

# Health Promotion Action

Year in Review  
2023-24





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Year in Review  
2023-24

## Central Coast Health Promotion Service

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[www.healthpromotion.com.au](http://www.healthpromotion.com.au)



[www.facebook.com/CentralCoastHealthPromotion](https://www.facebook.com/CentralCoastHealthPromotion)



[www.youtube.com/CCHealthPromotion](https://www.youtube.com/CCHealthPromotion)

To view the interactive digital version please visit  
the Health Promotion Service website:

[www.healthpromotion.com.au](http://www.healthpromotion.com.au)



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Darkinyung (Darkinjung) people who are the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live.

We acknowledge and recognise all First Nations people who have come from their own country and now call this country their home.

We pay respect and acknowledge our First Nations ancestors and Elders that have walked and cared for these lands for many generations before us. Our Elders are our knowledge holders, teachers and leaders.

We acknowledge our youth who are our emerging leaders in this community.

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# Director's Report



## Welcome to our Health Promotion Action: 2023–24 Year in Review.

I always look forward to the time of year when we publish our annual report as it provides a great opportunity to take a moment to reflect on the outstanding prevention work of our service and others across Central Coast Local Health District (CCLHD).

Such an opportunity feels very timely this year with the launch of a new CCLHD Strategic Plan 2024–2027. The plan outlines the need to have a greater focus on prevention, early intervention and wellness, with one of its strategic priorities to 'Enable people to live healthy and fulfilling lives'.

We know that health promotion can keep hundreds of thousands of Australians out of hospital every year by preventing chronic diseases like

cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancers, stroke and depression.

This has the knock-on benefit of reducing the burden on our health system, enabling us to optimise hospital and community services and ensure timely hospital care is available to people when they need it.

There's also a financial benefit too. Every dollar invested in preventive health saves more than \$14 in healthcare costs. These are savings that can be reinvested in health and community services to ensure people can enjoy healthy and fulfilling lives.

The vision outlined in the Strategic Plan of trusted care and better health for everyone is at the very core of what we do. Whether through our health and wellbeing programs and resources, research projects, public campaigns, trusted expertise and insights, or our stakeholder engagement, advocacy and

partnerships, we aim to create a Central Coast where everyone can enjoy better health and wellbeing.

All of this means our service is a prime position to provide the solid base that supports our District in meeting its strategic goal; that is to create 45,000 days of care to support people to stay healthy and well in the community, rather than in hospital.

In line with this, our theme for our 2023–24 Year in Review is *Preventive health – making healthcare sustainable into the future*. I'm pleased to say that you will see many examples of this throughout this report, including the:

- return of our popular Move like a Mariner program that teaches vital fundamental movement skills to children ages 3–5 (see page 16).
- expansion of our Thirsty? Choose Water! program into primary

schools, providing sustainable drinking water to all school-aged children (see page 18).

- provision of support for adolescents to reduce harms from vaping, including strong collaboration with local schools (see page 42).
- return of our Get Active San Remo and Blue Haven initiative to help break down the barriers to physical activity for families and individuals of all ages (see page 28).
- development of a toolkit to support local groups and organisations to assess and respond to the impact of excessive alcohol supply on the community (see page 38).
- launch of a new Healthy Bites radio series to provide practical wellbeing tips to adults aged 50-plus in a bite-sized format (page 34).

- creation of a Central Coast Seniors Interagency to work alongside other local organisations in meeting the changing needs of our growing older population (see page 36).

This year was also an exciting one as it saw the launch of our new Health Promotion website. The new website includes a Resource Library, articles and intuitive search function to greatly improve the user journey and experience.

Building on previous years, this year's report features health promotion and prevention activity from more services across CCLHD than ever before. And as Health Promotion continues to work alongside teams as part of the District's Community Wellbeing and Allied Health directorate, expect to see further collaboration between services across existing and emerging projects.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Year in Review, and –don't forget –if you're reading the digital version, there are interactive elements littered throughout.

I hope you enjoy looking back on our work throughout 2023–24 as much as I do. You can find out more information about many of the projects in this report on our new website, or feel free to get in touch with us to chat further.

Nicole Kajons  
Director, Health Promotion and Population Health Improvement

# Highlights of the Year

## 2023-24



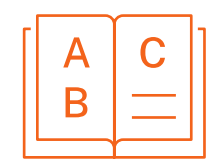
93%

of Central Coast **early childhood services** are engaged with **Munch & Move** to reinforce healthy habits to children aged 0 to 5.



3,312

**children** aged 3 to 5 years developed their fundamental movement skills by participating in the **Move like a Mariner program**.



3,836

**children** received **transition-to-school resources** from more than three quarters (78%) of primary schools on Central Coast – up from 74% in 2023.



2,700

**students** received access to sustainable drinking water through the **Thirsty? Choose Water!** primary school pilot and secondary school program.



82%

of **primary school-aged children** surveyed revealed they learnt about good oral health habits from a first-of-its-kind behaviour change game, launched in partnership with the **Centre for Oral Healthy Strategy**.



100%

of **parents and carers** said following **Go4Fun** their child had a better understanding of healthy eating, increased their amount of physical activity, and improved their self-esteem/confidence.



200

**activations** offered as part of **Get Active San Remo and Blue Haven**, up from 155 the previous year, leading to 41% of adults increasing their physical activity levels.



91

**people from 50 member organisations** recruited to the new **Central Coast Seniors Inter-agency** to support a collaborative approach to addressing the unique and changing needs of older people.



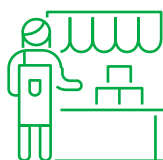
1,500

**Healthy Ageing Bags** distributed to community members and stakeholders containing information and resources for **older adults**.



42

**Healthy Bites episodes** produced, airing around 300 times on local radio to support **adults** with bite-sized, practical health advice.



5

**Healthy Food and Drink Framework practices** met by **100%** of our **hospital retailers**, with Central Coast Local Health District above the state average in 12 out of the 13 practices.



760

**Central Coast residents** referred to the **Get Healthy Service** to help them reach their health goals.



4

**liquor licences** either not granted, withdrawn or having conditions imposed following responses submitted, resulting in **significant harm reduction**.



300%

increase in **user engagement** following launch of the new **Health Promotion website**, with a new Resource Library, articles and intuitive search function to improve the user journey and experience.



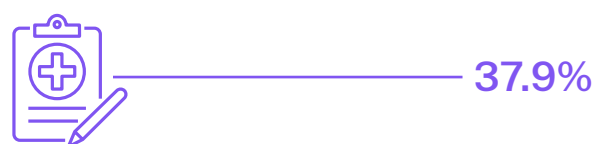
339

**vapes** collected from local high schools as part of a study into **e-cigarette contents**.

# Central Coast Snapshot



Just 4.6% of children aged 2–15 years consume the **recommended daily intake of vegetables**



37.9% of people suffer from one or more **long-term health conditions**



8,097 **children attend one of our pre-schools** – 2.3% of our population



Less than one in six (15.7%) children aged 5–15 years achieve **adequate levels of physical activity**



There were 3,833 **fall-related injury hospitalisations** 2021–22 at a rate of 776.9 per 100,000 population



49,776 **children attend primary or secondary school** – that's around one in seven (14.3%) of our population



Around two thirds (63.5%) of **adults are overweight or obese**



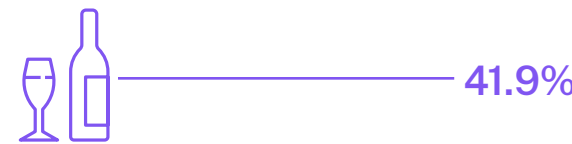
Around one in seven (15.1%) people aged 16 or over **currently smoke**



99,339 people are **aged 60 or over** – more than a quarter (28.7%) of the population



More than a third (35.3%) of **adults are insufficiently active**



41.9% of Central Coast adults **consume more than the recommended intake of alcohol** – that's the highest in the state



4.9% of the population identify as **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander**





# Health Promotion Team

2023-24



**Director**

**Health Promotion and Population Health Improvement**

Niki Kajons

**Manager**

**Tobacco, Alcohol & Administration and  
Research & Evaluation**

Samantha Batchelor

**Team Leader**

**Healthy Eating Active Living**

Justine Gowland-Ella

**Health Promotion  
Officers**

**Administration**

**Communications**

**Health Promotion Officers**



**Tobacco/Vaping**

Leanne Andrew



**Administration  
Support**

Georgina Coster



**Communications  
Coordinator**

Mitchell Gadd



**Alcohol**

Erin Braund



**Office Manager**

Manami Brisebois



**Communications  
& Design**

Monique Wilding



**Early Childhood**

Jasmin Wing



**Go4Fun**

Michele Munday



**Primary Schools**

Nina Douglass  
Michelle Syddall



**Secondary Schools  
and Young People**

Chelsea Drew



**Healthy Built  
Environment**

Nigel Tebb



**Healthy  
Ageing**

Samantha Hingerty

We aim to create a Central Coast where everyone can enjoy better health and wellbeing.

We do this by creating healthy places for our communities that promote good health across life's journey.

By working together with the community and other partners, we provide information, programs and resources, and we advocate for healthy policy, to ensure the foundations for good health.



**93%**  
of Central Coast  
**early childhood  
services** are engaged  
with **Munch &  
Move**

# Munch & Move

## Introducing healthy habits from an early age

### What is it?

Munch & Move is a NSW Health initiative that supports the healthy development of children from birth to five years by promoting physical activity, healthy eating and reduced small screen time within early childhood settings. This includes providing training and resources for educators and assistance in implementing a fun, play-based approach to supporting healthy eating and physical activity habits in young children.

With more than 8,000 children on the Central Coast attending pre-school, working with our early childhood services to support healthy development of children can have

a major impact on the health and wellbeing of our future generations.

### What did we do?

We provided strategic support to 150 early childhood education and care services across the Central Coast through face-to-face visits, phone, virtual meeting, or email to help them meet the 16 key Munch & Move practices that relate to children's health, development and wellbeing.

In addition, support was provided through:

- Developing active play resources such as updated fundamental movement skill posters and new yoga dice and cards featuring Darkinyung language and Australian animals that were

developed in partnership with Nunyara Aboriginal Health Unit.

- Distributing a 'Welcome to 2024' pack to all services including a Munch & Move Reflective Calendar, professional development flyers, and details on how to access our new Central Coast Munch & Move webpage.
- Offering transition-to-school resources such as the Magic Lunchbox and Jack's FUNtastic Day storybooks and Make Their Meals Count videos to support children's healthy and active transition to primary school.
- Facilitating an Unpacking Fussy Eating webinar with guest speaker Rachel Gerathy, manager of the PICNIC Project at Mid North Coast

Local Health District, to provide educators with practical skills to support stress-free mealtimes and appropriate feeding methods.

- Promoting online professional development opportunities such as Munch & Move eLearning delivered by the Early Childhood Training and Resource Centre and the NESA-accredited Small Bites for Big Steps.
- Reviewing and providing feedback from Nutrition Services on 56 services' menus to ensure they meet the NSW Health nutritional guidelines as a part of the Central Coast Healthy Menu Award Scheme.
- Working in partnership with Nutrition Services to provide early childhood cooks with opportunities to attend Cooks Network meetings and subscribe to Cooks Corner newsletter.
- Launching a Menu Planning Essentials training course, developed by Nutrition Services to support service cooks and educators.

