

Central Coast Local Health District



Caring for the Coast Awards

Recognising our people for their
outstanding contribution

2026

With thanks to our Gold Sponsors



Sponsored by



A message from our Acting Chief Executive Jude Constable

Welcome to the Caring for the Coast Awards

Every achievement we celebrate tonight began with a simple goal: finding a better way to care for our community.

Our finalists have challenged the status quo, embraced and promoted new ways of working and improved and enriched the care and support we provide. Tonight, we celebrate the individuals, teams and volunteers who, through their dedication, innovation and compassion, are shaping the way we deliver health care on the Central Coast.

What makes these achievements so remarkable is that they are not only about what has been accomplished, but also about how it has been achieved. Through collaboration, kindness, respect and a commitment to excellence, our finalists exemplify the values that define Central Coast Local Health District at its best.



To all our finalists and nominees, thank you. We are proud to celebrate your achievements.

I would also like to acknowledge our sponsors, thank you. Your support plays a vital role in ensuring these inspiring stories are shared and celebrated.

Thank you to our sponsors

GOLD SPONSOR



Gosford Health Hub is a purpose-built specialist medical facility bringing together healthcare providers under one roof at 60–64 Showground Road, directly adjacent to Gosford Hospital and opposite Gosford train station. Spanning five floors and 6,745sqm, the Hub provides space for a range of healthcare and allied services, with confirmed tenants including a General Practice, PRP Diagnostic Imaging, Icon Cancer Centre, T-Spoon Cafe and a childcare operator. The Hub supports on-site parking across three basement levels for patients and practitioners.

Located on the Central Coast, in a region set to grow to almost 400,000 residents by 2031, Gosford Health Hub is designed to bring specialist care closer to where patients need it most.

With flexible tenancy options and premium, hospital-grade fit-outs, Gosford Health Hub gives healthcare professionals the infrastructure to collaborate, grow and deliver better outcomes for the community.

www.healthhubs.com.au

GOLD SPONSOR



Telstra is Australia's leading telecommunications company, helping organisations connect, innovate and thrive in an increasingly digital world.

We are proud to partner with Central Coast Local Health District to deliver secure, reliable and innovative technology solutions that support clinicians, patients and communities.

From advanced networks and mobility solutions to cybersecurity, cloud and collaboration services, Telstra helps enable better patient outcomes and more connected care.

Our team works closely with healthcare organisations to strengthen resilience, support critical services and accelerate digital transformation initiatives.

With a long-standing commitment to the health sector, Telstra is honoured to support and celebrate the outstanding achievements of healthcare professionals whose dedication, compassion and innovation make a meaningful difference to the lives of people across our communities every day.

www.telstra.com.au

GOLD SPONSOR



The University of Newcastle has built a strong reputation as a world leading institution, creating impact locally, across Australia and globally. Ranked in the top 1 per cent of universities worldwide and top 30 for Impact, the University enrolls more than 39,000 students from diverse backgrounds, with a focus on equity and developing socially minded leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators.

For over 30 years, the Central Coast campus has delivered world class education and research. In 2026, the University expanded with a new site on Mann Street, Gosford (Central Coast Campus–Gosford Central), improving access to higher education.

Alongside the Central Coast Campus–Ourimbah and Gosford Hospital and the Central Coast Research and Innovation Centre (CCRI), the Gosford location strengthens the University's commitment to local education and economic growth, ensuring more people can live and study on the Central Coast.

www.newcastle.edu.au

SILVER SPONSORS



Collaborative Construction Solutions is proud to support Central Coast Local Health District in creating spaces that enhance the delivery of healthcare across the region. Based on the Central Coast, we provide practical solutions, value strong positive relationships with our clients, and we're committed to excellence in every project we deliver.

