

Central Coast
Local Health District



Annual Research Report

2023-2024





Acknowledgement of Country

Central Coast Local Health District acknowledges that we are located on the lands of Australia's first people. The traditional custodians of the land covered by our District are the Darkinjung people.

We pay respect to these lands that provide for us. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Aboriginal ancestors that walked and managed these lands for many generations before us.

We acknowledge and recognise all Aboriginal people who have come from their own country and who now call this country their home. We acknowledge our Elders, both past and present, our elders are our knowledge holders, teachers and pioneers.

We also acknowledge our Aboriginal youth who are our hope and who are our future leaders.

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Contents

Foreword	2
Key Research Statistics for 2023-2024	3
Our Research Strategy and Priorities	4
Meeting our annual priorities for 2023-2024	5
Our Research Governance	6
Research Activity	7
Research Finance	9
Grant Funded Research Activity	10
Caring for our Future Research Grants	11
Clinical Trials	13
Central Coast Research Institute	14
The ALICE Program – All Inclusive Care for Older People	15
Central Coast Health and Wellbeing Living Lab	15
Nursing and Midwifery Research Service	16
Research Support and Development	17
Honorary Conjoint Scholar Program	18
Research Impact	20
Research Publications	22

Foreword

Building research capacity, collaboration and culture

It has been a very busy year for research at Central Coast Local Health District (CCLHD). The enthusiasm and commitment of our staff to improving the quality and effectiveness of the care we provide to our patients through research and innovation is leading to tangible changes in practice, driving better health and wellbeing outcomes for people in a more efficient and sustainable way.

The establishment of the Clinical Trials Network Group has been instrumental in the successful implementation of the National Clinical Trials Governance Framework, a key part of hospital accreditation. The Group has taken action to enhance the operational support needed by our growing clinical trials portfolio, improve the clinical trials service provided for patients, and identify opportunities to enable the safe provision of innovative, effective, and sometimes lifesaving treatments that would otherwise not be available.

This year we also launched the Aboriginal Health Research Group, chaired by our District Director for Aboriginal Health, Steve Ella. This aims to increase the number of priority research projects conducted with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and community, and ensure our research is culturally responsive. A major grant award from OHMR's Translational Research Grants Scheme on Addressing Food Security for Aboriginal Families, led by our Nunyara Aboriginal Health Service and Health Promotion teams, is a tangible outcome from these efforts.

The Central Coast Research Institute (CCRI), our joint venture with the University of Newcastle, was awarded \$2.9 million in new research funding with its affiliates over the past year. This has included funding to understand how to optimise the potential for research translation; assess the impact of multi-disciplinary primary care teams and how outreach services operate in domestic and family violence refuges; and assess the value of sensor-based technology in supporting older people to remain healthy at home.

The Research Office team, in addition to their core role to provide a responsive and high-quality research governance service, have also been pro-active in supporting our growing education, training and networking events. Our newly developed Central Coast Research Group has co-developed for the District a research impact framework through which to benchmark our research outputs and growth. The Honorary Conjoint Scholar program has allowed local staff to be provided with mentorship opportunities and to work collaboratively with these highly experienced and successful researchers. Capitalising on such partnerships will be pivotal in building a culture of research and innovation for our staff, and to making a difference for our local community through research translation.

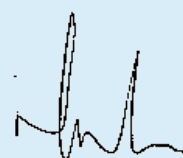
As we build on these foundations for research growth and excellence, we look forward to the continued stories of success in how our research works with our partners, our staff and our consumers, in ways that lead to demonstrable and sustainable improvements to the health and wellbeing of our Central Coast community.



Scott McLachlan
Chief Executive



Dr Brent Jenkins
BRC Chair



Professor Nick Goodwin
Director of Research

Key Research Statistics for 2023-2024

521

Total projects currently under management by CCLHD Research Office

48

New quality improvement projects

96

Open Clinical Trials

103

New research project applications received

586

Total subscribers to the CCLHD Research e-mail list

343

Number of participants attending the Health Professionals Research Education Program (HPREP) run in partnerships with Hunter New England LHD and the University of Newcastle

456

Number of participants in research education and training sessions

34

Number of research education and training sessions provided by CCLHD Research Office

\$2.1M

Total annual research income

87

New publications by CCLHD staff listed in the CARE Repository

\$2.9M

Total annual grant funding awarded to the CCRI

Our Research Strategy and Priorities

The CCLHD Research Strategic Plan 2022-2026 was finalised and published in December 2021. The Key Focus Areas for this Plan are:

1. LEADERSHIP

Growing Research Leadership and Excellence

Opportunities will be created for the next generation of researchers and research leaders to fulfil their interests and careers at CCLHD through enhancing its reputation as an organisation that supports high quality research.

2. CAPABILITIES

Building Research Literacy, Capacity and Capabilities

Investment will support and develop the knowledge and skills of CCLHD's workforce and create a learning environment that promotes engagement in research.

3. PARTNERSHIPS

Developing Dynamic Partnerships and Collaborations

Research partnerships will be prioritised as an essential path for the CCLHD to mobilise the talent, creativity and expertise necessary to drive forward high-impact research.

4. COMMUNITY

Involving Consumers and the Community in Research

Consumers and the community will be encouraged and supported to collaborate and engage as partners in research.

5. IMPACT

Driving Research that has an Impact

Our research will lead to demonstrable and sustainable improvements to people's health and wellbeing and to the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of healthcare practices and services.



Meeting our annual priorities for 2023-2024

To support our strategic priorities, the Annual Implementation Plan for 2023-2024 focused on establishing leadership in priority research areas, supporting clinical trials across CCLHD, establishing research networks, building research partnerships, enhancing collaboration with Aboriginal Health and developing research priorities in Aboriginal Health. Also, the Implementation Plan focused on developing a strategy for communication and marketing of our research and developing a way of assessing the impact of our research.

In 2023/24 we delivered:

Growing Research Leadership and Excellence

- A governance and management committee was established with the University of Newcastle to identify clinical academic positions in priority research areas
- The Clinical Trials Network Group was established, including the development of an operational plan to maintain and grow clinical trial activity and meet accreditation requirements

Building Research Literacy, Capacity and Capabilities

- A gap analysis of existing training opportunities was conducted, together with a survey to examine the needs, issues and barriers of clinicians and academics to engage in research
- A revised Researcher Pathway was developed
- A horizon-scanning capability was created to identify and disseminate grant funding opportunities
- The Central Coast Research Group was established as an ongoing forum to support research capacity building
- An affiliate scheme was developed by the CCRI

Developing Dynamic Partnerships and Collaborations

- The Aboriginal Health Research Group was established
- Strategic priorities for research on Aboriginal Health were incorporated into CCLHD's Aboriginal Health and Workforce Plan

Involving Consumers and the Community in Research

- CCLHD contributed to a co-design process with NSW Regional Health Partners to support community and consumer engagement in research. This has led to the Consumer Connect initiative to link people with lived experience to research programs, and a Doing Research Together practical guide
- The Crestani Fellowship program provided \$15k towards CCLHD's SLAM-B project, the first time it has invested in cancer research
- Value cases on our research and research impact were created to engage consumers and the community

