

# Hunter **PRIMARYCARE**



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2024**

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. 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 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.**



**HUNTER PRIMARY CARE IS COMMITTED TO EMBRACING DIVERSITY AND ELIMINATING ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES. WE WELCOME ALL PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE SEXUALITIES AND/OR GENDERS.**

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# CHAIR AND CEO REPORT



It is our pleasure to present Hunter Primary Care's Annual Report for the 2023-2024 financial year. This report outlines our ongoing commitment to delivering integrated health and wellness services that help each person be their best, recognises our people and our clients, and highlights some of the milestones Hunter Primary Care has achieved throughout the year.

As the Chair and CEO of Hunter Primary Care, we are proud to lead such an exceptional organisation. As we reflect on our achievements this year, we acknowledge our team's unwavering focus on executing our strategic plan. This has not only strengthened our position but also laid the groundwork for sustainable, long-term growth. Without the strength of all teams working across the disparate areas of our organisation, we would not be able to deliver such outstanding supports for our clients.

Appreciation is extended to the Board for their governance and strategic direction over the past twelve months, as well as Hunter Primary Care's Executive and Leadership teams for their contribution and dedication to working towards our vision of good health and wellbeing for all. Our leaders exemplify Hunter Primary Care's organisational values of respect, excellence, recognition and integrity. We also appreciate the support of our members, referrers, stakeholders and clients for their enduring confidence in our work. Many of our members are also valued participants on our GP Access after hours rosters. We could not maintain the level of services we provide in our five after hours clinics without their involvement.

This year marked significant milestones in our service delivery and footprint. With growing demand across the majority of primary care services we deliver, particularly mental health services, we listened to our clients and implemented new models of care through

extensive consultation and research. Our Primary Mental Health Services team, following comprehensive training and consultation with key stakeholders, introduced a group therapy room in order to pilot Dialectical Behaviour Therapy and Groups for Belonging programs to priority populations across the Newcastle and Hunter region. The purpose of these groups is to increase belonging and social connection for participants and develop skills to assist with attentional control. Following the successful pilot, the team will continue to enhance and expand this program offering to clients.

Hunter Primary Care was supported by funding from the Department of Health and Aged Care to deliver a new service – the Aged Care Nursing Clinical Placement Program in the Hunter New England and Central Coast regions. Students in their second and third years studying a Bachelor or Master of Nursing were offered the opportunity to experience the full scope of gerontological nursing. Ninety-one student placements have been registered with the program and the team has achieved a 90% satisfaction score from students.

Our NDIS and Chronic Disease team were able to further implement their award-winning shared health appointments program after being funded by The Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network's Priority Allied Health Service program to provide free diabetes education to residents in Denman, Aberdeen, Muswellbrook and Scone. The team also launched To-ròl, a new wellbeing place for connection and gathering for our NDIS and Care Coordination and Supplementary Services clients. The first To-ròl service was the gym at our Warabrook office, where clients can attend sessions with our exercise physiologists, with a mobile kitchen being launched this coming year for clients engaged with our dietitians. Both of these initiatives incorporate lifestyle medicine and social prescribing.

The restoration of our GP Access services, which were reduced back in 2021 due to funding shortfalls, continued throughout the year. After signing a new contract with the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network in early 2023 we were able to reopen the Calvary Mater clinic and restore the extended hours at clinics at the John Hunter, Maitland and Belmont hospitals and at Toronto. With our focus on continuous improvement, we are also working on introducing a new model of care in the coming twelve months in order to address the ongoing issue of GP shortages in the region and utilising advances in technology to improve our service delivery.

headspace Newcastle celebrated its 10th birthday after opening back in 2013 by the Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Sharon Claydon MP, Member for Newcastle. Since then, the team have supported over 8,000 young people and their families to access services to support mental health, physical health and alcohol and other drugs. The centre's range of services and staff have expanded over the past decade to reflect the local needs of Newcastle's growing population and across the Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens areas.

It has been a busy year internally for Hunter Primary Care, with many initiatives taking place to support our highly valued people. The organisation's Mental Health and Wellbeing initiative expanded

throughout the year to include self-investment and movement sessions for staff to learn how to practice self-care. We invested in leadership training for our leaders and continued our rewards and recognition program, which encourages peer to peer acknowledgement of individuals and teams for exceptional contributions to our organisation by upholding our values. Our diversity, equity and inclusion strategy progressed with the organisation meeting several of our Stretch RAP deliverables and significantly expanding our work in the visibility of our LGBTQ+ and disability inclusion initiatives.

Looking ahead, service expansion, innovation, operational excellence and supporting our valued workforce will be at the heart of everything we do. We are confident that with the solid foundation we have built over the last 30 years, Hunter Primary Care is well-positioned to continue to meet the needs of our community. A major focus for next year will be the development of a new strategic plan and enhancing our efforts to engage consumers and key external stakeholders to co-design the delivery of our services.

We invite you to take a closer look at our achievements over the past twelve months in the 2024 Annual Report.

**Richard Anicich AM**  
Chair

**Keith Drinkwater**  
Chief Executive Officer

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mr Richard Anicich AM - Chair  
BCom, LLB, FAICD



Dr Sarah Bayley - Deputy Chair  
BMed, BN, FRACGP, GAICD



Dr Fiona Van Leeuwen  
BMed, FRACGP, RN, DRANZCOG



Ms Jennifer Hayes  
BBus, MBus, CPA, GAICD



Mr Laurence "Ben" Wilkins  
BPharm, AACPA, GAICD



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



Mr Scott Puxty  
BCom, Dip Law, MBusAdmin,  
GAICD



Mr Steven Adams  
AdvDip Bus Man, FAICD

# WHO WE ARE



Vision

Good health and wellbeing for all.

Mission

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

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.

How we serve



## Listen

We understand everyone's healthcare journey is different.



## Care

We deliver quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, mental health, NDIS, after hours and primary care services by experienced 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 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



## 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







# 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, Wonnarua, Gomeroi, Dunghutti, Nganyaywana, Gringai and Worimi peoples.





# OUR SERVICES

## AFTER HOURS & PRIMARY CARE

- Aged Care Emergency Service (ACE)
- Aged Care Nurse Practitioner Service
- Aged Care Nursing Clinical Placement Program
- Call Managed Services
- GP Access After Hours
- IT Services
- Priority Allied Health Service



## NDIS SERVICES

- NDIS Allied Health
- NDIS Positive Behaviour Support
- NDIS Specialist Support Coordination
- NDIS Support Coordination




## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Clinical Care Coordination
- Commonwealth Psychosocial Support (CPS) Service
- headspace Newcastle
- Mindreach Low-Intensity Mental Health Services
- Psychology Services
- The Way Back Support Service



## ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH SERVICES

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Care Coordination (Yudhilidin)
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Aftercare Service
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Psychology Services (YARN)
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Care Coordination & Supplementary Services (CCSS)
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Service





# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



**92.9%**

of clients were satisfied with the service they reviewed at HPC



**161**

Aged care homes supported by Aged Care Emergency (ACE) education service



**96.6%**

GP Access client satisfaction score



**88**

Aged care homes supported by ACE in the after hours



**12**

Aged care homes provided Nurse Practitioner services



**4.1/5**

Average client satisfaction score for headspace Newcastle



**781**

Young people supported by headspace Newcastle



**61,873**

Calls taken by GP Access



**43,076**

Patients seen in GP Access clinics



**511**

NDIS participants supported



**93.4%**

Mental health services client satisfaction score



**3,688**

headspace Newcastle occasions of service

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Hunter Primary Care is committed to embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the provision of health services. We welcome all people of diverse ethnicity, ability, faith, sexuality and/or genders.

Through a range of inclusion initiatives, we work tirelessly to improve Hunter Primary Care as an inclusive and culturally-safe organisation, both for staff and for the community, providing high quality health care services where all people are treated equally and with respect.

Our objective is to ensure that our organisation is welcoming and accepting of all people in the community, every time they visit one of our locations or interact with us in any way.

## RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Hunter Primary Care is committed to reconciliation and building strong, sustainable and mutually respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. Hunter Primary Care recognises and understands that reconciliation is the journey that the organisation must take to realise a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians stand together as equals. By focusing on improving relationships, enhancing respect and promoting opportunities, Hunter Primary Care is working to create a reconciled and equitable Australia.

Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) journey to date has seen the organisation progress from a Reflect RAP which scopes capacity for reconciliation and creates a vision, to an Innovate RAP which outlines actions and initiatives for achieving our vision. We are now at the third stage of our journey with a Stretch RAP 2025 that aims to embed reconciliation into our organisation, which was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia in February 2022.

## SOME OF OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR INCLUDE:

### RAP WORKING GROUP

Hunter Primary Care's RAP Working Group continued to meet regularly throughout the year to progress our Stretch RAP 2022-2025. The role of the group is to:

- Ensure the good intentions of Hunter Primary Care are actioned
- Develop and monitor progress of the RAP
- Liaise with Reconciliation Australia
- Identify the key tasks and assist in assigning responsibility
- Report to the Executive regarding progress
- Reflect on key learnings in developing a RAP
- Ensure that the organisation grows and develops to be recognised as a leader in the provision of contemporary, culturally sensitive and effective primary healthcare.





