



The Path to Wellness

The Sunshine Coast Private Hospital's celebration of recovery through art

Sunshine Coast artists, who are also mental health consumers or carers of a person who has experienced mental health issues, participated in the Cooinda Mental Health Service's second annual art exhibition *Path to Wellness* during Mental Health Week 2014.

At the inaugural art exhibition held at Cooinda Mental Health Service in 2013, more than 100 people attended the event and enjoyed 50 pieces of featured artwork and craft whilst being entertained by local musicians.

Adriana Leonardi, director of support services at The Sunshine Coast Private Hospital, said the event served an important role in helping bring people together to raise the profile of mental health in the community.

"When we opened Cooinda we consciously made the decision to make it accessible – mental health is too often misunderstood and hidden away behind closed doors, and as a result people are made to feel embarrassed or ashamed," she said.

The art exhibition had its beginnings as a strategy to inspire and re-energise people participating in Cooinda's group therapy programs. To complement the evidence-based components of its program, the Cooinda Clinic's group therapy programs utilise diversional craft, physical fitness, relaxation, art and music, all of which can play an important role in relapse prevention – teaching new skills and encouraging socialisation and community connections.

Jo Munday, Cooinda Mental Health Service's business development manager, said, "It's amazing to witness the enormous sense of pride and accomplishment the artists experience. It's also great to see local artists have the opportunity to participate in this program and see their art celebrated."

The exhibition also affords the hospital an opportunity to promote mental health wellbeing to the community.

"What we are trying to convey through our programs and this exhibition is that mental health is a part of everyone's wellbeing," Ms Munday said.

The Cooinda Mental Health Service offers a range of therapeutic programs for patients with emotional, psychological and psychiatric issues such as mood disorders, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder/trauma, addictions, obsessive compulsive disorder, anger management issues, and more. [PH](#)

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Closing the gap

Toronto Private Hospital increases capacity and access to mental health services for Hunter residents



A critical shortage of psychiatrists in the NSW Hunter region has created demand for more mental health services and innovative ways to provide them. Toronto Private Hospital, located in Toronto on Lake Macquarie NSW, has introduced a number of mental health services to provide the local community with a variety of options to suit their lifestyles and mental health needs.

Previously, local residents had limited options when considering mental health inpatient treatment. When Lingard Private Hospital, located in Newcastle, introduced a cardiac ward, their large mental health unit, known as the Woodlands Ward, and their out patient programs, needed a new

home. Lingard and Toronto Private collaborated with local mental health specialists and their own psychiatric team, leading to the conclusion that in the best interest of the community, the services would be relocated to Toronto Private in October 2013. A \$2 million redevelopment project ensured that the new Woodlands Ward would provide patients with a modern, spacious and tranquil facility.

"Mental illness continues to cause considerable distress and disability for individuals, impacting on the entire community. Toronto Private Hospital has been working collaboratively with local psychiatrists and mental health organisations to ensure our services are meeting local needs," said Andrew Mereau,

chief executive officer at Toronto Private Hospital.

"The opening of the inpatient mental health and day therapy units have provided increased capacity and access for patients in the Hunter."

Now with 25 beds, the voluntary Woodlands Ward is run by specialist psychiatrists, Dr Allan White, Dr Catherine Faehrmann, Dr Ian Fowler and Dr Cynthia Parker, who have developed a variety of well researched therapeutic programs, groups and activities, based on best practice principals.

Toronto Private Hospital recently commenced a new service for patients suffering from treatment resistant anxiety and depression - the Mood and Anxiety Assessment Program.

"The program has been established to support general practitioners by providing a comprehensive clinical assessment service for patients with acute or chronic mood and/or anxiety disorders.

"General practitioners can refer patients with mood or anxiety symptoms where initial treatment has been unsuccessful or hampered by complicating factors," Mr Mereau said.

"The combination of our services is another step towards ensuring the Hunter community gets the best possible care from a well trained and an appropriately resourced mental health unit." [PH](#)