

Leading by example

Payal Mukherjee knows there will come a day when future generations of surgeons will have female role models in prominent leadership positions.

And as an executive member of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons NSW State Committee, and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's research lead for ear nose and throat surgery, she's working hard to make it happen.

"There is still a lot to be achieved, but we are starting to really focus on the role of women in surgery as a group and that means we have already come a long way," she said.

"The college's NSW committee currently has its first female chair and it is extremely proactive in advocacy in areas of gender equality. I'm confident that my four-year-old daughter will enjoy greater opportunities to achieve leadership positions within surgery than those who came before her."

Dr Mukherjee is also involved in the Women in Surgery Think Tank, launched by RPA's Institute of Academic Surgery to start a discussion regarding how RPA can enhance and support the experience of surgical trainees and consultants.

She was recently awarded a scholarship in advanced leadership training by Women in Leadership Australia so women in health can be better equipped with vital skills that enable them to be better leaders.

Dr Mukherjee specialises in ear surgery, lateral skull base surgery and Cochlear



implantation. One of her many achievements is a project that could revolutionise the way surgeons plan complex procedures and explain them to patients.

It uses 3D printing and augmented reality technology on smartphones to create interactive models to visualise the part of the body being operated on, and was granted \$25,000 in the District's most recent Pitch challenge.

"I'm researching the benefits of this technology in improving patient safety by examining surgical outcomes, and surveying patient comfort and satisfaction with the way they are treated," she said.

"I believe that the more the patient understands about the procedure they are about to undergo, the more engaged and compliant they will be about their care and this could really help improve their outcomes."

Dr Mukherjee is an executive on the Meniere's Research Fund, dedicated to understanding the disease that causes debilitating disruption to hearing and balance and finding new treatments.

She runs the fund with a small group of colleagues who volunteer their time to apply for grants and raise funds to support further research.

Read more about the Women in Surgery initiative on Page 4.



Message from the Chief Executive



Dr Teresa Anderson

*Sydney Local Health District
Chief Executive*

With winter finally behind us, Sydney Local Health District has been busy hosting a range of events to raise awareness of important health issues and promote the care and services we provide.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and the District marked the occasion with the launch of a new state-of-the-art BreastScreen van and the announcement that we will be opening a permanent BreastScreen site at the Campsie Centre. The Canterbury local government area has one of the lowest breast screening rates in NSW so this new centre will make an enormous difference by increasing local access to potentially lifesaving mammograms.

We are also recognising Mental Health Month in October, with a range of educational events for clinicians and members of the public, and a photo competition designed to combat isolation among those with living with mental illness and capture the essence of a happy life.

We officially named the Griffith Spragg Building at the Concord Centre for Mental Health, in honour of the late veterans' advocate and Concord Hospital employee. Dr Spragg served in Syria and Kokoda before becoming the chief psychiatric adviser for the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

The naming ceremony was attended by members of Dr Spragg's family and former governor Professor Marie Bashir, and was followed by a series of expert presentations on health issues facing our veteran community.

Message from the Chair, District Board



The Hon. Ron Phillips

*Sydney Local Health District
Board Chairman*

Sydney Local Health District has achieved commendable results in the YourSay Workplace Survey with improvements across all major indicators.

The survey gives employees an opportunity to provide confidential feedback about their experience working within the District.

This is an important measure to maintain transparency and accountability, ensuring that managers are providing safe, positive and effective working environments for the staff members reporting to them.

The District's results showed high levels of staff engagement, positive workplace culture and confidence in management.

A vast majority of staff who completed the survey said they were proud to be a part of the Sydney Local Health District,

and this pride is evident in the level of care and service provided to the community.

One reason staff are so proud to work at Sydney Local Health District is the level of expertise among its clinicians.

The District has some of the world's leading neurosurgeons and neurologists and many of them came together at the recent Neurosciences Think Tank event at RPA.