- Producing and distributing the quarterly Munch & Move newsletter, which features seasonal and topical ideas, research, events, and everything else that responds to the needs of services.
- Raising awareness of initiatives that support the principles of Munch & Move, such as Vegie Month.

### What did we achieve?

- 140 out of 150 local services (93%) are engaged with Munch & Move.
- Around two thirds (64%) of Central Coast early childhood services are meeting at least 80% of their recommended Munch & Move practices. This is above the NSW state average.
- 72 Central Coast services ordered transition-to-school resources supporting more than 2,000 children.
- 20 people from 17 early childhood services attended the Unpacking Fussy Eating webinar and 38 cooks attended Cooks Network meetings.

- 36 new educators completed Munch & Move eLearning – more than double the number in 2022–23 – while there were 58 completions of the Small Bites for Big Steps training from 34 users.
- 20 services achieved a 5-star menu reviews and were awarded a Healthy Menu Award.
- 209 subscribers to the Munch and Move newsletter and 47 subscribers to Cooks Corner newsletter.
- 35 Central Coast early childhood services participated in Vegie Month in March 2024.

### Partners

Nutrition Services (CCLHD)  
Central Coast Early Childhood Educators' Network  
Centre for Population Health





**3,312**

**children** aged 3 to 5 years developed their fundamental movement skills by participating in the **Move like a Mariner** program

# Move like a Mariner

Partnering with Central Coast Mariners to promote fundamental movement skills to pre-school children

## What is it?

Participating in sport and physical activity throughout our lives is important for maintaining good health. However, it's important we put the building blocks in place from an early age. Fundamental movement skills (FMS) are those building blocks. They involve key movements of the head, trunk, arms, hands, legs and feet, and are essential in providing a platform for being active as we grow older.

Move like a Mariner is a joint initiative between Central Coast Health Promotion Service and A-League

football team Central Coast Mariners to teach FMS to children aged 3–5 years old.

The six-week program encourages early childhood education and care services to teach these skills through a series of fun games. In taking part, services address some of the Munch & Move (see page 14) physical activity practices that are designed to give children the best start in life.

## What did we do?

The program kicked off with an educator training night held in July

2023 at Mingara to introduce new services to the program and provided guidance on how to implement it at their service.

Educators heard about teaching FMS and played the games they would be playing with children over the course of the program, with Mariners players and Health Promotion staff on hand to help demonstrate.

Following the workshop, participating services signed a pledge to teach FMS every day for six weeks and received an equipment kit and educator guide to help facilitate active play.

Services were also invited to join a private Facebook group to stay connected and share experiences throughout the program, while they were also given access to a password-protected webpage housing digital program resources and other relevant resources that might support them in delivering Move like a Mariner.

To further support program delivery, Health Promotion worked with the Mariners to produce six videos featuring players demonstrating some of the games, along with two further videos introducing new elements to the program this year – Snack like a Mariner, promoting healthy eating, and Sip like a Mariner, promoting choosing water as a drink. Videos were posted in the Facebook group and made available on the private webpage.

Engagement with services via the Facebook group increased in 2023, with the introduction of posts to

encourage healthy eating learning experiences and drinking water, along with new FMS in Action social tiles. Social media tiles were also made available for services to download and share with families via their own social media channels. In addition, services were asked halfway questions to gather feedback on the program so far, resulting in resources like Mariners posters being made available.

At the end of the program, services completed an evaluation to go into a draw to win a visit from the entire Mariners team for new services and a two-player visit for returning services, which were won by Kariong Childcare Centre and The Kindiclub Preschool respectively.

## What did we achieve?

- 3,312 children aged 3–5 years developed their FMS by participating in the Move Like a Mariner program.

- 53 early childhood services, including 27 new services, took part in the program –nearly double the number that took part in the 2022 program.
- 51 educators from 29 different services attended the educator workshop to receive professional development in teaching FMS.
- 61 members joined the Move like a Mariner Facebook group, generating more than 100 posts from services taking part in the program.

## Look out for . . .

New resources and prizes on offer in Move like a Mariner 2024.

## Partners

Central Coast Mariners





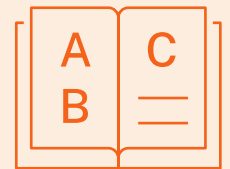
“I always love hearing what is happening in other schools. I love sharing with the teachers at my school for inspiration and ideas.”

– School Gardens Interest Group workshop participant



“Thanks for sharing all the fantastic resources. The new FMS A5 cards you are creating look fantastic and will be very helpful for teachers and students.”

– Fundamental Movement Skills PDHPE workshop participant



**3,836** children received transition-to-school resources from more than three quarters (78%) of primary schools on Central Coast – up from 74% in 2023

# Live Life Well @ School

A whole-of-school approach to promoting healthy eating and physical activity in primary schools

## What is it?

Live Life Well @ School is a collaborative initiative between NSW Ministry of Health and NSW primary schools. The program supports schools in the implementation of whole-school health initiatives and assists them to increase physical activity and healthy eating for all primary school-aged children.

Creating healthy habits in our children early in life has a lasting and positive impact on the future health of our population.

## What did we do?

Activity in 2023–24 included:

- Installing chilled water stations in two local primary schools as part of a Thirsty? Choose Water! pilot program, allowing access to clean, chilled water for students, as well as distributing stage 2 curriculum resources to promote water as a drink of choice that included an Aboriginal cultural component. The pilot was extended to be trialled with four other local health districts including Illawarra, Mid

North Coast, Sydney and South Eastern Sydney.

- Delivering PDHPE Network professional development workshops, such as:
  - Gymnastics – with qualified Gymnastics Australia coach Holly Yuile to support teachers to feel confident in safely teaching gymnastics as part of their PDHPE program.
  - Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) – developed by the Department of

Education School Sport Unit in consultation with NSW Health and presented by our own health promotion officer and qualified PDHPE teacher, Chelsea Drew.

- Running a School Gardens Interest Group workshop at Porters Creek Public School, which included a tour of the school's garden and overview of recent learning activities on healthy and sustainable food practices, as well as a CSIRO presentation on the Taste & Learn program for primary schools, followed by hands-on activities.
- Offering transition-to-school resources including reading books, healthy lunchbox ideas, magnetic puzzles and educational videos to support a healthy and active start for children in primary school.

Supporting schools in the delivery of whole-school health promotion strategies such as Crunch & Sip, which increases student fruit and vegetable intake, and active travel to school.

## What did we achieve?

- Transition-to-school resources were ordered for 3,836 children from more than three quarters (78%) of primary schools on Central Coast, up from 74% in 2023.
- 1,029 students received access to sustainable drinking water through the Thirsty? Choose Water! pilot.
- 28 teachers from 16 schools attended our professional development workshops.

- New FMS workshop developed in collaboration with the Department of Education, designed to support the teaching of FMS across all stages of primary school.

## Look out for . . .

- More ‘thinking while moving’ and fundamental movement skills workshops.
- Whole-school healthy eating initiatives.

## Partners

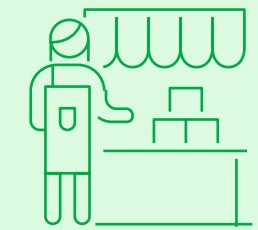
Association of Independent Schools  
Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay  
Centre for Population Health  
NSW Department of Education  
Nutrition Services (CCLHD)  
Rumbalara Environmental Education Centre





“Thank you for a great day. The information is helpful, and networking is inspiring. It is a fast-paced job and your feedback and support is encouraging.”

– Term 1 Canteen Network meeting participant



Department of Education  
schools meeting

## NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy

61%  
primary schools

71%  
secondary schools

# Healthy School Canteens

Supporting primary and secondary school canteens to increase their availability of healthy food and drink options

## What is it?

The Healthy School Canteens initiative, led by Central Coast Health Promotion Service and Nutrition Services, aims to support canteen managers in implementing the NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy. This strategy focuses on making healthier food and drink options readily available in school canteens, promoting students' wellbeing and healthy eating.

Working with our local canteen managers can have a positive impact on the food and drink choices available

to more than 34,000 students. Healthy eating in childhood means children have less chance of developing chronic disease like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and some cancers in later life. It also means they learn better and enjoy life at school more.

## What did we do?

In 2023–24, primary and secondary school canteens received various forms of support and opportunities to enhance the availability of healthy food and drink options in schools.

Specifically, this included:

## Central Coast Healthy School Canteen Award

To achieve this award, school canteens were required to have a current Healthy Menu Check and to conduct one 'Everyday' healthy food or drink promotion each term throughout 2023.

## Term 1 Canteen Network meeting

Attendees received updates on the canteen strategy and a practical resource pack, including a 2024 health promoting school calendar, chopping board, fork spatula, mince chopper

and tongs. On that day, the main topics of discussion were promoting healthy food, overcoming challenges in the canteen, supporting the Crunch&Sip program, and utilising free software for sales promotions and recruiting volunteer staff.

In addition, the Canteen Network provides a supportive community for canteen managers to collaborate, share their experiences and ideas, and recognise the efforts of the canteens who increase the availability of healthy food and drink options.

## Apple Cart healthy canteen promotions

Canteen managers have been encouraged to continue to conduct 'Everyday' healthy food and drink

promotions through submission and recognition in the termly Apple Cart newsletter.

## What did we achieve?

- 62% of Central Coast Department of Education schools meeting NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy – 61% primary and 71% secondary schools .
- 20 schools (18 primary and two secondary) achieved a Central Coast Healthy School Canteen Award in 2023.
- 100% of participants at the term 1 Network meeting rated it as 'excellent' when asked if it met their expectations.

- 96% of participants rated all sessions at the term 1 Network meeting as 'extremely useful' or 'very useful'.

## Partners

Association of Independent Schools  
Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay  
Central Coast primary and secondary schools  
Centre for Population Health  
Health Kids Association  
Nutrition Services (CCLHD)  
NSW Department of Education





“It’s great seeing Marley’s confidence grow, interacting with the other kids and playing the games. Seeing his knowledge about healthy eating and activity improve, it’s awesome. Definitely do it [the program], it’s well worth it. You learn so much.”

–Chris, father of Central Coast participant



### Child benefits

- Better understood **healthy eating** 100%
- Increased their **physical activity** 100%
- Improved their **self-esteem/confidence** 100%

# Go4Fun

Supporting children and their families to be active, build confidence and create healthy habits for life

### What is it?

Go4Fun is a free 10-week afterschool program that encourages children aged seven to 13 and their families to be active, build confidence, and develop healthy habits for life by learning together and supporting parents and carers to provide healthy home environments.

Healthy eating in childhood is essential for healthy growth and development, and decreases the risk of developing chronic diseases, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and some cancers in later life. Obesity in children can cause sleep problems that can result in poor concentration at school, physical and psychological ill health, and can also be a strong

predictor for ill health in adulthood. Children living with obesity are also two to three times more likely to spend time in hospital.

### What did we do?

There were three main strands of activity in 2023–24:

1. Program promotion
2. Leader recruitment
3. Establishing venues

Activity across these strands included the following:

#### Program promotion

From term 2, the Go4Fun program eligibility criteria changed to include all children aged 7–13 years. New promotional posters and flyers

reflecting the changes were locally developed and sent to schools, community centres and libraries across the Central Coast. Program changes were also communicated through media relations activity.