Driving Research that has an Impact

- A research impact framework for the CCLHD was co-created with CCRI and a set of core indicators developed
- A program to support skills building in research translation was initiated with Hunter Medical Research Institute's (HMRI's) Healthcare Transformation Program

Our Research Governance

Central Coast Local Health District (CCLHD)

CCLHD Board

Board Research Committee (BRC)

Chair: a Board member

Executive Sponsor: District Director Quality, Strategy & Improvement

Members: 10 including CCLHD Chief Executive (CE), 2 Board members, District Directors, Director of Research, Research Manager and Chair of the ORC

Operational Research Committee (ORC)

Chair: District Director Nursing & Midwifery

Executive Sponsor: District Director Quality, Strategy & Improvement

Members: Up to 24 including Director of Research, Research Office staff, CCLHD staff, JMOs, community representative, student and UON representatives

Clinical Trials Network Group

Chair: Director of Research

Aboriginal Health Research Group

Chair: District Director of Aboriginal Health

The **Board Research Committee (BRC)** oversees the development of research strategy, provides research governance and mitigates research risks. The Committee monitors research activity, governance reports, research finances and human resources. It oversees the implementation of the Strategic Research Plan and reports on key research indicators to the CCLHD Board, with a continued focus on the development of the Central Coast Research Institute and meeting the Key Performance Indicators for site governance review of research projects.

The **Operational Research Committee (ORC)** provides research support and mentorship to CCLHD staff and researchers, and to operationalise the District's current Strategic Research Plan. Members of the Committee were instrumental in providing support to the Research Office and local researchers throughout the year. The ORC and BRC met on a two monthly basis with a focus on the implementation of the Strategic Research Plan 2022-2026, as well as updating the CCLHD Research Governance Framework for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

The **Clinical Trials Network Group** assists the Research Office in the coordination of clinical trials across CCLHD. The Group meets every 2 months and acts as a forum to share ideas and challenges, including the development of an operational plan that sets actions and milestones for clinical trials. The Group seeks to identify opportunities for collaboration, communicate and share success, and foster partnerships with consumers. The Group reports its key messages to the ORC and BRC.

The **Aboriginal Health Research Group** was newly established this year to identify issues and make recommendations in relation to the conduct of culturally responsive research at CCLHD. Starting in November 2023, the Group meets quarterly to provide advice and strategic guidance to ensure research that uses data from, or engages directly with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is culturally responsive; celebrate and promote the Aboriginal Health research and quality improvement (QI) being conducted with the local community. This Group has been developed as an advisory group to the Research Office and as a function of the CCLHD Aboriginal Partnerships and Advisory Council and reports to the ORC.

Research Activity

There were 103 research projects submitted to the Research Office in 2023-24 (Figure 1), up from 95 in the previous financial year, an increase of 8 per cent (Figure 2). These were submitted from many departments, with Cardiology having the most combined research and quality improvement projects reviewed by the Research Office (Figure 3). Projects submitted via our internally reviewed Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Exempt Low/Negligible Risk Research pathway made up the largest proportion, with 46 of these projects submitted in 2023-24 (up from 36 in the last report).

The number of Quality Improvement (QI) applications reviewed by the Research Office increased by 78% from 27 last year to 48 this year, making up 32% of total submissions for this period (Figure 4). The increase in QI submissions is possibly due to increased awareness of the need to register these projects with the District. The Research Office only reviews those QI projects that may have ethical concerns, may require a different pathway for review (e.g. research), or require a letter for publication purposes.

Research Applications Submitted 2023 -2024

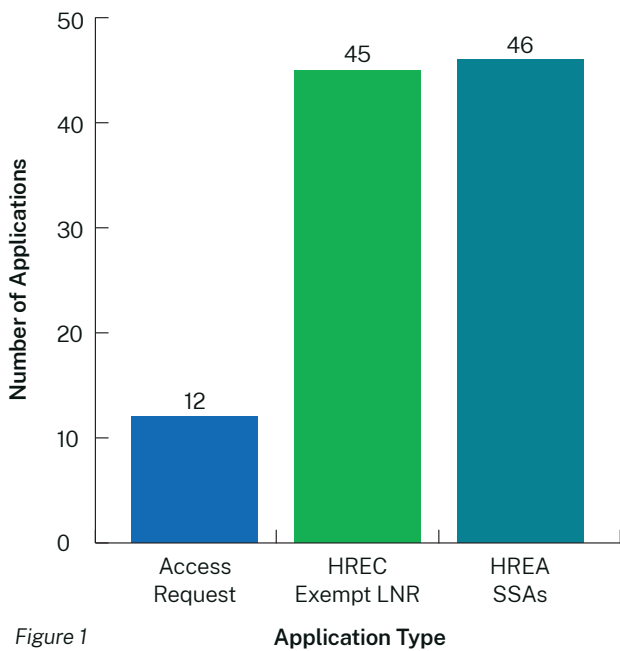


Figure 1

Access Request - Access Request applications
 HREC Exempt LNR - Human Research Ethics Committee Exempt Low/Negligible Risk Research
 HREA SSAs - Human Research Ethics Application (HREA) Site Specific Assessments (SSAs) via REGIS

Research & Quality Improvement Applications Submitted 2023 -2024

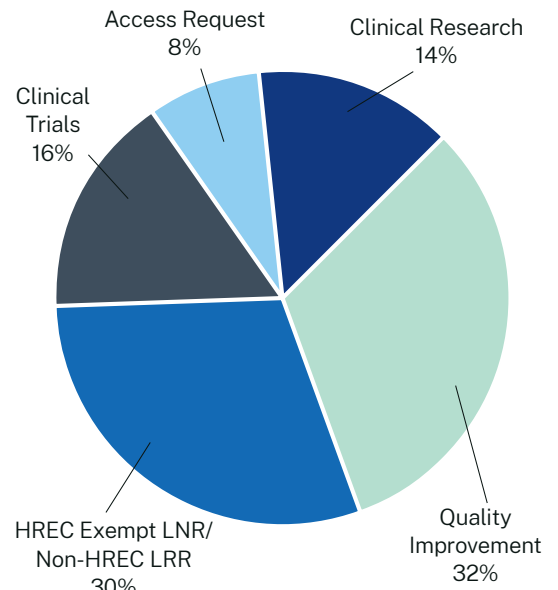


Figure 4

HREC Exempt LNR - Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Exempt Low/Negligible Risk Research
 Non-HREC LRR - Non-HREC review of Lower Risk Research (LRR) projects

