Northern Regional Paediatric Unit

The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit aims to:
- Provide a high quality child health service
- Provide a service as close to home as possible for the children of rural and remote Northern South Australia
- Work in a child-parent-family-community partnership

Staff
We have three resident paediatricians on the team, one paediatric registrar, two child health nurses and clerical support staff.

Third Paediatrician
Vacant since April 2008 – see person and job specification

Clinical duties include:
- Provision of a second clinic at Whyalla each week
- Monthly clinic at Maitland each month and providing support to the GPs and the team down there in children’s health.
- Paediatric clinics in Port Augusta every day other than Thursdays

Teaching
- Undergraduate training of medical students. The Adelaide University has offered 15 - 20 places for students to undertake their entire fifth year program in the Spencer Gulf region. The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit in Port Augusta is providing these students with their entire formal undergraduate paediatric experience.
- Post graduate training of the paediatric registrars who have a six-monthly rotation to the Paediatric Unit.
- Up-skilling of other health professionals including GPs, nursing staff and allied health professionals

Non-clinical duties include quality improvement related activities, research.

Adolescent Health Service  (Your Space Youth Health Service)
The Adolescent Health Service was established in 2005. This is carried out by Dr Andy Killcross, with support from Rachel Press (child health nurse) and paediatricians from our service.

The service’s key aims are to provide a safe, non-threatening and confidential environment in which adolescent patients aged between 12 – 19 can access health care.

Inpatient services
Inpatient services are provided at Port Augusta Hospital including neonatal, paediatric and adolescent services.

The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit provides medical expertise for level 2 neonates at the Port Augusta Hospital. This includes appropriate personnel and appropriate contribution to maintenance of standards in order to provide care to neonates over 34 weeks gestation requiring neonatal care. This also includes supporting the obstetricians, attending caesarean sections and providing neonatal care. The inpatient component also involves liaising appropriately with tertiary institutions in particular the Women’s and Children’s and Flinders Hospitals.

Emergency Care
Paediatricians provide an on-call service within the region and are available by mobile phone at all times to offer support to outreach nursing staff and also to general practitioners for emergencies at hospitals within the area.
The paediatricians provide neonatal support as and when appropriate and by negotiation with Whyalla and Port Pirie Hospitals and other hospitals in the region. This includes supporting emergency neonates in this setting prior to the arrival of emergency teams from Adelaide.

**Outpatient clinic locations**
There are regular outpatient clinics held at Port Augusta Hospital and at health services throughout rural and remote South Australia.

**Clinic locations include:**

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flinders and Far North Region</th>
<th>Mid North Region</th>
<th>Eyre Peninsula Region</th>
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<tr>
<td>Port Augusta</td>
<td>Port Pirie (Weekly)</td>
<td>Whyalla (Weekly)</td>
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<td>(All other days when not on outreach)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roxby Downs</td>
<td>Ceduna (Monthly)</td>
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<td>(Monthly)</td>
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<td>Coober Pedy</td>
<td>Tumby Bay (Monthly)</td>
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<td>(Bi-Monthly)</td>
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<td>Oodnadatta</td>
<td>Port Lincoln (Monthly)</td>
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<td>(Four-Yearly)</td>
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**Aboriginal Health Clinics**
The following clinics are run in conjunction with Aboriginal controlled health organisations. This partnership model allows provision of specialist services to Aboriginal clients in a user friendly and culturally appropriate way. These include:

Monthly clinics:
- Port Augusta – Pika Wiya Health Service
- Ceduna - Ceduna-Koonibba Aboriginal Health Service
- Coober Pedy - Umoona Tjutagku Aboriginal Health Inc
- Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health Service

Three-monthly clinic:
- Oodnadatta Dunjiba Community

**Developmental Issues**
The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit supports the Child Development Units at Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta and has been instrumental with its outreach clinics in providing this service not just within Spencer Gulf towns but this type of coordinated service across the region into smaller communities.

**Palliative Care / Home Visiting**
The majority of children in need of palliative care have malignancy and severe disability. They are usually cared for in Adelaide. However a number of children such as those with brain tumours may not be under the oncology unit at the Women’s and Children's Hospital and may require local services. This includes pain relief, organisation of services, medical support and home visits by paediatricians.

**School Based Health Care**
A number of case conferences are held each year usually in schools with teachers, Behavioural Management Team members and families about young people with health/educational issues. This can include intellectual disability, ADHD and mental health issues.
SERVICES PROVIDED IN CONJUNCTION WITH CHILD HEALTH NURSES

Health Care Plans and Schools
A number of children in Northern South Australia will suffer from health problems that require Health Care Plans. This can include severe allergy and anaphylaxis, severe asthma, diabetes, seizures and other health problems. A combined medical and nursing management plan that is supported with training allows for these children and their teachers to be supported to a high standard of professionalism.

Nursing staff from the Unit are working in collaboration with Child Youth Health and DECS to develop a group of distance learning modules to be used in conjunction with practical training sessions to enable staff in remote locations to develop the skills required.

