

# NCAHA NEWS

Your monthly communication from the North Coast Allied Health Association



## Message from the Board



**Rob Curry,  
Director NCAHA**

Speed Networking events held across the North Coast in recent weeks have shown the keenness and dedication of Allied Health Professionals who want to connect with other health professionals to support each other and nurture integrated care with the patient at the centre.

Events took place in Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Ballina and Tweed Heads. All events were well attended- Port Macquarie had 46 attendees and Coffs Harbour a whopping 76. Allied Health Professionals made up about 75% of all networkers. We have taken notice of the feedback, which shows a high level of satisfaction and indicates that most attendees are seeking more of these opportunities. We are continually striving to connect practitioners and organisations.

I would like to extend my best wishes on behalf of the Board to all those who have had to deal with the consequences of the recent weather conditions on the North Coast. Whether you are mending your own businesses, or tending to injuries some of your patients sustained as a result, remember to look after yourself, too.

Enjoy the April edition of NCAHA News- you may be able to see yourself in some of the photos from the Speed Networking events.





**Kirily Thomson**  
**Paediatric Physiotherapist, Ballina Community Health**

Kirily Thomson has an ongoing fascination with child development, but it wasn't until five years after working in adult physiotherapy that she found herself working alongside a paediatric physiotherapist in Brisbane. It was this experience that sparked her interest in working with babies and children, resulting in a change of professional paths.

"I had always had an interest in paediatrics when studying but it was a lot easier to gain work in adult physiotherapy as a new graduate and so I followed that path instead. Rediscovering paediatric physio was a game-changer for me. I managed to get a position at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane, which I loved, and everything went from there!"

Kirily completed her study for a Bachelor of Physiotherapy at the University of Queensland in 1999. Her first position was working for a private sports and musculoskeletal physiotherapy practice in Brisbane. She said that it was quite a big learning curve for her after working in hospitals on placement during her final year.

"I gained a lot of knowledge quickly, but it wasn't really a great choice for me as I have to admit that I'm not very sports orientated!"

"My favourite part of that job was doing home visits for a lovely elderly lady who suffered from chronic pain. She loved having someone to chat to as she was quite lonely and our physio sessions often ended up with me staying for a cuppa and a bite to eat."

After this, Kirily moved to the UK where she spent a year working in a private hospital in London and two years working as a domiciliary physiotherapist in Berkshire. She also worked part time in a couple of private practices doing adult sports/musculoskeletal work.

In 2004 Kirily and her husband spent a year travelling through Europe, and, after moving back to Australia in 2005, she again worked in an adult practice before moving to work at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane. In 2007 she moved to Ballina and since then has had various positions at Lismore Base Hospital, the Tweed Hospital and in private practice. Her primary job has been working as a community-based paediatric physiotherapist for NSW Health. She is also a qualified Pilates instructor.

Kirily describes her job as both challenging and very rewarding.

"One experience that stands out was teaching a young client of mine to ride a bike. This boy had always struggled to learn new skills and was now nine and had given up on ever being able to ride a bike.

"His class at school was about to go on a 'bike riding expedition' and he was pretty devastated about being the only one in his class who could not ride a bike, and the only one who couldn't go. His mother and I developed a detailed plan-of-action on how we could break bike-riding down into smaller skills that could gradually be put together to achieve the real deal. A big part was trying to find places and times to practice when other kids wouldn't be around to watch!

"When this boy finally managed to pedal along by himself his Mum and I both teared up a bit! It was just such a fabulous thing for him to achieve. He got to go on the school bike riding expedition and all his classmates cheered him! Totally amazing."

Kirily gets a lot of satisfaction out of performing interventions to enable a child to get onto a more normal path of movement.

"I see a lot of babies and young children working at Community Health. Parents can be tired and emotional and struggling with multiple appointments, confronting diagnoses as well as the normal demands of parenthood. When they honestly thank me for my help and I seem to have made a difference to their child's wellbeing, that is when I know I am in the right job. Plus I get to play with babies and children all day!"

For Kirily it's important to her that paediatric physiotherapy is gaining more attention.

"It is common for me to encounter people who have never heard of physiotherapy for children, or who immediately think of children with sporting injuries or broken bones. This can be part of paediatric physiotherapy, but it is a very small part of what I do.