Number of Research Projects 2019 -2024

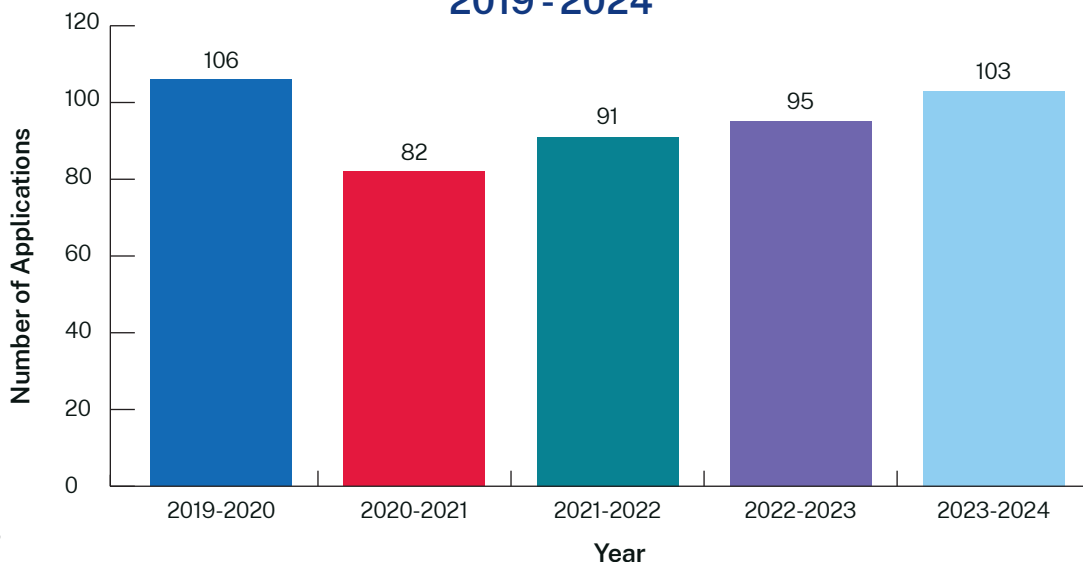


Figure 2

Distribution of Research & Quality Improvement Projects within CCLHD Top Departments / Health Services 2023 - 2024

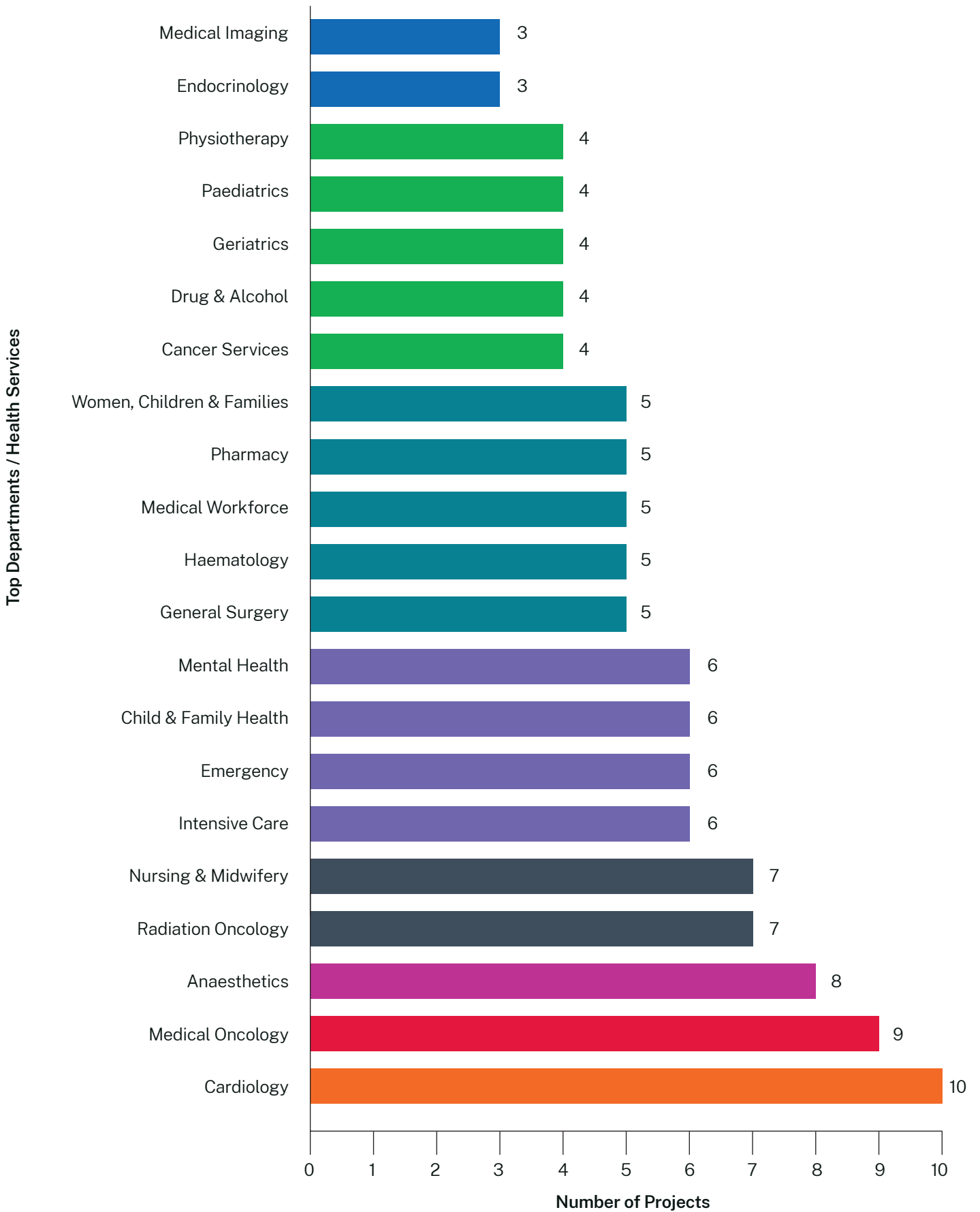


Figure 3

Research Finance

In the financial year 2023-2024:

The total income for research was \$2,084,783 (up from \$1,885,263 last reporting period). The research income included:

- \$89,346 in revenue generated by the Research Office.
- \$297,300 in General Fund Clinical Trial cost centres.
- \$1,676,892 in Restricted Financial Asset Clinical Trial cost centres.
- \$21,243 in Restricted Financial Asset Research cost centres.

Total expenditure was \$2,212,382 (up from \$2,016,071 last year). The research expenditure included:

- \$467,999 for the Research Office of 4.0 FTE.
- \$1,222 in Government Research Grants, including temporary funding for 1.6 FTE staff for 3 months of the year and \$9,838 in Non-Government Grants.
- \$1,729,517 in Clinical Trial Cost Centres to conduct commercially sponsored research, including funding for 15.3 FTE staff from 5 clinical departments (same FTE as last year).
- \$3,806 from Restricted Financial Asset accounts for the conduct of research projects where monies had been donated or grants/scholarships received specifically for the purpose of funding projects.



Grant Funded Research Activity

Central Coast Local Health District directly administers several ongoing research grant awards.