In addition, electronic promotional packs were sent out every term to local schools, GPs, paediatricians and allied health professionals, as well as to teams within CCLHD. These included self-print flyers, posters, newsletter inserts, and social media tiles to encourage promotion of program dates and locations.

In support of our local venues, Lake Haven Recreation Centre and Bateau Bay PCYC female netball and basketball teams were provided with

Go4Fun keep cups at their grand final awards to promote local term 2 programs.

To support promotion, new photography was commissioned to capture images at a local program that will be used across various hardcopy and digital assets.

### Leader recruitment

Four community professionals, including a cultural leader from Bungree Aboriginal Association, have joined our experienced leaders to bring a mix of skill, experience, energy and fun to the program. This has been reinforced by the positive feedback from children and families every term.

Furthermore, we are collaborating with CCLHD’s volunteer department to recruit volunteers who can support the program as needed to ensure the Go4Fun program can be offered every week of the term.

### Establishing venues

We held 60% of Go4Fun programs at either Lake Haven Recreation Centre or Gosford Olympic Pool, which has streamlined program co-ordination and delivery, and provided a consistent

location to help increase community awareness of the program.

### What did we achieve?

- Fifteen 10-week programs offered across standard, Aboriginal and online Go4Fun streams.
- 72 eligible enrolments across Go4Fun programs, with an 89% completion rate—including a 95% program completion rate for Aboriginal Go4Fun programs—exceeding the 85% target set by NSW Health.
- Of parents and carers who completed the post-program survey:
  - 100% said their child had a better understanding of healthy eating
  - 100% said their child had increased the amount of physical activity they do since attending the program
  - 100% said they had noticed an improvement in their child’s self-esteem/confidence

- Coverage on NBN News and ABC Central Coast breakfast radio to promote the program benefits and activities and a further interview on ABC to share the changes to the program eligibility criteria.

### Look out for . . .

Evolvement of program content following changes to the eligibility criteria.

### Partners

- Better Health Company
- Bungree Aboriginal Association
- Centre for Population Health





“The Thirsty? Choose Water! Challenge created a ripple effect of positive change, enhancing engagement, promoting healthier habits, and fostering a supportive, health-conscious environment.”

–Samantha Hutchinson, PDHPE teacher, Wadalba Community School



“I look forward to receiving the Healthy High Schools e-updates, which seamlessly connect our school with local health initiatives, providing us with regular, localised updates and resources that are both relevant and practical.”

–Nicole Ludlam, acting head teacher wellbeing, Narara Valley High School



**1,700** secondary school students

benefitting from access to **chilled water stations**

# Healthy High Schools

## Supporting secondary schools with healthy initiatives for young people

### What is it?

Healthy High Schools promotes the health and wellbeing of young people aged 12–18 in local secondary schools by using a whole-of-school approach to encourage healthy eating, adequate hydration and physical activity.

Supportive health initiatives have a positive impact on more than 20,000 students who attend secondary school on the Central Coast. This helps young people to adopt healthy behaviours such as drinking more water and being physically active, while avoiding behaviours like vaping and poor diet that could lead to poorer health in later life.

### What did we do?

In 2023–24, we provided support to secondary schools via a range of

resources and programs that promoted healthy eating, water consumption and physical activity.

This included several programs, initiatives and events offering locally developed health-promoting resources, such as:

The **Thirsty? Choose Water!** program for secondary schools that encourages students to choose water over sugary drinks. The 2024 Thirsty? Choose Water! Challenge encouraged local secondary schools to adopt a whole-school approach to promote the benefits of drinking water. Research conducted by Central Coast Health Promotion shows that strategies such as classroom education, promotional messages and environmental changes effectively increase water consumption among students and encourage them to replace sugary beverages with water.

Highlights from the challenge included:

- Teachers delivering engaging hands-on classroom lessons on the benefits of drinking water.
- Innovative and exciting whole-school activities and internal competitions championing healthy drinking and eating messages for students, staff and community.
- Partnerships developed within schools between Key Learning Areas, school canteens, indigenous groups and the wider school community.

**Healthy High Schools e-updates**, a new communication channel that connects health and local secondary schools through regular online updates. Each update offers localised initiatives aimed at enhancing the health and wellbeing of both students and staff. These

updates include the latest classroom resources, school-wide initiatives, and fresh ideas to promote nutrition, hydration, physical activity, and mental health and wellbeing.

**Youth Day Out** at Lake Haven Recreation Centre in May 2024. The event connected around 200 young people with community services to improve their health and wellbeing. Students engaged well, particularly with the interactive Blender Bike, which highlighted the importance of exercise and nutrition. The Health Promotion team blended around 80 smoothies and provided popular nutrition resources. The ‘de-bunking the vape cloud’ display by year 8 students from Lisarow High School sparked discussions on vaping harms, nicotine addiction and quit support.

**YourWay**, a student-led co-design approach for secondary schools that aims to encourage healthy behaviour change in adolescents. In Term 4 2023, the YourWay program was delivered to year 8 students at Lisarow High School. Students explored the topic of vaping, brainstorming and pitching numerous project ideas and prototypes to the school principal. These included

classroom resources, de-bunking the vape cloud displays, toilet talker posters and more. This was evaluated via surveys where students reported high levels of increased knowledge and understanding of vaping harms. Additionally, students reported high levels of enjoyment of project-based learning and group work.

### What did we achieve?

- Chilled water stations worth \$4,500 each installed at two schools, servicing approximately 1,700 secondary school students and 170 staff .
- More than 150 insulated water bottles provided to three secondary schools during the 2024 Thirsty? Choose Water! Challenge.
- 69 teachers and youth service workers subscribed to the new Healthy High Schools e-updates, representing 25 secondary schools and 13 services respectively.
- Healthy High Schools e-updates average open rate of 96%, more than double the government/ defence sector average of 46%, and average click-through rate of

63%, seven times the government/ defence sector average of 9%.

- Approximately 100 secondary school students engaged with our interactive Blender Bike and vaping stall at the 2024 Youth Day Out.

### Look out for . . .

- Case studies of winning schools from the 2024 Thirsty? Choose Water! Challenge.
- A new Healthy High Schools webpage on the Health Promotion website.
- A 2025 Thirsty? Choose Water! Challenge along with updated resources.
- Updated and localised vaping resources for schools.

### Partners

Central Coast secondary schools  
NSW School Link Coordinator  
Nutrition Services (CCLHD)  
School Infrastructure NSW





“Creating built environments that encourage people to walk, cycle, take part in physical activity, use public transport and interact with community members can contribute to lifelong health and wellbeing. In contrast, poorly designed built environments can have negative effects on the physiological, psychological and social wellbeing of communities.”

– NSW Health Healthy Built Environment Checklist



200,000+

opportunities to see or hear  
**print media coverage**  
**on active transport**  
awareness days

# Healthy Built Environments

## Advocating for built environments that protect and promote community health and wellbeing

### What is it?

The Healthy Built Environments program delivers on Strategic Direction 4 of the NSW Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy 2022–2032, which aims to:

- create environments that increase people's access to healthy food and drink and enable them to be more active through a systems and whole-of government approach
- contribute to local food-related initiatives that promote healthy food choices
- influence the design of healthy built environments by building and maintaining partnerships with stakeholders

- ensure healthy eating and active living are prioritised in cross-government and local planning, infrastructure, and transport initiatives.

Healthy food and healthy built environments are key components of a comprehensive approach to supporting healthy eating and active living. This is because the environments where we live, learn, work, play and age strongly influence our choices.

### What did we do?

Across our Healthy Built Environment portfolio, in 2023–24, we:

- Contributed to protecting and promoting the health of the Central Coast community by advocating

for healthy built environments, working in partnership with the CCLHD Public Health Unit. This included reviewing and responding to state significant development applications and other plans, as well as participation in the NSW Healthy Built Environments LHD Network.

- Worked to increase physical activity levels among CCLHD staff and the Central Coast community by supporting and encouraging use of active transport. This included membership of Central Coast Council's Pedestrian Access and Mobility (Active Transport) Advisory Committee.

- Promoted and supported active transport-related events such as World Bicycle Day, National Walk to Work Day, National Ride2Work Day, National Walk Safely to School Day and National Ride2School Day, involving internal and external communications. We engaged Woy Woy South Public School as a case study on its support for children riding to school.
- Contributed to improving the environmental sustainability of the District as a member of the CCLHD Environmental Sustainability Committee. This involved advocacy for sustainably designed health facilities and precincts, particularly sustainable transport.
- Supported CCLHD staff seeking access to bike parking and end-of-trip facilities.
- In partnership with Central Coast Council and the Office of Sport, delivered Get Active San Remo

and Blue Haven, a place-based community physical activity initiative, for a second year. See page 28 for full details including achievements.

- In partnership with CCLHD's Public Health Nutrition Team, continued implementation of the Healthy Food and Drink in NSW Health Facilities for Staff and Visitors Framework. See page 30 for full details including achievements.

### What did we achieve?

- Successful advocacy for CCLHD implementation of electric bicycle (e-bike) salary packaging.
- Generated an estimated 200,000-plus opportunities to see or hear about active transport awareness days through broadcast, print and online coverage secured in media outlets such as NBN, Triple M and Coast Community News.

### Partners

Central Coast Council  
Office of Sport – Central Coast  
Public Health Unit (CCLHD)  
Nutrition Services (CCLHD)





“I’m so glad to have come across this initiative. Being new to the area it helped me find a few more options available to increase my activity and wellbeing, which I can pursue.”

–Survey response from local community member



200

activations offered throughout the month, leading to 41% of adults increasing their physical activity levels

# Get Active San Remo and Blue Haven

Creating opportunities for people to be active in their local community through a place-based approach

## What is it?

Get Active San Remo and Blue Haven is a partnership between the Health Promotion Service, Office of Sport and Central Coast Council that facilitates and promotes opportunities for local people to be active in their community. Working with existing sport and recreation assets and active recreation providers, a month-long calendar of activities is developed and promoted to address barriers to physical activity participation and get more people moving.

## What did we do?

San Remo and Blue Haven were the project partners began by reviewing feedback from 2022’s inaugural

Get Active initiative. In addressing feedback, the following strategies were implemented for 2023:

- Production of more hardcopy resources to promote the initiative, including a new A5 flyer delivered door to door locally.
- Development of an online map promoting freely accessible local sites that lend themselves to recreational activities such as walking.
- Increased prominence of messages around the importance of being physically active.

Local activity providers were approached to develop a calendar of activities throughout the month

of October. These activities aimed to address the barriers to participation identified during a community consultation in 2022, such as being available for free or low cost, held on a variety of days, at a spread of locations, and aimed at all ages and abilities. In addition, the most requested and popular activities from 2022 were also included, such as basketball, walking (including dog walks), Oztag and swimming.

As well as recreational activity, enabling health and wellbeing services such as the Get Healthy Service were also engaged and promoted as part of the campaign.

In addition to the A5 flyer, activities were promoted via the Get Active

webpage, direct mail, paid and organic social media, media relations, and corflutes positioned at key local sites. Furthermore, a new Promotional Toolkit was developed with social media tiles, editable posters, email banners, website and newsletter copy to support providers to promote their activities.

