

# NCAHA NEWS

Your monthly communication from the  
North Coast Allied Health Association



## Message from the Board



**Rob Curry,**  
Director NCAHA

It seems that each month of this year just gets busier for NCAHA.

We have a face-to-face Board meeting scheduled for Monday 19 September in Coffs Harbour. One of the key agenda items will be finalising our plan to bring about relevant and high-quality CPD for Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) across the North Coast. We are determined to improve access to training that supports local AHPs to improve their services.

On this note, I am happy to report that NCAHA is sponsoring a half-day **CPD event on Telehealth for AHPs** on Saturday 12 November in Port Macquarie. We are facilitating a range of similar topical CPD events across the North Coast over the coming 12 months – we aim to re-run successful events in different locations across the region.

Another major issue on our radar is the roll out of the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** into each district of the North Coast from mid-2017. This is a huge service reform with great possibilities for improved care and support for local people with disabilities. But there are also many challenges thrown up by such a major reform and we, the NCAHA (and AHPs more generally across the North Coast), need to be as prepared as possible to ensure effective service transition for our clients. The NDIS presentation from our recent Lismore forum can be viewed at <http://ow.ly/2fg5304dU9u>.

I would like to remind you all of the **National SARRAH Conference** coming up from October 27-29 at Port Lincoln on South Australia's Eyre Peninsula. These are always great forums for rural and remote AHPs and Port Lincoln is shaping up to be pretty special with its theme of "it takes a village". There are few better opportunities for sharing information, networking and relaxing with colleagues who know what you're talking about. Better hurry though; the registrations are almost fully subscribed. You can register at [www.sarahconference.com](http://www.sarahconference.com).

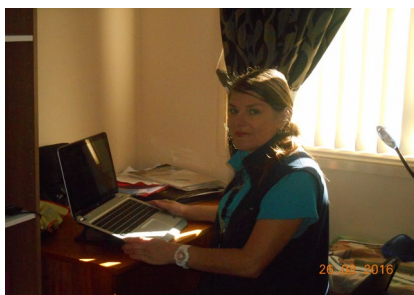
Speaking of SARRAH, a delegation recently visited **David Gillespie, the new Federal**

**Assistant Minister for Rural Health** in his electorate office in Port Macquarie. Dr Gillespie noted his keen interest in the NDIS and its roll out across the country. He is well aware of the issues of market failure for Allied Health services in rural areas, and that this is also likely to present challenges for more remote Australians with disabilities accessing AHP services. He stated his commitment to working with SARRAH to address this issue. Dr Gillespie also highlighted the need for the AHPs to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of their service interventions. This would be the only way to bring about further reforms to Medicare to improve access to AHPs.

This edition also introduces a new segment **profiling our members**. First cab off the rank is Deb Doyle, Senior Dietitian and Nutritionist at the Oncology Unit, Port Macquarie Base Hospital. Her story makes for fascinating reading and Deb epitomises the intelligence and hard work of North Coast AHPs.

So, another jam-packed edition. Please enjoy and provide any feedback on the contents to [enquiries@ncaha.org.au](mailto:enquiries@ncaha.org.au).

Go well.



**Deborah Doyle**  
**Senior Dietitian and Nutritionist**  
**Oncology Unit, Port Macquarie Base Hospital**

Deborah Doyle is passionate about the NCAHA and working alongside GPs.

“People say I’m always ahead of the game and I really enjoy networking and liaising with other disciplines. I really want to develop NCAHA as a voice to advocate for Allied Health.”

She wants to encourage Allied Health practitioners of all disciplines to actively engage with the Alliance and to work together and move forward as a group.

***“We can’t sit in our individual disciplines, we need to link up with champions from other disciplines and move ahead,” Deborah said.***

“It was exciting to attend the Alliance’s inaugural Breakfast Meeting. We finally have a voice. So whether you are in private practice or public or community health, get networking so that we can strengthen our North Coast voice. ”

Deborah completed a triple major Bachelor of Science at New England University in biochemistry, biology and nutrition and then went to the University of Sydney where she completed a Graduate Diploma in Nutrition and Dietetics.