Funding awarded in 2023/24:

- **Addressing Food Security through School and Community Support**

Funder: OHMR Translational Research Grants Scheme (TRGS) _ Round 7

Chief Investigators: Nicole Kajons (Health Promotion), Steve Ella (Aboriginal Health)

Funding amount: \$489,813

The following five CCLHD-held research grants were active in 2023/24

Enabling Better Care at the End of Life for the Central Coast Community

- Funder: Medical Research Futures Fund (MRFF) Rapid Applied Research Translation (RART) Grant
- Award period: 2020-2023
- Chief Investigator: Nick Goodwin
- Funding amount: \$300,000
- Status: Closed

Thirsty? Choose Water! Behavioural Interventions and Water Stations in secondary schools

- Funder: Translational Research Grant Scheme (TRGS)
- Award period: 2017-2023
- Chief Investigator: Nicole Kajons
- Funding amount: \$975,212
- Status: Closed

Head and Neck Survivorship on the Central Coast

- Funder: Innovations in Cancer Control Grants, Cancer Institute
- Award period: 2019-2023
- Chief Investigator: Craig Kukard
- Funding amount: \$64,769
- Status: Active

Self-Administration of Bortezomib for Patients with Myeloma (SLAM-B): A Pilot Study

- Funder: NSW Regional Cancer Network Shovel-Ready Project Grant
- Award period: 2023
- Chief Investigator: Jacqueline Jagger, Michael Swab
- Funding amount: \$40,199
- Status: Active

Clinical Variation Rectal Cancer

- Funder: Innovations in Cancer Control Grants, Cancer Institute
- Award period: 2019-2023
- Chief Investigator: Melanie Cook and Matt Sproats
- Funding amount: \$75,000
- Status: Active

Caring for our Future Research Grants

Since 2021, the CCLHD's Caring for our Future Research Grants program has provided \$300,000 in seed grant funding across 22 projects to support clinician-led research projects in CCLHD priority areas on an annual basis. In 2023/24, three Caring for our Future Research Grants were awarded to:

- **Partnered Pharmacist Medication Charting in Wyong Emergency Department for Improved Medication Management**
Chief investigators: Jennifer Duncan (Pharmacy) & Aimee Petersen (Pharmacy)
Funding amount \$15,000
- **Evaluation of a Community Breastfeeding Assessment Tool**
Chief Investigators: Karen Myers (Child & Family Health) & Jennifer Mulligan (Child & Family Health, Western Sydney LHD)
Funding amount: \$13,480
- **Participatory action research to improve the death literacy of CCLHD allied health clinicians**
Chief Investigators: Lucy Leu-Marshall (Palliative Care), Jacinta Hensby (Social Work), Zoi Triandafilidis (CCRI), Jeanette Hurl (Consumer Representative), Kerrie Noonan (Research, Western NSW LHD)
Funding amount: \$11,520



Other Caring for our Future Research Grants that were ongoing in 2023/24 included:

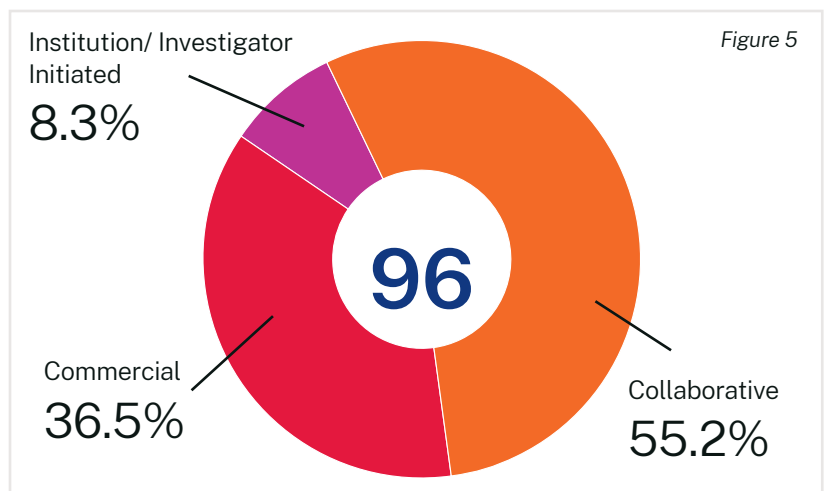
Evaluation of Clinical Procedure Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award period: 2019-2023 • Chief Investigator: Jacqueline Colgan and Kim Miles • Funding amount: \$12,000 • Status: Closed
Women's Health Project: Bringing Family Planning and Drug and Alcohol Services Together on the Central Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award period: 2020-2023 • Chief Investigator: Vicki Chase • Funding amount: \$20,000 • Status: Closed
Pets are Family Too: Investigating the Human Bond into Patient Centred Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award period: 2021-2023 • Chief Investigator: Cheryl Travers, Tia Covi • Funding amount: \$20,000 • Status: Closed
Integrating a Clinical Pharmacy review into a Diabetes Outpatient Clinic to improve Medication Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award period: 2019-2023 • Chief Investigator: Linzi Robson, Jessica Hagan • Funding amount: \$18,468 • Status: Closed
Evaluation of a Community-Based Multidisciplinary Clinic for People Living with Motor Neurone Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award period: 2021-2023 • Chief Investigator: Anna Shutz, Karen Hutchinson • Funding amount: \$19,955 • Status: Active
SLAM B: Self Administration of Chemotherapy for Patients with Myeloma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award period: 2023-2024 • Chief Investigator: Jacqueline Jagger, Michael Swab • Funding amount: \$20,000 • Status: Active
Evaluation of a New Model of Integrated Wound management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award period: 2023-2024 • Chief Investigator: Jonathan Brinton, Anne Purcell • Funding amount: \$20,000 • Status: Active
Empirical Antibiotic Use in suspected Viral Respiratory Infections: Influenza vs SARS-CoV-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award period: 2023-2024 • Chief Investigator: Sim Galimam, Nicole Cerruto • Funding amount: \$20,000 • Status: Active
Aligning Research with Practice in the CCLHD High Risk Foot and Podiatry Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award period: 2023-2024 • Chief Investigator: Claire Linton, Vivienne Chuter • Funding amount: \$20,000 • Status: Active