Following the month, participants were surveyed to determine whether they improved their physical activity levels and what activities they participated in, with a small incentive provided for completion of the survey.

Activities that continue to be offered are promoted via a dedicated Get Active page that sits on the Sport Central Coast website.

## What did we achieve?

- 200 activations held throughout the month, up from the 155 the previous year.
- 144 free and 30 reduced-cost activations offered, up from 111 and 28 respectively in 2022.
- 161 activations that were inclusive of people with a disability, up from 126 in 2022.

- Of the activities identified by the community in the initial community consultation:
  - three of the top five;
  - seven of the top 10; and
  - 10 of the top 15 most-popular activities were offered.
- Activations across all days of the week and a wide variety of times.
- Of the 116 responses to the survey:

- 74% of respondents were aware of Get Active, up from 61% in 2022
- 49% increase in the proportion of people who had heard about Get Active that participated in Get Active activities compared to 2022
- 50% increase in awareness of opportunities to be active compared to 2022
- 41% of adults increased their physical activity levels
- 70% participated in other forms of physical activity during the month, with many

identifying the promotion of Get Active as a trigger to exercise

- 57% generally felt better
- 50% had more energy
- 43% felt fitter
- 93% of those who were active during the month said they were likely to continue to be active

## Look out for . . .

Get Active San Remo and Blue Haven returning in October 2024.

## Partners

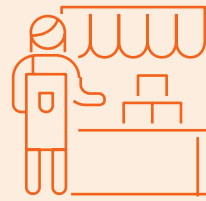
Central Coast Council  
Office of Sport – Central Coast





“It’s getting easier to stick to providing the correct foods as the customers become more aware of what we can and can’t sell and stop asking for things that just are too far off the scale.”

– Volunteer at Woy Woy kiosk



**5**  
**Healthy Food and Drink Framework practices**  
met by **100%** of  
our **hospital retailers**

# Healthy Food and Drink Framework

Providing healthy food and drink options for staff and visitors to our health facilities

## What is it?

The Healthy Food and Drink in NSW Health Facilities for Staff and Visitors Framework provides best practice guidelines to help NSW Health facilities work towards offering healthy food and drink in their food outlets. The framework aims to support our staff and visitors to make healthy food and drink choices by increasing the number of healthy options.

## What did we do?

In March 2024, Health Promotion and Nutrition Services conducted an audit of all food and drink outlets at CCLHD facilities. This informs part of a state-wide audit that sees results submitted to NSW Ministry of Health to communicate directly with outlets.

The audit covered eight food outlets (cafés, cafeterias and kiosk) and 33 vending machines including both drinks

and food over three hospital sites – Gosford, Wyong and Woy Woy.

It involves monitoring outlets against a set of 13 food and drink-related practices that reflect a healthy food and drink benchmark. A notable change in 2024 saw the health star rating for muesli bars and flavoured milk reintroduced.

This year, to educate Gosford retail staff about the framework and how

to meet the practices, a face-to-face training session was designed and conducted by fourth year nutrition and dietetics students from the University of Newcastle.

This training showed an overall improvement in knowledge of the framework components when comparing results of the pre-and post-knowledge test.

To remind all CCLHD staff about the framework and its importance, an update was published in the Staff Weekly Broadcast, hospital newsletters, and on the intranet.

## What did we achieve?

- 41 food outlets and vending machines audited.
- CCLHD performed above the state average in 12 out of the 13 practices.
- Five of these practices were met by 100% of applicable food retailers.

These were related to removal of sugar-sweetened drinks, the Health Star Rating of flavoured milks, the portion size of muffins and salty snacks, and choice of promotional deals.

- Since 2023, an increase in compliance was achieved for three of the practices – removal of sugar-sweetened drinks, the portion size of salty snacks, and the placement of ‘Everyday’ foods and drinks at eye level on shelving.

## Look out for . . .

The next state-wide audit of health facility food and drink outlets from February to March 2025.

## Partners

Nutrition Services (CCLHD)  
Contracts and Leasing (CCLHD)  
Gosford Hospital cafés and staff cafeteria (Compass Group Australia outlets)

Nutrition and dietetics students (University of Newcastle)  
Woy Woy Hospital kiosk (auxiliary volunteers)  
Wyong Hospital café and staff cafeteria (Trippas White Group outlets)





“The program worked wonders for me personally as I achieved my health goals, which I never imagined I would.”

–Margaret, program participant from the Central Coast



**760**  
Central Coast residents referred to the Get Healthy Service

# Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service

Supporting people to set and achieve personal healthy lifestyle goals

## What is it?

Unhealthy lifestyles including poor eating habits, sedentary behaviour and higher-than-recommended alcohol intake increase our risk of developing serious health conditions, many of which can become chronic. Chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers are estimated to be responsible for around 80% of the total burden of disease in Australia.

Making lifestyle changes is often easier said than done, and the journey can be challenging. Get Healthy is a free coaching service that supports people aged 16 and over to make positive lifestyle changes. Qualified health coaches work with participants as a team, providing practical tools and supporting people to set achievable goals, make a plan (starting with small steps) and overcome barriers that stand in their way.

## What did we do?

We sought to raise awareness of the Get Healthy Service and Get Healthy in Pregnancy programs to our community so they could self-refer to the program, as well as to Central Coast health professionals so they could offer referrals to their consumers.

With the service now being provided by Diabetes Australia, this gave us the opportunity to communicate to the public and health professionals

referring into the service many of the enhancements to program, including:

- Flexible and tailored coaching designed to fit in with each person's needs
- Options for video calls, webinars, Q&A sessions and an online portal to access resources
- Bilingual health coaches (Cantonese, Mandarin, Arabic) and in-language coaching
- Option to have digital data collection (pre-call surveys) so more time can be spent receiving health coaching
- Aboriginal health coaches

Communications and engagement activity included posts on social media, providing content for newsletters such as the Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Healthcare Network and Health Promotion's own Refresh newsletter, as well as giving out program collateral and engaging with

the public at key events such as Central Coast NAIDOC Community Day.

We also worked directly with CCLHD teams to help them find ways to embed the referral process into their routine clinical care as much as possible, with messaging focusing on how complementary health coaching can be as part of an integrated care approach. We delivered presentations at education sessions and team meetings and shared updated resources that are now available to order on the Get Healthy website.

## What did we achieve?

- 760 Central Coast residents referred to Get Healthy programs, with 85% coming from health professionals.
- 513 women referred to the Get Healthy in Pregnancy program.
- 293 people enrolled into Get Healthy programs.

## Partners

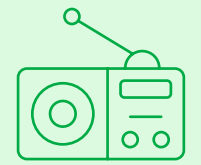
CCLHD health professionals and services  
Centre for Population Health





“If we can educate people to be more aware of their medicines, to ask for advice and to use them safely, we can reduce the number of problems that arise with their use and which may lead to hospital admissions and increased levels of care, which can be costly for our health services and community. Spreading these messages is so important; Healthy Bites provided us with a great opportunity to do this in a medium we hadn’t used before, and that was exciting.”

– Claire McCormack, team leader pharmacist, CCLHD



42

**Healthy Bites episodes** produced, airing around 300 times to the station’s 150,000 listenership

# Healthy Bites

Bite-sized health advice for adults aged 50 plus

## What is it?

Healthy Bites is a series that provides bite-sized advice for adults aged 50 plus on a range of topics related to healthy ageing. Each episode is around 60 to 90 seconds long and includes practical tips from a health professional that you can use in your daily life. The series airs every weekday on community radio station Radio Five-0 Plus and is also available online.

## What did we do?

Central Coast Health Promotion Service met with Radio Five-0 Plus, a station aimed at adults aged 50 and above, to

discuss the possibility of airing short advice pieces related to healthy ageing. From here, Healthy Bites was born, providing free airtime in what would typically be a paid-for slot.

We worked with a number of services across CCLHD to produce episodes, including Geriatrics, the Public Health Nutrition Team, Community Allied Health, Public Health, Pharmacy, and Community, Chronic and Complex Care, as well as local optometrists and podiatrists. Health Promotion works with these services to identify issues pertinent to improve the health and wellbeing of their consumer base,

distilling potentially complex issues and messages into practical, simple and engaging content.

This helps equip people with the skills they need to stay as healthy as possible as they age, maintaining their independence while also reducing pressure on clinical services.

Forty-two episodes have now been scripted, recorded and edited entirely in-house, with episodes airing on the station every weekday at 9:30am. Topics range from simple ways to improve your strength and balance, and the importance of good nutrition and fluid intake, to selecting the right

footwear to stay on your feet, caring for your eye health, and how you can reduce your risk of a fall with simple changes around the home.

To expand the series, a Healthy Bites webpage was established on the Health Promotion website, with audio and text versions of each episode available. Episodes are also available on a YouTube playlist.

The series has also been promoted through media relations activity targeted at publications aimed at older adults including Growing Older and Living Life Magazine, Meals on Wheels newsletter and a local retirement village magazine, as well as through owned channels such as Health Promotion’s Refresh newsletter and Facebook page

## What did we achieve?

- 42 different Healthy Bites episodes produced.

- Episodes have aired approximately 300 times, going out to the station’s 150,000 listenership.
- Initially greenlit as a pilot, Healthy Bites has now been commissioned to air indefinitely on the station, and forms part of Radio Five-0 Plus’ Strategic Plan.
- More than 850 views of episodes on YouTube.

## Look out for . . .

New episodes of Healthy Bites online and every weekday on Radio Five-0 Plus.

## Partners

Radio Five-0 Plus

Participating services

“Healthy Bites is an excellent series covering important health issues that affect people as they age. Since its inception, it has received positive feedback from our listeners with many comments on how interesting, helpful and informative the advice is. Healthy Bites is now a regular feature in our programming schedule and has been incorporated into our Strategic Plan.”

– Ann Fredericks, station production manager, Radio Five-0 Plus





“Working with Central Coast Local Health District to deliver Stepping On has been truly rewarding. Together, we’re making a significant impact in our community by improving the lives of older adults. Each week, we witness firsthand the positive feedback from our clients as they build new friendships, enhance their balance and strength, and gain confidence. Thank you, Central Coast Local Health District, for your collaboration and dedication to improving community health!”

–Bec Meenahan, business manager, Catholic Healthcare



114

new **hospital admissions** every day of people aged 65+ in NSW **because of a fall**

Source: Fall Prevention in NSW White Paper 2023 (Clinical Excellence Commission)

“The new Seniors Interagency meeting has filled a critical gap in the sector by fostering collaboration and information sharing among the myriad of organisations that support older people and promote positive ageing on the Central Coast. This initiative provides a much-needed platform for agencies to coordinate efforts, address common challenges, avoid duplication of services, and develop integrated strategies that enhance the wellbeing and quality of life for seniors.”

– Penny Newson, chief executive officer, Central Coast Community Council



91 **people from 50 member organisations**

recruited to the new **Central Coast Seniors Interagency**

# Healthy Active Ageing

Working in partnership to improve the quality of lives of older people

## What is it?

Regular physical activity for older people can reduce the risk or delay the progression of chronic diseases, cancers and some forms of dementia. Recent evidence also shows that exercise can reduce the risk of a fall for older adults by nearly a quarter, as well as significantly reduce the risk of sustaining a fall injury, many of which can be significant and often lead to a hospital admission, or even a fatality.