"Knowledge of child development and what is 'normal' and 'abnormal' in posture and movement underpins all my work. I would even say that after working with children, I would probably make a much better adult physiotherapist! I feel lucky and privileged to work in paediatrics."

**Contact Kirily at Ballina Community Health on 6686 8977.**

## Acute Back Pain HealthPathways - A Doctor's Journey

by Dr John Roberts

Hospital-based doctors like myself are often faced with managing fairly simple, common problems in the Emergency Department while supervising very junior doctors.

Junior doctors occasionally find these very simple problems to be something that their university education has not adequately prepared them for.

As well as providing pathways to best practice, the HealthPathways Acute Back Pain pages are great teaching tools.

The HealthPathways for Acute Back Pain have been localised with reference to the best practice and are a good example of how best practice guidelines can be incorporated into pathways which cater for all levels of experience.

The presentation of Acute Back Pain is covered over three separate pages (best found by entering "back pain" in the search box).

- **The Acute Back Pain without Leg Symptoms**
- **Acute Back Pain with Leg Symptoms**
- **Acute Back Pain with Red Flags**

Each page begins with a prominent reminder of the "Red Flags".

The "Acute Back Pain with Red Flags" page has all the links to local Emergency Departments and Orthopaedic Surgeons. On this page there is a useful link to a YouTube video showing a brief neuro exam for low back pain. This is aimed at junior learners, but is a great resource.

"Acute Back Pain with Leg Symptoms" also has advice regarding imaging timing and modality.

"Acute Back Pain without Leg Symptoms" has several useful links which can be expanded when in a teaching scenario, but can be easily passed over by an experienced practitioner. There is a link to a useful Youtube video for patients by "DocMikeEvans", which they can watch in their own time.

There are lots of examples of useful thing to say and not say in drop down menus, if required, to avoid communication issues making things worse for the patient, a common problem.

In the referral section of the Acute Back Pain HealthPathways, Health Professionals are directed to Allied Health Referral Services:

### Acute Back Pain with Leg Symptoms

In the referral section of this pathway it states that "if pain has not settled, consider referral to a **physiotherapist, rheumatologist**, private pain specialist, or **rehabilitation physician**."

### Acute Back Pain without Leg Symptoms

The referral section of this pathway advises that "if patient not improving, consider referral to a multidisciplinary **chronic pain program**."

### Acute Back Pain with Red Flags

The referral section of this pathway has a link to the **Osteoporosis HealthPathway** which includes links to the following Allied Health services, **exercise physiologist, occupational therapist**, or **physiotherapy assessment**.

### Is your Service Listed in HealthPathways?

If your Allied Health service is not listed here, or if there is any change to your listing, please contact the HealthPathways Team who will be happy to assist. Simply press the 'send feedback' button located at the top left of any HealthPathway.

<https://manc.healthpathways.org.au/index.htm>

**Username:** manchealth

**Password:** conn3ct3d

For further information about HealthPathways please contact:

Fiona Ryan  
(02) 6583 3600  
[fryan@ncphn.org.au](mailto:fryan@ncphn.org.au)  
(Mid North Coast)

Kerrie Keyte  
(07) 5523 5507  
[kkeyte@ncphn.org.au](mailto:kkeyte@ncphn.org.au)  
(Northern NSW)

## Allied Health Professionals Wanted

### Foot Network Working Party – Expressions of Interest

The National Association of Diabetes Centres (NADC) is calling for Expressions of Interest from suitably qualified health care professions who would like to join the Foot Network Working Party (FNWP). The overarching mission of the Foot Network is to establish and maintain reduced morbidity and mortality caused by diabetes-related foot disease in people in Australia. It aims to realise a coordinated national process of prioritising high-quality and accessible foot assessment and management across the spectrum of foot disease in diabetes.

The NADC Foot Network aims to lead a national coordinated communication network for health professional and scientific aspects of foot care in diabetes, including a nationally standardised excellence process of high-risk foot care in Australia, targeted health professional education and promoting health care delivery research. This process will be aligned to the 2016-2020 Australian National Diabetes Strategy. An initial high priority project is to establish functional national definition(s) for diabetes multidisciplinary high risk foot services.

