

MEDIA RELEASE

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Music uplifts Parkes and Forbes hospitals

For a hospital patient or visiting family member, having live music played to you might seem out of the ordinary, but in Parkes and Forbes hospitals this new experience has been a dose of uplifting joy.

Musicians Kerrie Davies, Andrew Davies and James Whalan made the first of more than a dozen visits to the hospitals last month, playing gentle, uplifting songs to patients, staff and visitors.

The music sessions are a partnership between Arts OutWest, Mitchell Conservatorium and Lachlan Health Service. The sessions are part of the culture and arts program being imbedded into the new facilities.

“The aim is to introduce music that has a positive impact on the ambience for patients, visitors and staff,” Arts OutWest arts and health coordinator Christine McMillan said.

“We have had wonderful feedback so far,” Ms McMillan said.

One patient at Parkes Hospital said: “I was here last week and Arts OutWest had music, gee they were good, just the right music for the hospital.”

A visitor added “Yes they were great! This place [Parkes Hospital] really looks after you in lots of different ways. We are so lucky.”

The musicians perform a repertoire of old time, country and western, blues, rock and roll and folk songs, moving around the hospital from public areas to wards, on the invitation of people in each room. The times spent in ward rooms vary from just a few minutes to up to half an hour depending on the response from the patients.

“We’re aiming to create an intimate musical experience with the patients,” Kerrie Davies said. “Live music experiences are used in many hospitals across Australia and around the world.”

In maternity there have been performances for mothers with newborns, and mothers just about to give birth. In the physiotherapy unit at Parkes the musicians are working on “a rhythmical repertoire that creates stronger energy for patients”.

“Staff have responded very well to the music sessions – it’s been a welcome interlude during our busy working days,” said Lachlan Health Service Manager, Liz Mitchell.



The Parkes and Forbes music program is part of the Lachlan Health Service Culture and Arts Working Group. The Lachlan Health Services Project team engaged regional arts development organisation Arts OutWest to integrate culture and arts into the Forbes and Parkes Hospital redevelopments. The NSW Government provided \$113.7 million to redevelop the Forbes Hospital and build a new Parkes Hospital. A component of this funding was used to help deliver the Lachlan Health Service Culture and Arts program.

For more information about the Lachlan Health Service Culture and Arts program, please contact Arts OutWest's Arts and Health Coordinator, Christine McMillan: christine.mcmillan@health.nsw.gov.au or 6330 5228

Media note: music sessions will continue in August, various times. Media opportunities can be arranged with advance notice.

Photo captions:

Kerrie Davies and Ross Beattie at Forbes Hospital. Photo by Kim Storey.

Entertaining patients at Parkes Hospital. Photo by Jay Lee Zagrovic.