
North Coast
Allied Health Association



July 2022-June 2023
ANNUAL
REPORT

www.ncaha.org.au
ncahaexecutive@hotmail.com

Robyn Fitzroy

Chair

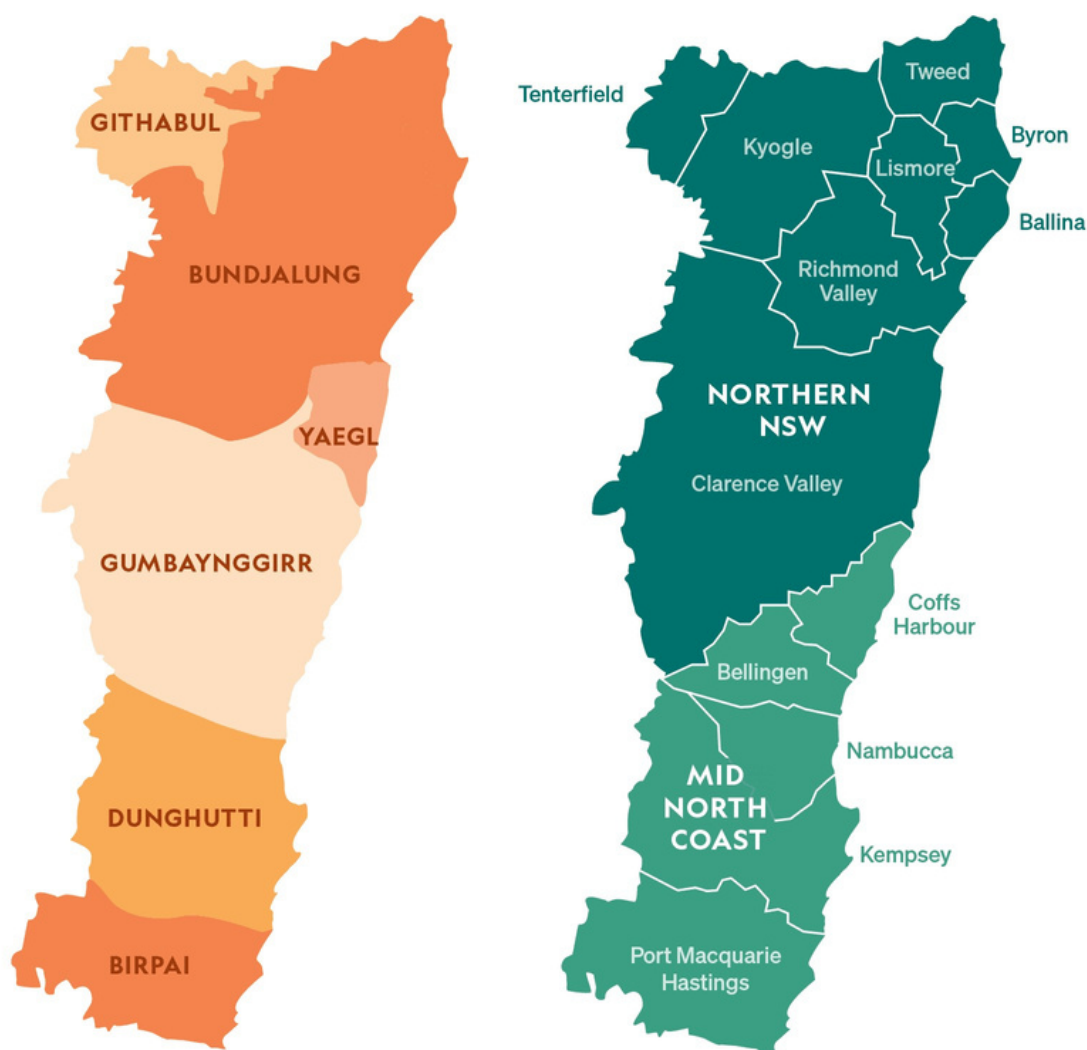
Rob Curry

Executive Officer

NCAHA acknowledges and respects the traditional custodians across these lands where we represent Allied Health Professionals.

We acknowledge and respect past and present Elders and all Aboriginal people across these nations.

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



MAP Source: Healthy North Coast - www.hnc.org.au

SUMMARY



2022-23 has seen the opening of the country again following two years of COVID restrictions, during which time we relied on a program of regular webinar events and our monthly Newsletters to keep members abreast of relevant developments for allied health services and providers.

This year, finally, we have been able to bring AHPs together again, face-to-face, for several professional development and networking events across the North Coast. All have been well attended, positively appraised and been excellent opportunities to bring health practitioners together in one place for learning and collegiality. We believe such networking of our members and colleagues is vital in a rural/regional setting where professional isolation is a risk that needs countering if we are to attract and retain the necessary workforce to meet the needs of our community.