We aim to add life to years by encouraging older adults to experience the benefits of being active and eating healthy. Alongside this, we work with local organisations to ensure the environments in which older people live, work and socialise cater to and support our changing physiological and social needs that are encountered as we grow older.

## What did we do?

Initiatives focused on the promotion of why physical activity and healthy eating are important to maintain function and

therefore independence as a person ages. Specifically, this has included:

### Communications

- Working with a range of community partners to provide practical information on healthy and active ageing topics, as well as communicating to the community how to access healthy ageing programs, services and other resources via newsletters, print and social media, as well as our website.
- Promoting the launch of the new Healthy Ageing Online Learning platform on the Active & Healthy website, which is now available for everyone in the community to access without requiring registration or medical clearance.

### Capacity building

- Partnering with the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association (CPSA) to provide healthy ageing presentations across the Central Coast.

- Producing and distributing Healthy Ageing Resource Bags, plus a wide range of factsheets and other resources that provide evidence-based, accessible and practical healthy ageing information to a diverse range of partner organisations across the community, as well as those that support older adults in the community, including primary healthcare, aged care service providers and non-government organisations.
- Developing a community advocate toolkit for the community to use to promote the April Falls message.
- Attending the Central Coast Multicultural Festival, Seniors Expo and NAIDOC Community Day to promote resources, programs and services that support healthy active ageing. Resources were also supplied to a range of other community events focused on carers, dementia and general health and wellbeing.

## Advocacy

Establishing the Central Coast Seniors Interagency in partnership with Central Coast Council and Central Coast Community Council to support a collaborative approach across services and community organisations who are dedicated to addressing the unique and changing needs of the rapidly growing seniors population on the Central Coast. The focus of the Interagency is on areas critical to providing a supportive local environment that promotes a wholistic and positive approach to ageing, including physical activity, nutrition, mental health, social engagement and isolation, and digital literacy, that facilitate people living independently in the community. The interagency encourages membership from any service or community organisation that supports positive ageing, aiming to build a broad and inclusive network dedicated to the wellbeing of older adults living on the Central Coast.

### Partnering to deliver exercise programs

Offering the Stepping On program, a seven-week falls prevention program for adults aged 65 years and over and Aboriginal adults aged 45 years and over. Using gentle group exercise and educational talks from experts, the program helps to teach people how to reduce their risk of falling and how to

maintain independence. In 2023–24, we worked in partnership with Northern Sydney Local Health District, Catholic Healthcare and Adssi In-Home Support to offer more Stepping On programs across the Coast than ever before.

## What did we achieve?

- 91 people from 50 organisations have already joined the Central Coast Seniors Interagency including Bungree Aboriginal Association, Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services, the Primary Health Network, Council of the Ageing, Central Coast Meals On Wheels, Volunteering Central Coast, Westfield, Hearing Australia, Coast Shelter, University of Newcastle, plus many others representing a diverse range of non-government and government agencies, not-for-profits, and service providers for housing, welfare, advocacy, home care, legal, allied health and transport.
- Approximately 1,500 Healthy Ageing Bags distributed to community members and stakeholders including many CCLHD services, primary and aged care service providers, and other non-government organisations.
- More than a quarter of a million opportunities to see or hear about healthy ageing advice and support

generated through broadcast and print media coverage achieved on NBN News and in Coast Community News, Central Coast Home and Lifestyle Magazine, and Growing Older and Loving Life magazine, with additional coverage online.

- 243 people completed the Stepping On program across 20 programs offered on the Central Coast.
- 22 presentations delivered by CPSA peer speakers across the Central Coast, reaching 525 people living in our community.

## Look out for . . .

A continued focus on embedding and promoting healthy ageing principles and programs throughout a wide range of community groups, services and non-government organisations that support older people living on the Central Coast.

## Partners

Adssi In-Home Support  
Catholic Healthcare  
Central Coast Community Council  
Central Coast Council  
Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association  
Central Coast Meals on Wheels  
Northern Sydney Local Health District



4

**liquor licences** responded to were either not granted, withdrawn or had conditions imposed, resulting in significant harm reduction **significant harm reduction**

# Alcohol and our community

## Addressing alcohol harm across our community

### What is it?

In addition to being linked to eight different cancers, alcohol is known to increase the risk of other health conditions including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attacks, stroke, dementia and depression. It contributes to more than 2,600 hospital admissions on the Central Coast each year, with the Central Coast experiencing higher rates of alcohol-related hospitalisation, emergency department presentations and deaths compared to the NSW rate, making alcohol one of our most significant preventive health challenges.

Quite simply, the greater the level of alcohol availability, the higher the level of consumption and the greater the level of harm. Conversely, increasing community participation in liquor licencing matters has been shown to reduce the harms associated with alcohol.

We strive for a safe, healthy and well community through advocacy in healthy public policy, supporting collaborative community engagement, and ensuring existing liquor licencing controls are implemented appropriately by making recommendations to Liquor & Gaming NSW regarding local liquor licence applications.

### What did we do?

In 2023–24, Central Coast Health Promotion Service collaborated with local Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs), community not-for-profit organisations, Tuggerah Lakes and Brisbane Water Police, and Central Coast Council to continue to support and advocate for a reduction in alcohol harm on the Central Coast. This included representing CCLHD at local Liquor Accords.

Due to concerns for potential health, social and wellbeing impact on the community, we responded to two notices of intent from retailers

intending to submit a liquor licence application and eight full liquor license applications.

Health Promotion also collaborated with Central Coast Council to implement alcohol harm-minimisation strategies for two liquor licence applications at community activations, promoting safe and engaging community events.

We continued to build strong relationships with our local CDATs, co-hosting two Central CDAT regional forums which were attended by representatives from Wollongong to Taree. We also developed a community toolkit to help CDATs and local community organisations access localised data to better assess and respond to the impact of excessive alcohol supply on the local community.

We submitted responses to public consultations including the NSW Liquor & Gaming stage 2 alcohol delivery reforms and Central Coast Council's night-time economy strategy.

Health Promotion is also supporting the update of the Alcohol-Related Harms Costing Model (ARHCM) to continue to enable NSW Health staff to compare costs borne by a particular community related to alcohol harm (including health, morbidity and mortality, and crime impacts) with the purported economic benefits proposed by new liquor licences.

### What did we achieve?

- Three liquor licences responded to were either not granted by the licencing authority or resulted in all recommended harm-minimisation strategies being imposed. A fourth licence was withdrawn from the application process, and one is pending a decision.
- Implemented alcohol management plans at two community activation events in collaboration with Central Coast Council.
- Our locally developed community toolkit is now set to be rolled out

across other NSW CDAT programs to help community members better assess and respond to community concerns around liquor licencing in other parts of the state.

### Look out for . .

Collaboration with Liquor & Gaming NSW to undertake a sale of alcohol to minors compliance operation for same-day delivery of alcohol.





227,187

impressions from  
social media  
awareness campaigns

# Smoke- and Vape-Free Local Health District

Keeping the air around our facilities clean for the health of  
staff, patients and visitors

## What is it?

Central Coast Health Promotion Service works as part of the CCLHD Smoke-Free Health Care Working Group to lead the implementation of its Smoke-Free Workplace Policy and by-law. We continue to keep the air around our hospitals and other health facilities clean and free from toxic chemicals produced from smoking and vaping and reduce smoking-related harm to individuals attending CCLHD services.

Within CCLHD, smoking was attributable for 581.7 hospitalisations per 100,000 people in 2021–22,

compared to 563.3 across NSW, further demonstrating the continued need for leadership, compliance and cessation support within this setting. By supporting individuals to stop smoking and vaping and providing an environment free from the harms of second-hand smoke and aerosol from e-cigarettes, we will continue to reduce the burden of smoking-related disease on our health system.

## What did we do?

- Continued to convene the Smoke-Free Health Care Working Group, working alongside clinical support

service managers, fire safety officers, the Public Health Unit and Security Services.

- Increased patrols of Gosford and Wyong hospital sites from quarterly to monthly. Patrols conducted by Health Promotion staff aim to inform patients, visitors and staff of the smoke-free by law and hospital boundaries and advise on available support for nicotine cravings whilst on site, as well as options for cessation support.
- Conducted quarterly smoking counts to monitor compliance

with smoke-free by-law to identify trends in smoking and use of e-cigarettes to assess and evaluate strategies.

- Reported cigarette litter at hotspots and signage requirements to Wyong and Gosford site management after each patrol as needed.
- Developed and shared social media assets to inform the Central Coast community of the CCLHD smoke- and vape-free environment, including running paid-for Facebook campaigns.
- Drafted and published a website commentary article on the smoking and vaping laws and health risks to coincide with World No Tobacco Day.
- Produced an information brochure for patients and visitors and distributed to emergency departments, Patient Enquiries and Staff Health.

## What did we achieve?

- The commitment and collaborative approach of the existing members of the CCLHD Smoke-Free Health Care Working Group has strengthened over the past 12 months, with a renewed focus to identify opportunities for improvement to work on.
- 12 patrols per year at each Gosford and Wyong Hospital sites with 57 people approached during July 2023 to end June 2024.
- Increased follow-up for patients and staff smoking or vaping on site, with greater support for ward and department managers.
- Increase in regular cleaning of high pedestrian access areas by Environmental Services staff, particularly at Wyong Hospital.
- Addition of No Smoking means No Vaping promotional signs at known vaping hotspots alongside existing mandated no smoking signs.

- 189,688 people reached through social media awareness campaigns, generated more than a quarter million (227,187) impressions.
- 89 views of World No Tobacco Day website commentary article.
- NRT vending machine use has doubled since 2022, with an average of four packets per month at each of Gosford and Wyong sites.

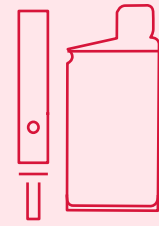
## Look out for...

More communication to the Central Coast community about how to support our local health services to stay smoke- and vape-free including public address announcements from community members.

## Partners

CCLHD Smoke-Free Health Care Working Group





339

vapes collected from local high schools as part of a study into e-cigarette contents



Current use of **e-cigarettes** amongst people aged 16 to 24 in NSW

2019-20 **4.5%**

2022-23 **19%**

Source: [www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/r/113716](http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/r/113716)

# E-cigarettes and young people

## Reducing e-cigarette harms amongst young people

### What is it?

The use of e-cigarettes by young people aged 16 to 24 years old in NSW has continued to rise at an alarming rate compared to any other age group. In 2022-23, current use increased threefold.

Health harms associated with vaping include throat irritation, coughing, dizziness, headaches, nausea, seizures and serious lung injury. Rechargeable vapes can also explode, causing serious burns and trauma. In addition, there is strong evidence that non-smokers who use e-cigarettes are three times as likely to go on to smoke tobacco as non-smokers who do not use e-cigarettes.

This project aims to reduce the e-cigarette related harms to young people on the Central Coast.

