

HEALTH PROMOTION NORTHERN NSW LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



INTRODUCTION

30% of the burden of disease in NSW is preventable.

AIHW, 2016

What we do

We work collaboratively to reduce modifiable risk factors such as smoking and obesity and to promote wellness. Our funding targets three state-wide priorities:

- ✓ Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL)
- ✓ Tobacco
- ✓ Falls Prevention

Special Health Promotion Funding allows us to also target:

Alcohol

Health Literacy

Equity and Aboriginal Health

Research and Evaluation

Infant Hearing

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Find out more:



www.nnswlhd.health.nsw.gov/health-promotion



Live Well Now



Healthy Eating and Active Living




Since 1982 the proportion of Australian children who are overweight has doubled and the proportion who are obese has tripled. Excess weight gain increases the likelihood of developing chronic disease such as type-2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, many types of cancer and fatty liver disease.

We support and deliver programs that focus on children

The NSW Healthy Children Initiative

The **NSW Healthy Children Initiative** (HCI) was established in 2011 to provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to childhood obesity prevention across NSW. HCI is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health and delivered through the NSW Office of Preventive Health and Local Health Districts.

NNSWLHD partners with **120** Early Childhood Services and **137** primary schools to deliver a range of HCI programs:

PROGRAM	TARGET GROUP	SETTING	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	NNSWLHD PERFORMANCE
	Children aged 0-5 years, parents/carers, early childhood educators and staff.	Early Childhood Services	Encourages healthy eating, increased physical activity and reduced small screen recreation in children attending Early Childhood Services.	Implemented by 86% of Early Childhood Services in NNSWLHD. 92% of these services are delivering >70% of program practices.
	Children aged 5-12 years and the broader school community.	Primary Schools	Enhances teacher's knowledge and skills in teaching nutrition and movement. Supports schools to create environments which enable children to eat healthily and be physically active.	Implemented by 82% of schools in NNSWLHD. 98% of these schools are meeting >70% of program practices.
	Children aged 7-13 years, parents/carers.	Community	Helps children above a healthy weight and their parent/ carer(s) to modify family lifestyles, improve nutrition and activity levels, promote weight management and increase wellbeing and self-esteem. Delivered by trained and qualified health professionals, with prioritisation for delivery within disadvantaged communities.	4 mainstream and 3 Aboriginal specific programs delivered. 75% of participants completed the program.



Healthy Eating and Active Living

We support and deliver a range of programs that focus on **children**

Routine Measurement of Children's Height and Weight

Regular measurement of the height and weight of children is a normal part of good clinical care and is essential to accurate monitoring of a child's growth and identification of children below or above a healthy weight.

Health Promotion supports and encourages clinical staff to:

- ✓ Access training and resources
- ✓ Routinely take children's height and weight measurement
- ✓ Provide brief interventions to the parents of children who are above a healthy weight
- ✓ Refer parents to programs and services that assist families adopt healthier lifestyles, such as Go4Fun.

The Big Vegie Crunch!

Thousands of children around NSW bit into vegies on March 5th 2020 as part of The Big Vegie Crunch!

9 out of 10 NSW children do not eat enough vegetables.

The Big Vegie Crunch was an opportunity for kids to trial fresh vegetables and to learn about healthy eating.

29 schools and 53 Early Learning Centres in the Northern Rivers took part in the 2020 Big Vegie Crunch!

In 2019/20 56% of children using NNSW LHD services had a height and weight measurement recorded. We aim to lift this figure to 70%.



Healthy Eating and Active Living

In Northern New South Wales **6 out of 10 men and 5 out of 10 women are overweight or obese**, increasing their risk of disease such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and some cancers. The economic impact of obesity in NSW has been estimated at \$19 billion. Reducing overweight and obesity benefits individuals, families and society.

Access Economics, 2008; NSW Health

We support and deliver a range of programs that focus on adults

Get Healthy

Get Healthy is free telephone based health coaching that provides 10 confidential phone calls over 6 months and evidence based goal setting and information.

NNSW LHD Health Promotion works to increase clinical referral to 'Get Healthy' and to provide regular feedback on NNSW LHD referral levels.

Fitness passport

Fitness Passport is a discounted gym and pool membership program for Northern NSW staff. Health Promotion promotes the program and provides administrative support. This year 955 staff and 1125 family members of staff had fitness passport membership in Northern NSW.