The event featured a series of fascinating presentations and provided an opportunity for clinicians to discuss how their services will change over the next decade. Initiatives like these help the District meet the challenges of the future while continuing to provide the highest standard of health care and services to its community.



Sea of pink



Wafa Zaim stressed the importance of engaging Muslim women

Sydney Local Health District's BreastScreen service will soon have a permanent presence in Campsie, thanks, in part, to a new partnership with the Lantern Club, Roselands.

The club has committed to raise \$30,000 for the District this month by holding a series of fundraising events amid a sea of pink. Even the club's lawn bowling greens have changed colour.

Earlier this month, the District celebrated the partnership and launched a new state-of-the-art BreastScreen mobile van at the club to mark the beginning of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Canterbury Hospital consumer representative Wafa Zaim spoke at the event about the importance of engaging Muslim women.

"Muslim women can be hesitant to access health services so I have been trying to break down the barriers. I have been educating my community, but also health professionals on how to make Muslim women more comfortable."

The new van includes improved air conditioning and wheelchair access, upgraded digital mammography equipment and a secure wireless communication system, allowing diagnostic images to be instantly transferred to the statewide BreastScreen service.

Mrs Zaim said the District had ensured women had access to female and Arabic speaking clinicians, when necessary.

She organises regular group visits so women can support each other before and after screening, and it was on one such visit that she had a personal scare.

"I received a call shortly after my exam to let me know something wasn't right," she said. "I had another test and, thankfully, it was a false alarm. It could have been very frightening but the staff were calming and professional," she said. "My experience was a reminder of how important these checks are – for me, my three daughters, my eight grandchildren and my whole community."

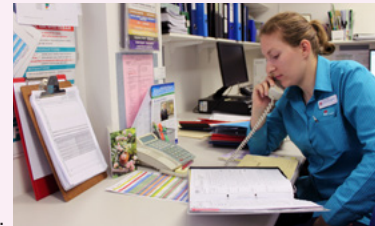
My day:

Laura Brienesse – Exercise Physiologist – Balmain Hospital

06:00 I wake up and head to the rowing club or gym for a morning training session. It's a nice way to start the day and we've got to practise what we preach.

08:00 I start the day by organising patient files and sort out the training sessions and case conferences for the day.

08:50 We have our first team meeting to go over the plan for the morning sessions and discuss any patients who need extra attention or consideration.



09:00 We run the first of three group training classes, each with about 15 patients in



them. Most of the patients are elderly and it feels really good to know we're helping them with something that will impact their health and improve their function and quality of life long after we see them.

12:50 We have our second team meeting to plan for the afternoon classes and update everyone on how the patients are doing and if we need to change any plans we've made.

01:00 We run two more training sessions for groups of patients with various diseases and chronic conditions. Some patients are being rehabilitated following a fracture so it's really important that we help them get their physical confidence back. If we don't help them overcome their fear, their health and enjoyment of life can really deteriorate.

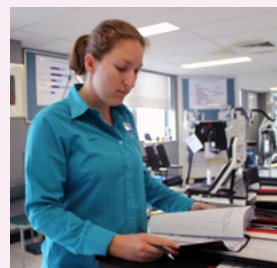


03:00

We have patients come in for strength and balance testing. This is done a few times per year for each patient so

we can see how they are progressing over time. This is the best part of my day because I get to see how much better everyone is doing since they started seeing us and I get a chance to have some one-on-one time with patients. It's really rewarding.

04:30 I get some more paperwork done before I head home.





Healthier living after cancer

Concord Hospital medical oncologist Janette Vardy is involved in several research projects and clinical trials that could fundamentally change the way patients recover from cancer.

"The Challenge study is examining the effects of exercise for patients recovering from chemotherapy for early stage colon cancer," Associate Professor Vardy said.

"If the interim results continue on their current trajectories, we could see doctors prescribing exercise regimes for people entering the recovery phase of their illness."

Concord Hospital is the lead recruiter in Australia for this international trial. So far, the results have shown that patients in the exercise group are able to do much more physical activity than those not in the exercise group, allowing them to continue improving their health.