We find ways to give back to our community and one another, and we are delighted to support the Caring for the Coast Awards and recognise the remarkable people caring for our Central Coast community.

www.collaborative.com.au



LeasePLUS is proud to partner with Central Coast Local Health District, helping employees enjoy a better way to drive and pay for their vehicle expenses with real savings through novated leasing and salary packaging. For almost 25 years, we have worked with health organisations across NSW Health to make everyday benefits more accessible to those who keep our communities running. We are honoured to recognise the dedication of Central Coast Local Health District staff and remain committed to supporting healthcare workers' wellbeing across the district.

www.leaseplus.com.au

Our finalists

Excellence in Improving Equity in Healthcare Award

Recognising exceptional healthcare, that is responsive to the needs of our local Aboriginal community, people from multicultural backgrounds or other diverse needs.



An Aboriginal pharmacy workforce pathway for culturally safe care

The pathway was designed to increase Aboriginal participation in the pharmacy profession and improve equity in care across Central Coast communities. The pathway supports Aboriginal school students to progress from a school-based traineeship into an apprenticeship, with clear, supported transitions to university admission and long-term employment within the health system.

Developed in partnership with education providers and Aboriginal stakeholders, the initiative addresses long-standing barriers including limited access, fragmented training pathways and lack of continuity between education and employment. By engaging students early and providing paid employment, mentoring and tailored cultural and academic support, the program creates a deliberate, sustainable workforce pipeline.



Wyong Aboriginal-led Safe Haven

The Aboriginal-led Safe Haven is a community co-designed suicide prevention service based at Wyong Hospital. It offers a culturally safe alternative to the emergency department and a trusted, welcoming entry point for any community member experiencing suicidal distress.

Led by Aboriginal staff, the service integrates both lived experience of mental health challenges and lived experience as Aboriginal people — creating culturally meaningful, relational care. Peer workers bring diverse lived experience and offer connection, trust and hope.

The voluntary, no-barrier model removes structural barriers to care, supporting equitable access, early intervention and continuity of care.



Improving patient experience for people with disability

Evidence shows that people with disability are more likely to experience poorer mental health, chronic illness, earlier onset of complex conditions and significant barriers accessing equitable healthcare.

The Disability Services team provides a highly specialised and expert consultation service to both staff and community through two dedicated roles to help people with disability receive coordinated, respectful and inclusive support.

The Intellectual Disability Health Service delivers comprehensive care planning, assessment, education and management for consumers with intellectual disability while the Disability Pathway Navigator supports patients, carers and staff in navigating the NDIS, engaging with community disability providers and care coordination. Working together, these services are improving health outcomes for people with disability on the Central Coast.

Our finalists

Volunteer of the Year

Recognising a volunteer who provides excellent support for staff, patients, carers and families.



Margaret McIntosh

Margaret is a familiar and welcoming presence in her meet and greet role, clocking up lots of steps as she greets visitors and assists them with wayfinding at Gosford Hospital.

She also volunteers in an inpatient unit where she provides social support and companionship to patients. She takes the time to sit and talk with patients, listen to their stories and engage them in card games like Uno.

Margaret actively encourages connection among the volunteer team – she shares her knowledge, trains new volunteers and has initiated informal catchups after shifts, giving volunteers an opportunity to come together, share, laugh and support each other.



Bob Blair

As a meet and greet volunteer at Gosford Hospital, Bob offers a warm welcome to patients, visitors and staff alike. He arrives at every shift with a friendly smile, always ready to help, and patiently guides people to their destinations.

Bob has trained and supported many new volunteers over the years, empowering them to feel confident and part of the team, while quietly setting the standard for what great volunteering looks like.

Bob has contributed to improving patient experience, proposing that long waits for wheelchair escorts could be reduced with volunteer support, leading to the establishment of our highly valued volunteer wheelchair escort service. He also shared his expertise in the development of the hospital's wayfinding signage.



Margaret Harland

Margaret takes great pride in wearing her teal volunteer vest. She volunteers at Lake Haven renal unit and as a meet and greet volunteer at Gosford Hospital however she also supports many other teams and units over three volunteer shifts each week.

Margaret brings warmth, kindness and compassion to every interaction. She reassures those running late, personally escorts people to appointments and ensures patients needing a wheelchair have her phone number to arrange their return. If a patient or visitor is upset, she will offer company, a listening ear or a cup of tea.

