The opening of the Macarthur Clinical School at Campbelltown Hospital marks another milestone on Campbelltown’s journey towards becoming one of the state’s key cities.

Ms Amanda Larkin
Chief Executive, South Western Sydney Local Health District

The $21 million clinical school brings a wealth of opportunity to the area, with Campbelltown predicted to transform into a ‘university city’ over the next two decades. The clinical school provides hands-on clinical experience and mentoring for the region’s future doctors, and is one of the major training sites for Western Sydney University’s School of Medicine.

Chief Executive Amanda Larkin said the School provided access to top-quality education, with almost 70 per cent of graduates staying to complete their internships in western Sydney hospitals.

“The with such high growth in the area, and a commitment from our top educators, Campbelltown Hospital is in good stead to become a centre for cutting edge health care delivered by some of the very best doctors not only here in the state, but on a global level,” Ms Larkin said.

Comprising purpose-built, specialist teaching and simulated learning spaces, the school also houses Campbelltown Hospital’s postgraduate training unit for nursing and other health professionals, providing a significant boost to the Hospital’s clinical training capacity.

The Greater Sydney Commission has identified Campbelltown as a future precinct for health research and education in its final draft district plan.
Last year was the 40th anniversary of the District’s Health Language Interpreter Services. The unit provides around the clock interpreting services in all clinical areas, at all of our hospitals and services. The highest spoken languages are Arabic, Vietnamese and Chinese (both Cantonese and Mandarin).

Our Multicultural Health Unit support equitable access to health services for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities across the District. They provide innovative programs such as:

- Quit & Fit, a Vietnamese Tobacco Project
- Arabic Healthy Lifestyle Project
- CALD Stepping On Program
- Bilingual Community Education Program
- Breast Screening Project for Refugee Women
- HeartSmart for Women project

Language by numbers:

Health Language Services provides services in 87 languages, including Auslan. In the last financial year Health Language Services delivered 176,398 interpreting services. The interpreting team has about 55 staff accredited and a panel of 200+ contracted interpreters. 83,043 of these interpreting services were at Liverpool Hospital.

Due to the Syrian refugee intake, Health Language Services experienced a 225% increase in work for Refugee Health Services for the 1st quarter of 2017.

Our community

South Western Sydney Local Health District is a vibrant, culturally and linguistically diverse region with around 45 per cent of the population born overseas. More than 50 per cent of our community speak a language other than English at home. This is highest in Fairfield, at 75 per cent. Over 40 per cent of Arabic speaking people in NSW live in south western Sydney.

Between 2012 and 2016, more than 10,000 refugees and people entering on humanitarian grounds settled in our region - about half of the NSW humanitarian and refugee intake.

Our District is home to the state-wide NSW Refugee Health Service, providing a dedicated service to promote and support the health of people from a refugee background living in NSW.
Fairfield Hospital is a 220 bed major metropolitan hospital in one of the most multicultural and diverse communities in Australia.

The hospital provides a wide range of hospital and community-based health services including acute care services in medicine, cardiology, surgery, orthopaedics, obstetrics, paediatrics, and emergency medicine. It also provides 24/7 specialist care to babies, children and teenagers, with specialist paediatric doctors available around the clock.

Each year Fairfield Hospital admits over 32,000 patients, performs around 7,600 surgical procedures and delivers over 1,800 babies. The Emergency Department treats 35,000 patients each year and over 200,000 people visit one of the many outpatient clinics. About 700 staff work at Fairfield Hospital, from patient support staff, dieticians to specialist surgeons and doctors.

Beware of treadmills and instant noodles – our team of burns specialists at Fairfield Hospital have named them the more unlikely culprits behind serious burn injuries to children.

Fairfield Hospital Staff Specialist Paediatrician Dr Nicholas Cheng and Clinical Nurse Consultant Wayne Phillips head up the Hospital’s paediatric burns treatment centre, which is run in partnership with The Children’s Hospital at Westmead.

If Dr Cheng and Mr Phillips could let people know one thing, it would be the importance of first aid.

“Of course prevention is best but unfortunately sometimes despite our best efforts, accidents happen and the important thing to do is apply the correct first aid,” Dr Cheng said.

Mr Phillips said only 30 per cent of patients undertake the correct first aid after a burn.

“Over the years we’ve found that certain cultural beliefs about burn first aid were very common in Fairfield. We’ve seen the use of toothpaste amongst Vietnamese patients, soy sauce amongst Chinese patients and butter amongst Spanish patients,” said Mr Phillips.
Liverpool Hospital has been leading groundbreaking cancer drug trials for the past five years, but a new dedicated, cutting edge research facility now places the Hospital at the centre of important cancer research.

Liverpool Hospital’s new fully-integrated Phase 1 Clinical Trials Unit has been launched, providing a permanent space to conduct phase 1 trials of cancer medications.