Current members of the group include:

- Abby Richards, Marketing & Communications Manager
- Amy Bailey, Clinical Psychologist & Program Manager
- Brandon Hall, Care Coordinator & Registered Nurse
- Byron Williams, Community Development Officer
- Emily Pile, Service Manager
- Gale Walker, CEO Executive Assistant
- Geoff Ford, Management Accountant
- Hana Edgar-Jones, Aboriginal Support Worker
- Kathy Piper, Senior Psychologist
- Keith Drinkwater, CEO
- Mel Teirney, Indigenous Peer Navigator
- Myron Olsen, Indigenous Care Coordinator
- Nic Robertson, Senior People & Culture Business Partner

## ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ORGANISATIONS

Throughout the year, Hunter Primary Care continued regular engagement with the following local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned organisations:

- Aboriginal Legal Service
- Awabakal Aboriginal Medical Services
- Awabakal Disability Services
- Awabakal Aged Care Services
- Barkuma Neighbourhood Centre
- Blackseed Catering
- Bungree Aboriginal Association
- Justiz Community Services
- Kiray Putjung Aboriginal Corporation
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils – Karuah, Biraban, Darkinjung, Worimi, Mindaribba, Bahtabah, Wanaruah
- Marrung Pa
- Midnight Dreaming
- Milan Dhiyaan
- Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre
- Muloobinba Aboriginal Corporation – Nikinpa
- Newcastle All Blacks
- Numa Ngarra
- Peibri Place
- Singleton NAIDOC Committee
- Tobwabba Aboriginal Medical Service
- Speaking in Colour
- Toby Cedar Art
- Ungooroo Aboriginal Corporation
- Yanteen Creative Enterprises (Yamuloong)
- Yaramun
- Yarn Up



## CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

### NAIDOC Week

In July 2023 we celebrated NAIDOC Week by attending local events Awabakal Newcastle NAIDOC, Barkuma's NAIDOC Family Fun Day and Singleton's NAIDOC Community Day. Celebrations were held at both our Warabrook and headspace Newcastle offices, where staff were treated to an Aboriginal dance performance, weaving and art workshops with Midnight Dreaming, as well as lunch catered by Numa Ngarra.

### Close the Gap Day

In March 2024 we celebrated Close the Gap Day at our Warabrook office with special guest, Toby Cedar, a passionate storyteller and artist who calls Maitland home. A proud Torres Strait Islander man, Toby has heritage from both eastern and western islands and brings stories to life through sculpture, carvings, dance, song and new technology. Lunch was provided by Peibri Place with fresh native ingredients.

### National Reconciliation Week

In June 2024 we celebrated National Reconciliation Week with special guests, Milan Dhiyaan, hosting immersive and educational workshops 'Barrawimambinya – Coming into Country Proper Way' at our Warabrook office. Staff were provided with a fresh understanding of the true meaning of Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country. Lunch was provided by Blackseed Catering.





### PRIMARY SCHOOL CULTURAL DAY BUSH TUCKER WORKSHOPS

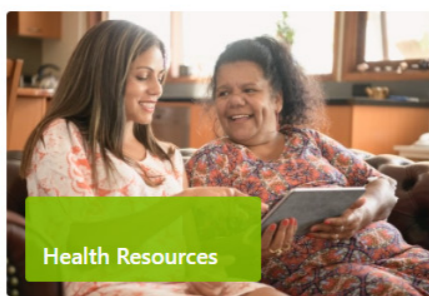
In July 2023, Hunter Primary Care’s allied health team were invited back to Stockton Public School for their cultural day celebrations. Our team of Aboriginal health workers, dietitians, occupational therapists and social workers delivered bush tucker workshops, teaching students how to incorporate native ingredients into their cooking at home.

### ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH & WELLBEING HUB

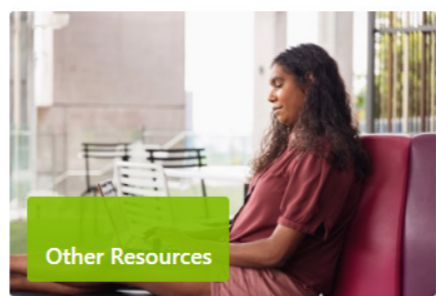
In September 2023, our RAP Working Group launched an online Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health & Wellbeing Hub on Hunter Primary Care’s intranet. The purpose of the hub is for staff to access valuable and relevant support services, useful links and resources that are working towards closing the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s life expectancy.



Crisis Supports



Health Resources



Other Resources

### ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

In June 2024, Hunter Primary Care launched an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy. Through consultation with our existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and members of our RAP Working Group, the strategy was developed with the aim to not only leverage from the strengths and commitment of our current employees, but to also encourage and engage new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to build their career at Hunter Primary Care. The strategy focuses on four main pillars:

- Culture and Community
- Attract and Recruit
- Develop
- Retention

Our objective is to ensure that Hunter Primary Care is welcoming and accepting of all people as valued employees who have a diverse range of skills, knowledge and abilities.



### CULTURAL IMMERSION TRAINING

Throughout the year, all Hunter Primary Care staff were offered the opportunity to undertake Cultural Immersion Training with Winanga-y Dreaming. The training includes activities to learn aspects of Aboriginal culture, local history and a better understanding of working with Indigenous communities. A total of 148 staff attended the training.

### INTEGRATED TEAM CARE PROGRAM EVALUATION

In October 2023, Hunter Primary Care staff, our Care Coordination and Supplementary Services clients and the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network (The PHN)’s First Nations Health Access Coordinator came together for a morning tea and yarn to discuss results of The PHN’s Integrated Team Care program evaluation. Our valued clients contributed to the evaluation process with feedback and insights of the strengths and areas that require improvement. The evaluation found that the program is achieving its desired outcome of improving life outcomes experienced by Indigenous Australians.



# LGBTQ+ INCLUSION

## PRIDE IN HEALTH & WELBEING MEMBERSHIP

Hunter Primary Care continued our Pride in Health + Wellbeing (PIHW) membership throughout the year, to understand how we can further contribute to the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people through the ongoing provision of safe and inclusive services.

We are a proud member of the ACON Institutes Welcome Here project that demonstrates to the LGBTQ+ community that our organisation is safe, inclusive and welcoming to all people in the community. By displaying the Welcome Here sticker on the front door of all of our business locations, we publicly embrace the LGBTQ+ community while also actively promoting our organisation as a place that is free from judgement, prejudice and discrimination.

Throughout the year, visibility of our inclusion commitment was enhanced by introducing the option to include pronouns in Hunter Primary Care staff email signatures, name badges and business cards, as well as hosting a Pride Month celebration for staff and celebrating Wear it Purple Day.

## LGBTQ+ AWARENESS TRAINING

Presented by ACON Institute, Hunter Primary Care staff are provided with the option to undertake LGBTQ+ Awareness training throughout the year. The purpose of the training is to expand our team's accessibility to clients and staff by providing a safe, and inclusive space that promotes and delivers exceptional person-centred care.

The full day workshops allow staff to improve their provision of person-centred care, elevate their clients' overall experience, and expand their understanding of people with diverse genders and/or sexualities.



## HEALTH + WELLBEING EQUALITY INDEX BRONZE AWARD

The Health + Wellbeing Equality Index (HWEI) is an annual benchmarking tool designed to assess and benchmark LGBTQ+ inclusive service provision among health, wellbeing and human service providers in Australia. Developed and assessed by Pride in Health + Wellbeing, the HWEI evaluates how well organisations address LGBTQ+ related needs and create inclusive environments.

In 2023, Hunter Primary Care's scorecard improved by 15 points on the prior year, which saw us achieve a Bronze Award. The improvement in our scorecard and being awarded a Bronze Award is reflective of our continued commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.



## PIHW STRATEGIC STEERING GROUP & RAINBOW NETWORK

In early 2024, Hunter Primary Care developed a PIHW Strategic Steering Group to provide strategic oversight to planning and activities to enhance Hunter Primary Care's inclusion and support of LGBTQ+ staff and clients. The group developed a Pride in Health + Wellbeing Action Plan, resulting in the introduction of a Rainbow Network Consultative and Advisory Group. This group consists of staff with an interest in inclusion, who manage implementation of the action plan.

Current members of the Rainbow Network include:

- Char Dege, Social Worker
- Emily Pile, Service Manager
- Janelle White, People & Culture Leader
- Kelly McDonnell, Clinical Psychologist
- Madeline Black, Clinical Care Coordinator
- Maighan Hassett, Clinical Psychologist
- Nicole May, People & Culture Administrator





# CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) COMMUNITIES

Hunter Primary Care appreciates that navigating healthcare can be challenging for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. For 30 years we have been providing healthcare and delivering support services to people who come from many different countries and backgrounds, and who speak many different languages.

Hunter Primary Care, as an organisation, demonstrates cultural understanding and respect. Some recent initiatives the headspace Newcastle team have implemented in the CALD space include:

## MULTICULTURAL YOUTH GROUP (MYG)

A weekly group engaging refugee youth at Hunter Multicultural Communities. This group is made possible through partnerships with STARTTS, Mosaic, Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre, Wesley Mission, the University of Newcastle (UoN) and Newcastle Police.