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 their best services. To this end, we continue to build partnerships with stakeholder organisations, particularly with Healthy North Coast (HNC) with whom we have an active MoU based on a comprehensive annual action plan of collaborative activity.

HNC remains our most important partner and we continue to nurture our other important partners like universities. We are developing new and vital relationships, like Rural Doctors Network (RDN) NSW, SARRAH and IAHA where we are working to improve allied health access to support services and resources.

SUMMARY



We are strengthening relationships with all local regional universities in our mutual pursuit of education and professional development and benefitting by sharing resources to deliver accessible and quality education.

Wollumbin NSW

We maintain regular contact with SARRAH (Services for Australian Rural & Remote Allied Health) and IAHA (Indigenous Allied Health Australia) to keep abreast of allied health issues and developments at the national level and nurture important relationships.

NCAHA faced some serious financial concerns yet continued to ensure compliance with all our governance requirements. In October 2022 the Board came together at Ballina to develop a new Strategic Plan. We are now building our strategies and actions around three core themes: embedding the value of allied health services in health and social care; enhancing allied health capacity and capability, and; building a stronger resilient Association.



CONTENTS



1. NCAHA Directors

2. Key Issues

2.1 Changes to the Board

2.2 Financial Challenges

2.3 Member Engagement

Newsletter

Face-to-face forums

2.4 Engagement with HNC (Healthy North Coast)

MoU, priority areas and action plan

2.5 New and Stronger partnerships

2.6 Proposed CPD Program

3. NCAHA Strategic Direction

4. Finances

5 .Achievements 2022 - 2023

6 .Future Goals

1. NCAHA DIRECTORS



Robyn Fitzroy - Chairperson

Director, Multidisciplinary Health, University Centre of Rural Health (UCRH)

Jacqui Yoxall –Deputy Chair

Chair of Discipline Allied Health, Midwifery, Social Work and Community Welfare,
Director of Clinical Services SCU Health Clinic, Southern Cross University

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

Nicole Turner

Dietitian
Aboriginal Workforce Engagement Officer at Rural Doctors Network (RDN), NSW
Chairperson, Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA)

2. KEY ISSUES



2.1 Changes to the Board:

At the 2022 AGM Alira Bayndrian, Michael Woods, and Sarah Miles were re-elected to serve a further term as Directors on the Board.

In April 2023, Nicole Turner joined the Board as the second Board-appointed Director. Nicole is a proud Kamilaroi woman, one of a few qualified Aboriginal Community Nutritionists in Australia, and the current Chair of IAHA. She holds a full-time position with RDN as Aboriginal Workforce Engagement Manager.

2.2 Financial challenges

Over the reporting period, NCAHA remained in a challenging financial position. The Association's level of income and rate of expenditure meant that, whilst always able to maintain solvent trading, funds were decreasing. A decision was taken in February 2023 to reduce the work hours of the Executive Officer until, and unless, the financial position could be improved.

Towards the end of the financial year, HNC committed to fund CPD activities that were mutual and where NCAHA offered particular skills and reach to enhance the common programs. This new funding provided confidence that NCAHA would remain financially viable into 2023-24, whilst maintaining capacity to support allied health professional service provision on the North Coast.

2.3 Member Engagement

NCAHA engages its membership through its monthly Newsletter, highlighting matters of relevance in health care provision, particular issues relating to allied health services, key CPD opportunities available in the region and beyond and NCAHA matters.

This financial year has also seen the return of face-to-face forums presented by NCAHA for AHPs in the region, with three well-attended forums provided over the year on Aged Care in Lismore and Trauma-informed Care events in Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. These events are also important opportunities for networking and information sharing between local practitioners. This face-to-face format will remain a priority in the new financial year with plans to deliver at least four forums across the North Coast.

2.4 Engagement with HNC

HNC continues to be NCAHA's principal partner, collaborator and funding source. HNC's annual sponsorship of \$20,000 enables greater representation and assistance for allied health professional services on the North Coast.

This sponsorship is built on a foundation of understanding mutual goals. It is consolidated with a memorandum of understanding MoU.

This MoU draws our two organisations together with an annual action plan. This is a collaboration of activities aimed to promote access to allied health services in the region to better enhance integration of health care.



Rob Curry (r) with Nerida Volker presenting at HNC event, Coffs Harbour

The action plan focus areas during this reporting period were:

- **Enhancing Allied Health Workforce data and description on the North Coast**
- **Supporting healthy ageing on the North Coast.**

NCAHA continues to view its membership of a range of HNC committees as a priority. These include being one of the five member organisations of the HNC; being a member of the Education Advisory Group, and several NCAHA Directors and members continue their engagement with the HNC Clinical Council and Clinical Societies. NCAHA remains an active participant on 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.