One of the first trials to take place will be for a new prostate cancer drug, which originally started as a possible arthritis medication.

Head of the Unit, Professor Paul de Souza, said the new Unit would focus on testing therapeutic studies in advanced cancer patients along with other biomarker or genomic studies.

“What the patients who will be treated here have generally failed other cancer treatments available, so we will be able to offer treatments that are not yet available outside of a research setting,” he said.

Services will include drug treatments, blood sampling, blood processing, monitoring, education and patient review.

Associate Professor Kieran Scott shared his story with us about the journey taken by the team of scientists behind a revolutionary prostate cancer drug trial.

“This is the story of how a small compound we call c2, got to the front doors of this brand new facility. The story spans decades and involves the efforts of over 100 scientists and clinicians.

The c2 story begins here in Sydney, when Albert Tseng, a student of mine studying for his PhD degree, got an unexpected result. So unexpected that his supervisor made him repeat the experiment 11 times.

What he’d found was that a small peptide was inhibiting the function of a small human protein, just discovered at that time, that we knew was really highly expressed in inflammatory diseases like septic shock and arthritis.

But the inhibitory effect of the peptide on our small protein was also small. To improve its effect, Albert worked with some very clever chemists and structural biologists to make the peptide better at inhibiting its protein target. And so c2 was created.

But how did we get to prostate cancer? Another very clever scientist, Qihan Dang, now a Professor at Western Sydney University, was working on genes that suppress prostate tumour growth and found that one of these genes affected a biochemical pathway in which our small protein worked.

So we added c2 to prostate cancer cells in a dish and found to our surprise that it slowed the growth of these cells.

The next step was to do laboratory tests to see if an oral formulation of c2 could slow the growth of prostate tumours. Our first studies encouraged us to do more and more studies, until we were sure c2 in an oral formulation could slow tumour growth.

What was remarkable, was that c2 caused some tumours to shrink and when they had gone away, we could stop treatment and they did not come back even when we looked up to six months later. It was these studies that suggested to us that a human clinical trial was warranted.

So we had a small clinical grade of c2 made, enough for all the quality and laboratory safety tests, with enough left over for a world first human trial if the tests were promising. Pleasingly for us, even at high dose, c2 showed no toxicity by any measure.

The next step was to apply to the Human Ethics Committee for approval for the trial. The committee rightly wanted more information, more experiments, more information, and yet more information, but one day a few months ago, the ethics committee did not want any more information and the trial, now called PLA001, was approved to proceed.

The chances of this story arriving at the doors of any Phase 1 Clinical Trials Unit, from where it started 15 years ago, were about 1,000 to 1. But if this trial is successful, the chance of c2 being a useful treatment for men with advanced prostate cancer will be significantly increased, as will its potential to save lives.

c2 is a Sydney story, conceived, grown and developed right here. It is enormously pleasing to know that its first human trial will be done right here at Liverpool. This facility has made this possible.

— Associate Professor Kieran Scott
The future of tumour treatment has come to Liverpool Hospital. Treating patients based on their individual molecular make-up is now a reality made possible by the molecular science cyclotron facility.

District Medical Imaging Director Dr Peter Lin said the world-class molecular tracer played a key role in evolving models of care towards image guided, highly-personalised medicine.

“The facility allows us to treat each patient as an individual, taking into account their own genetic makeup and tumour biology.

“Instead of relying on pathology results, molecular imaging provides doctors with the ability to diagnose the disease early, based on clinico-biological findings and to predict the treatment response and patient outcomes during the early stage of the disease,” he said.

The cyclotron produces radioisotopes used in the identification and therapy of a range of cancers, including lymphoma, lung, pancreatic, head and neck, breast and prostate cancers. It will be used for cancer diagnosis and research, which will prove essential to the timely diagnosis and treatment of tumours.

The isotopes are injected into patients before they undergo a PET scan, highlighting any tumours present, making them easily identifiable and trackable before, during and after treatment.

Elizabeth Doonan, 53, was one of the first beneficiaries of the cyclotron, receiving isotopes that enabled early and more accurate assessment of her life-saving targeted cancer treatment.

“When you’re so desperate to get help and get well it is such a big thing to get help quickly,” she said.

“It’s been a tremendous and overwhelming experience and I can’t thank South Western Sydney Local Health District enough.”

South western Sydney has the second highest childhood overweight and obesity rate in the state—almost 6 per cent above the state average.

“The rate of childhood overweight and obesity is high right across the state, and here in south western Sydney it’s over one in four children,” Chief Executive Amanda Larkin said.

“That’s a matter of deep concern for the District.”

Ms Larkin said with no intervention, children who were overweight or obese were likely to remain that way into adulthood and were more likely to develop chronic diseases such as diabetes at an early age.