"Weight gain is one of the symptoms of cancer treatment and it can raise significant health concerns," she said.

"We have another study that is evaluating whether an intensive exercise and dietary program can help overweight cancer survivors to lose weight and increase their fitness."

Other trials are exploring the little understood memory loss and cognitive impairment that can occur in patients following chemotherapy, and the extent to which ginkgo biloba and cognitive rehabilitation may help mitigate these symptoms.

"I am also studying the effects of attending the Sydney Survivorship Centre and the preliminary results



AI/Prof Janette Vardy is working to unlock answers to help in cancer recovery

are very positive with more than 90 per cent of participants saying the centre has helped their recovery," she said.

The Survivorship Centre was launched at Concord Hospital in 2013 to give patients access to a multidisciplinary team following a cancer diagnosis and connect them with other patients through therapeutic group activities.

Supporting women in surgery

The Women in Surgery Think Tank was launched by RPA's Institute of Academic Surgery to ask female surgeons what could be done to enhance their experience at work and to better support trainees.

"The initial meeting was a forum to initiate discussions, hear opinions and to highlight anything that could be improved," said the Institute's director Katie McBride.

"This is a really important first step and a lot of great ideas have been discussed."

So far, suggestions have included the implementation of a mentorship program for surgical trainees, including specialised training for mentors.

"There are lots of other groups looking at this issue but we wanted to consider it from an RPA perspective and focus on what we can achieve within the hospital," Ms McBride said.

"By looking at the broader issues within our own campus we can take a really proactive approach to supporting our staff.

"I think the forum has already been worthwhile so I'm looking forward to what we come up with in the next one and broadening out the discussions to include all surgical staff. We want to draw from the positive momentum that the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has generated and build on that at a local level."

The ideas and suggestions that come from the Women in Surgery Think Tank may be used to develop specialised leadership training for heads of departments and supervisors.

The next Women in Surgery forum will take place in the RPA Boardroom at 3pm on Friday, 13 November.

For more information call 9515 3206 or email IAS.admin@sswhs.nsw.gov.au.



Last chance to make your mark on RPA

Entries have been flooding in for Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's Muralogy 2015 competition, which is seeking five designs to cover the new Institute of Academic Surgery building.

"The competition has attracted some incredible talent, and some of the submissions have been fantastic," said IAS Director Katie McBride.

"We still have a few weeks to go but already I think the judging panel will have a hard time deciding on their favourite pieces."

The panel includes the vice president of the Art Gallery of NSW Board of Trustees, Mark Nelson, who is a judge at the annual Archibald Prize, and the College of Fine Art's Associate Professor Michael Esson.

The building will soon be home to RPA's Institute of Academic Surgery, established in 2014 to support surgeons undertaking research and education. It will include a state-of-the-art simulated operating theatre, a surgical skills laboratory and research offices.



Four of the murals will adorn the side of the building facing the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, while the winning entry will be given pride of place on the wall facing Missenden Road.

The winner will receive \$5000 while three runners up will receive \$1000 each. A "people's choice" prize of \$2000 will also be selected by the RPA community by voting through the Sydney Local Health District Facebook page.

Entrants must submit their original designs and application form by email at muralogy2015@gmail.com before Friday 30 October.

For more information, or to enter the competition, visit www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/RPA/muralogy2015.

Saving the planet one pump at a time



Carmel Kelly's sustainable ingenuity to be considered for award

RPA's Carmel Kelly has an idea that could save thousands of plastic bottles from landfill each year.

"Recently, we have become concerned that mothers who were having trouble breastfeeding and needed to express were using a large number of plastic bottles and teats that were thrown away after each use," Ms Kelly said.

"Each mother could use eight bottles each day for two days or more."

Ms Kelly recently introduced a trial on two postnatal wards with an expressing kit and bottle that could be cleaned and reused for three days before being thrown away. This saved up to 15 bottles from landfill for each mother having difficulty breastfeeding.