Clinical Trials

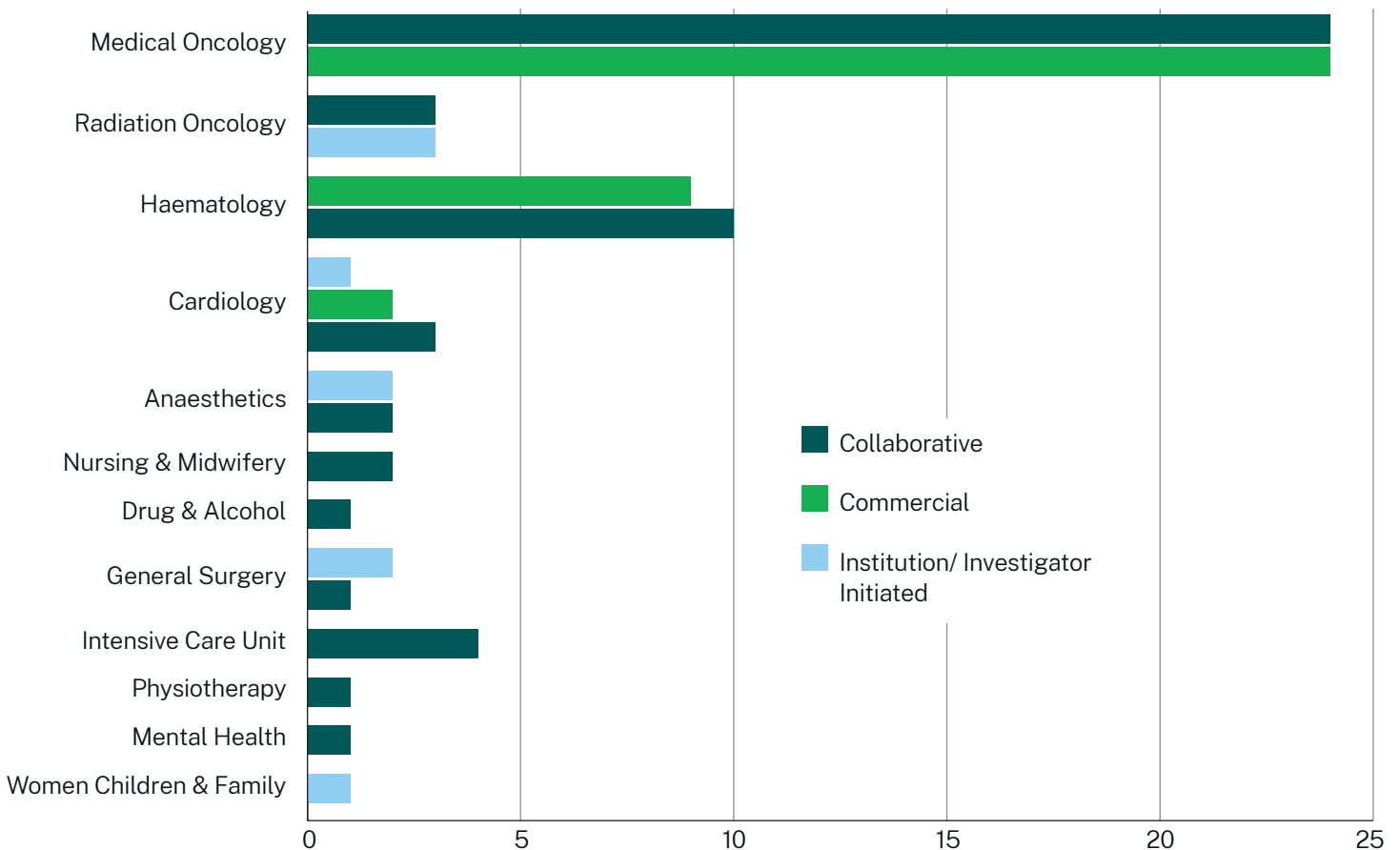
Clinical trials play an important role in patient care by providing access to the newest interventions (treatments, therapies and diagnostic tests). They also provide other benefits for participants including the opportunity to play an active role in their own health care, gain a greater understanding of their condition, and receive closer monitoring of their condition, care and treatment. Investigators benefit from involvement in clinical trials as they provide an opportunity to network with their peers and increase their knowledge about new treatment possibilities.

A CCLHD Research / Clinical Trial Monitoring Program is conducted in line with the requirements of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#), [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research 2023](#) and the CCLHD Research Governance Framework. CCLHD sponsored clinical trials are monitored one year after site authorisation and every two years until project completion to ensure that the research being undertaken conforms to approval conditions from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and in accordance with NSW Privacy legislation and the relevant policies, procedures and guidelines. There are currently 58 clinical trials monitored under this program, as at end of June 2024 (up from 49 at the same time last year).

In 2023/24, there were 14 new clinical drug trials submitted, 7 of these were commercial and 7 collaborative, up from 13 in the past reporting period. The number of clinical trials submitted for review has increased, with 17 applications for new clinical drug or device trials in this reporting period, compared to 14 last year (an increase of 21%). Altogether, there were 96 active clinical trials ongoing at CCLHD as of 30 June 2024. The majority of clinical drug or device trials are being conducted in Medical Oncology, Haematology and Cardiology.



Active Clinical Trials at CCLHD 2023-2024



Central Coast Research Institute

The Central Coast Research Institute (CCRI) is a joint venture between the CCLHD and the University of Newcastle.

During 2023-2024, CCRI and its affiliates were awarded \$2.9 million in new research funding. These included a Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) project, led by Dr Simon Deeming, to evaluate the Rapid Applied Research Translation Project (RART) funding scheme. RART was established to fast-track translation of evidence into practice and has had two funding rounds to date – round one in 2020, and round two in 2023. The project will establish a framework to assess the translation and impact generated by the funded projects, identify factors that optimise the potential for translation from this research funding scheme, optimise the potential for translation from the on-going funded projects, and improve the evidence base regarding the factors that improve the probability of translation.

CCRI also collaborated on a successful TRGS grant led by Dr Niki Kajons from CCLHD. The project will test the impact of implementing a framework for co-designing local strategies to address food security among Aboriginal families on the Central Coast and the mid North Coast of NSW. The intervention involves food relief strategies such as a school-based pantry and food hampers for families in need, strategies to improve nutrition literacy, and referrals to address the underlying causes of food insecurity. CCRI's role on the project will be to provide research methods advice.

CCRI's Healthy@Home collaboration has also been successful in being awarded a 'Grand Challenge' grant from the NSW Smart Sensing Network (NSSN). Led by Professor Paul Egglestone, the project will identify a set of meaningful measures collected from sensors that provide better understanding of older people's wellbeing at home. These insights are intended to inform the development of personalised care models and self-management interventions that may prevent adverse health outcomes and hospital admissions. Partners include University of Technology Sydney, Hospital in the Home, My Medic Watch, Intelicare Holdings Ltd, Vlepis, Hills and United for Care.

CCRI have also been awarded a contract to evaluate the Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network's Domestic and Family Violence Primary Care Outreach Program. The innovative program involves delivering multidisciplinary outreach services in domestic and family violence refuges on the Central Coast. The primary care outreach team consists of a nurse, GP and CCLHD-based speech pathologist and maternal and child health nurse. Led by Dr Zoi Triandafilidis, CCRI's role will be to conduct a feasibility and acceptability evaluation of the program to support applications for further funding to transition the pilot to an ongoing program.

The CCRI continue to support improvements in palliative and end-of-life care on the Central Coast. In 2023 a co-design process was undertaken involving key stakeholders focusing on integrated models of care that improve care experiences, outcomes and effectiveness of services delivered with and for people living with dementia at the end-of-life. This project received grant funding from HMRI's 2023 Healthcare Transformation Research Program and was named as a finalist in the Central Coast Local Health District 2024 Caring for the Coast Awards. CCRI are also collaborating on a CCLHD Caring for our Future Research Grants funded project seeking to measure and grow death literacy among allied health professionals on the Central Coast.

CCRI has also collaborated with CCLHD and the University of Newcastle on the development of a Professional Certificate in Co-ordinated Care that will be offered through the Newcastle Academy for Health Professionals. Aimed at health professionals, this course will comprise three modules and will be piloted in 2024. In late 2023, CCRI also launched its Affiliate Scheme, designed to develop a local research network and foster new collaborations.