“Growing Healthy Kids will address key issues concerning our children, providing more opportunity to get healthy and active.”

A new action plan will see government and non-government organisations working together to ensure children in the south west have the opportunity to enjoy good health and an active life.

The Growing Healthy Kids in South Western Sydney action plan outlines how services in south west Sydney will deliver on the NSW Premier’s Priority to reduce overweight and obesity rates of children by five per cent by 2025.
Capital works begin at Bowral

World class facilities are on their way at Bowral and District Hospital with early capital works underway.

Bowral and District Hospital acting General Manager Susan Hair said extensive planning had been underway since the announcement of the $50 million NSW Government-funded and led project which will ensure the revamped hospital meets the needs of the Southern Highlands community.

“We have been through a thorough and careful planning process, which has included master planning, building design, ground works and construction,” she said.

“Once the hospital is upgraded, we will have a new clinical services building with improved patient and staff amenities that will allow us to continue delivering quality health services to our community.

“While there may be some access changes during the redevelopment, we will ensure there will be no issues for patients attending or accessing the emergency department, or other areas of the hospital.”

The new building will include:

- Modern theatres and inpatient wards
- More single patient rooms with ensuites
- Improved facilities for patients and staff
- New medical equipment
- New main entrance to Bowral and District Hospital.

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Leaders recognised

Vicarious trauma study
A District Drug Health Nurse has started a campaign to help nurses and doctors working in Drug Health to recognise the signs of vicarious trauma in themselves and their colleagues.

Ravina Raidu won two awards at the recent Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs conference, for a literary review she conducted on vicarious trauma and its effect on nurses working with drug and alcohol clients.

"Sometimes we blame ourselves for not feeling enough empathy or not giving enough to our clients, but we cannot pour from an empty cup," she said.

Leaders in generosity
The District is among the most generous givers in the country, taking out the Best Public Sector Program category of the One Million Donors 2017 Workplace Giving Excellence Awards.

Almost a quarter of our staff make a regular $1 a week donation towards funding sustainable projects to improve health outcomes for women and children in Ethiopia. Through the District’s Workplace Giving Program, the Barbara May Foundation has built a 20-bed maternity hospital in Ethiopia and trained birth attendants to manage women’s pregnancies in their village.

Premier’s finalists
The team at Campbelltown Hospital was finalists in the NSW Premier’s awards for Improving Service Levels in Hospitals with its innovative approach to reduce ED waiting times, through better patient flow. The project identified barriers in patient flow, educated staff in understanding patient flow, used length of stay data and developed local solutions to make improvements. As a result, ambulance offload times and patient flow was greatly improved. A number of initiatives since 2014 have lead to 1,329 less patients staying in ED over 24 hours, 5,850 more ambulance offloads in 30 minutes, an extra 4,800 patients admitted to an inpatient bed and 13,900 patients managed and transferred home within 4 hours. An amazing result!

Teacher of the year
Congratulations to Dr Hari Nandakoban, Network Director of Physician Training, who was named Teacher of the Year at the AMA NSW Doctors-in-Training Awards. Dr Nandakoban was nominated for his ongoing development of the Basic Physician Training Program and the significant improvement in College exam results this year.

The nomination also highlighted Dr Nandakoban’s significant contribution to supporting junior doctors across Liverpool Hospital, including the development of a more robust three-tier junior staffing model on clinical teams and his advocacy for changes in workplace culture to support the well-being of junior doctors.
Many assume that once treatment is complete, and the threat of the cancer returning has passed, all your health problems are over.

What many don’t know is that the cancer treatment itself can have serious consequences, which may affect your health further down the track.

Angela Lonergan is one of those patients and she shared her story with us.

Diagnosed with Hodgkin’s lymphoma at the age of 14, she underwent multiple procedures and operations to diagnose and treat the disease.

These treatments included mantle radiotherapy to her neck and chest. For five years her check-ups returned a clean bill of health, but it later became clear that the mantle radiotherapy had troubling side effects.

“If I hadn’t had the mantle radiotherapy treatment for Hodgkin’s Lymphoma, I may not be here now to complain about the late effects, but the effects have been significant,” Ms Lonergan said.

“At the time mantle radiotherapy was one of the standard treatments for Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. It was only later that they realised that there could be late effects for those exposed to it,” she said.

For Ms Lonergan, those late effects included a number of chronic and complex medical problems including aggressive breast cancer and a basal cell carcinoma skin cancer, both within her previous radiation field.

She also has thyroid and dental problems and cardio arterial damage linked to her previous treatment.

“I have the best of care from my medical team to manage my late effects, and I am now hoping to support others who are experiencing the same issues.”