That first job as a locum at Hastings District Hospital found this young graduate thrown in at the deep end, but she learnt fast being on a steep learning curve.

From there Deborah went to Tamworth Base Hospital working as a dietitian and providing outreach services with the Flying Doctor Service and running clinics in towns such as Narrabri, positions she found extremely interesting.

After becoming engaged, Deborah and her husband moved and she worked at Manning Base Hospital, residing at Port Macquarie where she worked part time and started a private practice and also worked as a nutrition consultant. This is where she recognised a deficit in counselling skills with clients, so she later obtained a SARRAH scholarship and completed qualifications in Counselling and Family Therapy- skills that she uses daily in and out of work.

“I provided a mobile service because that was what was needed, doing outreach work, so I travelled across the Hastings Macleay

district doing clinics and implementing healthy eating programs in schools and in the community. ”

When she became pregnant with her first child Deborah needed to find more local work and got a permanent part-time position with the Mid North Coast Area Health Service doing project work in community nutrition, implementing public health initiatives and working with school canteens. She also had some time as the Allied Health Adviser in Dietetics for the District.

“At the area health service, I worked in rehab, in a chronic care program and community nutrition; and then in 2008 I got a job as a locum at the Oncology unit at The North Coast Cancer Unit (Port Macquarie Base Hospital), where I am now. I needed a job with more regular hours and one where I could be at home when my boys came home from school,” she said.

When asked about job satisfaction and if any particular patient comes to mind, Deborah doesn’t hesitate.

“I had a DVA patient in private practice- a post head and neck cancer patient. He’d had a laryngectomy and a voice prosthesis. Being DVA meant that I could do home visits and spend time with him, as required.

“He was very intense and took up a lot of my time liaising with his voice therapist and other practitioners. It was satisfying to be able to improve his quality of life. At the time such cancer surgery resulted in many side effects that had an impact on his long-term eating. He had been on tube feeds and then progressed to thickened oral supplements.”

Deborah said it was very rewarding being able to free this man from being housebound – he could take his supplement sachets with him and enjoy socialising and having meals with friends again. It was this patient that led to Deborah’s interest in oncology.

Constantly reflecting on her practice approach, Deborah describes her work as an ongoing quality improvement project. She is keen to change organisational culture and review things constantly to enable improvement.

***“I’m not about accepting that because things have always been done that way that they have to stay that way,” she said.***

Nowadays Deborah works in the Oncology Unit three days a week. Her strong interest in community nutrition and the link between food and health has seen her serve on the NSW Branch of the Dietitians Association of Australia and she has recently expressed interest in re-joining some national branch committees.

She is also interested in sustainable food and promoting the growing of food and can often be found at the community garden outside of work hours.

## Primary Health Care Excellence Awards

**Luisa Eckhardt,**  
**Company Secretary,**  
**NCAHA Board of Directors**

On Friday 9 September, I had the pleasure of attending the inaugural Primary Health Care Excellence Awards evening at Opal Cove Resort in Coffs Harbour, hosted by North Coast Primary Health Network. These events are always interesting as much for the keynotes as for the award nominees.

Colleen Ryan, an award-winning journalist, graced us with her experience and advice on 'change' - how to manage, accept, go with it and even be ahead of the change game. It was a very intriguing address and with a message for anyone from any background: change processes and management involve the same ingredients - disruption, resistance, discomfort, disbelief, unwillingness, leadership, vision, belief, acceptance and success. If you can make it through all of that, you might just have successfully transitioned through change.

Award events like these always inspire me both personally and in my role as a health care practitioner. We need to have our little bubble burst every now and then to remind us that the world of innovation and good work is happening. Great ideas come from listening to the milestones, challenges and successes of others.