Margaret has embraced our gentle hand massage program, giving an additional hour of her time each week to bring comfort, relaxation and human connection to patients through hand massage.

Our finalists

Innovation and Sustainability Award

Recognising innovations in models of care, systems or services, or achievements to reduce our environmental footprint or improve our financial efficiency, whilst continuing to deliver high quality healthcare and patient experience.



Sustain ED

Sustain ED is a Wyong Hospital Emergency Department (ED) initiative which seeks to reduce waste, improve value-based care and embed environmental sustainability into everyday emergency medicine practice.

Multiple projects have been successfully implemented as part of Sustain ED. Working with NSW Health Pathology, Wyong ED was the pilot site for 'Right Test, Right Time' to reduce unnecessary pathology testing. This flagship project delivered measurable financial and environmental benefits and informed the statewide rollout.

Other innovations include replacing non-recyclable kidney dishes with a tackle box and a compostable alternative, introducing reusable tourniquets and replacing environmentally harmful nitrous oxide with methoxyflurane.



Pharmacy dashboard and data cube project

Prior to this project, accessing patient-level data about medicine prescribing and use was difficult and time consuming, limiting efforts to implement systemwide improvements in medication safety, efficiency and sustainability.

The project addressed this gap by integrating data from across the system into a large, single data set (the cube) feeding automated, visual dashboards. Clinicians can now answer key questions on medication use, filter and explore data, track workload and identify high-risk medicines in near real time.

The project has supported multiple clinical audits, reduced manual reporting burden and unlocked over \$65,000 in savings. It demonstrates that innovation, data-driven analytics and data visualisation can support safer care and more sustainable use of healthcare resources.



Continuity aligned dedicated education unit (CADEU)

The CADEU program offers a novel clinical education model for final-year University of Newcastle nursing students. Students spend all their third-year clinical placements in one dedicated unit and are supported by academic and clinical educators, as well as the unit's team of registered nurses.

The CADEU model cultivates a supportive and dynamic learning environment, leading to a high-quality educational experience for students. It also benefits units and staff by fostering leadership, strengthening ward culture, enhancing patient safety and building capability within the future nursing workforce.

After a successful pilot in 2024, the program was implemented in two units at Gosford Hospital in 2025. In 2026, a third unit at Wyong Hospital also implemented CADEU.

Our finalists

Keeping People Healthy Award

Recognising work with the community to provide community-based health services, raise awareness of healthy choices, prevent ill health and improve the overall health and wellbeing of the community.



Wyong ED afterhours medical imaging referral process

In 2025, more than 50 per cent of patients who received an out-of-hours ultrasound request from Wyong Hospital Emergency Department (ED) presented to the Medical Imaging (MI) department the following day without an appointment. This caused frustration among patients and clinicians, workflow disruptions, longer wait times and strained imaging resources.

With more than 90 emergency doctors rotating through the emergency department, with different understandings of how to request and coordinate ultrasounds, the project established a clear pathway for ultrasound requests and standardised communications between ED and MI staff.

The project improved patient flow, reduced delays and enhanced both the patient and staff experience through a more reliable, transparent and patient-centred ultrasound pathway.



PARTY (Prevent alcohol and risk-related trauma in youth) program

The PARTY program is an interactive education program that helps young people understand the real-life consequences of risk-taking behaviours.

The program uses realistic simulations and firsthand stories to take high school students through the journey of a major trauma patient, from emergency treatment to rehabilitation. Participants hear from emergency clinicians, trauma specialists and a local injury survivor, gaining insight into how a single decision can have lifelong consequences.

The program aims to reduce preventable injuries by encouraging safer choices around alcohol, drugs and other high-risk behaviours. Feedback from students and schools has been extremely positive and there is growing demand from schools to participate in the program.



PICC your battles

PICC your battles is a patient safety improvement project aimed at reducing complications caused by delivering medications through standard intravenous cannulas.