## WELCOME RIDE

An event which welcomes recently arrived youth to Newcastle and the Hunter through a day excursion. The group tour Newcastle and Lake Macquarie and is hosted by services that the young people may need to access.

## OPEN FOOTBALL SOCCER PROGRAM

headspace Newcastle sponsored the delivery of this program to CALD students at Callaghan College Waratah. This 8 week wellbeing and soccer program engaged 12 multicultural students was well received by both students and staff.



## EHEADSPACE WORKSHOP

A four hour workshop was created by headspace Newcastle to be delivered to the CALD leadership group at Callaghan Waratah. Students were given case studies to workshop as groups using eheadspace and online resources. This workshop engaged 20 students from the leadership groups.

## TOUR OF UON

Part of the MYG group's focus on building capacity and creating opportunities involved an excursion to the University of Newcastle, where students are welcomed by international students.

# COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE, INTERAGENCY AND REFERENCE GROUPS

Hunter Primary Care recognises the importance of consumer, family, carer, service provider and staff participation in the development, implementation and evaluation of responsive and innovative programs for the community and within our organisation.

As such, we have either developed or participated in a number of Communities of Practice, Interagency and Reference Groups which allow us to enhance our clients recovery and wellbeing, and leads to improved service quality and development through the expression of collective experience and expertise. Some of these Groups are internally focused to enhance the wellbeing of our staff and provide them the opportunity for their voice to be heard. Groups include:

## Communities of Practice

- Equality & Wellbeing Hunter Community of Practice
- First Nations Mental Health Community of Practice
- Individual Placement Support Communities of Practice
- Palliative Care Community of Practice

## Interagency

- Aged Care Interagency Meetings
- Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens Youth Interagency Meetings
- HNELHD Maitland Mental Health Interagency Meetings
- HNELHD Hunter Mental Health Interagency Meetings
- MindLink Upper Hunter Interagency Meetings
- Lake Macquarie Interagency Meetings
- Making Change in Our Suburbs Youth Project
- Newcastle and Lake Macquarie Careers Expo

## Advisory and Reference

- headspace Newcastle Advisory Committee
- headspace Newcastle Youth Reference Group
- headspace Newcastle Family and Friends Reference Group
- headspace Newcastle As You Are LGBTQ+ Group
- headspace Newcastle Multicultural Youth Group
- Individual Placement Support Steering Committee
- headspace Managers and Clinical Leads Networks NSW/National
- HNECCPHN Youth Mental Health Managers Group
- Internal - Staff Consultative Group
- Internal - RAP Working Group
- Internal - Health and Wellbeing Steering Committee
- Internal - PIHW Strategic Steering Committee
- Internal - Rainbow Network



# INNOVATION, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

## AGED CARE CLINICAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM

In July 2023, Hunter Primary Care was supported by funding from the Department of Health and Aged Care to coordinate delivery of the Aged Care Nursing Clinical Placement Program in the Hunter New England and Central Coast regions. Second and third year students studying a Bachelor or Master of Nursing were offered the opportunity to be involved in a high quality aged care nursing clinical placement to experience the full scope of gerontological nursing.

Students were provided with placement at a residential aged care home close to their own homes, working closely with a registered nurse mentor and a clinical facilitator. The purpose of the program is to prepare student nurses to apply clinical assessment and critical thinking to competently manage complex care needs, expose students to the leadership role of a registered nurse in aged care, and to apply holistic care and develop communication skills with residents and families.



## HEADSPACE NEWCASTLE AND NEWCASTLE JETS GOLD STRENGTH PROGRAM

In October 2023, headspace Newcastle worked with Matt Starr, Newcastle Jets (Jets) Community Liaison Officer and both male and female players to develop and implement the Jets Gold Star Strength Program. The program involves a series of videos highlighting the players personal stories relating to mental health and wellbeing. The program toured a number of schools throughout the Hunter including Merewether High School, Cardiff High School, Dungog High School, Singleton High School and Cessnock High School.

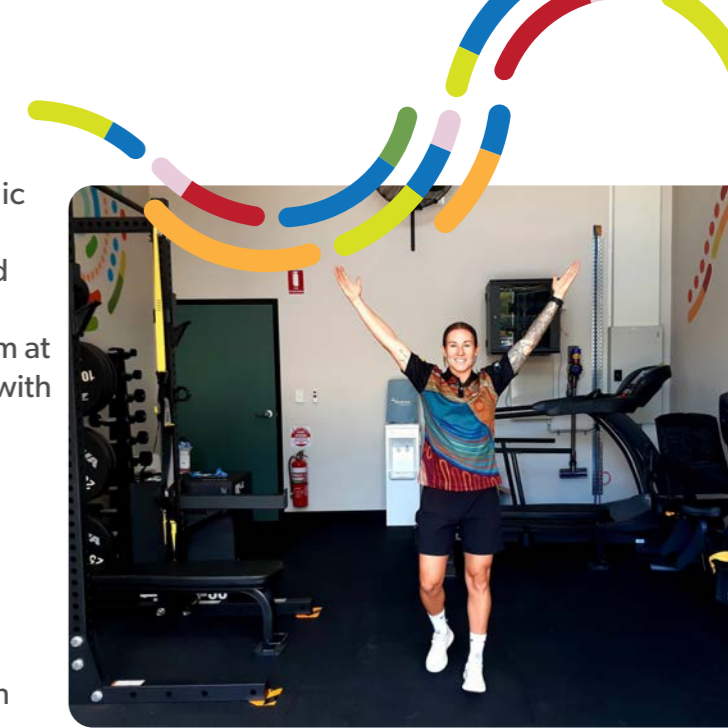
## HSC STRESS LESS PROGRAM

headspace Newcastle partnered with Newcastle Library to deliver the HSC Stress Less Program to help HSC students deal with exam stress and school pressures. The three week program, developed by headspace Newcastle a number of years ago and revamped in 2024, engaged 10 students from various schools across the Newcastle region. Co-facilitated by headspace Newcastle clinicians, the sessions taught students mindfulness techniques, stress-reduction and organisation strategies.

## TO-RÒL

In November 2023, Hunter Primary Care's NDIS & Chronic Disease team launched To-ròl, a new wellbeing place for connection and gathering. The word To-ròl, (pronounced too-rol) is an Awabakal word meaning 'to be in a state of healing' and 'to be well'. The first To-ròl service is the gym at our Warabrook office, where clients can attend sessions with our exercise physiologists. The vision for To-ròl is:

- To provide health and wellbeing services that incorporate a culturally informed, trauma integrated healing approach and meaningful engagement principals.
- To provide quality allied health services that incorporate evidenced-based therapies to strengthen health outcomes including social and emotional wellbeing.
- To provide a welcoming space that acknowledges a person's journey with a focus on the importance of gathering and connection.



## HEADSPACE 10TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

In November 2023, headspace Newcastle celebrated its 10th birthday. To mark the occasion, they hosted an afternoon tea to launch their new First Nations design created in collaboration with Speaking in Colour. headspace Newcastle opened in 2013 by the Hon Mark Butler and Federal Member, Sharon Claydon. Since its opening, the team have supported over 8000 young people and their families to access services to support mental health, physical health (including sexual health) and alcohol and other drugs. The centre's range of services and staff have expanded over the past decade to reflect the local needs of Newcastle's growing population and across the Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens areas.

headspace Newcastle worked with Speaking in Colour to create a First Nations design that is inspired from this local area (Awabakal and Worimi country). The design reflects the animals, birds and waterways and intertwines them with a young persons' journey to wellbeing. The afternoon tea featured performances and dances by the young women from Ngaarr Dhuwi Aboriginal Girls Program at Newcastle High School and speeches from local youth advocates.





## PRIORITY ALLIED HEALTH SERVICE DIABETES EDUCATION

In November 2023, Hunter Primary Care was funded by The PHN's Priority Allied Health Service (PAHS) program to provide free Diabetes Education to residents in Denman, Aberdeen, Muswellbrook and Scone. Participants were provided access to six treatment sessions with a Credentialed Diabetes Educator, and in some cases, up to ten sessions. Participants have the option to join online Shared Health Appointments to:

- Connect with people who share similar experiences and concerns about health and wellbeing.
- Understand that they are the expert in their own life and we will support them with meaningful goals.
- Build their confidence and strengthen community connections.



*I really gained a lot from being a part of these appointments. You do a fabulous job, there really needs to be more Gareth's in this world*

**- Participant quote**

*These groups are awesome, I feel so encouraged because someone will say exactly what I'm feeling. I am not alone and it's been amazing*

**- Participant quote**



## AGED CARE NURSE PRACTITIONER PROGRAM

In November 2022, Hunter Primary Care successfully piloted a new model of care to improve access to primary care and support residents of aged care homes to manage their healthcare goals, across the Hunter New England region. The Aged Care Nurse Practitioner Program was funded by The PHN and included a partnership with both the UoN and HCF to evaluate the effectiveness, feasibility and acceptability of the model over a 12 month period.

In November 2023, with a 97% satisfaction score from residents involved in the program, The PHN supported Hunter Primary Care to continue the program in the Tamworth region. Following the success of the pilot program, Hunter Primary Care expanded the service to additional aged care homes outside of the funding provided by The PHN for a fee. We have now employed five nurse practitioners, a transitional nurse practitioner and provide student placement opportunities across twelve aged care homes.



