
North Coast
Allied Health Association



June 2021-July 2022
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

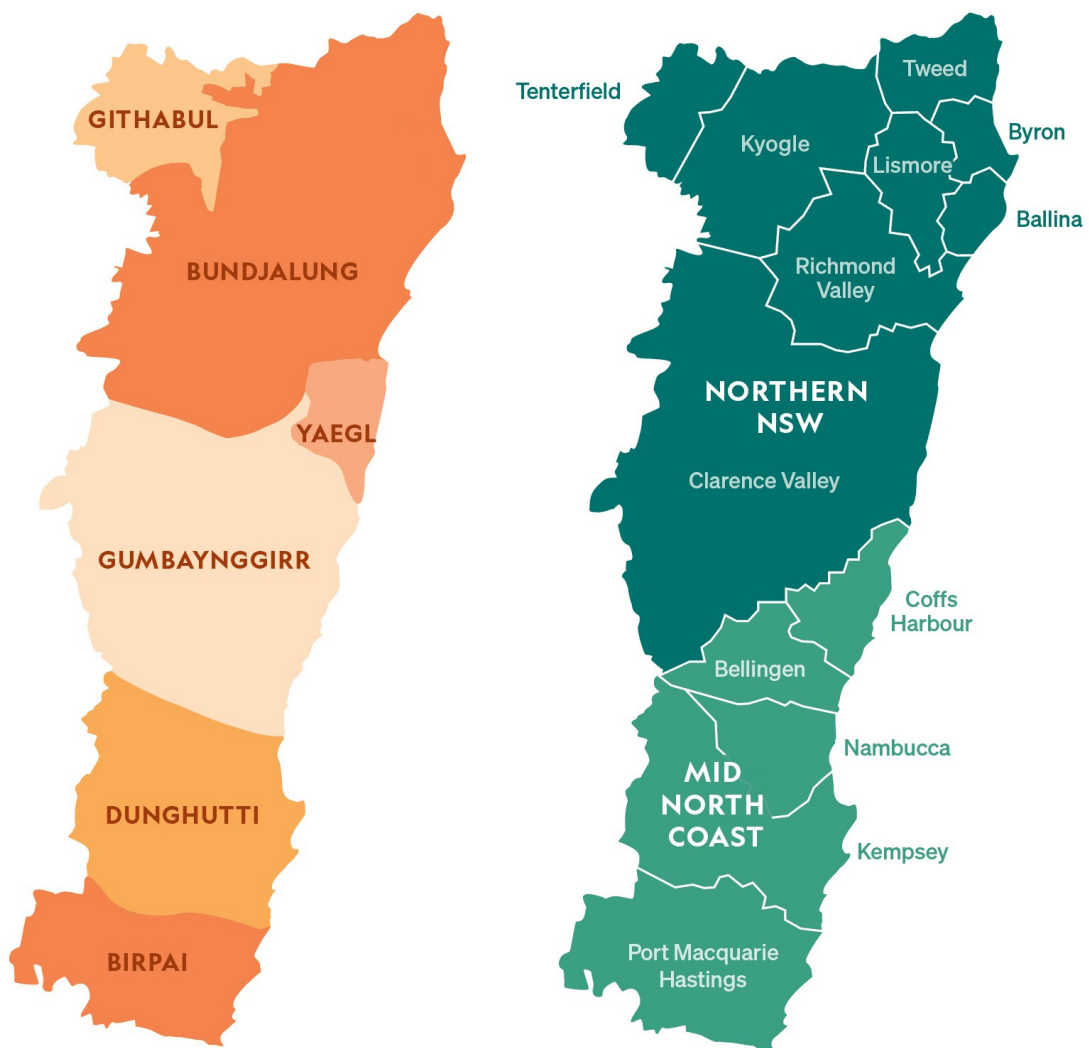
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Rob Curry
Executive Officer
Robyn Fitzroy
Chair

The NCAHA acknowledges and shows respect to the traditional owners of the lands on which we work together.

We represent Allied Health Professionals across these nations and want to show respect to past and present Elders and all Aboriginal people.

We recognise that this land always was, and always will be Aboriginal land.



