

MEDIA RELEASE
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Big Red Kidney Bus pulls up in Ballina

A mobile dialysis bus which allows kidney patients to go on holiday has set up in Ballina for ten weeks.

The NSW Big Red Kidney Bus is a state-of-the art mobile dialysis unit fitted with three chairs capable of providing up to 1,500 treatments a year when at full capacity.

Kidney Health Australia (KHA) owns and operates the bus and with expert renal nurses and dialysis technicians provided by Royal North Shore Hospital to treat the patients.

The bus will be conveniently located at the Big4 Ballina Headlands Holiday Park until December 16, offering families and individuals from around Australia the opportunity to have what is possibly their first holiday since starting dialysis treatment.

One of those taking advantage of that opportunity is Anne Neilson from Sydney.

“My husband John and I were excited to find out the Big Red Kidney Bus would be in Ballina, we love this part of the coast,” Ms Neilson said.

“We’re spending two weeks here, our first real break since I started dialysis 18 months ago.”

Ms Neilson’s dialysis on the bus gives her husband welcome respite from managing her home dialysis and also makes it possible for the couple to catch up with family who live in south-east Queensland.

They will even get to enjoy their granddaughter’s high school graduation, something that would have been very difficult without the availability of the Big Red Kidney Bus.

KHA CEO Mikaela Stafrace said she is thrilled the bus program is now in NSW after originally starting in Victoria in 2014.

“Dialysis is a debilitating and restrictive regime and it can be extremely difficult for those with end-stage kidney disease to take a holiday,” she said.

“On average, dialysis patients need to have treatment for up to five hours at a time, three days a week, and holiday dialysis chair availability is very limited around Australia.”

Ms Stafrace said dialysis on the kidney bus is also available for locals who might want to try out the service in Ballina with a view to including it in their own future travel plans.

Kidney Health Australia gratefully acknowledges the Lions Club which has committed to raise \$200,000 by 2019 to underwrite the costs of a new Big Red Kidney Bus for NSW. The Lions Club of Toronto is leading the fundraising effort. To support the Lions fundraising, go [here](#) to make a donation or buy tickets for a major raffle prize.

KHA urges people and families living with kidney disease to book dialysis, a familiarisation visit or request more information on the bus as soon as possible. Phone 1800 454 363 or email bigredkidneybus@kidney.org.au

Kidney Health Australia is a national health care charity with a vision 'to save and improve the lives of Australians affected by kidney disease'.

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