CCRI provided support to the International Foundation for Integrated Care (IFIC) Australia to convene the 3rd Asia Pacific Conference on Integrated Care that took place in Sydney from 13-15 November 2023. With the overarching theme 'Building healthcare system sustainability and resilience', the conference was attended by 500 delegates and included 4 plenaries, 60 Oral Paper and Poster Sessions, 12 workshops, a site visit, and summer school. Professor David Perkins, Conjoint Professor of Rural Health Research at the University of Newcastle and former Director of the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, based in Orange, New South Wales was provided with IFIC's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award. Dr Karen Hutchinson, CCLHD Honorary Conjoint Scholar, was awarded best oral paper for her research on integrated Motor Neurone Disease (MND) clinics.



The ALICE Program – All Inclusive Care for Older People

The ALICE Program is a translational research initiative of the CCLHD, Hunter New England and the Central Coast Primary Health Network (HNECCPHN), Central Coast Council and the Department of Regional NSW. The ALICE model seeks to support all community-dwelling older people aged over 65 (or aged 50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community) living in the catchment area of priority Central Coast neighbourhoods.

ALICE is being co-created with residents, community groups and care providers. Over the last year, ALICE has delivered: a joint assessment of the needs of older people on the Coast; an international evidence review; research examining the maturity of the Central Coast to support population health management; a benefits case led by HMRI; and an implementation plan with a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Looking ahead, a minimum viable model for ALICE is being taken forward in its pilot community of The Entrance and Long Jetty using \$97,100 grant funding awarded by HNECCPHN. Evaluation of ALICE's co-design process is the subject of a PhD project led by Cate Dingelstad from the PHN, and further research grant funding is being sought to assess the impact of ALICE on an ongoing basis.

Central Coast Health and Wellbeing Living Lab

The Central Coast Health & Wellbeing Living Lab, launched in February 2024, is a partnership between the CCLHD, the University of Newcastle, and the Central Coast community. It brings together older people, caregivers, businesses, healthcare professionals, service providers, and researchers to design, test, and deliver smart solutions that help us live fulfilling, connected lives in our homes as we age.

The Living Lab's inception workshop brought together over 50 key stakeholders to inform its values and shape its thematic areas: Community Connection, Support at Home, and Enabling Lifelong Health. Subsequent engagement has included over 150 diverse participants to date, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of positive ageing challenges and priorities on the Central Coast.

For 2024, the Living Lab is prioritising the Community Connection theme, actively co-designing and testing solutions to enhance social connections for older residents. Looking ahead, the Living Lab aims to address its other thematic areas while continuing to strengthen the local innovation ecosystem. A monitoring and evaluation framework has been developed to assess the Living Lab's co-design processes and overall impact. This ongoing evaluation will guide future initiatives and ensure the Living Lab's effectiveness in meeting community needs.



Nursing and Midwifery Research Service

The **Nursing and Midwifery Research Service** continues to advance practice-based research to ensure patient care is founded on the best available evidence. Guided by the Nursing and Midwifery Research Operational Plan 2022-2026, the service focuses on five key priorities that align with the District's Research Strategic Plan:

- 1. Leadership:**
Strengthen Nursing and Midwifery Research Leadership within CCLHD
- 2. Capabilities:**
Build Nursing and Midwifery research literacy, capacity and capability and increase research activity
- 3. Partnerships:**
Foster key partnerships to support research integration and translation in Nursing and Midwifery
- 4. Community:**
Partner with consumers and the community in the co-design of Nursing and Midwifery research
- 5. Impact:**
Lead Nursing and Midwifery research that has an impact

Supported by the **Nursing and Midwifery Research Advisory Group**, the service has made substantial progress in fostering a culture of research and innovation across the CCLHD. Through strategic initiatives and collaborations, the service continues to enhance the research capacity and impact of nurses and midwives across the District.

Funded by the 2023-2024 NSW Nursing and Midwifery Strategy Reserve, the **Nursing and Midwifery Research Internship Program** was developed, aimed at building research skills among nurses and midwives. A Project Officer led the scoping and design phase, resulting in a proposed program structured into three modules, each focusing on a critical stage of the research process. The modules include interactive workshops, learning objectives, prescribed readings, self-directed learning, and mentorship from clinical and academic experts. A proposal for additional funding has been submitted to support the pilot program's implementation in 2025.

A searchable Excel format list of nursing and midwifery research projects is now available on the Nursing and Midwifery Directorate intranet. This updated list includes nine new research projects and eight QI projects that received governance authorisation in 2023-2024.

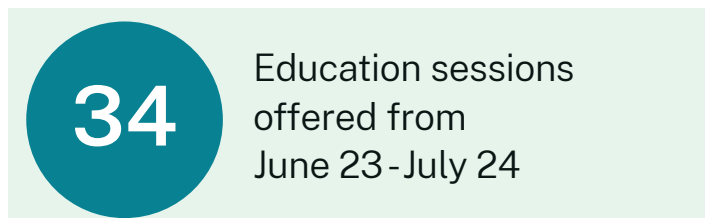
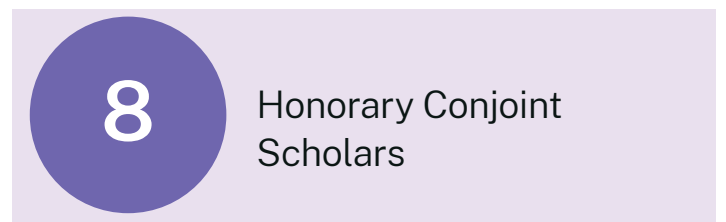


Research Support and Development

The **Research Office** managed 521 active projects in 2023-24, providing support to all staff who bring queries about the best pathway for submission and review of their project (for ethics and governance purposes), as well as providing education sessions on various topics and further support in the form of pre-submission meetings. These meetings are conducted between a Research Governance Officer and staff member (or external collaborator) who is preparing either an ethics application or site-specific assessment (SSA) for governance review. These meetings are brief but are streamlining our review process by increasing the quality of the applications and reducing the number of follow-up emails or phone calls required during the review process.

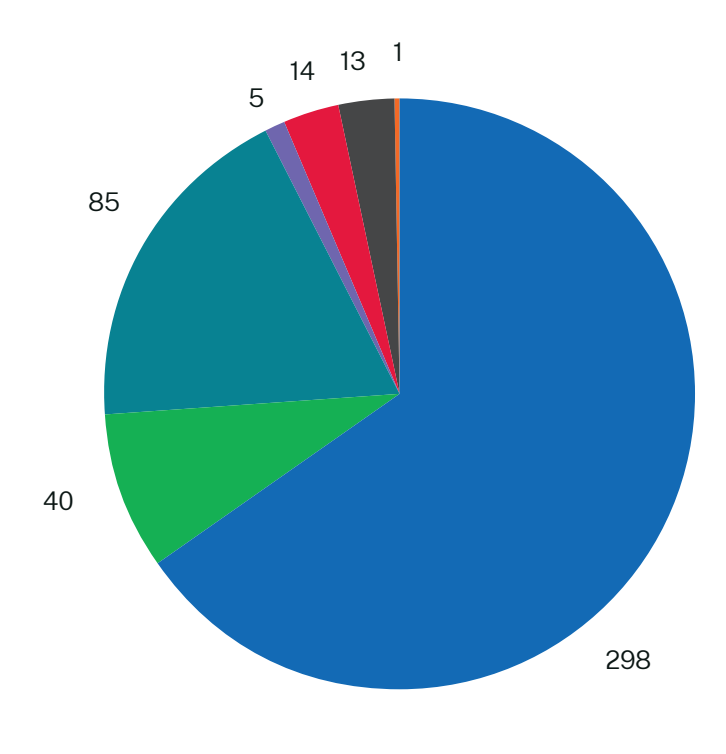
The Research Office provided 34 education and training sessions directly for staff during the year and supported the provision of the quarterly Health Professionals Research Education Program (HPREP) organised in partnership with Hunter New England LHD and hosted by Research Advantage at the University of Newcastle. Access to other research support networks included to the Rural Research Collaborative Learning Network (RR-CLaN) coordinated by Northern NSW LHD, and the various research networks and roadshows supported by NSW Regional Health Partners, including the NSW Regional Cancer Research Network.