MAP Source: Healthy North Coast -<https://hnc.org.au/>

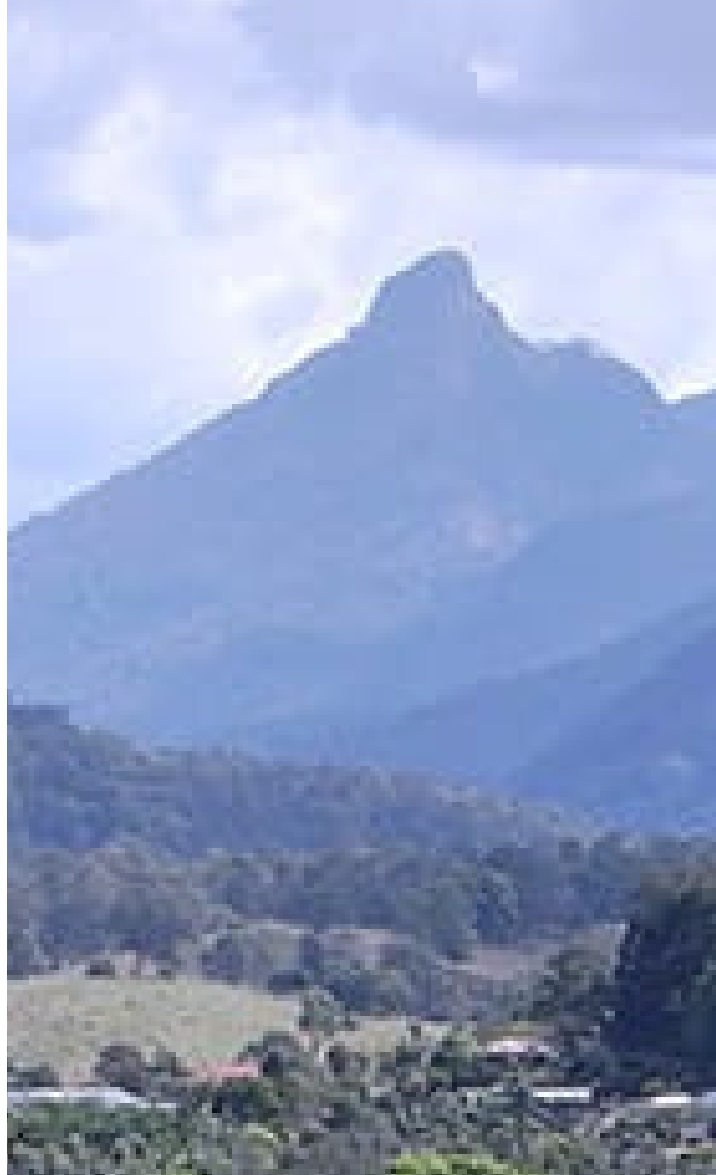
SUMMARY

This year, once again, the ambitions of NCAHA to link and network its membership have been limited by the continued concerns and lockdowns associated with the COVID virus pandemic. Plans to run face-to-face workshops in the different regions had to be postponed, despite the easing of restrictions in the first half of 2022. The first workshops are now planned for late 2022 in both the Lismore and Coffs Harbour districts.

Instead, NCAHA has produced monthly newsletters for members and stakeholders to highlight CPD and events of relevance for allied health professionals in the field, and several webinar events have been delivered on topical issues such as NDIS, culturally safe care, and responding to community disasters. This latter theme has been of particular relevance given the ongoing recovery from the 2019 bushfires, the 2020 floods, and now the catastrophic floods across the Northern Rivers in early 2022. Many Northern NSW communities remain trauma-affected to this day.

The NCAHA remains committed to advocating for improved allied health services across the region and supporting the broad range of allied health professionals to deliver the best services they can. Efforts to build partnerships with stakeholder organisations in the region have been re-doubled, the key relationships being with UCRH and Healthy North Coast, but new collaboration being established with Southern Cross University. SARRAH remains a key partner and ally on the national stage, but further partnership development will be crucial to underpin the capacity of NCAHA to bring about necessary changes and improvements to health care and health outcomes on the North Coast.

Despite the importance of the work and roles of NCAHA, the financial position of the Association remains precarious and the ability to continue as an incorporated entity a challenge. Suring up the financial position will be a priority goal going forward.