Get Healthy in Pregnancy

Get Healthy in Pregnancy provides pregnant women with evidence-based coaching and goal setting in relation to healthy diet, weight and alcohol use.

Gaining too much weight during pregnancy can lead to complications at birth and beyond for both mother and baby.

NNSW LHD clinicians referred over 25% of pregnancies to the program.

**In 2019-2020 NNSW LHD
Midwives referred 564
women to 'Get Healthy in
Pregnancy'**



Healthy Eating and Active Living

We deliver a range of programs that focus on **healthy ageing**

Fall injury is a major cause of hospitalisation and loss of independence for over 65s.

Participation in 2 hours of strength and balance exercise per week can reduce a persons risk of falls by 42%.

Community Health Education Groups (CHEGS)

Low cost exercise classes for older people, supporting physical activity and social connectedness.



Up to 30 classes per week across Northern NSW, with 10-20 participants per class.



Now being delivered in Grafton



CHEGS has been delivered for over 30 years, operating on a cost recovery basis.

Stepping On

An evidence based falls prevention program that builds participants confidence to undertake everyday activities safely. **This popular program has consistently exceeded participation targets.**

Stepping On was paused in Term 1 2020 due to Covid-19.

Standing Tall

Standing Tall is a new and innovative fall prevention program that delivers a home-based balance exercise program via technology to over 60s.

Standing Tall is a research trial being undertaken in partnership with Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA).

We aim to enroll 100 participants by 31 November 2020.

In 2018/19 there were significantly less falls related hospitalisation stays for over 65s in Northern NSW than the the NSW average.



Healthy Eating and Active Living

4 out of 10 NSW adults do not do enough physical activity. Creating built environments that encourage people to walk, cycle, take part in physical activity, use public transport and interact with community members can contribute to lifelong health and wellbeing. Poorly designed built environments can have negative effects on the mental, physical and social wellbeing of communities.

www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au

We advocate for healthy environments

Advocacy

In 2019/20 Health Promotion provided detailed, evidence based and action oriented feedback on key policy documents, including:

- ✓ The Local Strategic Planning Statements (LSPs) for all seven Northern NSW councils.
- ✓ Council open space strategies and council policies.

Outdoor Gym Equipment

We worked with councils on the delivery of Outdoor Gym Equipment activation courses in Coraki, Pottsville and Tweed Heads. These courses teach community members how to safely use newly installed equipment.

Delivery of further courses was delayed due to Covid-19.

Alcohol licence applications

Health Promotion assessed 11 alcohol licencing applications and provided responses in relation to 5 of these applications.

Workshops

Our Active Living NSW workshop brought councils together to discuss incorporating healthy environment into Local Strategic Planning Statements. The workshop was well attended, with representation from Tweed Shire, Ballina Shire, Kyogle, Clarence Valley, Byron Shire and Richmond Valley councils.

Park Run

Casino's first Park Run was launched on July 2019 with 168 runners in attendance.

Park Runs are currently on hold due to Covid-19.



Healthy Eating and Active Living Community Grants

Only 2% of young people aged 13-17 meet both the Australian physical activity and sedentary screen based behavior guidelines. Less than 1 in 10 NSW children eat enough vegetables.

AIHW, 2020; www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au, 2017

We advocate for health communities

Enabling individuals and communities to lead healthy lives is a cornerstone of health promotion. In November 2019 ten grants of up to \$4000 were awarded to pilot innovative community led initiatives aimed at increasing physical activity and/or healthy eating for young people.

Ballina Coast High – Student Activity

Project Lunchtime strength and conditioning training sessions for students, delivered by PDHPE teachers.

Banora Point High School – A Special

Cycle Program A cycling program for Special Education students at Banora Point High School.

Bulgarr Ngaru (Grafton)- Bulgarr

Boot Camp Weekly personal trainer boot camp sessions for young Aboriginal people and their families.

Byron Youth Service – Aunties

cookbook A girls-only project supporting self-care and healthy life choices.

CASPA Education – CASPA

Community Garden project Provides students with gardening based learning experiences, increased physical activity and daily contact with nature.

Kyogle Track and Mountain Bike Club

– Access program Provides bikes and safety equipment to enable disadvantaged youth to participate in mountain biking.

Mid Richmond Neighbourhood

Centre –Physical activity workshops

Workshops in martial arts – Fight Like a Girl, and skateboarding with the Ladies of Shred.

