

# NCAHA NEWS

Your monthly communication from the North Coast Allied Health Association



## Message from the Board

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



*Gantheaume Point and Cable Beach near Broome, Western Australia*

It is with much pride that I congratulate one of our NCAHA Directors, Dr Lindy Swain, on being appointed to head the new Kimberley University Rural Health Alliance to focus on remote and rural health in the Kimberley.

Apart from her Directorship with NCAHA, Lindy is currently the Allied Health Academic Lead at the University of Sydney's University Centre for Rural Health (UCRH) based in Lismore. A pharmacist by profession, she holds a doctorate awarded for her thesis on improving medication management for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

During the past decade, Lindy has performed a number of roles including Director of Rural Policy for the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Clinical Pharmacist with the Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service as well as Associate Lecturer positions with Griffith University and the University of Technology, Sydney. She was awarded Pharmacist of the Year in 2014 for her work in Aboriginal health.

I'm sure you will join with me in wishing Lindy all the best for this exciting appointment.

# Clinical Psychologist Gary Grant Set to Retire

by Janet Grist

After a stellar career spanning 48 years, Port Macquarie based clinical psychologist Gary Grant is retiring in mid-December to pursue other interests.



Born in Canada, Gary attained his psychology qualifications there, along with a Degree in Commerce. His immensely broad range of roles reflects his curiosity in pursuing new avenues of employment -he's worked in every state in Australia.

He thinks Australians and Canadians have a lot in common.

"When I came here a lot of people said 'Oh, you sound really American'. But the Canadian culture is much softer, more like the Australian culture. We have this view that if things seem too difficult, just give things a go and we tend to get together and work stuff out. And that's how it's been on every single job I've applied for in Australia. Someone's hired me and they've given me a go. I really like that."

I'd wager Gary's enthusiasm for something new and his ability to take on a challenge have shaped his career.

Some of Gary's roles include setting up a pilot scheme for child and adolescent health in the Gosford area; setting up a forensic psychology service in Western Australia; establishing a child protection service in Queensland; working on a lead contamination project at Port Pirie; teaching at the University of Queensland, 18 years with the Mid North Coast Local Health District and 20 years in private practice.

And for the past 16 years Gary has worked as an authorised clinician with the Children's Court Clinic.

Looking back on his professional life, Gary said that earlier on in his career work activities seemed more exciting and innovative, with people trying to deliver unique services.

He recalls his time setting up Child & Family Health Services on the Central Coast.

"We had seven outstations and rather than requiring people to come to hospital, we went out to see them. This lasted for about 10 years and then the bureaucracy wound it back so everyone had to come to the hospital."

Gary has also found that the discipline of psychology has become more complicated over the years, particularly when insurance companies are involved.

"But there's still a lot of good things happening," he said.

Gary also enjoyed working at the University of Queensland after completing his Masters of Clinical Psychology and a degree in Organisational Behaviour. He explained his motivation for this latter study focus.

"I felt that clinically the psychologist focus was just on the individual and minimised the fact that that person was part of a family and also the work environment - both of which could have been dysfunctional."

Gary said teaching university students was like 'being thrown in at the deep end' for him.

"In the past I was a shy, retiring guy and I'd never envisaged I'd stand up in public which is what I do now...I loved the students, they are bright sparks who keep you on your toes."

The work that Gary does for the Children's Court is something he thinks he'll keep doing while 'trying out retirement'. He very much enjoys working with young children.

"Kids don't come along and check out your shingle and your qualifications and say 'Wow, you must be a legend'. They just take you at face value and if you're genuine and sincere it seems to work really well. And the other thing I find about working with kids is that it's really energising."

Other career highlights include working in Corrections and setting up an Occupational Psychology service for people struggling to retain work or locate a job.

When Gary began a private practice on the Mid North Coast 20 years ago he not only enjoyed his many different clients, but also working with local GPs.