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1. NCAHA DIRECTORS



The NCAHA Directors during this reporting period:

Robyn Fitzroy - Chairperson

- Director, Multidisciplinary Health, University Centre of Rural Health (UCRH)
- In April 2021, Robyn assumed the Chair from Jacqui Yoxall who had held the position for the maximum allowable duration of four years.

Jacqui Yoxall –Deputy Chair

- Chair of Allied Health & Midwifery and Clinical Services Director and Acting
- Clinic Manager - Southern Cross University
Registered Psychologist

Sarah Miles – Company Secretary

- Clinical Educator, Occupational Therapy - University Centre for Rural Health
- Occupational Therapist

Michael Woods

- Director, The Lismore Hub
- Exercise Physiologist

Craig Gilmore

- Director, Principal Cirrus Health
- Physiotherapist

Alira Bayndrian

- Clinical psychologist and practice principal
- Secretary, Australian Psychological Society, Mid North Coast Branch,
- Healthy North Coast Clinical Council Member

David Goodwin

- Private practice physiotherapist, Hoys Allied Health
- Healthy North Coast Clinical Council Member

2. KEY CURRENT ISSUES



2.1 Changes to the Board:

At the 2021 AGM, both Jacqui Yoxall and Craig Gilmore were re-elected to director positions on the Board. New Director, David Goodwin, was elected to a third vacant position created by a decision of the Board to expand the elected Directors from five directors to six. The Board then elected Robyn Fitzroy to the Chair position, given Jacqui had served her maximum period as Chair under the Constitution. Jacqui assumed the new role of Deputy Chair.

2.2 Financial challenge:

The NCAHA continues to be challenged on its financial position, with expenditure considerably higher than its annual income, and therefore a rapidly deteriorating balance sheet. It is clear that, without significant new funding being sourced beyond that provided by Healthy North Coast, the Association will have to modify its current business model to reduce spending. The two major current costs to the association are the contract employment of the Executive Officer (12 hours per week at a cost of \$31,200 per annum), and provision of CPD for members through Sourdough Business Solutions (approximately \$10,000 per annum). Consideration will need to be given to significantly reducing both of these costs during 2022-23.

2.3 COVID:

To everyone's great relief, the COVID picture and the associated restrictions began to ease in the first half of 2022. It was still too much of a risk to be attempting to bring our members together face-to-face in workshops and forums, but at least the end of social gathering restrictions was coming into sight and planning could commence in earnest to run workshops in late 2022. Ironically, however, the lockdowns had stimulated our ability to run on-line Zoom events for the benefit of our members, and it could be said a new normal has now been established at NCAHA for virtual connection of AHPs for CPD and information-sharing.

2.4 Northern Rivers Floods:

The floods and destructive weather across the East Coast of Australia and specifically in the Northern Rivers in February and again in March 2022 had a major impact on the community, businesses and essential services including our health practices.

The impact has been felt widely and will be so for a long time. Many practices were directly damaged and others not able to operate. The physical impacts were obvious and the consequences on practitioners were profound as they carried the burden of providing care under difficult circumstances. There have been many examples of courageous and resilient practitioners.



NCAHA planned support activities for its members and others, worked with HNC and distributed resources and information as a priority.

2.5 Engagement with HNC:

HNC continues to be our main funder with an annual \$20K contribution over the past three years and the likelihood of further funding support into the future. In late 2021 NCAHA extended its MoU with HNC with an action plan focusing on aged care, workforce data and mental health. In addition, NCAHA retains its membership and contribution to the HNC Education Advisory Group, and several NCAHA members retain engagement with the HNC Clinical Council and Clinical Societies in the regions. NCAHA continues to be an active member of the Member Liaison Committee of the HNC Board, and uses this forum to regularly discuss issues of concern with health service provision on the North Coast and matters of strategic import for improvements required.

2.6 Member engagement:

NCAHA keeps in touch with its membership through dissemination of a monthly Newsletter highlighting matters of relevance in health care provision, particular issues relating to allied health services, and key CPD opportunities available in the region and beyond. In addition, monthly zoom webinars were also offered throughout the year covering a range of topical issues for AHPs, including: culturally responsive care, effective practice management, dealing with NDIS, responding to community disasters, and many others. These webinars are well-attended and, it would seem from the feedback surveys, well appreciated by those participating.

