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# Piece of the regional healthcare puzzle

Macquarie Home Stay exists to support patients who travel to Dubbo to receive medical treatment and care

#### Rod Crowfoot, Managing Director at Macquarle Home Stay

CAN you imagine trying to navigate a high-risk pregnancy and needing to travel to be close to birthing facilities many weeks or months prior to your due date!

Or perhaps you're a cancer patient receiv ing radiotherapy and need treatment every day for 15 minutes over a period of six weeks and you come from Bourke.

What if one of your family members has been admitted to intensive care needing surgery and rehabilitation over a period of time and you've just arrived from Lightning Ridge to be by their side and sometimes to even say your last goodbyes?

There are truly so many scenarios which unfortunately affect families right across the western and far western regions of NSW. That's where Macquarie Home Stay (MHS) becomes your "Home away from home."

Patients from across NSW are frequently referred to major regional centres for specialist medical treatment.

Dubbo, as a major health hub to the region, draws considerable numbers of patients for treatment and, in doing so, patients, their carer and family require appropriate, affordable, short-term accommodation close to hospitals. That's the niche that MHS sits in.

MHS is a jigsaw piece in the puzzle of regional healthcare. The facility is key in supporting NSW health to deliver medical services, connect patients with treatment, and build healthier, stronger and thriving regional communities.

The MHS patient accommodation supports people accessing a wide range of services from paediatrics, cancer care, obstetrics and emergency surgery, to specialist appointments and more

With the funding provided to build the Western Cancer Centre (WCC), it quickly became apparent that MHS would need to expand to support patients receiving treatment. In consultation with WCC, 26 units were needed for patients who travel for

The CWA of NSW, passionate grassroots community members, supported MHS's vision and, along with their Sydney leadership team, provided substantial donations to expand the accommodation facility

Sponsorship across all areas of the roposed building were created - each unit and common areas inside and out were



Macquarie Home Stay, just 800 metres from Dubbo Hospital, now operates 51 units of patient and family accommodation. The first quests occupied the new CWA of NSW Guesthouse in February 2025. Picture supplied

funded by businesses, community, families and others to see the vision realised.

Combined with a grant from the NSW Government, it enabled the first guests to occupy the new CWA of NSW Guesthouse in February 2025

Speaking of grassroots, we spoke with Tim Williams, Nurse Unit Manager of Western Cancer Centre in Dubbo. 'Home away from home comes to mind when someone mentions Macquarie Home Stay. That's what it becomes for many people from out west," Mr Williams said.

Whether they have support from loved ones or not, MHS caters for the needs of the well, not so well and the could be better. giving them a refuge amid the trials of life, likening it to a supportive community family when isolated from their own.

"I have seen the way that the staff of

Home away from home comes to mind when someone mentions Macquarie Home Stay. That's what it becomes for many people from out

Tim Williams, Nurse Unit Manager Western Cancer Centre Dubbo

Macquarie Home Stay do their best to meet the immediate and long-term needs of clients, from arranging transport to town, to seeing the need of rearranging appointments within the cancer centre to suit their individual requirements.

"Being able to be connected into a community that is not your own is vitally important for those who stay. Linking to a chemist, bank or grocery store allows clients to maintain that independence and sense of control when a cancer diagnosis seems to take most of that away." Mr Williams said.

Stay continues. As Dubbo increasingly

And so, the journey of Macquarie Home

becomes the drawcard for medical care for the far-reaching communities of NSW, MHS will continue to meet patient accommodation needs. Call it magic or plain and simple help, where help is needed the most. That's MHS - supporting, caring and helping people so they can soon return to their regional communities and be with family and friends



Coonabarabran woman, Mary Wainwright (pictured), has travelled to Dubbo for oncology and chemotherapy appointments and, more recently, for surgery. Picture supplied

# Accommodation with a big heart

IN 2024-25 close to 4500 night, a couple of days, a people stayed at Macquarie week or for months and Home Stay (MHS), with months. The longest stay at medical appointments and treatment.

providing patient accommodation to many of the western and far western people of NSW. Guests travel from over Director of MHS, explains,

50 per cent of the geographimedical treatment. Thanks to the medical care they need. Some people stay over-

future predictions sug- MHS this year was 112 nights gesting that close to 10,000 and the longest distance people each year will need travelled was 772 kilometres accommodation support one way. But MHS is much at MHS while undergoing more than just a place to stay, it's really a home away from home which happens Since 2019, MHS has been to offer accommodation for patients and their families with some "special sauce", as Rod Crowfoot, Managing

'Our special sauce is made

The accommodation, amenities, staff and transport facilities were first class and of a standard that met each and every need I could ask for.