The project has introduced a 'PICC' first approach and patients needing vascular infusions are assessed for a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) as soon as possible. Patient data has shown that those who receive a PICC experience far fewer complications than those treated with standard cannulas.

By reducing pain, vein damage, treatment delays and hospital-acquired complications, the project has improved patient comfort and safety while supporting shorter hospital stays and more efficient use of healthcare resources.

Our finalists

Maree Gleeson Award for Excellence in Research

Recognising outstanding achievement in research, positively improving patient experience and outcomes, our health decisions, policies and practices.



Transforming acute dizziness care in the emergency department

This research program aimed to improve how patients with acute dizziness are assessed and treated in the emergency department. The team identified that many patients were undergoing unnecessary imaging, while important bedside assessments were not being used consistently.

They developed the Emergency VESTibular Algorithm (EVESTA), a practical clinical pathway that helps clinicians make more accurate diagnoses and provide appropriate treatment sooner. The program has improved the use of evidence-based assessment and treatment, reduced unnecessary imaging and medication use and enhanced patient care.

By improving diagnostic accuracy while reducing costs, delays and environmental impact, the project provides a sustainable and scalable model for delivering safer, higher-value emergency care.



A comparison of two preparations of lignocaine for airway topicalisation

This research project focused on improving the safety and accessibility of awake intubation, a critical technique used when managing difficult airways.

The study compared two readily available forms of lignocaine to determine whether they could provide effective airway numbing without the need for specialised equipment or medications.

The results showed both approaches were safe, well tolerated by participants and produced medication levels far below toxicity thresholds.

This approach supports broader access to optimal awake intubation practices in non-tertiary hospitals, retrieval medicine and remote environments where specialised equipment and medications are limited.



An exploratory service evaluation of the Specialist Wound Centre

This project examined the impact of the Specialist Wound Centre (SWC), a nurse practitioner-led service designed to improve care for people with complex wounds.

The SWC provides a single access point for assessment, prescribing, debridement, referral coordination and care planning for patients whose wounds were previously managed across fragmented services.

The exploratory mixed-methods evaluation found the service delivers high-quality, efficient care at scale, with high diagnostic accuracy and strong patient satisfaction.

The project demonstrates excellence in applied health services research by generating rigorous, real-world evidence that is immediately actionable for service planning, workforce design and policy.

Our finalists

Patient Safety and Experience Award

Recognising a commitment to quality improvement to safe, patient-centred care that leads to better health outcomes or an improved experience in acute care, community or other settings.



Group-based patient deterioration and basic life support simulation pilot

This innovative education program was designed to strengthen nurses' ability to recognise and respond to deteriorating patients and medical emergencies.

The program used realistic team-based simulations that mirror everyday clinical situations, helping staff practise early recognition, escalation and emergency response skills in a safe learning environment.

More than 90 per cent of the medical nursing workforce participated, with the majority reporting significant improvements in their confidence in managing patient deterioration and cardiac arrest scenarios.

The initiative has fostered stronger teamwork, communication and clinical readiness and early indicators suggest a reduction in rapid response calls. By building capability where care is delivered, the program supports safer patient care, earlier intervention and a stronger culture of patient safety.



Tell her from me

This patient-centred initiative was developed to connect women undergoing gynaecological cancer treatment through shared messages of support, hope and lived experience.

Women completing their treatment write cards, anonymously, for those beginning their cancer journey, creating a powerful sense of connection and reducing feelings of isolation. The program provides emotional support for both the writer and recipient.

Since its launch, Tell her from me has engaged dozens of participants and statewide interest has led to the development of an implementation toolkit for other health districts wishing to replicate the program. By fostering kindness, connection and peer support, the project strengthens wellbeing and enhances patient experience.



Nurse practitioner-led acute myeloid leukaemia outpatient model of care

This nurse practitioner-led program enables patients with acute myeloid leukaemia to receive much of their care as outpatients rather than remaining in hospital for extended periods.

Traditionally, patients spend several weeks in hospital during each treatment cycle, which can impact their wellbeing and quality of life. Under this model, patients receive regular nurse practitioner-led reviews, monitoring and support through outpatient clinics while remaining safely at home.