Ultimately, it is felt that a return to face-to-face forums will further support member engagement when members are actually able to gather together around key issues, share information, and make connections and friendships, all of which should support stronger allied health service provision in our region.



Image: Grafton NSW

2.7 New partnerships:

For the past two years NCAHA has been concerned about a lack of mental health practitioner service availability for children with mental health issues. With long waiting lists to see psychologists and counsellors, these children and their families are at risk of unnecessary hardship and the establishment of long-term mental health issues in the children in lieu of an adequate service response. In the light of these concerns, NCAHA and Southern Cross University joined forces in 2021-22 to prepare two funding submissions for projects to investigate these service challenges in mental health and to find and trial proposed solutions. Unfortunately, neither submission was successful, but NCAHA and SCU remain in close contact as we explore future funding opportunities. This collaboration marks the beginning of a new opportunity to advance goals for improved allied health care on the North Coast.

Although NCAHA has members down in the Port Macquarie region, new partnerships are required to support service advocacy and CPD events in this area.

2.8 Proposed workshops: Aged Care and Mental Health :

For over two years now NCAHA has been planning to develop face-to-face forums in each of the regions for its members and interested stakeholders. The intention has been to support connection and networking of members and to workshop challenges in service provision to find solutions. Unfortunately, COVID has held back delivery of these workshop until now. Forums on aged care and on trauma-informed care are now being scheduled for second half of 2022 in Lismore and Coffs Harbour. Further forums on culturally responsive health care and the NDIS and allied health are under consideration for early 2023.



3. ACHIEVEMENTS 2021-22



The principal achievement for the reporting period was staying active and viable as an incorporate entity during the pandemic challenges. We have kept in touch with our membership during this time with our regular Newsletters and CPD webinar events. We now look forward to more personal engagement and networking as we come face-to-face in proposed forums over the next 12 months.

4. NCAHA FINANCES



NCAHA retained approximately \$40,186 cash at bank as at 31 March, 2022, and cash at bank at 30th June, 2022 was \$28,767.62. Income for the year was \$20,000 from Healthy North Coast and expenses were \$37,214.

Major ongoing expenses are:

- Salary for part-time Executive Officer at \$2,600 per month
- Payments to Sourdough Business Solutions for support with Zoom
- Professional Development events at approx. \$800 per month
- Insurances at approximately \$2,300 for the year.

Additional expenses anticipated for 2022-23 will include the cost of delivering face-to-face forums on Aged Care and mental health in the second half of 2022.



5. NCAHA PLANNING



NCAHA Strategic Plan is due for renewal, but the opportunity to bring the Board together has been limited during this period due to COVID restrictions.

With new opportunities now opening up, a Strategic Planning forum of the Board is proposed for October 2022. This work will enable NCAHA to update itself in relation to key health challenges on the North Coast and to take a pro-active stance in support of necessary allied health developments for better health outcomes.

POST REPORTING PERIOD NOTE:

As this report has been produced after the reporting period, the outline of NCAHA strategy is provided below.

Image: Ballina NSW



6. NCAHA STRATEGIC PLAN 2022



North Coast
Allied Health Association

NORTH COAST ALLIED HEALTH ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2022

Vision: The best possible health and wellbeing for the North Coast Community

Mission: Strive for fair access to allied health services in our community

1

EMBED THE VALUE OF ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

- Strategically represent Allied Health
- Build community awareness
- Harness allies/supporters of Allied Health
- Promote evidence for Allied Health interventions
- Working with non-AHPs
- Strategically represent Allied Health

2

ENHANCE ALLIED HEALTH CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

- Promote social structure supports for Allied Health
- Build business support for Allied Health practice
- Advocate for Allied Health quality and integrity
- Promote Allied Health workforce development
- Respond to gaps in Allied Health services
- Provide and promote professional development

3

BUILD A RESILIENT, EFFECTIVE, STRONGER, DYNAMIC AND IMPACTFUL ASSOCIATION.

- Build a value proposition
- Grow the membership
- Build Allied Health leadership
- Source new income streams
- Communication and marketing
- Resourcing association
- Explore a national regional Allied Health network

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7. FUTURE GOALS



- Regular workshops for members
- Establish financial viability
- Build the membership
- Strategic plan review and implementation
- Operational Plan development and implementation



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