## DEMENTIA NURSE RESEARCH PROJECT

In April 2024, Hunter Primary Care partnered with researchers at The University of Newcastle, Central Coast Research Institute and Hunter Medical Research Institute to investigate if support from a dementia nurse is helpful to people with memory problems and their carers. People aged 65 and older, living in the greater Newcastle region and living with dementia and their carers are eligible to participate in this study, which involves:

- A researcher visiting participants in their home to ask some questions about their health and to confirm their eligibility for this study.
- Participants being allocated to receive usual care or usual care plus the nurse-led care program.
- Participants in the group that gets nurse support will be visited by a nurse to ask about health and support needs. The nurse will talk to their GP to help plan their care, connect them to services and support, and provide four personalised consultations over six months.

## THE PHN'S PRIMARY CARE QUALITY & INNOVATION AWARDS FINALISTS

In June 2024, Hunter Primary Care was announced as finalists at The PHN's Primary Care Quality & Innovation Awards 2024. The awards celebrate outstanding contributions from primary care providers and individuals across the Hunter New England and Central Coast region. Hunter Primary Care was nominated in four categories;

- Technology in Health Award - Telehealth delivery via online diabetes education Shared Health Appointments for rural and remote clients.
- Primary Care Innovation Award - Aged Care Nurse Practitioner service enhancing primary care for people residing in aged care.
- Primary Care Leader Award (Organisation) - Leading innovation and implementation of Lifestyle Medicine into both service delivery to vulnerable people and workplace.
- Primary Care Leader Award (Clinic/Team) - Innovative solutions in the aged care environment supported by the establishment of a high functioning team.

Innovation, excellence and the pursuit of equitable access to primary health are the overarching themes of the event. To be nominated alongside such revered industry leaders was an honor and we are beyond proud of our remarkable team and the contribution they make every day.





## GROUP THERAPY - DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOUR THERAPY AND GROUPS FOR BELONGING

In June 2024, Hunter Primary Care created a group therapy room in order to pilot Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) and Groups for Belonging. These programs were offered to clients of The PHN-commissioned primary mental health services, identified by The PHN as priority populations, including:

- People at risk of suicide and self-harm
- First Nations people
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people
- LGBTQIA+ people
- Older people living alone/isolated
- People in the perinatal period
- People using alcohol and other drugs
- Residents in aged care homes

Hunter Primary Care started this journey in 2022 after identifying that demand for DBT and Groups for Belonging was high in the Newcastle area, with long wait times for the Centre for Psychotherapy and demand from Hunter Primary Care clients. HPC received a funding grant from Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA) for training of 18 clinicians. After a group therapy room was built and group management policies and resources were developed, the team piloted both programs in 2024.

The Groups for Belonging program is an Australian developed six session group program to help reduce loneliness and increase belonging and social connection for people in alcohol and other drugs recovery.

The DBT program involves ten sessions and aims to assist participants to develop skills to assist with attentional control using mindfulness, emotional regulation skills and distress tolerances skills. Participants were provided with DBT coping cards as a graduation gift on their last day of the programs. We have had quite promising results on the DERS-16 (Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale) and had some very positive feedback from participants. The team intends to continue to enhance and expand this program offering to clients.



*The things I most enjoyed about the program were very good facilitators and very nice and open participants, the connection with the group and the teachers, the people, the program structure, the freedom.*

**- Participant quote**

*The things I most enjoyed about the program were those who ran the program, the content and the participants. The program was structured in a fantastic way that was clear and concise*

**- Participant quote**



## CEO APPOINTMENT

In June 2024, CEO Brenda Ryan announced her retirement from Hunter Primary Care. Brenda joined Hunter Primary Care in August 2017 and guided the organisation through the COVID-19 pandemic, organisational structure changes, a rebrand, introducing new programs and program cessations, funding intricacies, strategic planning and more. Her passion, dedication and strategic guidance has been instrumental in shaping the organisation's success.



Keith Drinkwater, Hunter Primary Care's Chief Operating Officer, was appointed to the role of CEO. Keith has been an invaluable asset to Hunter Primary Care, demonstrating exceptional leadership, and dedication throughout his twelve-year tenure with the organisation. He has consistently shown a deep understanding of Hunter Primary Care's vision and mission and has played a pivotal role in driving the organisation's success.

Keith has worked in the health sector for over 40 years and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Health Service Management. In commenting on his appointment, Keith says *"I feel very privileged to be taking on this role and having the opportunity to further contribute to strengthening primary care in the Newcastle and Hunter region and beyond. I am confident that under my leadership, Hunter Primary Care will continue to thrive and deliver our mission of integrated health and wellness services that help each person be their best."*

## STUDENT PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Our Student Placement program continued to grow throughout the year. Hunter Primary Care has been working with the University of Newcastle for many years with student placements, expanding from psychology students to a range of disciplines. Our aim is to provide students with the necessary support they need to develop foundational skills in the health and disability industry. With a focus on best practice and optimum client care, the program sees students build capacity and independence as their skills develop. We hosted 20 students across the following disciplines throughout the year:

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health
- Exercise Physiology
- Occupational Therapy
- Nursing
- Nutrition and Dietetics
- Psychology
- Social Work





## IN THE MEDIA

- September 2023 – Byron Williams, Community Development Officer, was interviewed by Newcastle Weekly about headspace Newcastle’s collaboration with Lake Macquarie City Council and UoN on the innovative art program Head2Art, helping local teens get in the right frame of mind.
- October 2023 – Byron Williams, Community Development Officer, was interviewed by The Newcastle Herald about the 2023 headspace calendar competition.
- January 2024 – Sister Kay Carmody, RN with GP Access was interviewed by The Maitland Mercury about her impact on the local community following her retirement after 50 years as an RN and midwife and 22 years with GP Access.
- February 2024 - Janelle White, People & Culture Leader was interviewed by the Australian HR Institute about Hunter Primary Care’s hybrid and flexible working practices in their publication “The State of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Australian Workplaces”.
- February 2024 - Clare Quilty, Clinical Social Worker and Service Manager, featured on the Tanya and Steve breakfast show on Triple M Newcastle to provide tips on how to overcome the shame of alcohol dependence and seek help, as well as how to recognise signs of alcohol dependency in your loved ones.
- March 2024 - Byron Williams, Community Development Officer, was interviewed by The Newcastle Herald about increase vaping rates among young people in the Hunter New England region.
- May 2024 - Byron Williams, Community Development Officer, was interviewed by the Newcastle Herald about the Minds Matter Festival, a collaboration with MKZ Productions and The Hamilton Station Hotel to raise funds for headspace Newcastle.
- June 2024 - Andrew Stinson, Social Worker and Specialist Support Coordinator was interviewed by ABC Newcastle during Men’s Health Week to highlight the importance of men’s health checks.

## SHARING INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

Throughout the year, Hunter Primary Care staff were invited to present at a number of industry conferences and events including:

- Brenda Ryan, CEO – Being More Human’s ‘Culture is the Strategy’ Summit
- Claudine Ford, General Manager and Kate Wood, Team Leader & Accredited Practising Dietitian, NDIS & Chronic Disease – Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine Conference
- Claudine Ford, General Manager NDIS & Chronic Disease – NSW Rural Doctors Network and Rural Health Pro’s Rural Health Leaders Conference
- Byron Williams, Community Development Officer, headspace Newcastle – Healthy headspace, Positive Relationships, Year 13 and HSC Stress Less presentations at various local schools.







# OUR PEOPLE



## ANDRE TEY

**NURSE PRACTITIONER, AGED CARE SERVICES**



Andre is a Nurse Practitioner working in Hunter Primary Care's Aged Care Nurse Practitioner service. Andre was one of the first two Nurse Practitioners employed for the service when it was launched as a pilot program. Andre has extensive post graduate qualifications and experience which enables him to have an extended scope of practice ,order investigations and prescribe medications to facilitate timely primary care to residents of aged care facilities. Andre believes in person-centred care, where the resident's goals of care and how they want to live their life is the most important aspect of delivery of care. Another important part of his role is the provision of palliative care for residents in the home. In most cases he has known the resident for some time and developed a good relationship with them, which provides additional comfort to the resident and their families during the stage of life.

## BRANDON HALL

**REGISTERED NURSE - CARE COORDINATION & SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES (CCSS)**



Brandon is a Registered Nurse and has extensive experience in the cardiac and pulmonary settings both within the community and hospital settings. Brandon has over 20 years' experience working in the community for a variety of rehabilitative services. Brandon also has a background of acute care working in our district's busiest emergency departments. Brandon's extensive knowledge of chronic health conditions together with a delightful bedside manner enable Brandon to assist community to better understand and manage their health to achieve their goals.



# BYRON WILLIAMS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, HEADSPACE NEWCASTLE

Byron Williams has worked at headspace Newcastle for ten years in the position of Community Development Officer. He holds a degree in Industrial Design with a strong focus on project management and marketing, both of which are invaluable skills in the Community Development role. Byron combines this education with a passion for music and art to deliver innovative projects, events and workshops to young people in the Newcastle and surrounding areas. Byron has extensive experience working with young people in remote, rural, regional and urban communities throughout Australia. Music and art have enabled Byron to share stories with young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and age groups. Byron is part of Australian band The Herd and is a founding member of the music label Elefant Traks.