2.5 New and Stronger Partnerships

Our strongest partnerships remain with HNC and UCRH (University Centre for Rural Health), our administrative home and workplace for two of our Board Directors. Over the year, however, stronger relationships have been forged with local universities – Southern Cross University (workplace of a Director), Charles Sturt University and the University of Newcastle – as we work together to provide quality CPD. The university campuses offer a range of resources such as facilities and IT expertise in exchange for free admission to the CPD events for their students.

In addition, NCAHA is partnering with SCU in a scoping project looking at access to mental health services for children in the region. A stronger relationship is now also being developed with the NSW Rural Doctors Network (RDN) as we seek to improve access to their supports and services for allied health professionals under the RDN Rural Workforce Program.



2.6 Proposed CPD Program

Focusing on Chronic Disease, NDIS and Professional Self-care

With new funding anticipated from HNC for developing and delivering CPD programs for allied health professionals, we will enter 2023-24 with greater confidence in our ability to provide members and allied health colleagues with relevant and high-quality workshops and forums to meet at least some practitioner needs. Allied Health session streams are already being planned for Healthy North Coast Chronic Disease forums proposed for Port Macquarie and Lismore later in 2023.

NDIS and Children is a topic prioritised for forums in early 2024. NCAHA will undertake a survey of members to ascertain further CPD priorities of members for the coming period.



3. STRATEGIC DIRECTION



The ending of the COVID restrictions enabled the NCAHA Board to come together in Ballina for the important task of renewing our strategic direction. The facilitated planning workshop was intense and difficult but the Directors revised and contemporised the organisation vision and mission.

VISION

- The best possible health and wellbeing for the North Coast Community

MISSION:

- Strive for fair access to allied health services in our community

Three strategic areas for action were prioritised:

1. Embed the Value of Allied Health Services in Health & Social Care

Building our voice for better allied health services on the North Coast and building awareness of our health professional colleagues and the public on the value and importance of allied health interventions

2. Enhance Allied Health Capacity and Capability

Supporting allied health professionals with CPD opportunities, business supports, advocacy for workforce development, and shining a light on gaps in allied health services

3. Build a Resilient, Effective and Dynamic Association

Growing the membership and securing a funding base to underpin our work beyond the volunteer base.

The Board believes it now has a practical and achievable plan to continue our mission. In particular, the need to promote the roles and benefits of allied health to our communities and colleagues is the pressing advice from our Directors, members and colleagues. This is a priority area for NCAHA..

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

0429 999 005 | www.ncaha.org.au | ncahaexecutive@hotmail.com | 61 Uralba St, Lismore NSW 2480

4. NCAHA FINANCES



The income for the 2022-23 year was \$22,270 versus the prior years \$20,000.

The expenses for the year were \$41,108 versus the prior year \$37,214.

The ending cash position was \$9,930 versus the prior year \$28,768.

There is annual funding of \$24,000 income for 2023-24 so the expenses need to be managed to \$34,000 or lower for 2023-24.

5. NCAHA ACHIEVEMENTS 2022 - 2023



NCAHA is pleased to have made effective progress on several key objectives over the 2022-23 financial year.

• **A stronger Association:**

A renewed MoU and Action Plan with HNC, the negotiation of increased funding to support our advocacy and support activities and the development of a new Strategic Plan to guide our future direction over the coming years are important milestones in efforts to become a more resilient and influential organisation promoting improved allied health care on the North Coast. In addition, the appointment during the year of new Board Director, Nicole Turner, with significant experience in the field of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander health and expertise in organisational governance, has enhanced the leadership capacity of the Association.

• **Enhancing Allied Health Capability:**

The re-institution of face-to-face CPD forums for our members and allied health colleagues has boosted NCAHA capacity to support allied health service provision in the field. At the same time, bringing AHPs together at such forums serves a vital networking function where inter-professional relationships can be facilitated and information shared to reduce professional isolation in rural/regional areas.

6. FUTURE GOALS



With our new Strategic Plan and key focus areas, NCAHA will focus on the following key activities in the next reporting period.

- **Building the CPD program and opportunities**
- **Building the funding base to expand capacity for advocacy to bring about progress for allied health on the North Coast**
- **Making a stronger contribution to integrated care through positioning the allied health sector as champions of patient-centred, team-based care**





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www.ncaha.org.au

ncahaexecutive@hotmail.com

rob.curry1@outlook.com