Her idea is one of many that will be considered for the new Sydney Local Health District Sustainability Award.

Other ideas include using high powered hand dryers to reduce paper towel waste and purchasing a compacting machine to convert food waste into high grade soil which could be sold or used to maintain hospital grounds.

The Sustainability Award will be presented at the Annual General Meeting next month alongside the Quality Awards and the winner's idea will be adopted as a priority for the Sustainability Committee to implement.

To submit your sustainability idea, download a submission form from the District's intranet.



Campsie Breast Cancer event



IN BRIEF

Collaborative model wins mental health award

Clinical Nurse Specialist Rebecca Reid has received an award from the Mental Health Association of NSW in the category of Consumer Involvement and Participation for the collaborative care planning project. The project introduced a model for nurses to develop recovery focussed care plans in collaboration with the consumer, using their own goals and asking them to sign the plan as part of their recovery process.

Award winning Korean resource

The District's Multicultural Health Service was recently acknowledged with a NSW Multicultural Communications Award for the development of a Korean resource on hepatitis B. Multicultural Health Worker Su Kim and the Korean Health Committee developed the resource in partnership with the local Korean community.



The brochure is a guide for newly diagnosed chronic hepatitis B patients and will be available to all health services in NSW on the Multicultural Health Communication website.

Concord ranks in top five

Concord has been listed in the top five performing hospitals in the Australian Commission on Quality and Safety in Health Care's Australian Hospital 2014 Report on the National Antimicrobial Utilisation Surveillance Program. The results reflect the outstanding collaboration to ensure appropriate antimicrobial usage.

Sexual Health nurses excel

Sexual Health Service staff Donna Tilley, Brooke Dailey, Nicky Sharp and Damien House took out the Australian Sexual Health and HIV Nurses' Association Award for best poster at the Australian Sexual Health Conference.

The winning conference poster, titled 'Outreach Chlamydia Testing: Upskilling a Multidisciplinary Workforce' details the training of Aboriginal workers, health promotion officers, social workers and a nursing student to undertake urine chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing in an outreach setting

Health care in your language

Each year Sydney Local Health District's Interpreting Service provides more than 40,000 appointments and 33,000 hours of translation to help patients communicate with clinicians.

For 43-year-old Mandarin speaker Nia Chia Yu, this service has meant she can take her three-month-old daughter, Karla, for regular check ups at Croydon Health Centre and feel confident in seeking advice.

"The interpreters have all been lovely and very helpful. Everything would be so much more difficult without them," Ms Yu said through District interpreter Doris Ho.

"There are lots of technical terms that I need to understand, so it's important that I can ask questions when I need something explained in more detail."

Ms Ho has worked as an interpreter since moving to Australia from Hong Kong 15 years ago and sees her role as more than translating language.

"We can also help clinicians understand cultural differences and sensitivities that they may not be aware of," she said. "Australia is such a multicultural country that it is really important that we make sure everyone has equal access to health care."

Many of the patients Ms Ho helps don't have families they can rely on in Australia, and when sensitive medical information is involved, it is better to have an interpreter who is not a family member.



Interpreter Doris Ho helps new mother Nia Chia Yu at Croydon Health Centre

"Often it is easier for an interpreter to give bad news honestly and accurately, but we always do so with compassion," Ms Ho said.

The Sydney Health Care Interpreter Service provides interpreting either, face to face, over the phone or by videoconference.

The District recently celebrated the important work of its interpreters with multicultural food, music and dance with former Governor Professor Marie Bashir attending to express her appreciation.

Our women among most influential

Two staff from Sydney Local Health District have been named among the top 100 women of influence in Australia.

Psychiatry registrar Robyn Shields and surgeon Sydney Ch'ing were listed in the The Australian Financial Review Westpac 100 Women of Influence Awards 2015 for contributing to changes of perception of opportunities for women in public life.

The 100 winners were selected in 10 categories, including board and management, social enterprise, business enterprise, public policy, innovation, diversity, young leader, global,

local/regional and the new list, culture. The list was chosen by a 10 member judging panel.