The Foot Network Working Party is to provide the NADC Steering Committee with expert opinion on the development of a Foot Network.

The Foot Network Working Party EOI closes on Sunday 23rd April 2017. Visit [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FNWP\\_EOI](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FNWP_EOI) for more information.

### Psychologist, Kempsey, Coffs Harbour and Grafton

Key Employment is a federally funded disability support service that assists people with a disability to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. A large number of their clients have been assessed as having a psychological condition as their primary disability or as barrier to preventing employment.

Key Employment is seeking a registered psychologist or accredited mental health social worker to provide services for one day per week in their Kempsey, Coffs Harbour and Grafton locations. Clinical space will be provided and appointments will be scheduled to tie in with the clients' regular appointment with their case worker.

Applicants should have experience and an interest in working with people with disabilities. A Medicare Provider number will be required for each location.

For further information please contact Mike Swarbrick on 02 66919999 or [mike@keyemployment.com.au](mailto:mike@keyemployment.com.au).

### Psychologist, Kempsey

Kempsey Medical Centre is seeking the services of a psychologist in their busy practice. An upstairs room is available for rent and the practice offers client referrals and support.

For further information please contact Louise Ahearn on 02 6562 6188 or [lahearn@drkmc.com.au](mailto:lahearn@drkmc.com.au).

### Psychologist, Port Macquarie

The Port Macquarie Hastings Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Service (PMHDFVSS) is seeking a suitably qualified psychologist to provide mental health support services for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. Services are delivered under Medicare Better Access and Healthy Minds.

PMHDFVSS's experience in the domestic violence and homelessness sector is extensive, and they privilege client-centred, trauma informed narrative responses. Their preference is for professional approaches that encompass regrading supports and care planning for individuals that counter pathologised impacts of harm caused predominantly by men's violence toward them.

On occasion, they work with lesbian and transgender women who experience same-sex domestic violence. Therefore the successful practitioner would exhibit welcoming inclusivity to their practice. Young people are also supported by the service, in response to parental domestic violence, or experiences in their own intimate relationships.

To submit an Expression of Interest, contact Kylie Dowse, Service Delivery Manager on 02 6584 9102 or [sdm@midcoast.com.au](mailto:sdm@midcoast.com.au).

### Part-time teaching opportunities at TAFE

Port Macquarie TAFE is seeking part-time teachers and assessors in a range of Allied Health courses including dental, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, podiatry, nutrition and dietetics, pathology and medical practice assisting

Opportunities exist for teaching at one and two day workshops, online assessment marking and resource development. Qualifications required include relevant Diploma/Degree in the Allied Health specialty, plus applicants must hold a Certificate IV in Training and assessment (TAE40110).

Expressions of interested should be directed to the Head Teacher, Peter Hickey, on (02) 6581 6225.

## Upcoming Events

### Friday 28 April

Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health and Primary Care:  
Working Towards Integration – Sydney

### Friday 28 April

Decision Time: What Really Matters In The End –  
Lismore

### Tuesday 2 May

'Get Healthy' Breakfast – Lismore

### Friday 5 May - Saturday 6 May

Whiplash 2017: Meeting the Challenge – Surfers  
Paradise

### Tuesday 9 May

Webinar: Community Management of People with  
Eating Disorders

### Wednesday 10 May

Suicide Prevention Workshop – Help Shape Local  
Services – Kempsey

### Thursday 11- Friday 12 May

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training – Grafton

### Saturday 13 May

Schema Therapy Training – Coffs Harbour

### Tuesday 16 - Wednesday 17 May

Family Based Therapy for Eating Disorders – Macksville

### Thursday 18 May

Chronic Pain and Spinal Cord Injury – Ballina

### Tuesday 30 May - Thursday 1 June

National Mental Health Forum - Sydney

### Saturday 3 June - Sunday 4 June

Mulligan Concept Part B – Lower Quadrant Course for  
Physiotherapists – Wauchope

### Wednesday 7 June

Clinical skills for working with people with personality  
disorder (Project Air) – Kempsey

### Monday 5 June - Friday 9 June

Mindful Self-Compassion Skills – Byron Bay

## More Events

Visit [www.ncphn.org.au/events](http://www.ncphn.org.au/events) to view the North Coast  
Primary Health Network Events Calendar.

## Contact NCAHA

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