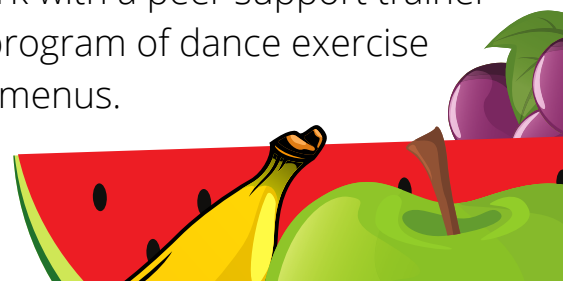
Rekindling the Spirit – The Lismore

Youth Koori Knockout A 10 week program focused on traditional Aboriginal games, sports and movement.

RTRL Lismore Library – Youth Pizza

Garden Encourages local youth to build and maintain a vegetable garden.

SPRUNG!! Young adult dancers with disability work with a peer support trainer to devise a program of dance exercise and healthy menus.



Tobacco

15.2% of adults smoke in Northern NSW are current smokers. **Smoking is the largest cause of preventable disease and death in NSW.** In NSW, Aboriginal people are more than twice as likely to smoke than non-Aboriginal people. NSW could reduce hospitalisations by 50,000 and deaths by 5,000 each year if people stopped smoking.

Cancer Institute NSW; www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au

We deliver a range of programs that focus on smoking cessation

Smoke Free Health Care

Keeping health facilities smoke free is a big but important challenge. Effective support of compliance with smoke free policies can reduce the need for enforcement actions. In 2019/20 Health promotion supported smoke free health care by:

- ✓ Working with local health and safety committees to make it easier for patients to quit smoking whilst in hospital and for staff to avoid cravings during work shifts.
- ✓ Conducting compliance audits across eight health campuses.
- ✓ Providing reports and recommendation for WH&S committees on how to improve smoke free compliance.
- ✓ Supporting and mentoring 'Smoke Free Tobacco Champions' who have led change in their workplaces.

"Our local Smoke Free Champions have done amazing work. Julie Butler, who works in Mental Health at Tweed has supported practice change in Kurrajong and approximately 18 clients have become totally smoke free over the past 18 months. Julie and the other Champions are really great ambassadors for Smoke free Health Care"

Christine, Clinical Engagement Team

Smoking in pregnancy

Nearly 4 out of 10 Aboriginal women smoke during pregnancy in Northern NSW.

Health promotion works to ensure all women, but in particular Aboriginal women, are offered evidence based support to become smoke free. Provision of Nicotine Dependence Training Programs to NNSW LHD midwives in 2019-2020 was limited due to Covid-19.

(www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au)



Health Literacy

Health Literacy is a person's ability to access, understand and act on health information. **60% of the general population have a low level of health literacy**, and this is made worse by the fact that health information is becoming increasingly complex. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted more than ever the importance of clear health communication.

The Northern NSW Health Literacy Project **continues to drive health literacy awareness, change and improvement** in our region.

Key achievements in 2019-2020:

- ✓ Launch of the NNSW Health Literacy Ambassador program. 42 Ambassadors across NNSW LHD are now trained and able to support colleagues in health literacy improvement.
- ✓ Inclusion of Health Literacy in both the LHD Consumer Engagement Strategy and Strategic Plan 2019-2020, and the use of health literacy principles in the consumer engagement strategy design process.
- ✓ Inclusion of the Northern NSW Organisational Health Literacy Assessment Tool in the Clinical Excellence Commission's 'Quality Audit Reporting System'. This means using the tool now contributes to accreditation.
- ✓ 50 Health Literacy Workshops held, 370 Health Professionals and 65 consumers trained.
- ✓ Review and co-design support for 181 patient information resources.
- ✓ Maintenance of the Northern NSW Health Literacy Website which contains a range of locally designed resources and is used by more than 250 health professionals.
- ✓ Establishment of an online consumer group to review health information.
- ✓ Supporting the Mental Health Commission's Mental Health Literacy Project.



Violence, abuse and neglect

Extensive research indicates that violence, abuse and neglect has a significant negative impact on the health and wellbeing of women, children and men. These impacts are cumulative and may be incrementally worse for victims experiencing multiple types of abuse.

We work in partnership to address violence, abuse and neglect

LOVEBiTES is an evidence based violence, abuse and neglect (VAN) primary prevention program that is delivered in high schools.

Health Promotion is working cross-agency to expand the reach of LOVEBiTES across the NNSW LHD and Mid North Coast Local Health District footprints.