### What did we do?

We provided a supportive environment for young people to not take up vaping or to stop vaping by:

- Developing a Vaping Information Network (Central Coast) to connect CCLHD departments, schools, council, and non-government youth and family organisations, and provide updates about changing federal and state legislation, training webinars, access to support services, and resources.
- Presentations to Secondary Schools Head Teacher Welfare and

hosting a webinar on the health harms and support services and resources.

- Providing the University of Wollongong with e-cigarettes collected from local high schools for analysis of contents and emerging trends in products. This also provides an interim solution for the safe disposal of e-cigarettes for local high schools and provides a supportive vape-free environment for students. The e-cigarettes collected from Central Coast high schools has already contributed to a chemical analysis study.
- Running a student-led YourWay project on vaping with year 7 students from Lisarow High

School. A variety of resources were developed by the students including models of the contents of de-constructed vapes, listing the harmful contents, a board game and an escape room game around the harms of vaping.

We also contributed to more effective management of nicotine addiction and cravings for young people on the Central Coast by:

- Reviewing the new Young People and Vaping Cessation Health Pathway and the updated Smoking Cessation Advice Pathway with local GP Dr Lyndon Bauer, for the Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network (HNECC PHN). Both pathways now available on HNECC PHN Health Pathways portal for GPs and other health professionals to access.
- Promoting the updated NSW Quitline service to local schools and CCLHD departments.
- Co-ordinating vaping cessation training webinars for CCLHD staff, delivered by St Vincent's statewide trainers.

- Hosting a stall at the Central Coast Council's Youth Day Out Wellbeing Expo – providing information on nicotine dependence and how to support someone with cravings.

In addition, we promoted the multitude of campaigns, and their associated resources and webinars, running over the past 12 months, including:

- Cancer Institute NSW's Do You Know What You're Vaping and Every Vape Is a Hit to Your Health e-cigarette campaigns, as well as its 16 Cancers tobacco campaign
- NSW Ministry of Health's vaping toolkit and No Smoking means No Vaping campaign.

### What did we achieve?

- 339 vapes have been collected from six local high schools over a 15-month period up until term 1 2024 .
- CCLHD staff from the following departments attended online vaping cessation training: Youth Health, Oral Health, Maternity Services, Child & Family Health,

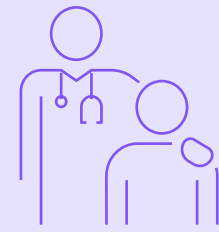
Medical Imaging, Aboriginal Health, Pharmacy and Staff Health.

- Six Vaping Information Updates distributed to a database of 67 contacts, generating an average open rate of 66% compared to a sector average of 46%, and an average click-through rate of 43% compared to a sector average of 9%.
- 2,000 No Smoking means No Vaping stickers provided to Central Coast Council to include on existing signs at sporting grounds, parks and reserves.

### Look out for . . .

- No Smoking means No Vaping promotion on the Central Coast, publicising the smoking- and vaping-free laws in public places, including on buses.
- Advocating for local support for young people with nicotine dependence from e-cigarette use.
- Raising community awareness of the harms of second-hand aerosol.

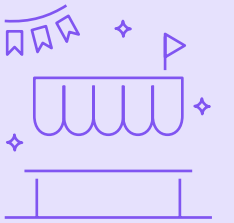




**3 in 4**

young people **aged 15–24** have one or more **chronic health conditions**

Source: [www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/health-of-young-people](http://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/health-of-young-people)



**4** local schools established Youth Health Pop-Ups

“We are so excited to have this service at our school.”

–Carly Hudson, deputy principal, Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College The Entrance Campus

# Youth Health Pop-Ups

Taking youth-friendly holistic care out into high schools

## What is it?

Youth Health Pop-Ups take the Youth Health service out into the community to schools. Youth Health staff provide youth-friendly health promotion, identify vulnerable young people and offer targeted health advice. They also provide care coordination to link students with health and social support services.

## What did we do?

Youth Health Pop-Ups feature a social worker, registered nurse and Aboriginal health worker. Students can self-refer

or be referred by school staff, and access physical and sexual health and wellbeing advice and care coordination. Examples include:

- Holistic psychosocial assessments to identify students with health vulnerabilities and guide care navigation to appropriate support services within CCLHD and the community
- Sexually transmitted infection (STI) tests, advice and follow-up
- Pregnancy tests, advice and follow-up

- Counselling and support
- Cultural support
- Consultation with staff, building capacity within the community to offer support to high school students

This initiative targets vulnerable young people who might not otherwise access healthcare. Youth Health is a soft entry for young people into the healthcare system and provides them with access to youth-friendly, holistic healthcare. By taking Youth Health services to educational facilities, the barriers of

transport, access, cost are all removed and young people can access specialist allied health and nursing advice.

Youth Health commits to pop-ups at schools for two terms only. This means Youth Health can provide services to more schools on the Central Coast and increase the number of vulnerable young people who have access to the service.

## What did we achieve?

Youth Health Pop-Ups established at a number of local high schools, including Northlakes (based at San Remo LINKS Youth Service), Gorokan, Tuggerah Lakes and Lake Munmorah. The team has also been invited to attend Wyong and Wadalba high schools.

## Look out for . . .

More Youth Health Pop-Ups in 2024–25.

## Partners

Jenny Bennett, network specialist facilitator, NSW Department of Education

School principals, wellbeing staff and Aboriginal education staff





“We all know that mental health within the younger generation is complex, however by showing support and guidance through education we potentially can reduce the harm on young Australians. I hope to continue this partnership long into the future.”

– Troy Lucca, senior constable, Youth Command, Wyong Police Station



# Health support for Aboriginal youth

Removing barriers for young Aboriginal people to access healthcare

## What is it?

Many long-term health behaviours such as tobacco and alcohol use, and lifestyle issues such as physical inactivity and poor diet are established during adolescence. Aboriginal young people experience health inequality, so improving access to healthcare and supporting healthy behaviours and lifestyle choices will have long-term positive impacts for the individual and CCLHD in terms of reduced use of emergency hospital admissions.

Youth Health Aboriginal Health Workers provide cultural connection,

cultural safety, health education and care coordination for young people with health needs. Support is provided by a male and female Aboriginal Health Worker – Uncle Glenn and Alice. These roles actively work to advocate for young Aboriginal people and remove barriers preventing them from accessing healthcare.

## What did we do?

- Within CCLHD, Nunyara Aboriginal Health Unit and Youth Health work in partnership to ensure a culturally focused service to reach out to and support young people to engage with Youth Health.

Activities in 2023–24 included:

- Providing cultural support and engagement to young people in hospital and on discharge.
- Partnering with NSW Police, the NSW Department of Education and Justice Health NSW to provide health information in a culturally appropriate way to students in several high schools across the Central Coast.
- Supporting young parents on how to navigate relationships with their partner following the birth of a child through the Healthy

Relationships program, provided in conjunction with Ngiyang.

- Delivering Seasons of Healing, a grief and loss education program for young people.
- Establishing a health hub for young people at Central Coast NAIDOC Community Day.
- Coordinating care for young people to access health and social supports, including medical appointments, re-enrolment for school, driver training and emotional support.

## What did we achieve?

- Effective partnerships established with NSW Police, NSW Department of Education, and Justice Health NSW.
- Four joint presentations with NSW Police in local high schools focusing on respect and on illicit substance use.
- 25 young people currently receiving case management and care coordination

- Young people have been supported to access: driving lessons through Bara Barang; return to school; medical appointments; psychology appointments; drug and alcohol rehabilitation; food parcels; Centrelink payments; Medicare cards; and Work Development Orders.

## Look out for . . .

- Further support for young people in families linked to Nunyara to ensure wraparound service for them and their families.
- More health information presentations in local high schools delivered in collaboration with NSW Police.

## Partners

Ngiyang (CCLHD)

Nunyara Aboriginal Health Unit (CCLHD)

Justice Health NSW

NSW Department of Education

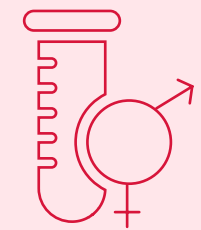
NSW Police





“Our ongoing partnership is instrumental in building a more inclusive and supportive community where sexuality and gender diverse people, and people living with HIV, can live as their authentic selves on the Central Coast.”

– Kage Gold, regional manager, Hunter ACON



National diagnoses over past 10 years

gonorrhoea doubled **x2**

syphilis tripled **x3**

Source: HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia: Annual surveillance report 2023 (The Kirby Institute)

# Creating awareness for our priority communities

Working collaboratively to engage our community in important health messages

## What is it?

Our priority communities experience a range of challenges in accessing the health information and services they need to live their best life. Through leveraging awareness events and linked community activations, we build a more health equitable society in our region.

## What did we do?

In 2023–24, the HIV & Related Programs (HARP) team attended the following activations to engage the community, provide valuable information and resources, and network with like-minded organisations:

- Coastal Twist LGBTIQA+ Festival at Umina Beach
- Koori Knockout at Central Sports Regional Sporting and Recreation Complex, Tuggerah
- NAIDOC Community Day at the Wyong Racecourse
- Dunbar Way Community Day at Dunbar Way community housing estate
- SHAG (Sexual Health and Guidance) Day at the University of Newcastle Ourimbah campus
- Welcome Day (Orientation Week) at the University of Newcastle Ourimbah and Gosford campuses
- Central Coast Multicultural Expo at Erina Fair

- Human Experience Expo at Mingara
- Early Childhood Conference at Mingara
- March Against Family/Domestic Violence in Gosford

In addition, the following actions were undertaken:

- Presented to Men’s Community of Practice and Homelessness Interagency on blood-borne viruses, sexual health, harm minimisation and accessing services.
- Presented to Central Coast Youth Interagency on the Play Safe program, with emphasis

on accessing free condoms and training, and the latest state and national awareness campaigns.

- Attended Central Coast multicultural, family, seniors and young parents Interagencies to provide expertise on a range of issues including sexual health, addressing stigma, and current national awareness campaigns and resources.
- Co-convened the Rainbow Inclusion Network (Central Coast) with ACON Hunter to bring together organisations that engage the sexuality and gender diverse community across all sectors and ages.
- Hosted a stall at Gosford Hospital and morning tea at Holden Street Clinic to recognise World AIDS Day.
- Co-chaired the out-of-home care Play Safe program to promote safe sex.
- Participated in the design and implementation of evidence-based activities as part of Community Drug Action Teams across the Central Coast.
- Led the local recognition of International Overdose Awareness Day.

## What did we achieve?

- 10 activations and community events attended by HARP alongside other CCLHD teams – a truly collaborative approach to community work for our vulnerable communities on the Central Coast.
- Awarded HARP Health Promotion Team of the Year at the 2023 NSW HIV & Related Programs Forum.

## Look out for . . .

New campaigns and resources deployed across the region and further integration with the work of other services where interests align.

## Partners

CCLHD services – Carer Support Unit, Diversity & Inclusion, Drug and Alcohol Service, Holden Street Clinic, Needle & Syringe Program, Mental Health, Nunyara Aboriginal Health Unit

ACON Hunter

Central Coast Community Council

Central Coast Pride

CoastShelter

Oasis Youth Centre

University of Newcastle

“Central Coast Health shared crucial information about health issues specific to our community, highlighting their vital and much-needed support. We are grateful for their ongoing collaboration with Pacific Link Housing in educating the community on health topics.”