# CLARE QUILTY

SERVICE MANAGER AND ACCREDITED SOCIAL WORKER, PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

Clare joined Hunter Primary Care in January 2023 and is an Accredited Social Worker with a diverse range of experience in project management, healthcare and clinical social work. Clare holds a Bachelor of Community Work, Bachelor of Health Science and Masters of Social Work and has worked as a Course Development Project Manager in natural therapies and counselling colleges. Clare's project management work continued in the education and IT industries before engaging in clinical social work in the areas of child protection and school counselling. Clare brings her management and clinical experience to the Primary Mental Health Services' Service Manager role and enjoys working with and supporting the diverse teams across Hunter Primary Care to deliver the best outcomes for our clients.



# JANELLE WHITE

PEOPLE & CULTURE LEADER

Janelle has a Master in Business (Human Resources) and Graduate Certificate in Employment Law. Janelle leads the People & Culture team and has been at Hunter Primary Care for 20+ years. Janelle was the first dedicated Human Resources team member employed at Hunter Primary Care (then Hunter Urban Division of General Practice) and has supported the company through many changes, including the transition to Medical Local and the start-up of the HNECCPHN. Janelle and the People & Culture team are dedicated to supporting people to be their best, including supporting their wellbeing and development. Janelle loves working with people who are passionate about making a difference to the wellbeing of our community.



# KERRY TURNBULL

PROGRAM COORDINATOR AND CLINICAL FACILITATOR, AGED CARE CLINICAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Kerry is a Registered Nurse with over 40 years of experience in aged and emergency nursing. Kerry worked for Hunter Primary Care in the Aged Care Emergency (ACE) service as an educator many years ago and was thrilled to return to the organisation in her current role in April 2023. This role combines Kerry's love of aged care nursing with her love of educating new nurses, and she feels it has been very rewarding to see student nurses grow and start to understand the speciality of gerontological nursing.



Kerry works closely with universities, aged care providers, clinical facilitators and students to get the best placement fit for the student so they can maximise their learning, preferably close to home. Some of Kerry's students have now started a career in aged care while others are now wonderful advocates for clients who live in aged care homes and for their colleagues working in aged care. Kerry enjoys supporting both students and clinical facilitators and challenging them to even greater understanding of the aged care environment and the complexities of caring for very vulnerable and valued elders of our community.

# JOSE ABRAHAM

CLINICAL TEAM LEADER, GP ACCESS

Jose is a Clinical Team Leader and also works as a RN at our GP Access After Hours service. Jose decided to become a nurse when he was very young, starting his career as an RN in 2008 and worked in various hospitals in India. After migrating to Australia in 2013, Jose worked in GP practices and joined GP Access in 2021.

Jose finds his role in GP Access very rewarding. He believes that every day is filled with new challenges with a focus on problem solving to create a smooth and organised system to run the after hours clinics. Jose looks forward to continuing his role and furthering his professional and personal development.





# MEL TIERNEY

**INDIGENOUS PEER NAVIGATOR, YUDHILIDIN**

Mel is a proud Ngunnawal woman from Wonnarua country and is an Indigenous Peer Navigator with the Yudhilidin team. Mel has a Certificate IV in Peer Work and previously worked as an Aboriginal Peer Worker with NSW Health. Mel provides culturally safe support for community members with a focus on helping individuals set health and wellbeing goals, access mental health care, and connect with local resources. Drawing on her own experiences, Mel fosters connections based on cultural understanding, ensuring clients feel seen and heard. She advocates for holistic, culturally relevant mental health approaches, highlighting the importance of community and identity in healing. Through her work, Mel empowers others, reduces stigma, and promotes resilience within her community.



# RENE MACARTHUR

**BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PRACTITIONER, NDIS POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT**

Rene has gained extensive experience living, working and studying abroad, which has broadened his understanding of various cultures and people. With a background in childhood education, psychological health and supporting individuals with severe and complex psychosocial disabilities, he has developed a comprehensive understanding of human needs and their critical role in psychological development. Rene holds an Undergraduate degree in Psychological Sciences and a Masters degree in Business Psychology. As a Behaviour Support Practitioner, Rene excels at meeting the needs of neurodiverse individuals. He is dedicated to offering personalised support that acknowledges the unique challenges faced by those with autism and ADHD. Rene's approach focuses on building real connections based on respect and supporting each person's independence. He takes the time to understand each individual's unique needs and goals. His interpersonal style is gentle and thoughtful, making sure everyone feels heard and supported.



# ZANITA JOHNSON

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST, CARE COORDINATION & SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES (CCSS) & NDIS ALLIED HEALTH**

Zanita is an Occupational Therapist and assists clients to be as independent as possible with everyday roles to enable them to stay living at home safely. This may include prescribing equipment or minor home modifications. Zanita is passionate about Lifestyle Medicine and what it can provide in terms of the management of chronic conditions. Zanita provides wellbeing support to clients that includes managing stress, getting restorative sleep and engaging in nature based therapy. The peer to peer support that clients experience in our group Shared Health Appointments (SHA) motivates Zanita to facilitate delivery of health interventions via the innovative SHA model.



# SOPHIE CURTIS

**CONCIERGE MANAGER**

Sophie holds a Bachelor of Counselling and has nine years of experience in mental health, working in roles such as individual counselling, group facilitation, mental health support, NDIS Support Coordination, and team leadership. Sophie joined Hunter Primary Care in 2019 with the Hunter Psychosocial Support Services (now Commonwealth Psychosocial Support) and has also worked as acting CPS Team Leader, an NDIS Support Coordinator and Project Officer.

In 2023, Sophie became the Team Leader of a new Concierge team, which was created to streamline referral pathways and service information for NDIS and Chronic Disease services, while also providing administrative support to the team and client support in line with the model of care for each service. Sophie has led her team through the integration of Client Services and the Concierge teams and expanding support across multiple Hunter Primary Care services. Sophie is responsible for developing and guiding the Concierge team to deliver a personalised, trauma-informed, and client-centred experience for all clients accessing HPC services. Her goal as a manager is to create an inclusive and psychosocially safe work environment where the team can feel fulfilled in their work. She believes that embracing diversity and inclusivity is essential to providing effective community health and wellbeing support to the wellbeing of our community.



# TARYN HENRY

**CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES**

Taryn is a Clinical Psychologist and has been working at Hunter Primary Care since 2021. Taryn has experience working with clients of all ages across settings that include primary health services, hospitals and inpatient units, and student counselling services. She enjoys working with a range of presentations for issues such as depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress, complex trauma, substance use issues, personality disorders and perinatal depression. Taryn uses a strengths-based and collaborative approach to support all clients to work towards their goals. She draws from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) in her work, with a focus on supportive psychotherapy. Taryn provides psychological therapy in the Warabrook office two days per week and works across a number of facilities through the Aged Care Program one day per week.





# SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

## 2023 CEO AWARD WINNERS



In December 2023, Hunter Primary Care held the annual CEO Awards. Staff are encouraged to nominate their colleagues who exemplify Hunter Primary Care's organisational values including Excellence, Integrity, Respect and Recognition, as well as Leadership.

The Individual Performance Award winners were:

- Abby Richards
- Byron Williams
- Emma Hughes
- Georgia Amess
- Hana Edgar-Jones
- Janelle White
- Leigh Darcy
- Patrice Davis
- Sophie Curtis

Team Performance Award winners were:

- headspace Practice Coordinators – Ashley Graham & Jessica Liverod
- People & Culture - Janelle White, Nic Robertson, Jen Partridge, Jacqui Sharkey and Nic May

## LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Throughout the year, leaders across Hunter Primary Care were provided with an opportunity to partake in Human Synergistics ANZ Lifestyles Inventory (LSI) Workshops with Being More Human. The LSI is an organisational tool that uses both self-assessment and colleague feedback to identify individual thinking and behavioural styles. Leaders across our organisation have been utilising this tool since 2019 and are given insights into their personal strengths, as well as areas for development. Staff were also offered to undertake a Certificate IV in Leadership and Management with Essential Skills Training and Recruitment in order help them grow and develop in their roles.



## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING INITIATIVE

Throughout the year, we continued our Mental Health & Wellbeing initiative to ensure that Hunter Primary Care has a structured and strategic approach towards a mentally healthy organisational culture. The focus of this strategy is to not only protect our employees against poor mental health, but works to promote good mental health; creating an environment where our people enjoy coming to work and find the experience a positive one. Some initiatives implemented throughout the year as part of this program include:

### PEOPLE AT WORK SURVEY

The annual People at Work survey - provides staff with the opportunity to contribute to a better understanding of the psychosocial hazards and factors that influence the psychological health of our people. Results found that praise and recognition is much higher than the industry benchmark, Supervisor and co-worker support exceeded previous survey results and change consultation was higher than previous years

### STEP & SIP

The Step & Sip encourages teams to move away from traditional meetings and try something different by having meetings take place outside, with a walk to the local coffee shop and back and a chat. Our teams often celebrate a theme to go along with the walk, including Halloween.