Dr Shields, who is also the deputy commissioner of the NSW Mental Health Commission, is dedicated to raising awareness and championing issues affecting Aboriginal people.

Dr Ch'ing, a professor of surgery at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, is committed to research and improving outcomes for patients undergoing plastic and reconstructive

surgery, head and neck surgery or cancer treatment.

The most influential in each category, as well as the most influential overall, will be announced on 15 October at the Sydney Town Hall.



Robyn Shields



Dr Sydney Ch'ing



Dr Harry Champion *Specialist, Removable Prosthodontists, Sydney Dental Hospital*

At the age of 80, Harry Champion has had a prolific career in dentistry as a senior clinician, administrator, teacher, clinical assessor and mentor.

Dr Champion, originally from Dubbo, was drawn to a profession where he could use his hands and received a scholarship to study dentistry at the University of Sydney. He completed both his dental degree and a year of National Service in the Army before the age of 21.

After owning his own practice in Woonona for 21 years, Dr Champion relocated to Sydney after some health struggles and when offered a position at the United Dental Hospital (now Sydney Dental Hospital), he reluctantly agreed to a 12 month stay.

Starting out in the Prosthetic Department, he then became Section Head, Head of Department and Deputy

Superintendent. He is still on staff 31 years later, despite attempting to retire in 2001.

Dr Champion continues to work part-time in prosthetics and enjoys his role in the Specialist Program for new graduates.

"I like working with the new graduates, who do rotations in each speciality. I like being able to mentor them, and I can get feedback too."

Dr Champion accumulated 50 years' continuous service in the Australian Dental Association, was appointed by the Minister of Health to the Dental Technicians Registered Board in 1988 where he set up an examination for overseas trained technicians and was an examiner for the Australian Dental Council in Prosthetics for 12 years.



Admired by all at Sydney Dental Hospital, he continues to impress and encourage those around him with his everlasting enthusiasm and commitment to patient care and the profession of dentistry.

Celebrating 60 years as a registered dentist this year, he has no plans to retire.

"I will work as long as my health holds and they'll have me. Work is fun, I wouldn't still be doing it if I didn't enjoy it."

EVENTS CALENDAR

Sydney Local Health District Annual General Meeting

Thursday 5 November

Meet the Board and enjoy refreshments from 4pm, AGM 5pm – 6.30pm

Auditorium, Centre for Education and Workforce Development (CEWD)

Building 301, Callan Park, Corner of Cecily Street and Balmain Road, Rozelle

Celebrating excellence in healthcare for all. RSVP by 29 October by emailing slhd.esu@sswahs.nsw.gov.au

The Pitch

Friday 6 November, 4pm

**Concord Medical Education Centre,
Concord Hospital**

See the latest round of the Pitch and the innovative ideas from across the District bid for funding.

Opera Night at Rivendell

Saturday 7 November, 6:30pm

Thomas Walker Estate, Hospital Road, Concord

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the 2015 program *From Opera to Broadway* will include ever-popular songs from Bizet's *Carmen* and *The Pearl Fishers*, Puccini's *Tosca* and *Madame Butterfly*, and *Nessun Dorma* from *Turandot*. Bring a picnic or enjoy the food on site and see Opera Australia singers perform on this magnificent stage at the water's edge of Rivendell. All funds raised support Concord Hospital's Gastroenterology Department.

Tickets \$40 adults, \$80 family (2 adults, 2 children) and \$20 Students/Pensioners.

Book at www.operanightatrivendell.com.au or phone 9767 7560.

Annual Consumer Conference

Friday 4 December, 9:30am – 3:30pm

CEWD Rozelle Campus

Building 301, Callan Park, Corner of Cecily Street and Balmain Road, Rozelle

Join in the conversation at the annual Consumer Conference. Lunch provided, free parking available on Balmain Road.

RSVP essential by Monday 23 November to

SLHD.Consumer@sswahs.nsw.gov.au or 9515 9622.