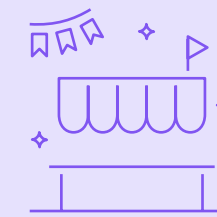
– Adelle Laing, tenant engagement officer, Pacific Link Housing (organiser of Dunbar Way Community Day)





“Young people in refuge are usually very reluctant to seek medical help. The CCLHD team were very approachable, easy to talk to and our clients felt that they were treated with dignity respect and without any stigma.”

–Dhia Ben Romdhane, senior case worker, Coast Shelter



Around **300**  
people engaged at  
community **youth**  
**day events**

“Evidence consistently shows that high-quality sexuality education delivers positive health outcomes with lifelong impacts. Young people are more likely to delay the onset of sexual activity –and when they do have sex, to have safer sex –when they are better informed about their sexuality, sexual health, and their rights.”

–World Health Organization

# Engaging young people in healthy living around sex and drugs

Supporting young people and those who work with them to promote healthy behaviours

## What is it?

Understanding and practicing safe and healthy living in the way we manage our sexual health and our behaviours around alcohol and other substances are important for all young people. Promotion of healthy messaging and access to resources and information is crucial in equipping young people with the tools to navigate their choices regarding these issues.

## What did we do?

Throughout 2023–24, the HIV & Related Programs team, alongside other CCLHD services, attended a number of strategically important events on the Central Coast, such as community youth days, youth week events and youth leadership forums.

The team provided information and resources on alcohol and other

substances, and sexual health, including dental dams and condoms, to encourage familiarity with their use. Interactive elements were also used to engage young people, such as quizzes, spinning wheels and stuffing oranges in a condom.

In addition, professional development opportunities for the youth sector workforce were promoted, such as YFoundation’s Sticky Stuff webinar

and Family Planning NSW’s Nitty Gritty workshops on how to engage with young people around sexual health.

As members of local CDATs, staff assisted in designing and implementing evidence-based CDAT activities and programs, including its work in local schools.

Youth health services such as headspace and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, community care services, and schools were supplied with information and resources to support the free training available on the NSW Health Play Safe website and their engagement with campaigns such as Take Blaktion and Because You Care.

## What did we achieve

- Around 200 students from nine schools and one disability provider were engaged by a variety of health and wellbeing services at Central Coast Youth Day Out.
- Around 100 people were engaged at Youth Week events at Oasis

Youth Centre (Salvation Army) and Erina Fair (Coast Shelter).

- Meaningful engagement with and information provided to parents and carers at all general community stalls.
- Around 40 people working in the youth sector received training through participation in the Sticky Stuff webinar and/or the Nitty Gritty workshop.

## Partners

CCLHD services –Drug and Alcohol, Holden Street Clinic, Needle & Syringe Program, Youth Drug and Alcohol Team, Youth Health

Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council

Central Coast Community Council

Family Planning NSW

STI Programs Unit (NSW Health)

YFoundation





# Health protection

## Central Coast Public Health Unit

### Who are we?

The Central Coast Public Health Unit (CCPHU) is dedicated to protecting the health of our community. CCPHU focus on controlling the spread of infectious diseases, addressing risks from environmental health hazards, supporting immunisation programs and responding to public health emergencies. Our team provides expert advice, education, and runs various health programs to keep everyone safe and healthy.

### What did we do?

In 2023–24, CCPHU undertook several key activities to protect the health of our community:

#### *Outbreak response and communicable disease control*

CCPHU had 15,588 notifications of communicable diseases in the 2023–24 period. The bulk of these were acute respiratory illnesses – Covid: 6,039, Influenza: 1,054 and respiratory syncytial virus: 2,703. High-priority disease such as meningococcal (>5), legionellosis (10), typhoid (>5) and shigellosis (36) require rapid response from the team.

##### **Group A streptococcus (GAS)**

**outbreak:** GAS bacteria generally cause mild illnesses such as sore throats (strep throat) and skin sores (impetigo); however, it can also cause severe invasive diseases including infection

of the blood (sepsis), meningitis and pneumonia. CCPHU managed an outbreak of GAS in a childcare centre, ensuring affected children received treatment and preventing further spread. A total of 15 cases were identified and treated. CCPHU also investigated 40 cases of invasive GAS.

**Rabies exposure management:** CCPHU facilitated timely preventive treatment for 31 people potentially exposed to rabies or Australian bat lyssavirus (ABL). Rabies is carried by mammals in many overseas countries and ABL is carried by bats in Australia. Infection with rabies or ABL infection is rare in Australia but almost invariably fatal. Both are spread by bites and scratches.

Dogs and monkeys in Bali were the most common potential sources of exposure.

##### **Respiratory and gastroenteritis outbreaks:**

Our team responded to 86 acute respiratory illness outbreaks, 87 gastroenteritis outbreaks in early childhood education centres, and 13 gastroenteritis outbreaks in residential aged care facilities.

**COVID-19 waves:** CCPHU continued to monitor COVID-19 infection rates and provided advice to hospitals, GPs, aged care facilities and other organisations through waves caused by new variants. Notable waves occurred in late 2023 and mid-2024, with increased transmission during the winter months. The impact of these waves was less severe than in previous years due to vaccination, immunity and improved treatments.

#### *Environmental health*

##### **Legionnaires' disease prevention:**

Legionnaires' disease is a form of pneumonia caused by bacteria that multiply in warm water, particularly cooling towers and warm water systems. CCPHU conducted inspections of 133 cooling towers and 42 warm water systems to prevent Legionnaires' disease, with a focus on vulnerable settings such as residential aged care and healthcare facilities. CCPHU also worked with system operators to proactively manage risk.

**Mosquito surveillance:** Mosquitos may carry illness such as Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus. CCPHU monitored mosquito populations at six locations weekly from December 2023 to April 2024 to assess the risk of diseases they might carry and informed the community accordingly.

**Water quality management:** CCPHU worked with local authorities to ensure safe drinking water and provided advice on major water treatment upgrades, as well as supporting approximately 70 private water suppliers in developing quality assurance programs.

**Healthy and safe built environment:** CCPHU responded to requests from NSW Department of Planning Housing

and Infrastructure and Central Coast Council for advice on development applications and environmental planning instruments. This often involved liaison with other CCLHD services and with other agencies such as Ambulance NSW, NSW Environment Protection Authority and NSW Department of Primary Industries to provide joint submissions. CCPHU advocated for healthy and safe built environment principles to be included in development assessment requirements and applications.

#### *Immunisation programs*

##### **Addressing declining immunisation rates:**

'The Big Catch-up' immunisation conference was held on the Central Coast in collaboration with the Primary Health Network in October 2023, with 295 virtual and 221 face-to-face attendees. The conference was a great opportunity to share experiences and ideas to continue to promote immunisation as one of the most successful and cost-effective public health interventions.

**Childhood vaccination:** CCPHU actively follow up children appearing as overdue for vaccination on the Australian Immunisation Register. Children in three age cohorts are reviewed monthly in line with recommendations under the National Immunisation Program.

**Community outreach:** CCPHU worked with Aboriginal Medical Services to help provide vaccination for Aboriginal elders, including influenza, COVID-19, pneumococcal, hepatitis B and shingles immunisations. CCPHU also provided education sessions and vaccination opportunities for students attending the Adult Migrant English Program classes at both Gosford and Wyong TAFES.

**Adolescent vaccination:** CCPHU supported school vaccination programs and participated in youth health events to ensure high vaccination coverage among adolescents.

##### **Reaching vulnerable populations:**

CCPHU helped coordinate a program to protect vulnerable babies against respiratory syncytial virus by

promoting uptake of a newly available immunisation. During the winter season CCPHU also offered free flu and COVID-19 vaccinations to hospital inpatients and in outpatient clinics, reaching 649 individuals.

**Vaccine safety:** Adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) are required to be reported to public health units. CCPHU investigated 39 possible AEFIs and coordinated follow-up advice from the NSW Immunisation Specialist Service when required.

**Keeping vaccines effective:** Keeping vaccines at the correct temperature is crucial to ensure they remain effective for use. CCPHU provided advice on 70 occasions to general practices and pharmacies that had experienced issues with their vaccine fridges.

#### *Other achievements*

The work of the COVID-19 Public Health Outbreak Response Team was reabsorbed into core communicable disease business and a surge Public Health Nurse workforce was created to assist with management of outbreaks and emergencies. The team supports settings with a higher risk of outbreaks such as residential aged care and disability care facilities. The team also responded to emerging infectious threats such as mpox.

Childhood vaccination coverage rates on the Central Coast remain consistently above NSW and national coverage rates.

CCPHU recruited a public health advanced trainee and public health physician (staff specialist) to grow the capacity of the unit. CCPHU was also able to place an Aboriginal public health trainee to enhance their expertise in health protection.

The CCPHU environmental health team continued to run a unique and comprehensive legionella monitoring program in conjunction with Central Coast Council.





**300%**  
increase in **user engagement**  
following launch of  
the new **Health Promotion website**



# Short & Sharp

## Health Promotion Service

### Aboriginal Lunchbox Connection

Health Promotion was successful in securing \$489,813 funding via the Ministry of Health Translational Research Grant Scheme to, over 2025–26, progress and scale-up delivery of Aboriginal Lunchbox Connection, a food security program that has already supported 88 families as part of a pilot in the San Remo area.

### Healthy and Active for Life Online

Healthy and Active for Life Online is a free 10-week program for people aged 60 and above, or 45 and above for people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

It aims to support older people to live independently by increasing their knowledge, skills and confidence in how to lead active and healthy lives, while also helping to prevent falls.

We facilitated the Healthy and Active for Life program on the Central Coast

by recruiting a pool of experienced and reliable phone coaches. We assigned individuals who registered for the program each to their own phone coach and worked together with coaches to provide support to participants.

Achievements included:

- 96 participants registered over two quarterly programs.
- 75 participants completed at least seven of the 10 online modules, representing a 78% completion rate.
- Program participants doubled the number of days per week they undertook moderate-intensity physical activity for 30 minutes or longer, increasing on average from two pre-program to four days post-program.
- Three quarters (75%) of participants said they intended to continue to participate in other organised physical activity programs after completing the program.

- 100% of participants said they intended to continue with some form of exercise post program.
- 88% of participants said they felt an increase in confidence in participating in regular physical activity without becoming unsteady or falling after completing the program.
- More than half (56%) said they are likely to continue with the Healthy and Active for Life Online exercises post program.
- Knowledge on recommended serves of vegetables increased from 51% to 92% pre-and post-program (51% to 87% for NSW) resulting in participants increasing their serves of vegetables from three to four per day.

Healthy and Active for Life program content is now available for everyone without requiring registration or a log-in via the Healthy Ageing Online Learning hub. Community organisations can also deliver the Healthy Ageing Online

Learning in their group settings and download the Healthy Ageing Online Learning guide for support.

### New Health Promotion website

In February 2024, Health Promotion unveiled its new website. The site features new resources (including a new Resource Library), articles, and information to help support good health and wellbeing for our Central Coast communities.

It also includes an intuitive search function that makes it easy for audiences to find the right information for them, has much simpler navigation to improve the user journey and is fully compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

The site is a culmination of a number of workshops with the team, along with stakeholder testing and feedback, over the course of the past couple of years. The site was developed by Kicking Pixels, working closely with Health Promotion's communications coordinator and designer.