### MENTAL HEALTH MONTH SELF-INVESTMENT SESSIONS

During Mental Health Month in 2023, Hunter Primary Care implemented weekly self-investment sessions for staff in a safe, supportive space to learn how to take care of their brain and body and practice self-care through mindful movement, breath-work, and guided meditation techniques. The sessions were delivered by Lucinda van de Berkt, a Kundalini Yoga and meditation teacher.





## MOVE IN MAY

Staff were invited to embrace movement in May and take part in 30 minutes of movement in any form every day for 30 days. Staff could showcase their movement through an MS Teams chat, a platform to share progress and receive valuable tips from Georgia, Hunter Primary Care's accredited exercise physiologist. The MS Teams chat was a shared space for open and respectful exchange of motivation, encouragement, sharing of pictures and tips by Georgia.



## R U OK DAY

R U OK Day is an annual event that inspires and empowers everyone to meaningfully connect with the people around them and start a conversation with those in their world who may be struggling with life. The team got together for a morning tea to connect, have a conversation, some food and spend time getting to know each other.





# OUR CLIENTS

## JOHN (STUDENT)- AGED CARE NURSING CLINICAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM

John applied to join Hunter Primary Care's Aged Care Nursing Clinical Placement Program and was placed with Mel, Registered Nurse and Clinical Facilitator. "I can still recall what it was like showing up on your first day of placement. You're in an unfamiliar environment, the setting may be new for you and you know no one" says Mel. "As a clinical facilitator, your goal of the first meeting with students is to reiterate they are in a supportive learning environment and make them feel welcome".

John was candid in explaining he was unsure why he had chosen nursing. His brother, a Registered Nurse, had encouraged him to consider it and he wasn't sure if aged care would be the right clinical specialty for him upon completion of his studies. This can be a common response for anyone undertaking studies as, whilst students cover theory components in detail, practical opportunities provide students a realistic and hands on learning opportunity.

During his placement, John applied an open minded approach to the program and embraced the learning opportunity. He flourished. On his final week of the program, he shared that he wanted to pursue work in aged care. He had enjoyed his placement so much he even said "it doesn't feel like coming to work".



*As clinical facilitators, we mentor our students to provide them the best opportunity available in their learning journey. We are beyond proud of our students for embracing the program and can't describe how rewarding it is when we see students find their passion.*

**- Quote from Mel - RN & Clinical Facilitator**



## MARK- NDIS SUPPORT COORDINATION

When his Support Coordinator, Kerri, first started working with Mark, he was not engaging with any supports or services and was only leaving the house briefly to walk his dog or to accompany his Mum on a weekly shopping trip. Understandably, engaging with Hunter Primary Care to coordinate Mark's supports in order to achieve his NDIS goals was going to be a vast change for him and not necessarily something that would be readily accepted.

Kerri took this in her stride and worked alongside Mark at a pace that he felt comfortable with. She listened to Mark's needs and maintained regular contact with Mark and his Mum to build trust and rapport. Over time, this allowed their working relationship to build to where Mark was open to and willing to accept support. That was then.

Having built the capacity and confidence to meet new people, Mark is now engaging in supports three times a week. Mark has recently undertaken a trip to Coffs Harbour, where he swam with dolphins. He has also recently experienced a sky diving adventure!



*Nothing is stopping me now from doing this. Now I am thinking of the next bucket list item!*

**- Quote from Mark**





## JESSIE\* - NDIS SOCIAL WORKER SERVICE

Facing barriers with community and social services involved in her care, Jessie was referred to Hunter Primary Care's NDIS Social Worker service.

Jessie was paired with Social Worker, Sophia, who works with participants to focus on maintaining and enhancing quality of life to facilitate empowerment. This includes assistance with navigation and linkage to services, supporting self-management and identifying strengths, as well as providing therapeutic and psychological interventions to improve mental health and wellbeing.

In their time working together, Sophia assisted Jessie to open lines of communication with these services and has supported her to advocate for herself. Jessie has now engaged new NDIS support services and is expressing interest in building capacity in other areas of her daily living. Jessie's Support Coordinator says *"it is wonderful to see Jessie's voice being heard and the positive impact this has had on her"*.

Whilst self-advocacy is something that many take for granted, being able to communicate your needs is not something that comes readily for everyone. This highlights the significance of the contribution made by our staff, like Sophia, who work with participants to assist with self-empowerment. *"Being able to witness the positive impact this has had on Jessie is just so gratifying"*, says Sophia.

\*Jessie's real name has been omitted from this story.

## RACHEL - AGED CARE NURSING CLINICAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Meet Rachel, Hunter Primary Care's first student with the Aged Care Nursing Clinical Placement Program. Rachel completed her placement at Stroud Community Lodge. Rachel was very happy with her experience, saying *"it was great to not have to compete with others to take part in learning opportunities, especially ones where a crowd of uni students may make the resident feel uncomfortable."* Rachel also commented on how great it was to work so closely with the registered nurse on duty and to have a clinical facilitator to herself for an hour each day to reflect on the day's activities.

The manager at Stroud Community Lodge, Yolande Williams, was so happy with the program she continued to take on additional students.



## MITCHELL - NDIS AND CHRONIC DISEASE

Meet Mitchell, a charismatic and down to earth man with a primary diagnosis of Down Syndrome. Mitchell lives with his parents, who have been navigating their own health challenges. Mitchell was referred to Andrew, NDIS Social Worker, with the identified key goals of supporting Mitchell to increase independence through daily planning, goal setting and routine, employment opportunities and future planning. Support was also provided to Mitchell's family unit in order to remain as independent as possible, with a strong focus on keeping their health and wellbeing in check and advocacy with other health stakeholders.

Andrew was able to undertake a holistic assessment with Mitchell and his family unit to understand previous barriers and systems of belief, including the fear of being taken advantage of due to past experiences, experiencing anxiety around meeting new people and leaving the house, and a history of ADHD. To date, Andrew has achieved significant milestones in his work with Mitchell, including;

- Engagement with APM, a Disability Employment Services provider for Mitchell to work in a disability friendly cafe in a supportive environment. This has allowed him to overcome fears due to experiencing a prior burn from a sandwich press. Mitchell undertakes the tasks of preparing toasties, stacking the dishwasher, collecting plates and more.
- Mitchell working on independence tasks in readiness for his cafe shifts, including making his own lunch.
- Liaison with Mitchell's GP, including referrals made for investigation into identified health concerns, medication and appropriate specialist reviews.
- Caregiver capacity building provided to Mitchell's mother, who is the nominated carer for Mitchell and her husband. Mitchell's mother was experiencing carer stress, reporting that caring for both was becoming overwhelming. Referrals were made to services to support them to remain independent at home.
- Future planning discussions held, identifying independent living options and supported independent living, as well as the entire family's openness to consider the same.



*The best thing we have done is connect Mitchell to Amazing Andrew*

**Quote from Mitchell's Mother**





## DONNA - NDIS & CHRONIC DISEASE

Donna was in a vulnerable period in her life at the time she was referred to Hunter Primary Care's Clinical Care Coordination program. Having experienced a decline in her mental health, she was distrustful of services due to challenging experiences with other providers, which left her initially reluctant to engage with Hunter Primary Care.

As her Clinician, Madeline introduced various evidence-based strategies to support Donna to manage her mental health, including psychoeducation, behavioural activation, pleasant activity scheduling, nightmare re-scripting and mindfulness. Donna was very receptive and successfully applied strategies explored outside of appointments. Through liaison with Donna's GP, Madeline was able to support Donna to access referrals to various health services to allow investigation into identified health concerns. Madeline supported Donna to attend initial appointments with new health services to support her to practice strategies explored together to reduce her anxiety. Working in collaboration with Donna's treatment team and family support network, Madeline was able to:

- Support Donna to lodge an application for the Disability Support Pension with Centrelink.
- Provide Donna's mother and identified carer, Lorraine, with education on Donna's mental health, including ways to identify a decline in Donna's mental health and strategies to safely manage this.
- Provide education around carer support and aged care services available to Lorraine to enable her to remain supported in her role caring for Donna.

*"I cannot thank you enough for all the support you have provided me" says Donna. Fast forward to now, Donna's improvement is evidenced by:*

- Significant improvement in her mental health and mood, which has reduced her anxiety.
- Re-engagement in the community, including connecting with friends.
- Improved functional capacity, allowing her to reengage in activities important to her, including training her horses using Liberty and Natural Horsemanship approaches.

*It has been such a privilege to walk alongside Donna in her journey to mental health recovery, seeing her growth from our initial meeting to the program completion. It has been such a rewarding experience and I am so proud of Donna and the progress she has made during our time working together.*

**- Quote from Madeline**



## PETE - NDIS AND CHRONIC DISEASE

Meet Pete, who with support from our Exercise Physiologist, Georgia, has been strength training in Hunter Primary Care's own onsite gym To-ròl.

Pete has autism and mental health conditions that he manages daily. Pete began with the goal of formulating a routine of regular exercise, which included daily at home exercises with a tailored program to suit his living space, needs and goals of increasing muscle mass. Pete also trains twice weekly with Georgia for an hour in To-ròl.

Pete's sessions with Georgia have focused on upper and lower body movements to reach Pete's strength goals, as well as sleep hygiene education. Having initially reported having troubles with sleeping and waking late of a morning and sometimes the afternoon due to poor sleep patterns, Pete now goes to bed at approximately 10-11pm as opposed to 1-2am and is waking around 8:30am most mornings with very restful sleep. *"I am excited to attend the gym every second day, it gives me something to look forward to"* says Pete.