Access Health Assistant Program
The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit with its combined medical/nursing expertise and in association with the Special Needs Unit and the Department of Education has trialled Rural Access Assistant Scheme for children who need extra support to be maintained in school. This program provides a trained worker in school where needed. This has been highly successful. This includes the paediatrician and nurse training and signing off on a Health Care Management Plan for young people with high needs in school. This might include management of seizures, incontinence and gastrostomy feeding.

Adverse immunisation service in association with the South Australian Immunisation Service
The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit provides a referral centre for special immunisation in a controlled environment. Those children who have had an adverse reaction are monitored and continue on the immunisation program with medical/nursing oversight. The appropriate notification and standards are practiced.

The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit has established an opportunistic immunisation program with appropriate standing orders being documented and are working towards developing training modules for registered nurses around immunisation.

Asthma Education and Lung Function Testing
This service provides a regular asthma clinic that can be accessed by the paediatricians and GPs. Families are offered information in all areas of asthma management. The asthma clinic houses a good variety of asthma training resources.

OTHER SERVICES
Child Protection
This service provides acute assessment of children with child protection issues in association with The Child Protection Service at the Women's and Children's Hospital. On occasions children who are unable to be examined in Adelaide due to anxiety and non-compliance have been examined locally. Children who need admission to hospital for issues of safety or injury are cared for by the Unit as well.

Teaching
Medical students come to Northern South Australia on a regular basis for six weeks at a time. Sixteen medical students have placements each year in Port Augusta with the Northern Regional Paediatric Unit.

Registrars have also been coming regularly to Northern South Australia. They receive six months of training in community paediatrics, developmental paediatrics and also Aboriginal children's health. This is a unique position within South Australia.

The service also provides a reference library and lends out material for projects. Team members are also approached on regular basis by ambulance officers and
nurses carrying out research or educational projects and wishing to have advice and direction, and then to use resources.

**SPECIALIST SERVICES**

**Child Psychiatry**
The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit supports a child psychiatrist coming to Port Augusta for a two-day clinic once a month. This is an extremely busy clinic, including clinical support of CAMHS workers, general practitioners and paediatricians. This can be done by informal consultation on clinic days in Port Augusta or by phone consults to Adelaide. This is a unique model of integrated mental health that appears to work well in rural South Australia.

**Other specialist paediatric services include:**
- Neurology attend four times a year (1 day clinics)
- Orthopaedics attend four times a year (1 day clinics)
- Endocrinology (diabetes) attend twice a year with a diabetes nurse educator (2 day clinics)
- Genetics attend twice a year with a geneticist and genetic counsellor (2 day clinics)
- Respiratory once a year (1 day clinic)
- Gastroenterology twice a year (2 day clinics)
- Cardiology once a year (1 day clinic)
- Nephrology once a year (1 day clinic)
- Allergist twice a year (1 day clinic)
- Ophthalmologist six times a year (1 day clinic)

The clinic time is shared equally between clinics located in Whyalla and Port Augusta.

**Projects**
The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit has been involved in the Child Health Project, which provides strategic planning for children’s health issues throughout our region. This project won an award for the Port Augusta Hospital for “Best practice in the Health Sector”.

The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit has also been instrumental in setting up Child and Youth Health Group as an Advisory Group to the Northern and Western Regional Board.

**Key Partnerships**
The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit has established partnerships and relationships with the following organisations:

**Aboriginal Health**
- Yalata-Maralinga Health Service
- Ceduna-Koonibba Aboriginal Health Service
- Umoona Tjutagku Aboriginal Health Service Inc.
- Pika Wiya Health Service
- Aboriginal Health Unit Port Augusta Hospital
- Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health Service
ALLIED HEALTH

Child Health Team
The allied health professionals involved in children’s health in Port Augusta meet regularly with our team and have been involved in a number of projects and advocacy issues. This group provides advice to the Northern and Far Western Regional Health Service Board on issues of children’s health and has a wide range of professional input and also canvases community input.

General Practitioners in the region
The Northern Regional Paediatric Unit is co-located with Flinders and Far North Division of General Practice and has regular contact with the GPs on the Eyre Peninsula and in the Mid North.

Royal Flying Doctor Service
Port Augusta is a base for the RFDS. Children from remote communities who are admitted to Port Augusta Hospital by the RFDS doctors and require paediatric consultation can now be treated closer to home. Follow-up consultation is available at the regular outreach clinics provided by the Northern Regional Paediatric Unit. When required a paediatrician is available to accompany RFDS doctors to remote locations in emergency situations. We have developed a very close working relationship with the RFDS.

Involvement with other services include:
- Child and Youth Health Services.
- Families SA office at Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta.
- DETE (Department of Education Training and Employment) including the Behavioural Management Teams for Port Pirie, Whyalla and Port Augusta.
- Disability teams for Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie and also the Port Lincoln team for the Northern Eyre Peninsula.
- Women's and Children's Hospital.
- University of Adelaide.
- Department of Human Services through the Northern and Far Western Regional Board.
- South Australian Immunisation Service
- CAMHS (Child Adolescent Mental Health Service)