A new **Central Coast Research Group** has been established to assist local researchers and those staff & students interested in research at CCLHD to network and collaborate, and to raise capacity for and engagement in research activities. This Group commenced in September 2023 with 'Lunch & Launch' events at Gosford and Wyong Hospitals as networking opportunities for those interested in research and to develop the Terms of Reference for the Group. It held 5 sessions during the year, with 85 total attendees.



% of respondents valuing sessions

Session Type	Percentage
Research Support:	
Navigating Ethics & Governance	75%
Introduction to REDCap	90%



- Research Support - Navigating Ethics & Governance
- Introduction to REDCap
- Improve your Quality Improvement
- Kick Start Your Research
- Presentations to Department Meetings
- Lunch and Launch
- CCRG sessions

Honorary Conjoint Scholar Program

In 2023-24, the number of CCLHD Honorary Conjoint Scholars (university academics) increased from 5 to 8 individuals, all of whom are undertaking research locally and who have made themselves available to provide mentoring and collaboration opportunities with local staff.



Professor Rhonda Wilson

Professor Rhonda Wilson is an internationally recognised mental health nursing scientist with a research focus on digital health interventions. She is Professor of Mental Health Nursing at RMIT University Australia and RMIT, where she leads the mental health nursing discipline and an innovative digital mental health nursing research virtual laboratory. As a Wiradjuri (First Nation) descendent, and member of CATSINaM (Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives) she is a vigorous advocate and activist for the promotion of cultural safety and decolonisation in our education and health institutions. She has published extensively in international journals, books and conferences, leading national and international mental health mixed methods research programs, including using methods suited to priority populations, and First Nations peoples. She is the current President of the peak body, Australian College of Mental Health Nurses.



Dr Zoi Triandafilidis

Dr Zoi Triandafilidis is a mixed-methods health researcher and Research Fellow at the Central Coast Research Institute. In 2018, Zoi completed her PhD which explored how young women smokers and ex-smokers construct and experience cigarette smoking. Upon completion of her PhD, Zoi began work with colleagues at the Black Dog Institute, where she contributed to The HIVE – an arts-based knowledge translation initiative. She spent several years working for Carers NSW, and in the mental health and suicide prevention sectors, researching family and friend carers, exploring family day care educators' experiences of supporting children's mental health and wellbeing, and the experiences of carers of people with depressive or anxiety symptomology. In 2021 she started work on the Central Coast, managing the MRFF Palliative Care Project, empowering clinicians to grow their research knowledge and develop clinical research skills, and support improvements in palliative care and end-of-life care.

Dr Sarah Casey

Dr Sarah Casey is an academic in the Discipline of Podiatry at Western Sydney University and an Honorary Conjoint Scholar with CCLHD. Originally from the UK, Sarah worked in the National Health Service for 12 years before migrating to Australia in 2009. Her clinical experience spans most areas of podiatry, with her clinical interests including high risk foot and wound management and foot surgery. Sarah worked as a podiatry lecturer at the University of Newcastle for 12 years, and in that time held the role of Program Convenor; in 2022 she left to combine her clinical and research interests, working for CCLHD as a podiatrist whilst pursuing research at Western Sydney University. Sarah was awarded a PhD in 2020 for her thesis “Vascular assessment of the lower extremity”. Her research interests include vascular and neurological assessment, wound care, diabetes and the high-risk foot. She is currently engaged in two projects with CCLHD, investigating the ability of vascular assessments to predict outcomes in people with foot ulceration, as well as a multi-centre study evaluating delivery of High-Risk Foot Services.



Professor Brett Mitchell AM

Professor Brett Mitchell is an internationally recognised researcher in infection prevention and control. As an academic and researcher. In 2023-2024, he was awarded an Order of Australia for services to nursing, and a COVID-19 honour roll for services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prof. Mitchell’s research at Gosford Hospital has included the CLEAning and Enhanced disiNfection (CLEEN) study -A randomised controlled trial investigating the effect of improving the cleaning and disinfection of shared medical equipment on healthcare-associated infections, and Hospital Acquired Pneumonia PrEveNtion (The HAPPEN study): A multi-centre randomised control trial exploring the effectiveness of improving the frequency and quality of oral care in reducing the incidence of pneumonia.

Associate Professor Yeun-Sim Sarah Jeong

Adjunct Associate Professor Dr Yeun-Sim Sarah Jeong is a Registered Nurse and a Gerontological Nurse Specialist. She is Adjunct Associate Professor, University of Sydney and currently holds a position in the Centre for Population Health (CPH), NSW Health, and works closely with Local Health Districts (LHDs) to manage and support the local delivery of agreed policies, programs and health services across the State. In 2023/24, A/Prof. Jeong’s research at CCLHD has included: OPAL-D: an optimal model of care for people with dementia and their carers, and co-designing an integrated model of palliative and dementia care.

Dr Sean Sadler

Dr Sean Sadler is a Lecturer in the Discipline of Podiatry at Western Sydney University, Clinical Educator at the University of Newcastle, Australia, Podiatrist at Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Health Services on Darkinjung Country and the Buridja Outreach Clinic on Wiradjuri Country, and a Podiatry Accreditation Assessor for the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency. Dr Sadler’s current research portfolio includes projects on First Nations foot health, culturally safe podiatry care, cultural capability training, medical technology, podiatric surgery, screening and diagnosis of peripheral arterial disease, and recreational runners.

Dr Karen Hutchinson

Dr Karen Hutchinson is a Research Fellow with the Centre for Healthcare Research and Implementation Science, Australian Institute of Health Innovation at Macquarie University. She was awarded her PhD (University of Sydney) in 2018 which explored family experiences living with younger onset dementia. Her clinical and research interests focus on lived experiences, implementation science and practice and integrated models of health care specific to individuals and families living with chronic and complex neurological conditions. In 2023/24, Dr Hutchinson’s research at CCLHD has focused on an evaluation of a multidisciplinary MND clinic on the Central Coast.