Throughout the twelve months of working together, Georgia has not only supported Pete to increase his confidence in the gym, but also to improve movement autonomy/coordination and allowance for different environments to be used for his exercise routine. Through Georgia's client-centered approach, Pete now also attends sessions with Georgia at Newcastle Ocean Baths in the summer to beat the heat and together they walk along the beach for a change of scenery. Pete has recently commenced a six week block of cardio training at the beach, where he has asked to implement more running and hill based sessions to increase his cardiovascular fitness. Pete reports he is really enjoying his sessions regularly and Georgia continues to tailor exercises and locations that suit Pete and his needs.



*To-ròl is a safe inclusive space where I feel comfortable to try any exercise.*

**Quote from Pete**





## ZOE - HEADSPACE WORK & STUDY

Zoe joined headspace Newcastle's Work & Study program with little idea of what career path she wanted to pursue. She was working casually in a fast-food restaurant but wanted to explore long term prospects.

Zoe and her Vocational Specialist considered Zoe's interests, strengths and past experiences and discovered she had a passion for working with children. They tailored a childcare specific resume and cover letter for Zoe, and they applied for multiple childcare traineeships. They worked on interview techniques together and within the next fortnight Zoe had attended three interviews – and was thrilled to get the job at all three!

Zoe was able to choose the centre she felt the most comfortable with and that offered her the best support. Zoe, her Vocational Specialist and her new Centre Manager collaborated at Zoe's request, and together they were able to come up with some positive strategies to assist Zoe to excel in her new role.



*I feel like this job has changed how I look at life as a whole and it has definitely helped me de-stress and lessened my anxiety.*

**- Quote from Zoe**



*I would like to convey my thanks for all the supports I am receiving, such as this morning to see my GP. I could not have done this without you all, I just want you to know I am so grateful.*

**- Quote from Gwen, CCSS client**

*I called GP Access and was professionally and kindly responded to. I was given a GP appointment at John Hunter Hospital almost immediately and I was seen, given medication and a script very quickly. The telephone services, reception at GP Access and the doctor gave exemplary and impressive service. What a wonderful health service to have.*

**- Quote from GP Access patient**

*Lesley was amazing throughout this service. I always looked forward to the calls from her.*

**- Quote from The Way Back Support Service client**

*I have had the privilege of closely collaborating with Hunter Primary Care team for the last two years, and I must say that I have consistently been impressed by the outstanding support, efficiency, and prompt communication. One stand out feature is the frequent Positive Behaviour Support training provided to Sunflower Services staff, this has enhanced our knowledge and ability to effectively support our client's needs. Based on my overall experiences, I wholeheartedly recommend Hunter Primary Care to anyone in need of professional and supportive behaviour support plan services. Thank you for your exceptional support and service.*

**- Quote from Brittany, House Manager from Sunflower Services, NDIS Positive Behaviour Support client**

*I was in a very down place last December. It was recommended I go to The Way Back Support Service and see if I could get some help. My whole experience there was incredible, the vibe of the person I was with made it seem like an incredible experience. Thanks to Cath, I now have loads of mindfulness activities I can do when I'm feeling down. She supported me in getting a job. She is just an all round amazing human.*

**- Quote from The Way Back Support Service client**



# OUR COMMUNITY

As part of their roles, our team are extensively engaged with the community. Hunter Primary Care also formally attends community events and celebrations. Throughout the year we attended 32 events in total including:

- Awabakal NAIDOC Week event 3rd July
- Barkuma Kurri Kurri NAIDOC Week event 4th July
- Singleton NAIDOC Week event 5th July
- Ungooroo Community & Health Expo 26th July
- Stockton Public School Cultural Day 28th July
- Being More Human's Culture is the Strategy Summit 28th July
- Hunter Homeless Connect Day 9th August
- Australasian Society of Lifestyle Medicine Conference 8th & 9th September
- Lifeline Suicide Prevention Walk 8th September
- Home in Place R U OK Day events 12th & 15th September
- UoN Allied Health Employment Expo 19th September
- Uniting Mental Health Day 10th October
- Merriwa Community Open Day 20th October
- Dungog Wellness Festival 27th October
- Carers NSW Future Planning Workshop 9th November
- HNELHD Cultural Community Connect Day 14th November
- Diabetes Alliance Multidisciplinary Conference 17th November
- Rural Health Leaders Conference 23rd and 24th November
- Able Plus Networking event 27th November
- Hunter Community IDPwD event 1st December
- Able Plus Networking Event Cessnock 7th March
- The Equal Futures Project International Women's Day breakfast 8th March
- 'A Taste of Soul Experience' at Soul Hub Newcastle 10th April
- Hunter Disability Expo Friday 10th and Saturday 11th May
- Muswellbrook Neighbourhood Service Picnic in the Park 15th May
- Tomaree Community Connect Day 22nd May
- Wollatuka Institute's Rising from the Embers Festival 24th May
- Port Stephens Disability Expo 29th May
- The Canopy's RAP Launch 30th May
- Ready Set Connect events 27th April and 29th May
- Disability Services Digital and Technology Transformation Forum 29th May



## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

In late 2023, Hunter Primary Care introduced a quarterly community e-newsletter to showcase our programs, services, people and clients to our local community. Scan to subscribe.



## HUNTER HOMELESS CONNECT DONATION DRIVE

Each year, Hunter Primary Care attends the Hunter Homeless Connect, which links people to vital services and provides general support to people who are experiencing homelessness, doing it tough or are at risk of homelessness. In addition to Hunter Primary Care purchasing products, we ask our staff to donate hygiene products including toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, hand warmers and feminine hygiene products. Over 70 items were donated by staff which were handed out to attendees at the event in August 2023.



## SAMARITANS GIVING TREE

Each year Hunter Primary Care supports the Samaritans Giving Tree. Hunter Primary Care staff were asked to donate to this worthy cause by purchasing a gift, toy or gift card, with the organisation also donating these items. Over 50 items were collected by Samaritans in December 2023.

## AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA

In May 2024, Hunter Primary Care hosted a Biggest Morning Tea for staff to support the Cancer Council. Morning tea was provided and staff were also invited to bring baked goods and sweet treats. A total of \$557 was raised on the day.



## MINDS MATTER FESTIVAL

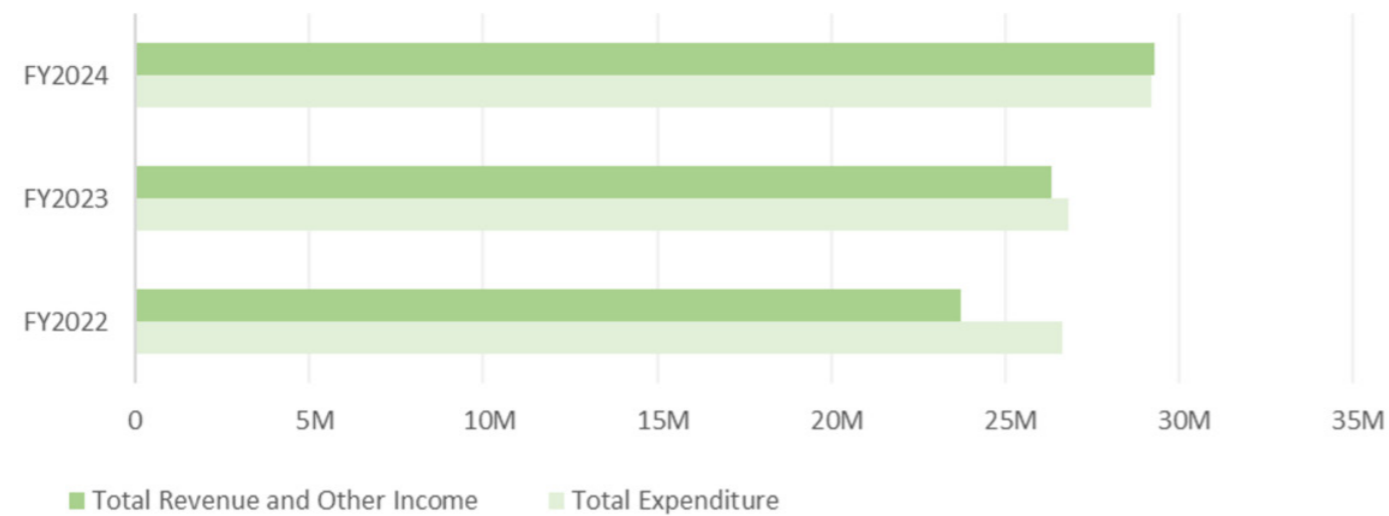
In June 2024, headspace Newcastle teamed up with MKZ Productions and the Hamilton Station Hotel to present Minds Matter. The festival of music featured an array of local Newcastle musicians joining forces to raise awareness and funds for mental health.



