

# NCAHA NEWS

Your monthly communication from the North Coast Allied Health Association



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## Message from the Board

The year seems to have disappeared very quickly. No doubt everyone is very busy with end of financial year activities.

We were thrilled with attendance at the Allied Health for the Future workshop held in Lismore during May- many thanks to Lindy Swain and Robin Fitzroy for organising this event. Our apologies to the people based at Port Macquarie who were unable to access the video conference. We are still working on our partnerships and figuring out how to get the technology right.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN) Needs Assessment. Allied Health was well represented in the surveys. Results are available on the NCPHN website in the form of easily accessible fact sheets, summarised by region as well as population/needs

specific issues (for instance: alcohol and drugs, mental health, older people). I encourage you to look at the data for your region and/or your specific topic of interest. You can access the fact sheets at <http://ow.ly/REqd301sYv4>.

The NCAHA is in the process of developing a telehealth CPD workshop, initially to be held on the Mid North Coast. This workshop will explore practical ways that Allied Health can use telehealth to increase the quality and accessibility of care to appropriate populations. We hope that this will be the first of many interdisciplinary CPD events in our region. As many of you will be aware, the Coffs Harbour region hosted one of the NBN pilot sites, with Feros Care using telehealth to help keep home-dwelling seniors more independent in the management of their health care. We know from this pilot that age is no barrier to the

use of telehealth technologies, and many older people would be happy to use videoconferencing to access Allied Health services if it were available. More information on the project is available at <http://ow.ly/QLXi301sYGa>.

Finally, don't forget to participate in our NCAHA Facebook community. We welcome sharing information that you think will be relevant to your Allied Health colleagues in the region. Follow us at <http://ow.ly/BBsg301t0vz>.



**Professor Susan Nancarrow,  
Chair, NCAHA Board**

# Hastings Macleay Clinical Council Update

by **Nick Neville – Occupational Therapist, HMCC Allied Health Representative**

I attended my first meeting of the Hastings Macleay Clinical Council (HMCC) on 31 May. The meeting went well and everyone was positive and enthusiastic about the changing makeup of the group. This was a great opportunity to meet local clinicians and health professionals and to be involved in the discussions around issues affecting the delivery of health services locally. The meeting was also attended by management representatives from NCPHN and the Local Health District, and was chaired by Dr John Vaughn.

The range of professions attending this meeting was broad with representatives from medical, pharmacy, OT, PT and nursing. It was great to have indigenous representation provided by Amy Thompson, who is an EEN and soon to be RN in Kempsey. Amy was introduced to the group by Dr Carol Booth. Wendy Oxley (Clinical Psychologist) has been approached and has agreed to join the HMCC to provide advice on mental health matters at future meetings.

The Hastings Macleay Clinical Council has been keen to engage representatives from Allied Health. Now that the council has achieved this goal, it is up to Allied Health and

the Council to identify and examine the issues that concern Allied Health practitioners and to encourage discussion and problem solving. At the last HMCC meeting there was discussion about access to specialist gynaecological services and issues related to owed scripts.

The NCAHA encourages you to get in touch with our representatives on any of the three NCPHN Clinical Councils (Hastings Macleay, Mid North Coast and Northern NSW) if you become aware of any areas of unmet patient need, or issues affecting the delivery of Allied Health. We can raise these concerns at a future Clinical Council meeting. Issues will vary from place to place, but may include topics such as access to multidisciplinary CPD, or system issues to do with access to appropriately skilled health personnel in your area. There is an eagerness to resolve identified issues and provide support in the areas identified as a priority.



## DIABETEC FOOT SCREENING HEALTHPATHWAY

Foot problems are a common complication associated with diabetes. A new diabetic foot screening pathway has been published to assist clinicians in foot care management and the reduction of foot ulcers, especially in high-risk diabetic patients. The referral section provides information on seeking urgent medical attention and how to arrange a vascular surgical or podiatry assessment for your patient. The patient information section provides you with printable patient information about diabetic foot disease and taking care of your feet. Click on the below link to access this new pathway:

<https://manc.healthpathways.org.au/25013.htm>

**Username:** manchealth

**Password:** conn3ct3d

## We need your feedback!

Your feedback is encouraged and helps us to maintain an accurate and user-friendly website. If your Allied Health service is not listed in any referral sections for new pathways, please let us know if you would like to be added. You can forward your feedback by selecting the 'send feedback' button, which is located on the top right-hand corner of the pathway or homepage.

For further information about HealthPathways please contact:

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# Walking the Camino: Fun, Freedom and Fitness on Foot

by Rob Curry, Director, NCAHA Board

I'm sitting here in my home office at Ellenborough, watching honeyeaters attacking the grevilleas outside my window. How can I best describe my Camino adventure?

El Camino de Santiago de Frances is a traditional Catholic pilgrimage over 800 kilometres through northern Spain, from St Jean Pied de Port on the French border, through the Pyrenees, Navarra, the wine region of Rioja, across the plains of the Meseta, and on through the province of Galicia to the beautiful old town of Santiago de Compostela. It's a bloody big walk, but it's a cracka.

