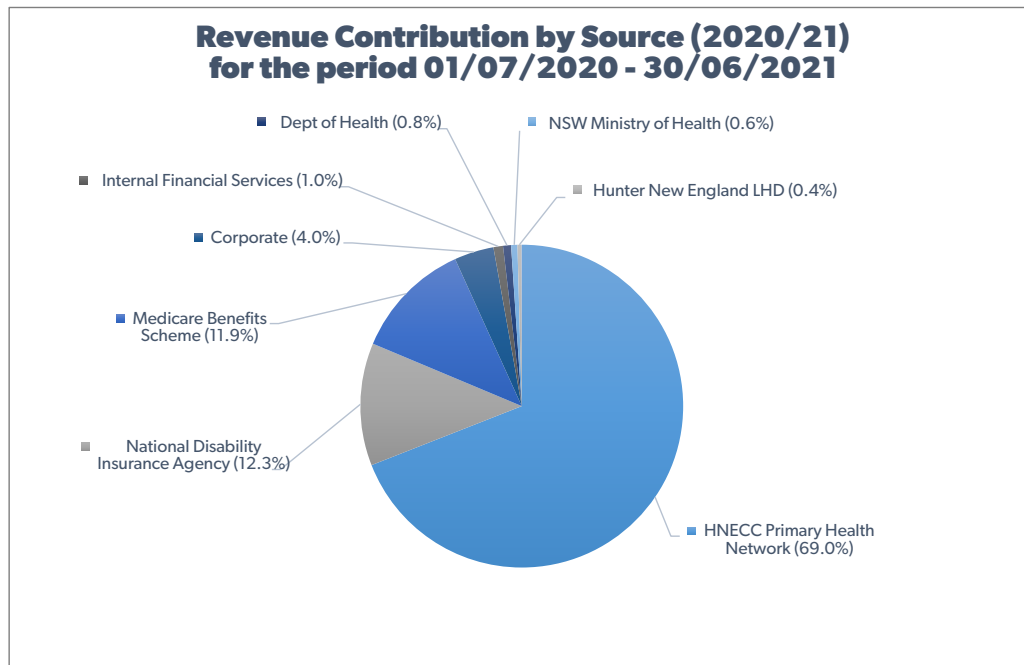
Statement of Comprehensive Income For the Year Ended 30 June 2021		
	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Service revenue	7,668,135	7,241,617
Government grants	18,998,968	19,961,327
Interest received	70,593	124,694
Other income	4,023,810	1,596,807
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>30,761,506</b>	28,924,445
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Employee benefits expense	21,984,112	19,633,815
Depreciation and amortisation expense	822,966	820,133
Administration Expense	2,375,173	2,315,402
Sub-contractors expense	1,550,201	1,876,554
Occupancy Expense	475,599	412,442
Other operating expenses	240,271	364,402
Finance Costs	352,364	368,621
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>27,800,686</b>	25,791,369
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>2,960,820</b>	3,133,076

Hunter Primary Care delivered an operating surplus of \$2.961 million against a prior year surplus of \$3.133 million. Gross revenues increased by 6.35% (\$1.837 million) on the prior year. The \$962K decrease in government grants is primarily attributable to the wind back of the Continuity of Support/Psychosocial Support Programs (previously PIR) which has been offset by increases in NDIS service revenues. The \$2.43 million increase in Other Income is a result of an increase in JobKeeper received in the current year. Hunter Primary Care received \$3.76 million in JobKeeper for FY2021, compared to \$1.46 million in FY2020.

Expenses have increased \$2.009 million. Increased employee cost of \$2.3 million resulting predominantly from \$686K in JobKeeper wages, \$373K from changes to the Hunter Primary Care Enterprise Agreement, \$550K from the growth of the Clinical Care Coordination programme, and \$230K from an increase in wages associated with new initiatives. Other general expenses decreased during the year by \$327K.

# SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

Hunter Primary Care receives its revenues from a variety of government and non-government sources, the most significant of which are the HNECCPHN, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and Medicare billings through the Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS). The sources of income received by Hunter Primary Care for the 2020/2021 year are presented in the below figure;



**Statement of Financial Position**  
**As at 30 June 2021**

	<b>2021</b>	2020
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	<b>10,756,650</b>	9,630,706
Trade and other receivables	<b>1,735,178</b>	3,618,426
Other current assets	<b>4,475,442</b>	383,149
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>16,967,270</b>	13,632,281
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	<b>1,395,784</b>	1,315,770
	<b>6,037,692</b>	6,715,352
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>7,433,476</b>	8,031,122
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>24,400,746</b>	21,663,403
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and other payables	<b>1,271,249</b>	1,501,695
Provisions	<b>2,504,061</b>	2,123,425
Other financial liabilities	<b>2,835,873</b>	2,699,293
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>6,611,183</b>	6,324,413
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Lease Liabilities	<b>6,174,581</b>	6,653,053
Employee Provisions	<b>313,680</b>	345,455
Other non current liabilities	<b>369,805</b>	369,805
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>6,858,066</b>	7,368,313
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>13,469,249</b>	13,692,726
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>10,931,497</b>	7,970,677
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Donations Reserve	<b>73,570</b>	69,028
Retained Earnings	<b>10,857,927</b>	7,901,649
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>10,931,497</b>	7,970,677



## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Retirement of the Excel-based annual budget process and implementation of a dynamic 15 month rolling forecast system built on the BI platform Solvert.

- Integration of the BI tool Solver with Hunter Primary Care's new CMS Profile
- Expand the use of the BI tool Solver to automate financial and quantitative reporting across the organisation, to support reporting of the Organisational Performance Framework.

As at 30 June 2021 Hunter Primary Care has net assets amount to \$10.931 million which follows several years of growing revenues and strong financial performance. Together with a broad portfolio of services and increasingly diversified revenue streams, Hunter Primary Care is well placed to capitalise on new opportunities and continue its growth into the future.

Comprehensive 2020/2021 financial statements can be found on the [Hunter Primary Care website](#).



# Hunter **PR1MARYCARE**



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