

25 February 2019

Volunteers needed for new program at Shoalhaven Hospital

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) is putting out the call for community members who are passionate about volunteering to be involved in a new program to support older people at Shoalhaven Hospital.

The Volunteers Assisting and Supporting Elderly patients (VASE) program aims to provide social, emotional and practical support to patients to enhance their care.

Shoalhaven Hospital Nurse Unit Manager, Nicole Ledger, said the new program will have many benefits.

“The VASE initiative will complement our ‘Fit for Frailty’ program and will support our shared goals of physical and emotional wellness and recovery for older patients.

“We are calling for volunteers in the Shoalhaven to help us by engaging with our patients – whether it’s going for a walk, helping with meals, playing board games or simply just having a chat.

“Volunteers make a significant difference to people’s lives and contribute to the wellbeing of patients in our hospitals and people in their homes,” Ms Ledger said.

“Our volunteers tell us that helping others gives them a sense of purpose and is also a great way to meet new people and make friends,” she added.

Volunteer, Robyn Hill, said her experience has been very rewarding.

“Being a volunteer with the Local Health District allows me to take the time to really get to know a person and learn about their past. The more we know about a person the more we can help them, which is very satisfying,” Ms Hill said.

Extensive training is provided and new volunteers work alongside experienced people to gain practical skills. They are also provided with ongoing education and support.

“Volunteers are a diverse group with varied skills, life experiences and backgrounds. What they have in common is empathy and a passion for helping people, both essential to volunteering,” Ms Ledger said.

The 2018-19 budget for Shoalhaven Hospital is \$147 million. The 2018-19 Budget for ISLHD is over \$951 million, an increase of nearly \$47.8 million on the 2017-18 annualised budget.

If you are interested in becoming a valued volunteer please contact Volunteer Co-ordinator Elanne Thompson: 4464 6985 or elanne.thompson@health.nsw.gov.au or Nicole Ledger on 44291629, nicole.ledger@health.nsw.gov.au