Mary Wainwright, guest at Macquarie Home Stay

ly rooms with generously and from appointments, this donated hand-crafted rugs and even beautiful patch- to the generosity of Dubbo work quilts for guests to use City Toyota." cal area of NSW to Dubbo for up of a number of elements and enjoy. We check in with including the caring and guests, some may be unwell nificant. Before the Western MHS, they now have a place attentive staff who make or having treatment and oth- Cancer Centre at Dubbo to stay where the cost of their sure all our guests have ers are the carer or partner of Hospital and Macquarie accommodation isn't the everything they need," Mr the patient who is in hospital. Home Stay existed, and onreason they delay obtaining Crowfoot said. "Volunteer We provide a guest conclerge cology treatment could only groups provide delicious service, with volunteers be undertaken in cities and dinners for our guests free of who drop off and pick up metropolitan areas far away

charge twice weekly, com-

patients from hospital or to also is free of charge thanks

The impact of MHS is sig-

from family, friends and fa- port facilities were first class miliar environments, many and of a standard that met medical treatment at all.

stay at MHS.

Wainwright said. "The

patients would sadly choose each and every need I could to stay at home and not seek ask for. The volunteer network that provided meals Over the past few months. during the week were a cred-Coonabarabran woman, it to those organisations and Mary Wainwright has trav- the people that participate in elled to Dubbo for oncology providing a service to those and chemotherapy appointlike me that appreciated a

ments and, more recently, home-cooked meal, friendly

for surgery. Mary chooses to faces and support. \*To everyone associated "At a time of uncertainty in with MHS, from those that my diagnosis of breast can-volunteer their time, to those cer, the ability to stay at MHS employed in areas from in Dubbo, so as to attend maintenance, gardens, advarious appointments and ministration staff and manweekly chemotherapy over a agement, a big, big thank you prolonged 12 to 15-week pe- and my sincere appreciation riod, was a great relief," Mrs to you all."

These stories are echoed accommodation, across a broad spectrum of amenities, staff and trans- people who stay at MHS.



At Lyons Project Management, we're incredibly proud to have partnered with the dedicated team at Macquarie Home Stay to bring this important community project to life.

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creating a safe, welcoming space for families who need to be close



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## Guest concierge service takes patients to and from MHS

Stay (MHS) first opened staff noticed a real need for patients to use public transport or taxi services to get to and from hospital and other medical appointments.

Sometimes guests staying at MHS are unwell, so driving is not ideal. There is the stress of driving in a busy city environment for those who are not used to traffic lights, roundabouts and general traffic mayhem.

MHS, through consultation and partnership with Dubbo City Toyota and Gilgandra Toyota, provides a RAV4 vehicle as the new concierge service. Patients are now able to travel to and from hospital and medical appointments with ease thanks to the the new service, offered five days a week,

The MHS concierge service would not be complete without the volunteer drivers Frances Rowley is one of

"I knew what a fantastic contribution MHS made give back," Ms Bowley said. to the community, the staff big impact on people's lives from a large part of western taking their minds off what and all the staff at MHS. So recently retired. "I had a bit out the year and has assisted



Bert McClellan and Frances Rowley (pictured) are two volunteer drivers for the Macquarie Home Stay guest concierge service. Picture supplied

who run the service weekly. and central west NSW and treatment they may be hav- I guess you could say I value of time on my hands so when over 150 guests to arrive as I had time on my hands I ing. I value the time I spend wanted to be part of this great with the guests as I love talkorganisation and I wanted to ing to them, hearing where

> "My greatest joy as a voltheir stories and hopefully

they come from, especially those that live out west. Also, and the volunteers make a uniteer driver is listening to every guest I pick up is so year. Bert ran a country mail appreciative of the drivers run for over 20 years and has at MHS for 31 days through-

MHS as much as the guests."

Bert McClellan, another Dubbo local, began as a volunteer driver for MHS's concierge service in April this

I was asked would I like to do safely at their appointments a bit of driving for the guests at MHS, I took up the challenge," Mr McClellan said.

around Dubbo. 'No one guest values the work volunteers do more than others, all To date. Bert has volunguests I have assisted have teered as a concierge driver been very much appreciative of the service provided for

## 66 AT ASTLEY'S, WE BELIEVE THE BEST SPACES ARE CREATED Macquarie Home Stay is a powerful played our part in supporting Macquarie reminder that when local businesses and the community work side by side, we can create places that truly Home Stay, an organisation that provides comfort, care WHEN A COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER. and a sense of home for it most. We're honoured to stand alongside so many others who helped bring this important space to families during some of life's most challenging Astley's 2 Skymaster PI, Dubbo NSW 2830

## Conversation and camaraderie over a meal

teering, the Dubbo community certainly knows how to put their hand up to help.

The Macquarie Home Stay (MHS) dinner program has become an institution where volunteers provide an evening home-cooked meal free of charge for the guests.

The dinners create an opportunity for not only a nour ishing meal but a chance to catch up with other guests outside the hospital system.