In the months leading up to the trip I trained up as best I could, walking one to two hours on most days each week, and occasionally doing longer walks of around 20 kms at weekends. These bigger walks I found a bit tough – my big flat feet would give me a hard time and I'd be properly aching by the finish. How the hell am I going to walk 20- 30 kms every day in Spain? What if I can't do it and I have to come home with my tail between my legs? This was definitely going to be a bit more than an ambling bushwalk in Kakadu. So, I had my trepidations, but I was also excited by the prospect of the unknown and a new adventure.

After lovely days in Barcelona and Pamplona, my wife and I met up with friends on the French border to start our trek. It's 20 March, it's still cold and we're about to enter the Pyrenees with its snow-capped mountains and Basque heritage. I can't believe we're doing this. How lucky are we. As we climb I am agog with the beauty all around – quaint villages, gorgeous fields of impossible green, and those mountains up ahead. Then, halfway through this first day, we get a call. My wife's mother is gravely ill and she has to rush off to South Africa to catch some precious time with her mum. Unbelievable, day one and her pilgrimage has transformed into a very different thing.

So began my five-week journey across northern Spain. 35 days of walking through highland fields, mountain passes, beautiful wine country, wheat fields as far as the eye could see. We walked through lovely sunny days, snow storms, and quite a bit of rain as well to test our mettle. Every 10 or so kilometres there was another ancient village built around a medieval church at the centre. All the towns offered albergue (bunkhouse) accommodation or better, if you could afford it. And the beautiful northern Spanish cities of Pamplona, Logroño, Burgos and León with their unique histories, yummy foods and quirky customs. What a pleasure.

You might ask, 'So what's the big deal about this Camino walk?' And it's a reasonable question. Hasn't it just become a trendy, over-crowded tourist gig? I'm not even Catholic, so what sort of pilgrimage does this represent in the modern era? Am I trying to have 60 years of lively sins absolved through the pain and suffering of this whopper walk? I don't think so (although maybe this wouldn't be a bad outcome).

The truth, for me, is that the Camino is a magnificent contradiction. Walking up to 30 kms per day, day after day – I've never done that. Glimpsing the medieval and the olden times through the ancient villages you stay in. Meeting local Spanish people and learning something of the language and culture. Befriending fellow travellers from all over the globe and sharing stories and many laughs.

But most of all it is the gradual pace of the walking, the peace and tranquillity, and all that fresh air. It's actually seeing, smelling and touching your environment, rather than rushing past at 100 clicks. And the time for contemplation and reflecting on whatever comes to mind. I've never been a great exponent of the meditative arts, but, after a certain point, the Camino is like one big meditation, nourishment for the soul.

I arrived back in Australia a few kilograms lighter, much stronger and fitter, and with a whole lot of plans in my head for further hikes in my own country. I'm now a committed walker – it's good for my body, and good for my head. I commend a walking life. Bon Camino.





## Allied Health for the Future Workshop

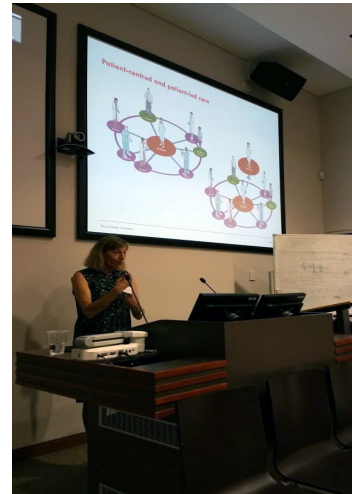
On 17 May 2016, the NCAHA and the University Centre for Rural Health hosted an Allied Health for the Future workshop. The event was well attended, with about 50 participants in Lismore and another 20 joining by video conference from Murwillumbah and Grafton.

Professor Kathryn Refshauge, Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney, commenced the evening with an inspiring presentation on why this is the decade of Allied Health opportunity. Michele Fairbrother challenged our thinking around the need for multi-disciplinary, innovative models of clinical placement, and Dr Michael Douglas outlined the opportunities for Allied Health students in our region. The evening concluded with an informative presentation on the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Feedback after the event was excellent, and the social media impact has been really positive, with over 400 hits on the event update and photos. Visit our Facebook site at:

<https://www.facebook.com/www.AlliedHealthNorthCoast/>

You can download presentations from the workshop at <http://ncaha.org.au/allied-health-for-the-future/>.



## Upcoming Events

Click the event titles to learn more.

### 28 July

Health Innovation Awards and Expo, Coffs Harbour

### 1-5 August

Eating Disorders Essentials, Coffs Harbour

### 6 August

Advanced anatomy and function of the peripheral nervous system (Upper Limb), Gold Coast

### 21-24 August

ANZSOM Annual Scientific Meeting 2016, Newcastle

### 22-23 August

Living Well with Dementia Conference, Sydney

### 9-11 November

2016 NSW Rural Health and Research Congress, Tweed Heads

*If you are aware of health events or activities happening on the NSW North Coast, you can add them to the Healthy North Coast calendar yourself.*

Visit <http://healthynorthcoast.org.au/dashboard/signup/>.

## More Events

Visit [www.healthynorthcoast.org.au/events](http://www.healthynorthcoast.org.au/events) to view the Healthy North Coast Practitioner Events Calendar.

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