"I've found all the Port Macquarie/Hastings GPs really supportive, although I must put in a plug for Dr David Gregory. I haven't ever had to advertise, it's word of mouth around here and I think the community is really blessed to have such a competent committed general practice team."

Gary also has a lot of time for the younger generation of GPs.

"There's not that arrogance and they are open and pretty down to earth and I've had a really great time working in the area, the local GPs are good value. The only thing I did struggle with is that it's not been easy to have any continuity with a consultant psychiatrist. We've had fly in VMOs...I think in some ways our mental health service has not kept pace with some other areas in Australia."

With a wife who's also worked in health care, three daughters and five grandkids, Gary is looking forward to spending more time with the family and doing more travel. Although speaking to him, it seems he's seen more of the globe than most.

Congratulations Gary on a life of service to others and best wishes from NCAHA in the years ahead!

*Pictured: Gary Grant with wife Linda*

# Rural Placements

by Lindy Swain

Rural placements are more than a workforce strategy - they are an important opportunity for students to learn a diverse range of lifestyle and professional skills. Characteristics which equip students to be competent rural clinicians include the ability to effectively communicate, the ability to work as part of a multidisciplinary team, willingness to empathise with people of cultural difference and those with social and/or economic disadvantage.

UCRH supports students to have positive rural experiences, facilitating interdisciplinary learning and enabling rural, Aboriginal and social inequity discussions and learnings. The UCRH vision is to offer Allied Health students unique, positive rural learning experiences which will encourage and equip them to practice rurally.

This year at UCRH we have developed continuous service learning models for student placements. Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection.

The continuity of Allied Health students across the placement sites allows schools and aged care facilities to factor students into their workforce. This results in delivery of services to communities which currently experience shortages in the health workforce. The workforce shortage and group supervision models encourage students to work both autonomously and in multidisciplinary teams. These service learning placements prepare students to be work-ready and provide them with huge job satisfaction and renewed enthusiasm, as they perceive they are "making a real difference".

Many of the students would love to come and work in communities such as Kyogle and Casino when they graduate. The challenge now is to create viable, blended models of employment, and a mentoring program to support these young graduates, and so create a rural employment pathway.



## HealthPathways for Mental Health

The HealthPathways Team have recently reviewed and localised new Mental Health referral, therapy and assessment pages just in time for us to promote alongside Mental Health Month!

In NSW, – Mental Health Month is celebrated each year in October. This 'awareness' month encourages each of us to think about our own mental health and wellbeing and develop an understanding of the importance of mental health in everyday life -encouraging help seeking behaviours when needed.

In today's society, most of us face increasing commitments and mental health & wellbeing can become less of a priority.

This year, the focus of Mental Health Month is on encouraging everyone to prioritise taking care of their own mental health and wellbeing with the theme 'Value Your Mind'.

The following is a list of Mental Health HealthPathways that will assist clinicians with navigating the system:

- **Mental Health Referrals**
- **Scheduling a Patient**
- **Acute Mental Health Assessment**

- **Non-acute Mental Health Referrals**
- **Non-acute Child and Young Person's Mental Health Assessment**
- **Non-acute Adult Mental Health Assessment**
- **Non-acute Older Adult Mental Health Assessment**
- **Non-acute Drug and Alcohol Assessment**
- **Psychological Therapy**
- **Mental Health Treatment Plan (MHTP)**
- **Mental Health Psychosocial Report**
- **Bereavement Support**
- **Child, Adolescent and Family Counselling**
- **Daily Living Community Support**
- **E-Mental Health**
- **Mental Health Helplines**
- **Problem Gambling Counselling**

To view all Mid and North Coast Localise HealthPathways visit:

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

**Username:** manchealth

**Password:** conn3ct3d

For further information about HealthPathways please contact:

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## Speed Networking – More than just a free dinner!