South Western Sydney Local Health District Cancer Services Director Professor Geoff Delaney, said while not everyone treated for cancer will experience late effects, for childhood cancer survivors in particular the long-term effects could crop up decades after the initial treatment.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Cancer Services Director, Professor Geoff Delaney, said while not everyone treated for cancer will experience late effects, for childhood cancer survivors in particular the long-term effects could crop up decades after the initial treatment.

“Many times patients are left weakened due to the debilitating impact of their cancer and their treatment, so research into reducing adverse effects of treatment, will be welcomed by all.”

The Centre will work in partnership with the University of NSW, Western Sydney University, the Ingham Institute and the National Institute of Complementary Medicine, but is still about $1.1 million away from being constructed.

To help fund the centre and significantly further cancer care research, contact 8738 9838.

One step closer to wellness

As the concept of wellness becomes more of a focus for many, cancer patients in south west Sydney are one step closer to a wellness centre oasis of their own.

Thanks to a $2 million grant awarded to Liverpool Hospital Cancer Services by the Australian Cancer Research Foundation (ACRF), south western Sydney is closer to its OASIS (Oncology Alliance for the Science of Integrated Survivorship) Cancer Wellness Research Centre.

The ACRF OASIS Cancer Wellness Research Centre will focus on gathering scientific evidence on the use of a wide range of therapies in improving short and long-term treatment and quality of life outcomes for cancer patients.

Director of Cancer Services, Professor Geoff Delaney, said the generous grant would advance scientific understanding of new approaches to cancer treatment.

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Community support

Foodies and philanthropists from the Vietnamese community came together at the annual Benh Vien Dinner which raised an astounding $50,000 for Fairfield Hospital. Funds raised will go towards an anaesthetic machine.

The Vietnamese community has been supporting the hospital for the past two years, when some community members attended a hospital tour during Multicultural Health Week.

Tour de force

Going out of their way to help patients is all in a day’s work for Fairfield Hospital staff, but they recently rode 35km out of their way as part of a special On Your Bike4Kids fundraiser for the Hospital.

Staff from the paediatrics and finance departments raised an incredible $13,000 by cycling from Parramatta River to Sydney Olympic Park. Funds will be used to buy phototherapy units to treat jaundice in pre-term babies.

Heart disease remains the biggest killer in Australia, responsible for 11 per cent of hospitalisations.

A state-of-the-art Cardiac Interventional Unit opened at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital to tackle the issue locally, changing the lives of Bankstown patients with heart disease.

The $1.6 million unit is equipped with technology to allow clinicians to explore arteries and chambers of the heart – often areas of narrowing or blockages. Once the problem is diagnosed, doctors will deliver treatment to unblock the heart vessels, relieving symptoms and increasing survival.

Staff Specialist Dr Kaleab Asress is leading the team and brings expertise in coronary and structural heart intervention to complement the experienced and dedicated multidisciplinary team at the new facility.

At the heart of Bankstown

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Get to know our staff...

Name: Doctor Harry Doan
Position: Director of Medical Services, Fairfield Hospital

What inspired you to become a Doctor? My parents always had high aspirations for my siblings and I, and they worked hard so we could get the very best education. I wanted to do something that they could be proud of and I could feel good about – the ability to help and treat people is exactly that.

What do you love most about your job? I am in a position to influence good change and establish a connection with people in the community. I am very fortunate to have this opportunity.

What is the most challenging part of your job? As director of medical services, I am responsible for overseeing medical, governance and workforce issues, so balancing numerous ideas, which can be quite challenging to mediate!

Fairfield has one of the highest refugee populations. Can you tell us about your refugee background? I think that’s what resonates with me at Fairfield Hospital. My family came here from Vietnam by boat and when we arrived we had nothing because pirates invaded the boat and stole all our money and jewellery. I was six years old and my parents did not speak a word of English. My parents had applied to go to America but my sister became very sick and Australia was the closest option. It was the right decision because my family’s struggles gave me a platform to appreciate the opportunities my parents worked so hard to give us. I am proud to be an Australian doctor at South Western Sydney Local Health District and serve a community whose experiences I can relate to.

Can you tell us about the contributions of the Vietnamese community? From their first tour of Fairfield Hospital, they decided to start a fundraising committee. In the first year they raised $80,000 which bought an ultrasound machine for the antenatal clinic. In 2017 their efforts let us purchase an anaesthetic machine for theatres. It is wonderful to see the community giving back to their local hospital.

Really get to know Harry...

Nickname: Doc
Hobbies and interests: Golf and travelling.
Education: Chester Hill High School, Sydney University.
Earliest memory: Kneeling down for hours as punishment for destroying my grandparents’ garden!
Sibling status: Middle child but parents’ favourite!
What did you think you were going to be when you grew up: Australian cricket player.
Hidden talent: Soccer.
Talent you wish you had: Being better at golf.
Advice: I did it. Anyone can do it.