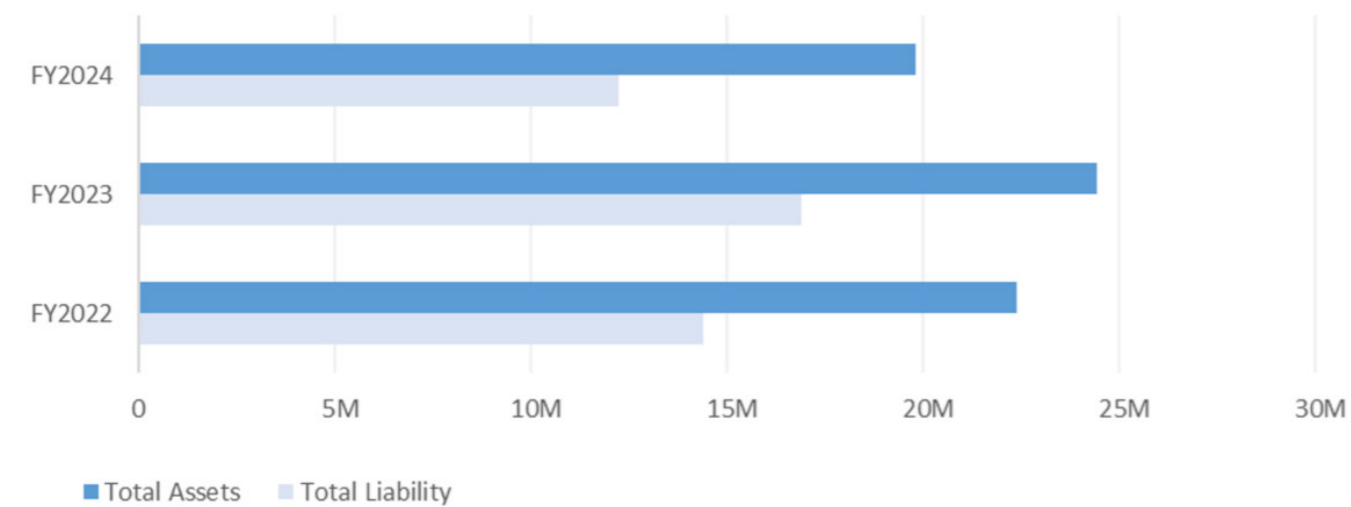
# OUR FINANCES

Hunter Primary Care delivered an operating surplus of \$0.052 million in FY2024 which is an improvement on a FY2023 deficit of \$0.455 million. The FY2024 return to surplus was driven by an 11% increase in revenues predominately from Aged Care services, NDIS services and the GP Access After Hours service. As of 30 June 2024, Hunter Primary Care has net assets amounting to \$7.58 million which ensures Hunter Primary Care is well placed to withstand any future fluctuations in activities or performance.

## Income and Expenditure



## Assets and Liabilities



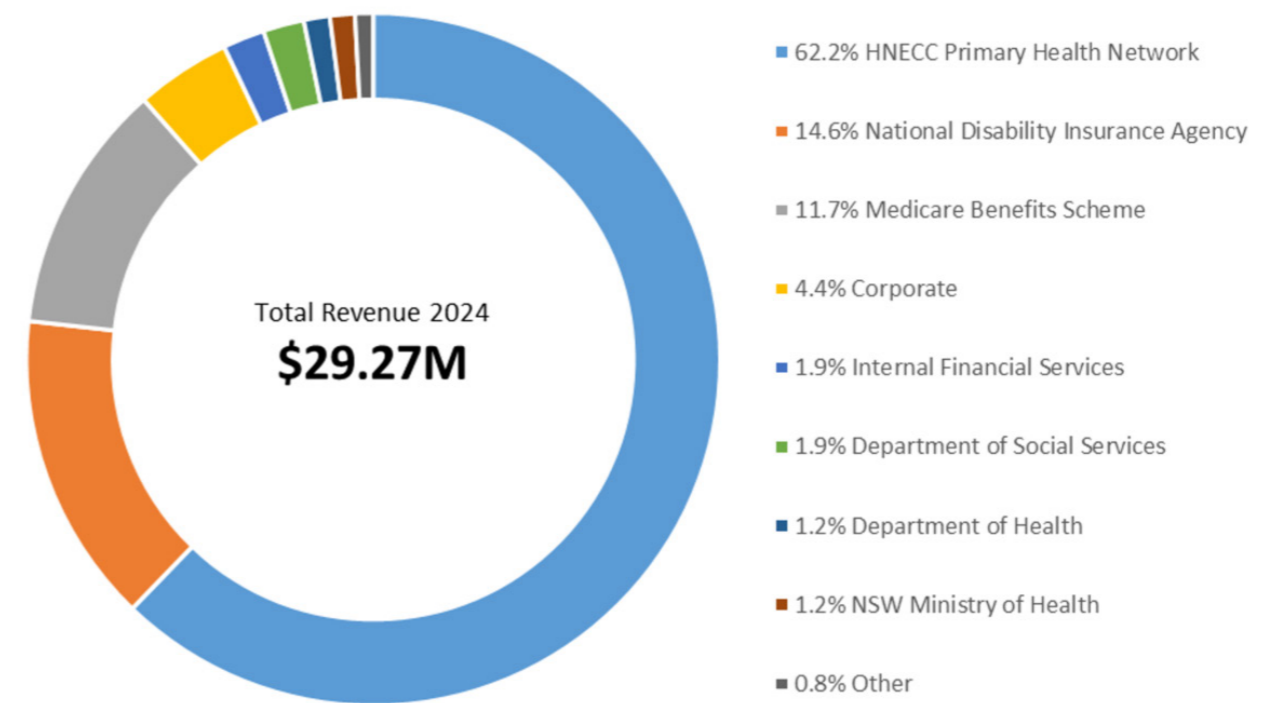
Hunter Primary Care Limited operates as a non-profit health promotion charity and community health services organisation. It is an independent public company limited by guarantee registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission. As a registered public company, Hunter Primary Care 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. Comprehensive FY2024 financial statements can be found on the Hunter Primary Care website.

# SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES

Hunter Primary Care receives its revenues from a variety of government and non-government sources, the largest of which include the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network (HNECC PHN), 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 FY2024 year are

## Revenue Contribution by Source

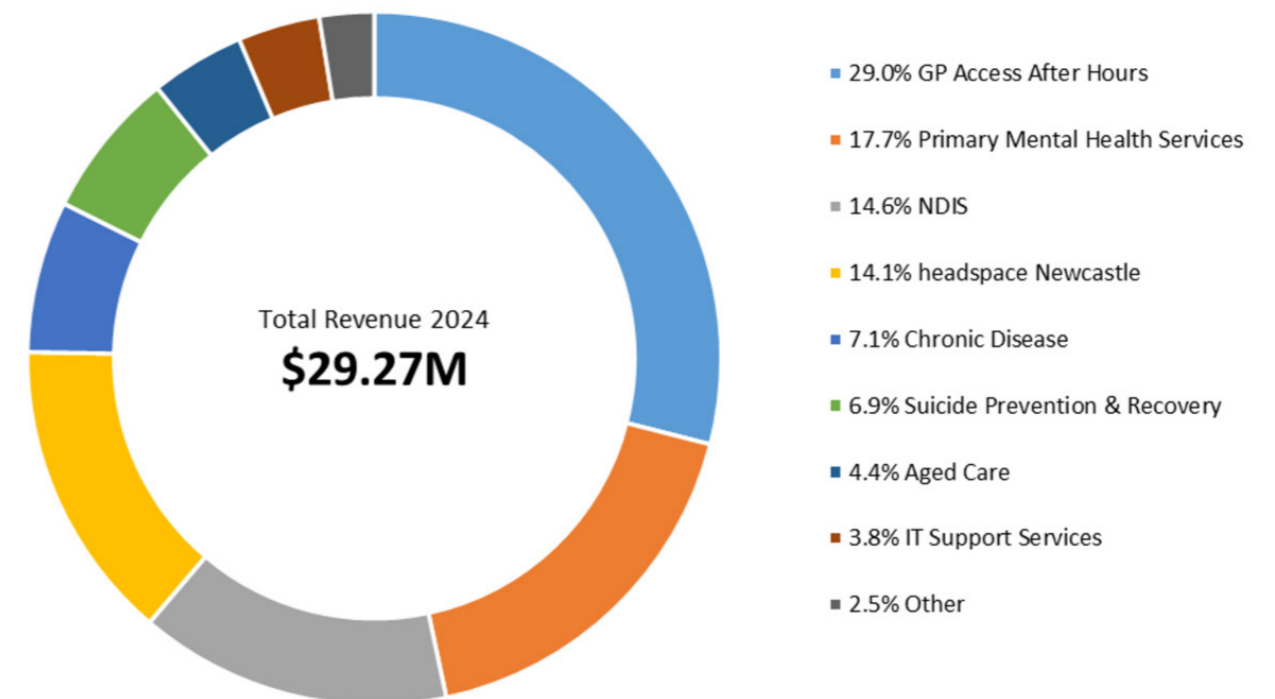
for the period 01/07/2023 - 30/06/2024



Hunter Primary Care uses these revenues to support a range of services. Revenues by service for FY2024 are presented below:

## Revenue By Business Unit

for the period 01/07/2023 - 30/06/2024





# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

Hunter Primary Care acknowledges the financial and other support provided from the following organisations:

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care

Australian Government Department of Social Services

Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network (The PHN)

Hunter New England Local Health District

headspace National

NSW Ministry of Health

Hunter  
**PRIMARYCARE**



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