LOVEBiTES:

- ✓ Provides a safe environment for young people to examine, discuss and explore respectful relationships
- ✓ Equips young people with the knowledge needed to have respectful relationships;
- ✓ Encourages and develop young people's skills in critical thinking; and
- ✓ Assists young people being able to problem solve and communicate effectively.

Increasing the number of trained LOVEBiTES facilitators and supporting new and existing LOVEBiTES Facilitator Committees will be a focus in Northern NSW in 2020/21.

LOVE BiTES 

State Wide Infant Screening - Hearing

The NSW Statewide Infant Screening – Hearing (SWIS-H) Program aims to identifying all babies born in NSW with significant and permanent hearing loss in both ears and for those children to access appropriate intervention by 6 months of age.

We screen babies for early detection of hearing loss

The State Wide Infant Screening - Hearing (SWIS-H) team responded rapidly to the Covid-19 pandemic, shifting from hospital to home based testing of infant hearing.

Despite having to make this change, the team has **maintained a screening rate of 98.4%** - screening 2832 babies.

Intervention by 6 months for babies with hearing loss maximises speech and language development and may reduce the need for special education.

"We find the one or two babies in a thousand who can't hear at that whisper quiet level."

"We can make a huge difference in those babies lives. We offer support with communication-signing, audio amplification, hearing aids and cochlear implants."

"The earlier we do that, the better the outcome for the children"

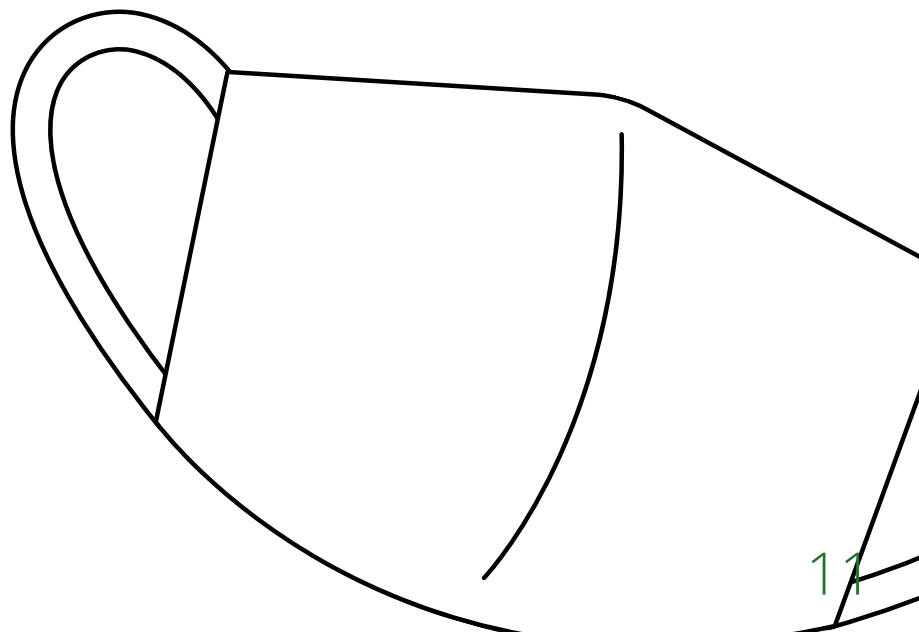
Anthony, NNSW LHD SWIS-H Manager



Covid-19

Like health systems around the world, Northern NSW Local Health District had to respond rapidly to the Covid-19 pandemic. Health Promotion supported this response by:

- Redeploying staff to support frontline clinicians and to support the Public Health Unit to undertake local contact tracking and tracing and community education.
- Adapting nearly all of our programs for virtual delivery, with face to face group education suspended across NSW until 2021.
- Stepping up online support for parents, schools and child care centers to keep children active and eating well during lock down periods.



Research

Health Promotion is committed to evidence based practice and the ongoing generation of high quality, local evidence. We work in partnership to deliver a range of high quality research interventions.