Associate Professor Allison Cummins

In 2021, Allison Cummins was appointed Associate Professor of Midwifery at the University of Newcastle where she has built a body of research around midwifery models of care and graduate transitions. She has led research internationally, including a project focused on the experiences of women during the COVID-19 pandemic and another on model of midwifery care for women with anxiety and depression. In 2023-24, A/Prof Cummins research at CCLHD has included: the experiences of midwifery students who are placed within midwifery continuity of care services, and a national study on mapping midwifery continuity of care models.

Research Impact

Over the past year, a Research Impact Framework for CCLHD was created to examine and benchmark our District's research performance in comparison to previous years, as well as with other Local Health District's in NSW and other similar institutions internationally. This included a review of our research activity that demonstrated that in 2023/24 we supported 521 total research projects, including 103 research applications, a 7% annual increase. Some 96 clinical trials were open during the year, with a slight increase in the number of new drug and device trials.

Academic Impact

In terms of scholarly output, a dashboard of metrics was created to look at our research impact over a five-year period. The results of the 2019-24 period (see Table below) demonstrate that our published research outputs were highly cited. Our field weighted citation score of 1.08 indicates an 8% favorability over the period to the average number of citations received by similar publications from the same research field. The H5-index is a measure used to indicate the impact and productivity of researchers based on how often publications are cited. The score of 21 over the 2019-24 is well above average since a score of 20 and above is generally accepted as the benchmark of good performance. Early indications from the first half of 2024 suggest a continued strong showing for the District's research outputs into next year.

Research Output Metrics, 2019-2024

Metric	2019-2024	2023	2024 (Jan-Jun)
Number of papers published	457	84	64
Number of papers in Category 1 journals	213	44	33
Number of citations (citation count)	3809	147	37
Average citation count (per publication)	8.1	1.8	0.6
Field weighted citation index	1.08	0.75	1.52
H5-index	21	-	-
Number of papers in top 1% (most cited papers)	7	0	2
Number of papers in top 10% (most cited papers)	44	44	33

Impact on Health and Wellbeing Services

One of the most important aspects of our Research Strategic Plan 2022-26 is to drive research that translates into policy and practice to support new approaches to care and/or to demonstrate how it provided a positive impact on the care experiences and outcomes of people living on the Central Coast, to our staff, and to the effectiveness of the care we provide. The following value cases from selected research studies concluding in 2023/24 demonstrate the impact that can be made.

SLAM-B Project: Self-Administration of Bortezomib for Patients with Myeloma: A Pilot Study

The SLAM-B study, led by Jacqui Jagger (Haematology Nurse Practitioner), explored the feasibility of self-administering subcutaneous Bortezomib chemotherapy for multiple myeloma patients at home. Data collection was completed by June 2024, with 23 patients participating in this prospective mixed-methods study. Key findings demonstrated that self-administration significantly enhances quality of life for patients by saving time and reducing the need for frequent hospital visits. The self-administration model required 30 minutes of the patient's time per week

compared to 1-3 hours in the Cancer Day Unit. Patients and families reported reduced treatment burden, enabling more time for meaningful activities and rest. Cost analysis revealed that home self-administration is less expensive than administration in a clinical setting. The model is safe, feasible and potentially adaptable for other drugs and tumour types.

CADEU Study: Investigating the impact of the Continuity Aligned Dedicated Education Unit (CADEU) model on nursing student learning experiences

The CADEU Study, led by Dr Gary Crowfoot (University of Newcastle) and Mary Kelly (CCLHD), addresses the challenges faced by nursing graduates in transitioning from student to registered nurse, a period often marked by feelings of unpreparedness and difficulty adapting to the realities of healthcare and their roles. In 2023, the innovative 'continuity-aligned' DEU (CADEU) model was piloted on K9, involving students working closely with a small team of preceptors in a supportive, continuity-focused educational environment. This model ensured consistent preceptorship and facilitation throughout the students' professional experience placements. Following the pilot's success, Gosford Hospital partnered with the University of Newcastle in 2024, enrolling 35 students in the CADEU study on K9. The study is evaluating the impact of this continuity-aligned DEU on the professional learning experiences, knowledge, skills, and workforce preparedness of third-year undergraduate nursing students. Interim findings show a statistically significant improvement in 22 out of 25 evaluated areas related to student experience and workforce readiness between the first and second timepoints.

The Dino Op Program: An integrated approach to reducing anxiety and improving perioperative outcomes in children.

A distressed or anxious child can cause significant operating theatre delays. The novel Dino Op program familiarises children with the process of having an operation in a fun and child-friendly way. Children read the Dino Op book before their operation, staff caring for the child wear a name and role sticker that matches their character in the book and a scavenger hunt activity distracts children on their way to theatre. The Dino Op program has resulted in reduced perioperative anxiety and distress, reduced the time taken to manage anxiety and distress and created cost savings by reducing theatre delays. There was also a reduction in the use of pre-meds and post op analgesia. The team is looking to embed the program into standard practice and other Districts have expressed interest in adopting the program. The Dino Op program was led by Kate McGill, Justine Roberts and Shuyan Lai (Operating Theatres at Gosford Hospital) supported by Penny Owens (Women, Children & Families) and Dr Jennie King (Nursing and Midwifery Directorate). The initiative was a Finalist in the Research, Innovation and Sustainability Award category at the Caring for the Coast Awards 2023.

Enabling Better Palliative and End of Life Care for the Central Coast Community

This project aimed to support the development of a long-term strategy for the implementation of integrated palliative and end of life care services to the Central Coast community. The first phase of the project comprised a series of five stakeholder workshops that examined existing service issues, gaps and key priorities for research projects to be taken forward in the second phase. From these workshops, three clinically led research projects were identified and delivered between July 2021 and September 2022 including:

- Improving the End-of-Life Care Journey for People with Dementia and their Carers
- Improving the Experience of Central Coast Residents and Carers who Access Emergency Care Towards the End of Life
- Models of Care to Support People with Dementia at the End of Life – Rapid Review

Clinician stakeholders involved in the research program reported increased research capacity, culture and research activity following the project. Findings from the study directly supported a successful bid for enhancement funds to employ a dementia care coordinator position, and the research supported the design of the new Palliative Care Unit at Wyong Hospital. The research has also stimulated further work with consumers to support participatory co-design of new models of care for people living with advanced dementia, and a study focused on death literacy. The research program from a wide multi-disciplinary team led by Professor Nick Goodwin and managed by Dr Zoi Triandafilidis from CCRI, was a Finalist in the Research, Innovation and Sustainability Award category at the Caring for the Coast Awards 2023.

Research Publications

CCLHD publications added to CARE and published between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024

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- Brooks, D., Smiles, J. P., Murphy, A. P., Cowan, T., Soeyland, T., Hullick, C., & Arendts, G. (2024). Assessment and management of older patients with abdominal pain in the emergency department. *Emergency Medicine Australasia*, 36(1), 149-158. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1742-6723.14361>
- Brown, D., Buckley, T., Aitken, R., & Edwards, H. (2023). Nursing Management: Coronary artery disease and acute coronary syndrome. In Brown, D., Buckley, T., Aitken, R., & Edwards, H. (Eds.). *Lewis's Medical-Surgical Nursing 6th Australia and New Zealand Edition: Assessment and Management of Clinical Problems* (pp. 842-875). Elsevier Health Sciences.
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