The program significantly decreases length of patient stay and minimises exposure to hospital-related complications. Patients report improved wellbeing and greater connection with family and community.

By maintaining safety while lowering resource use, the program demonstrates strong value for money while delivering high-quality care.

Our finalists

Staff Member of the Year

Recognising a clinical or non-clinical staff member who makes an exceptional contribution, inspires others and supports effective teamwork.



Elsie Mari

*Nurse Practitioner,
Aged Care Response Team*

In her role as a nurse practitioner in the Aged Care Response Team, Elsie ensures aged care home residents who are acutely unwell receive safe, high-quality care that is person-centred and evidence based.

Elsie is recognised for her collaborative approach and willingness to work closely with aged care providers, general practitioners and multidisciplinary teams to improve outcomes and reduce avoidable hospital transfers.

Elsie inspires other staff through her approachable leadership style, clinical credibility and compassionate approach. She actively mentors transitional nurse practitioners and clinicians, encouraging confident, reflective practice and professional growth.



Jenny Richardson

Manager, Central Coast Oral Health Service

Jenny is an accomplished healthcare leader whose career spans more than 30 years in the NSW public health system.

She is known for developing strong teams and leads the Oral Health Service with a kind and genuine approach which builds trust and inclusivity. She is passionate about improving access to care for vulnerable communities and champions innovative projects that deliver better outcomes for patients.

Jenny's thoughtful leadership and commitment to continuous improvement have helped build a service that is accessible, innovative and responsive to community needs.



Kerry Spratt

Senior Environmental Health Officer, Public Health Unit

Kerry is a highly respected environmental health officer who has made a significant contribution to protecting the health and wellbeing of communities across the Central Coast.

A pioneer in her field, Kerry was among the first women to lead an environmental health program in a NSW public health unit and has played a key role in shaping environmental health policy and practice statewide. Over the years, she has led programs spanning drinking water safety, disease prevention, air quality, mosquito control and environmental risk management.

Respected for her expertise and innovation, she generously shares her advice and guidance with colleagues and members of the public while also delivering lasting improvements to safeguard public health.

Our finalists

People and Culture Award

Recognising a team or project that supports our workforce to deliver safe, reliable, person-centred care that drives the best outcomes and experience for patients and staff.



Public Health Unit

The Public Health Unit is a small, expert team working behind the scenes to protect the health of the Central Coast community. Spanning immunisation, communicable disease control, environmental health, epidemiology and disaster management, the team works to prevent illness before it occurs and responds rapidly when risks emerge.

Their work includes containing disease outbreaks, ensuring safe water and air quality, and delivering vaccination programs to vulnerable populations. The team has developed innovative public health initiatives that are now being adopted across New South Wales, including an outreach vaccination model.

Through expertise, innovation and a commitment to equitable healthcare, the Public Health Unit helps keep our community safe and healthy.



SPARK pilot cohort

SPARK (Spark potential, achieve results, kindle growth) is an innovative leadership development program created to support the growth of current and future leaders across Central Coast Local Health District.

Co-designed with the inaugural pilot cohort, the program uses workshops, coaching, peer learning and feedback to help leaders develop the skills, confidence and self-awareness needed to lead effectively. The pilot cohort's openness, collaboration and willingness to test new approaches helped shape a program that is strengthening leadership capability across the organisation.

By fostering a culture of reflection, connection and continuous learning, SPARK is helping build stronger teams, more positive workplaces and better outcomes for staff, patients and the community.



Neurology nursing leadership team

The neurology nursing leadership team is a highly skilled and collaborative team dedicated to advancing neurological care across the Central Coast. Through innovative education programs, workforce development and strong clinical leadership, the team has built a culture of excellence that supports both patients and staff.

Their achievements include recognition through the World Stroke Organisation Angels Awards for excellence in stroke care and procedural leadership.

The team is committed to supporting staff wellbeing, creating a nurturing environment where learning, innovation and compassion thrive.