Research question/ objective	Partners	Findings if available	Implications and outcomes (so what?)
Outdoors Gym Equipment Activation (Completed)			
To determine outdoor gym equipment class participants' attitudes towards and experiences of both the equipment and the classes.	Councils – Tweed Shire, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley	<p>Most participants enjoyed the Come and Try classes, built confidence in using the equipment and gave the equipment positive feedback.</p> <p>Many participants requested more facilities such as toilets and shade.</p> <p>At follow up, frequent use of the OGE was varied, with more people using the equipment occasionally or never/rarely.</p>	<p>Outdoor gym equipment (OGE) and free classes were generally well received.</p> <p>Classes helped people feel more confident to use the equipment and were enjoyable.</p> <p>OGE installation needs to take into account other infrastructure for people to view the equipment as convenient and safe e.g. toilets, shade, lighting</p> <p>Overall park amenity is important to people and can be a deterrent to using the park</p>
Transitional Lunchboxes (Completed)			
Does the number of items of energy dense nutrient poor (EDNP, aka junk) food in lunch boxes increase between kindy and year 6?	Rural Research Capacity Building Program (HETI), NNSWLHD Health Promotion	<p>There were no significant differences between the number of items in lunchboxes of students in kindy and year 6. Lunchboxes of students in small schools had significantly less discretionary items.</p> <p>The more items packed in a lunchbox the more discretionary items were found</p>	Reassessing information and materials distributed to parent/caregivers around quantity of lunchbox items as part of Live Life Well @ School, e.g. kindergarten orientation information.
Splendour in the Grass drinking behaviour study (Completed)			
To assess the accuracy of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) during voluntary breath testing (VBT), factors influenced BAC self-estimation, and intended drinking behaviour after reviewing BAC.	To assess the accuracy of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) during voluntary breath testing (VBT), factors influenced BAC self-estimation, and intended drinking behaviour after reviewing BAC.	To assess the accuracy of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) during voluntary breath testing (VBT), factors influenced BAC self-estimation, and intended drinking behaviour after reviewing BAC.	To assess the accuracy of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) during voluntary breath testing (VBT), factors influenced BAC self-estimation, and intended drinking behaviour after reviewing BAC.

Research

Research question/ objective	Partners	Findings if available	Implications and outcomes (so what?)
Sweet Smiles (Completed)			
To evaluate the acceptability, feasibility and effect of measuring children's height and weight and providing brief action planning to the parents of children above a healthy weight.	NNSWLHD Oral Health Services, NNSLHD Health Promotion, NSW Centre for Oral Health Strategy (COHS), NSW Ministry of Health and NSW Office of Preventive Health.	Measurement and intervention were acceptable to dental therapists and parents. Interventions were feasible, adding five minutes to routine non-emergency appointments. There was no effect on sweet drinks consumption. Referrals to the Go4Fun program have increased from 0 before to 32.	Sweet Smiles provided a proof of concept that measuring children's height and weight in paediatric clinical appointments was feasible. NSW COHS has added a service item of ten minutes duration for dental therapists across NSW to conduct brief interventions.
Student Participation in canteen changes (Completed)			
How can schools create a more student centred approach to school canteens?	Centre for children and Young people (SCU)	Students hold strong views about their involvement in decisions about foods served in the school canteen.	School canteens are an important avenue for student participation in schools. Conversations with students about food choices broadens their food literacy and provide feedback to canteen managers. This can positively influence foods offered to and accepted by the school community.
Live Life Well @ School Co-design (Completed, not yet rolled out across NSW)			
Live Life Well @ School effectiveness of strategies and co(re)design	Sax Institute, Ministry of Health, Mentally Friendly	New program will be Department Education based and largely based on initiatives promoted on a new website	Live Life Well @ School will be part of a range of health initiatives that are more coordinated and will include oral health and mental health promotion
Casino Cricket Club - support for twilight cricket competition (Completed)			
To provide evidence that supports moving cricket games from day to evening during the summer months in Casino	Casino District Cricket Association Richmond Valley Council	At least a third of Saturday game days were in the high heat index values range and should have been subject to extreme caution health warning category.	Presented evidence and offered to help design evaluation of twilight competition A letter was submitted to Cricket Australia Feb 2020. Awaiting response from casino cricket about whether the proposal was submitted to and accepted by Cricket Australia.

Awards and Publications

Awards

2019 NNSWLHD Quality Awards - Keep People Healthy category - Helping U 2 Quit clinics

2019 NNSWLHD Quality Awards - Health Research and Innovation category - Sweet Smiles Project

Publications

Collins K, Zask A, Kreutzfeldt-Jensen N & Cretikos M. 2020. Feasibility and acceptability of growth monitoring and sugar sweetened drinks brief interventions in routine clinical care. Australia & New Zealand journal of Dental and Oral Health Therapy. 8, 19-22