*"Wonderful event – thank you so much!"*

*"A wonderful chance to meet health professionals from across the region."*

*"Great networking between GPs and specialists who have been referring and caring for each other's patients for years – they finally got to meet!"*

These are just a few of the positive comments received after NCPHN's successful Speed Networking event held at Casino during September. The night was attended by over 40 health professionals. Physiotherapists, podiatrists, surgeons, pathologists, pharmacists, GPs and nurses embraced the opportunity to swap contact details, describe their services to each other and finally put a face to that name. New workshops and further opportunities for strengthening networks have already arisen.

The Casino Kyogle Clinical Society (CKCS) was launched at this event, too, and places on the steering committee have quickly filled. CKCS is already planning their next event, to be held at Casino on Thursday 7 December 2017. The next event will look at current best practice in the diagnosis and management of COPD and will feature Dr Joe Churton (North Coast Respiratory & Sleep Clinic) and staff of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Service. Look for the flyer coming soon!

NCPHN is planning further Speed Networking events across the footprint. If you don't want to miss these opportunities, sign up for the NCPHN Practitioner Newsletters to stay in the loop. To subscribe, visit <http://bit.ly/2kXIA6H>.



*Adam Jorgensen (Rightfoot Podiatry) learning about HealthPathways from Dr Marion Tait (NCPHN)*



*Dr Daniel Bills (surgeon), Linda Ward (General Practice Support Officer, NCPHN) and Dr Cam Hollows (GP Registrar)*



*Taya Prescott (Health Literacy Project Officer NNSWLHD/NCPHN) chats with Dr Simon Kinny (specialist) about Health Literacy*

## Social Connections Breakfasts

The UCRH Social Connections Breakfast is a networking event for all students and community organisations. Originally born from a collaboration with Gus Hamilton (UCRH Allied Health team), Rosalie Kennedy (Social Work Manager at Lismore Base Hospital) and recent UNE Social Work graduate Hannah Bartrim with the idea of connecting Social Work and other placement students with their community and particularly NGOs and other agencies. As word spread through the community, the event has further evolved to include a broad range of attendees. This has enabled networking and collaborating opportunities within our region.

During 2017, we heard from local Social Work students sharing their student journeys and a wide-range of speakers from our local community covering topics including 'Thinking about your own Brain Health', 'Breaking down Barriers for People with Spinal Cord Injuries', 'Drugs and Alcohol – Don't judge a book by its cover', Kyogle Council Community Development and 'One Vision – Music Production', 'Providing Homes, Improving Lives, Strengthening Communities, Building Capacity', 'Child Protection – Early Intervention Referral Project', 'Projects and Services in our Region for Veterans and their families', 'Violence Prevention – Lead the Change' and most recently 'From Stigma to Acceptance – Working Effectively with the LGBTIQ Community.'

After a successful pilot year of the event, the UCRH Social Connections breakfast plans to return in 2018. Your input and suggestions are welcome - you can complete a feedback survey at <http://bit.ly/2ymxqmC>.

## Upcoming Events

### Monday 6 November - Friday 10 November

Transformers II – Special Event Series – Ballina

### Monday 6 November

An Update on Current Youth Drug & Alcohol Trends – Terranora

### Wednesday 8 November

Screening Tool for Assessing Risk of Suicide (STARS) – Gold Coast

### Wednesday 8 November

Dementia Essentials – Port Macquarie

### Thursday 9 November

An Update on Current Youth Drug & Alcohol Trends – Lismore

### Friday 10 November

Building the Wellbeing of Young People – Coffs Harbour

### Tuesday 14 November

Webinar: Collaborative Mental Health Care and the Narcissistic Personality

### Thursday 16 November

Mid North Coast Regional Obesity Summit – Port Macquarie

### Thursday 16 November

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention – Casino

### Monday 20 November - Wednesday 22 November

Experiencing Compassionate Mind Training From The Inside Out – Byron Bay

### Wednesday 22 November

Emergency Dental Care – Coffs Harbour

## More Events

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



North Coast  
**Allied Health Association**

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