Since going live, the site has seen:

- 300% increase in user engagement
- 96% increase in returning visitors
- 18% increase in new visitors
- 29% increase in page views

- 74% increase in content downloads
- 41% increase in user actions

In addition, feedback from stakeholders has been positive and there has been an increase in inbound enquiries for Health Promotion programs and resources.

The team is now using site analytics to further shape content going forward and is in the process of adopting a new dashboard to provide health promotion officers with information on page and content performance at their fingertips.

### Dr Roo's Dental Dash

In 2022, Central Coast Health Promotion Service was invited to work with the Centre for Oral Health Strategy (COHS) to develop a first-of-its-kind behaviour change game aiming to improve the oral health literacy of primary school-aged children.

Coordinated by COHS, the project is a collaboration between Central Coast Health Promotion Service, as well as oral health teams in Central Coast, Illawarra Shoalhaven, Sydney and Western local health districts, and specialist game developer Paper Plane Studios, the developer behind Health Promotion's Aqua Sprint game.

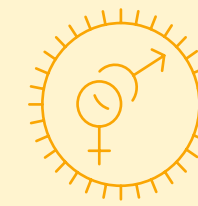
Following extensive testing, in 2023–24 the working group completed development of Dr Roo's Dental Dash,

a 3D runner game that promotes oral health messages like brushing your teeth morning and night, choosing water as a drink and eating more fruit and vegetables. Players score points while beating an obstacle course containing power-ups like toothbrushes and avoiding sugary foods as they make their way across four levels, culminating at the dentist.

The game was made available as an app on 20 iPads in dental clinic waiting rooms across the four health districts as part of a pilot rollout, with children's knowledge of what they learnt tested after playing the game. It represented the first time gamification has been trialled in Australia to specifically improve the oral health literacy and oral health-related behaviours of children.

Feedback was gathered from 71 children who played the game, with results indicating 93% would play the game again and 82% revealing they learnt something from the game about good oral health practices. A further 6% said they were already aware of the oral health messaging the game promoted. The most common learnings were to brush your teeth, drink water, avoid lollies and junk food, and eat healthy food.





## Increase in cases

in Australia since 2021

**Gonorrhoea** up  
45%

**Chlamydia** up  
24%

“The response from the students was extremely positive and they have all given really high praise/feedback for the day. They were obviously made to feel really safe and are keen to engage further.”

–Helen Chisholm, Young Parents College



## HIV & Related Programs

### Ending viral hepatitis

Using novel practices and insight of peer workers, the HIV & Relate Programs team is moving beyond conventional approaches to tackling viral hepatitis to ensure services are accessible for the communities that need it most. This flexibility allows the team to better address issues around stigma, discrimination and shame, and other barriers to access.

Activity included promoting awareness of the testing and treatment of hepatitis C in our region by organising

a visit from the HepCured mobile mural to Kibble Park in Gosford in July 2023. The mobile also stopped on Brisbane Water Drive and travelled throughout parts of the Central Coast, creating a buzz on social media. Staff from the Public Health Unit, Drug and Alcohol Service, Coast and Country Primary Care, Rotary and Holden Street Clinic travelled with the mural to engage the public.

More than 80 people were tested via dried blood spot testing blitzes at Holden Street Clinic in Gosford, as well as further community testing at

NAIDOC Community Day and the Glen rehabilitation centres for both men and women.

The team also set up an awareness stall at Gosford Hospital for staff and the public to access information on hepatitis C and to learn about the work being done to end transmission and increase testing and treatment.

## Youth Health

### Youth Booth

Youth Booth is a mobile outreach health check which allows young people between 12–24 years of age to have access to a variety of health services. Youth Booth's purpose is to address basic health needs on the day as well as facilitate speciality healthcare follow-up and referral.

In recognition of difficulties for young people to access services, Youth Health works alongside stakeholders to deliver Youth Booth at locations where the young people frequently visit, including

alternate learning centres or schools, youth services and Aboriginal services. In 2023–24, Youth Booth was held at Coast Shelter Youth Refuge, Young Parents College, TLK Alesco College and NAISDA Dance College.

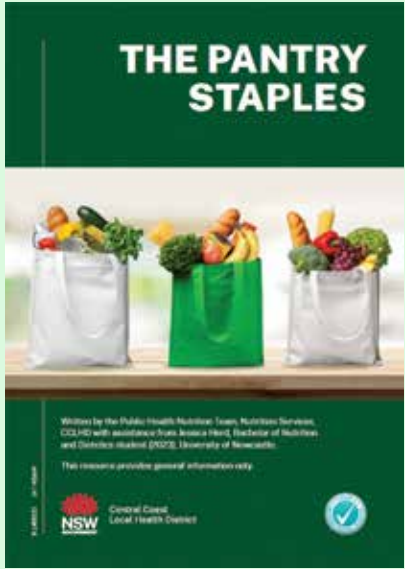
Services from across CCLHD and other partners such as youth refuses, schools and colleges come together to deliver tailored brief intervention and education in the following areas:

- oral health check-ups
- healthy relationships
- catch-up immunisations

- height and weight checks
- hearing and vision screening
- mental health check-ins
- safer behaviours surrounding alcohol and other drugs
- sexual health including STI and pregnancy checks

Young people visit each booth and spend one-on-one time with the health worker, which allows for an individualised health assessment to be completed with recommendations for follow-up.





“I will be more aware of what clients eat and what we may need to add to shopping.”

–Home care worker following nutrition training



“We print out the brochure and give it to every new home care package client at their admission.”

–Manager, local home care service provider



“Loved how interactive it was and better than sitting in a workshop.”

–Early Childcare Healthy Menu Planning Essentials course participant

## Nutrition Services

### PICNIC Project

PICNIC Project is a peer education program that supports new parents feeding their young children. Peer education is a beneficial method of providing health education. It is cost effective, information imparted by peer educators is perceived as credible, it provides positive role modeling, and it can reinforce learning over time.

The PICNIC team provide nutrition/feeding training, information materials and intensive support to parents who volunteer for the program. PICNIC volunteers can then pass on this information and provide feeding support to other parents within their social groups. Further public-facing support is provided through a comprehensive website and regular social media content.

Preparations to implement PICNIC on the Central Coast began in September 2023, with the Public Health Nutrition team developing and implementing a comprehensive stakeholder communication plan. In February 2024, PICNIC was launched on the Central Coast.

So far, 48 parents have expressed interest in becoming PICNIC parents, with around three quarters (73%)

hearing about the program through Child and Family Health. Although the program is in its infancy on the Central Coast, momentum is growing, and key stakeholders are very supportive.

### Childcare menu planning training for cooks

The Munch & Move program (see page 14) requires childcare cooks to complete training in providing nutritious meals and snacks for children. Data from 2022 indicated around a third of childcare cooks on the Central Coast had worked in the space for less than a year and 19% had no training in food and nutrition. Over 2023–24, the Public Health Nutrition team provided education and networking opportunities for local cooks including:

- **Quarterly Cooks Network meetings.** Education topics, timing and location were based on the results of a 2022 needs assessment and ongoing evaluation. Each meeting provided a nutrition education session specific to early childcare menu planning, plus the opportunity for cooks to network and learn from each other.
- **The Early Childcare Healthy Menu Planning Essentials course.** This

set of self-paced online modules was launched in May 2024. The course was developed to meet the Munch & Move suggested learning outcomes for cook training. Local cooks helped in the development and piloting of the course.

### Breastfeeding promotion

Evidence that breastfeeding is protective against a wide range of health problems in infants and mothers, is compelling. Nutrition Services is an active member of the CCLHD Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding Reference Group. This multidisciplinary group aims to coordinate the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding for Central Coast mothers and infants.

Breastfeeding promotion activities over 2023–24 included:

- The review and update of Supporting Breastfeeding: Grandparents can make a difference. This booklet provides information on breastfeeding issues and tips on what grandparents can do to help make breastfeeding a positive experience for the whole family.
- A refresh of the Central Coast Health Promotion Service breastfeeding webpage, which

provides links to services and information to support mothers to breastfeed.

- Promoting support for breastfeeding in public places by supporting Central Coast breastfeeding-friendly businesses to transition to the national Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere recognition program, run by the Australian Breastfeeding Association. Breastfeeding mums can look out for premises displaying the new Breastfeeding is Welcome Everywhere stickers. These premises help to improve the comfort of breastfeeding mums across the Coast.

### Updated resource for older people and their carers

Good nutrition helps to maintain weight, muscle and bone strength, and independence in older years. With increased need to protect against loss of muscle mass and malnutrition as we age, good nutrition is as important as it has ever been for people in their sixties, seventies and beyond.

The Eating Well brochure was developed in 2015 to provide a snapshot of key nutrition needs in

ageing and practical food ideas to reduce the risk of malnutrition. The Public Health Nutrition team began review in 2023 to ensure the resource remains up to date and relevant to the population group.

Dietitians, health professionals and the health literacy panel provided expert review of the resource content. Independent living older people and carers provided consumer insights during two group consultations. Suggestions and tips from both health professionals and community members were incorporated into the final booklet.

The new-look online booklet has been shared with more than a hundred local service providers and community groups, and close to a thousand copies have been sent to service providers for distribution to older people living on the Central Coast. You can view the brochure on Nutrition Services' Nutrition for older people webpage.

### Nutrition on a budget

The rising cost of living continued to be felt across the community this year. Local service providers expressed a need for nutrition resources to help people identify healthy food options

within a limited food budget. This would support maximising both the food budget and investment in the long-term health benefits of eating well.

To complement its popular family recipe book, Back to Basics, the Public Health Nutrition team developed a range of new resources to support people to prepare easy, low-cost and nourishing meals and snacks.

Partners from health and community services were consulted at all stages of development, from the concepts and drafts through to the final designs. It has resulted in the development of a range of visual one-page resources and a recipe book with simple and convenient meal and snack ideas for one.

Good Value Foods and The Pantry Staples were launched in June 2024. Their digital format allows for ease of inclusion into digital resource kits and distribution. They can also be printed to support display or distribution offline. You can view all the resources on Nutrition Services' Nutrition on a budget webpage.





# Project Contacts

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# Publications

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*Public Health Research and Practice*

Barnes C, Sutherland R, Jones G, Kingon N, NCOIS Research Collaborative, Wolfenden L (September 2023)  
Development and piloting of a Community of Practice to support learning and improvement in health promotion practice within NSW local health districts

*Public Health Nutrition*

Kajons N, Gowland-Ella J, Batchelor S, Kingon N, David M (July 2023)  
Thirsty? Choose Water! A regional perspective to promoting water consumption in secondary school students

# Major Presentations

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*Dietitians Australia Conference (July 2023)*

Strengthening connections with Aboriginal families via the lunchbox, a pilot

*APIC3 –3rd Asia Pacific Conference on Integrated Care (November 2023)*

Growing tentacles... the evolution and evaluation of Activate Your Space –A place-based approach on the NSW Central Coast

*NSW Health Promotion Forum (November 2023)*

Move like a Mariner –A fundamental movement skills program for early childhood services, delivered in partnership with a local sporting organisation  
Thirsty? Choose Water! for primary schools, utilising a partnership approach