If you're stuck at the hospital all day, or not feeling well, cooking a meal can be the last thing on your mind.

Guests going through similar medical journeys. whether they're having a baby, have a family member in hospital, are undergoing cancer treatment, or are staying by themselves, often appreciate the banter and conversations that arise through the dinner program.

This is particularly the case if they're away from home for many weeks.

The guests' dinners can have 30 or more attendees and all report how delicious the meals are, but more so the camaraderie and friendThe Can Assist Dubbo members provide monthly dinners for MHS quests

sharing a meal with strangers Bob Berry Real Estate is who then become friends. In 2024-25, a total of 21 orservices groups that provide ganisations provided dinners dinners monthly at MHS and for guests on 134 evenings have done since 2022.

"Our monthly visits have

ships they've made through achievement.

become more than just a volunteering effort. They're one of the volunteer guest a bonding experience that strengthens our workplace culture," said Karlie De Kaste, Bob Berry Real Estate

"We love being able to deliver a meal and provide some sort of normality for guests and ease the burden of cooking and have mean-

"Staff often bring their



dinners since 2022. Pictures supplied

partners and children, turnoften have our children ating each visit into a shared tend with us and we see how moment of kindness. Bemuch joy that brings to the yond the meals, we offer kids and guests, It honestly emotional support through warms the heart," Can Assist Dubbo mem conversation and companjonship, Many guests are far bers also provide monthly from home, facing serious dinners for MHS guests. medical challenges. A friend-"The highlight for Can ly chat or a listening ear can Assist members is chatting

make a world of difference. with MHS guests. We meet This human connection is a great people," said Susie Hill, core part of our contribution. co-ordinator Dubbo branch of Can Assist. "There is a special joy in

meeting families and mothers awaiting the arrival of their babies."

ingful conversations, We



over the year - a tremendous





Renascent

## Renascent Regional congratulates Macquarie Home Stay on the completion of the CWA of NSW Guesthouse.

Renascent was proudly engaged to deliver Stage 2, it has been a pleasure to work with them and provide such an amazing facility for the people of regional NSW to use.

At the recent Master Builders Association Western Regions Awards, we entered this development in the award for best public building over \$5,000,000 - and we celebrated winning this category.

We congratulate Macquarie Home Stay on their vision and commitment to the people they support, our team worked hard to ensure the client's voice remained at the centre of every stage of delivery.

## From Broken Hill to Glen Innes, MHS welcomes everyone

THE Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) is the largest LHD in NSW, covering an area of 246,676 square kilometres, with a population of more than 276,000 people.

The district is home to more than 30,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, representing over 11 per cent of the population, significantly higher than the total NSW Aboriginal population rate of 3.6 per cent.

The WNSWLHD provides innovative healthcare through a vast range of services, and for many, Dubbo Hospital is NSW's most north-western referral hospital. Dubbo is also a rapidly growing centre for specialist health services.

Over the past seven years, Macquarie Home Stay (MHS) has supported nearly 7000 individual patients, from right across regional NSW, with accommodation.

For context, residents from more than 50 per cent of the geographic area of NSW have ment can require multiple intensive and frequent med- to stay overnight qualify for received medical treatment in Dubbo and staved at MHS.

Some of these patients accommodation - to see a delivered while staying at a six-year period.



Over the past seven years, MHS has supported nearly 7000 individual patients, from right across regional NSW. Pictures Shutterstock

specialist, for a night in hospital, or the like. However, for visits to Dubbo.

many, their medical treat- is life-altering and requires ical treatment and needing ical appointments, surgery a NSW government subsidy Some families are deliv- and treatments. One such called IPTAAS (Isolated Paering their third and fourth guest was able to access ac-

The majority of guests cial assistance for the travel hospitalisation, deaths and Sadly, a cancer diagnosis travelling to Dubbo for med- and accommodation costs injuries and also have poorer available locally.

This program provides finan-

of patients who must travel access to, and use of, primalong distances for specialist ry health care services, than medical treatment that is not

MHS exists to help reduce Data shows that people the trauma, emotional stress have needed short-term baby, and each one has been commodation 60 times over dation Assistance Scheme). living in rural and remote and financial burden experiareas have higher rates of enced by guests.

people living in major cities.

Madison Sumberland At Snooze, we know how important a good night's sleep is, especially when life throws its toughest momen your way. That's why we're proud to support Macquarie Home Stay, an incredible charity providing a safe, comfortable home away from home for families travelling to Dubbo for medical care

Macquarie Home Stay helps take one big worry off people's minds, so they can rest easier and focus on what really matters. We're honoured to play a small part in the big difference they make every day.