The awards ceremony showcased a great deal of work from many different perspectives. Some focussed on a particular population and topic within a community (for example, locally-relevant CPR videos developed by teenagers), whereas others broadened the scope to include a range of ages with general health and wellbeing as a focus (for example, GP services delivered at the Winsome Soup Kitchen GP Clinic in Lismore).

In mentioning the Winsome project, many an arm felt a goosebump as we watched the short video about this project, and it was probably for the same reason that the submission received the People's Choice Award. As an occupational therapist, this project really resonated with me. A place in

the heart of the community (an old, beautiful hotel) where people can come to receive health care, as well as spiritual, and psychological support through community engagement, socialisation, friendship, food and a sense of being cared for. A holistic approach to person-centred care - very moving and very inspiring.

I came away with two of my current projects in mind for submission next year. To submit would be a way of demonstrating to my patients and the community that I truly believe in what I am a part of, to raise the awareness of my community and highlight not just the challenges we face but the changes and benefits we achieve together. So, will you have something to showcase? Allied Health was under-represented this year, so I will see you there next year!

Information about the awards and submissions can be found at [www.ncphn.org.au/excellence](http://www.ncphn.org.au/excellence).



*Luisa Eckhardt (right) with NCPHN's Shaida Attai.*

## What Patients Want Survey

Professor Susan Nancarrow, Chair of the NCAHA Board, is conducting research on what patients value the most from their chosen health care practitioner.

You are invited to participate in a quick survey designed to give health service users a voice around the aspects of health care you value most from your practitioners. The study is interested in what works well, and where improvements to health delivery need to be made the most. All individual answers are anonymous and the survey should take around eight minutes to complete.

Visit <http://ow.ly/npoW304dXNq> to participate in the survey.

# Save the date! Telehealth CPD for Allied Health Professionals

**Saturday 12th November, 1pm - 5pm**  
**Rural Medical School, University NSW, Port Macquarie**  
**\$150 (Special student rates will apply)**

The North Coast Allied Health Association is very proud to sponsor this workshop for Allied Health Professionals.

Professor Stuart Smith will explain the relevance of telehealth modalities and the possibilities for improving services for North Coast residents through telehealth innovations. He is a leading international researcher and thought leader in the development and evaluation of interactive digital technologies to transform the delivery of health, ageing and disability services.

At the workshop you will learn about:

- How and why telehealth is more than just a video consultation.
- Examples of telehealth solutions.
- Disruptive innovation and how it will impact telehealth service delivery.
- Consumer electronic solutions with application for health monitoring and delivering interventions.
- Hands-on practice with setting up a client in a tele-rehabilitation solution designed by clinicians for clinicians and clients.
- How digital literacy will be a requirement for allied health.

Numbers are limited to 30 participants to enable proper use of facilities and lecturer. A registration link will be available soon.

## Upcoming Events

Click the event titles to learn more.

### 22 September

Working as One Breakfast, Ballina

### 6-8 October

Australian Orthotic Prosthetic Association Congress 2016, Melbourne

### 8-9 October

Baker IDI National Diabetes Forum, Melbourne

### 17-18 October

Domestic Violence Response Training, Kempsey

### 18 October

CPR Update, Port Macquarie

### 27-29 October

2016 SARRAH National Conference, Port Lincoln

### 2 November

Brain Development and Strategies for Best Practice, Robina

### 9-11 November

2016 NSW Rural Health and Research Congress, Tweed Heads

### 10 November

Ballina-Byron Clinical Society Speed Networking, Ballina

### 10-11 November

Domestic Violence Response Training, Grafton

### 11 November

Driving Into The Future Forum, Sydney

### 11-12 November

Foot and Ankle Bracing and AFOs, Gold Coast

### 12 November

Telehealth for Allied Health Professionals

### 24-26 November

Domestic Violence Response Training, Lismore

## 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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