> Snooze Dubbo, 231 Cobra St, Dubbo NSW 2830 | (02) 6882 6545 Visit us in-store or at snooze.com.au It's amazing what a little snooze can do

#### **HOME AWAY FROM HOME**

## Slacksmith family welcomes twin boys

APRIL Richards, from northwest of Brewarrina, is currently staying at Macquarie Home Stay (MHS) with her family. April arrived at MHS nine weeks ago and had been awaiting the arrival of twins who were safely delivered at Dubbo Hospital this week.

"Being able to have com fortable accommodation for our whole family and the children for such a long pe riod of time has been won derful. We are so close to the hospital, our obstetrician and having access to medical services and facilities on a daily basis," April said, "It's been a blessing to not have to drive the 10 hour round trip to return home every week and being able to rest my body as much as I could during the third trimester of our twin pregnancy for the best outcomes.

"Having access to affordaas our temporary short term home and be part of a welcoming and warming community and having accommodation that has everything we need while still being able to continue our daughters schooling

through distance education. guest dinners twice weekcooking for our large family and save money on eating provide and how lovely been very different for us."

ble accommodation where us during our stay like we are little ones. Expectant mums we have come to know this part of the family here. All from across western and the staff are lovely and the northern NSW are brought volunteers. Every person we to Dubbo to deliver their have met staving here has their own personal journey and the things they are going through at times in their life and I definitely feel that everyone appreciates the facilities and the kindness as The Slacksmith's have had much as we have. The family unit we have stayed in has ly. "It has been lovely to be just been so comfortable, able to attend the guest din- there is no place like this. I ners and have a break from really don't know how we would have been able to get through this time in our lives guests can arrive around two out. Honestly, we have been without access to this essenblown away by the contin- tial service and I think if we uing support that various hadn't had access to it then entities and organisations the outcomes could have

Dianavah Jeffries

everyone is," April said

The Slacksmith's are one There are so many things of many families who call to be thankful for Everyone MHS home while they await here has been looking after the delivery of their special babies. Staying at MHS allows the mum and family to be close to the hospital for scans and midwife appointments and, when ready to deliver both mum and babs are in the best place - reducing risks and stress and alleviating any potential complications that may arise such as delivering a baby on the side of the road or needing emergency flights, Many weeks before their due date. however some are advised by their medical team to be closer to birthing facilities

The Stacksmith family from Brewarrina NSW. Picture

## New work at MHS continues growth

WITH the completion of the CWA of NSW Guesthouse, you might assume all the building works are now finished. Each accommodation stage has been designed to suit the needs of guests undergoing various medical treatments, and with sizes to suit guest, partner, and carer dynamics.

When considering the families who stay. the MHS board has committed to develop ing stage three - establishing the Village, which consists of five freestanding family units. MHS will install each unit as the budget permits. Fundraising to develop the Village has already begun, with individuals, community groups, businesses and others making donations and taking up sponsorship opportunities. To get involved, visit macquariehomentay.com.au.

Stage four is also on the radar. This involves actively engaging with state and federal government to help share in this



There's room to grow at MHS. Picture

nvestment for the betterment of regional NSW residents. It will provide 14 one and two bed units as the "bread and butter" of the MHS accommodation offering, and will be a welcome addition to the suite of diverse unit designs. Occupying 8.5 acres, the facility integrates all the accommodation precincts along with parkland and playground areas to create a safe, comfortable and appropriate accommodation facility.

Congratulations to Macquarie Home Stay on the incredible work you're doing for families in need. Red Door Decor is proud to have supported your spaces with our window furnishings, helping create a warm and welcoming environment for your guests.

Saturday December 20, 2025 DAILY LIBERAL - WRAP 7

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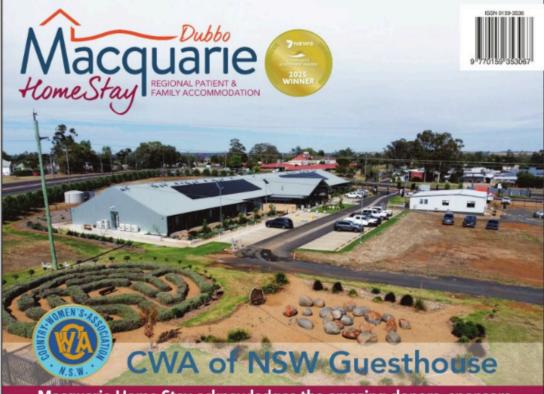
### Proudly supports Macquarie Home Stay



### **Proudly supports Macquarie Home Stay**



The CWA of NSW along with our members who support and use the facility are proud of our association. Congratulations on providing such a wonderful community asset



## Macquarie Home Stay acknowledges the amazing donors, sponsors and supporters that has helped bring this greatly needed patient accommodation facility to life.

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- Macdonald and Co Wool Brokers
- Midstate Shearing Shed Nyngan

- Glencore
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And if you have donated and supported this accommodation project, we thank you too.



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