

A career anchored in community: Luke Smith's journey at Eastern Health Authority

At Eastern Health Authority (EHA), Environmental Health Officers don't just enforce rules. They educate, guide and help create safer spaces for the communities we serve. For Luke Smith, this role has been a way to combine his public health training with his connection to the area he grew up in. Nearly 10 years on, Luke is one of our most experienced officers, someone with a sharp eye for detail, a practical approach and a willingness to share what he has learned.

A local start

When Luke Smith walked into Eastern Health Authority in March 2016, he was a new graduate ready to put his public health studies into practice. As an Environmental Health Officer, the role offered exactly the right mix of work he wanted: time out in the community, time in the office and a team environment big enough to share ideas and challenges.

For Luke, this work also had a special connection to home. Growing up close to EHA's five council areas meant the streets, sports clubs and businesses he would be working with were already familiar.

"Growing up, my grandparents were in Rostrevor, on the Campbelltown side of the border. I went to school in the area and my Dad's work was in Prospect, so I spent a lot of time on Prospect Road during school holidays. I also follow the Norwood Football Club, and a lot of my friends live across the five council areas. So, I've always been familiar with this area."

That familiarity made the work personal, but it didn't make it easy. Luke's role at EHA covers everything from food inspections to investigating public health complaints. One day, it could be a swimming pool inspection; the next, helping a business owner understand new hygiene requirements.

The variety keeps him engaged while the team's scale ensures there's always someone to turn to for advice.



“You never know what you’re walking into. You’ve got to be prepared, but you can’t over-prepare. When I’m doing an inspection, I’m not just ticking a box; I’m keeping my own community safe.”

New ways of working

Almost a decade on, Luke is one of the most experienced members of EHA’s environmental health team. In that time, he has seen approaches that worked brilliantly and others that didn’t, and he uses that knowledge to help steer the organisation towards better outcomes.

Luke also takes on a leadership role by mentoring newer officers, sharing insights from past projects and contributing to EHA’s strategic direction. He thrives in EHA’s collaborative environment where good ideas are heard, tested and put into practice.

“One thing I’ve always liked here is that if you’ve got a good idea, you can actually make it happen. We’re not such a big organisation that you get lost in the system. You can walk into a manager’s office, explain what you’re thinking, and they’ll actually listen. That’s a big deal. I don’t think you get that everywhere.”

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One of Luke’s proudest changes was improving the way EHA gives feedback to food businesses after inspections. Luke saw an opportunity to create more detailed, user-friendly reports that would educate business owners as well as identify issues.

With management’s support, he and the team made it happen. The new approach builds trust, encourages compliance and better protects public health.

“Before, we’d hand over a basic report that said, ‘Fix this, fix that,’” he says. “I thought, ‘We can do better than that. We can use this as an opportunity to educate and give business owners something that helps them keep standards up long-term.’”



“Now, the reports are much more detailed. They’re clear, they’re useful, and they help us build better relationships. I still get a lot of satisfaction from that because it’s about helping people succeed, rather than us just pointing out what’s wrong.”

Building a life alongside a career

Luke’s time at EHA has been marked by more than just professional milestones. Over the years, he has bought a home, gotten married and welcomed his first child, with a second on the way.

“I feel like I’ve grown up here. I was still living at home when I started here. Now, I’ve got a family and a mortgage, and EHA has been part of all of it.” The flexibility and supportive team environment at EHA have given him the space to achieve these life goals without sacrificing career growth.

“If I need to take time off for an appointment or the kids, I know it’s covered. There’s no guilt, no feeling like you’re letting people down, because we’ve all got each other’s backs. That’s what makes it possible to have a proper work-life balance.

“I also never have to take work home with me. That’s important when you’ve got a young family. My drive home gives me time to reset, so I walk in the door ready to be present.”

Outside of work, Luke spends his time with family and friends. Cricket and team sports have given way to weekends chasing his toddler and preparing for the arrival of his new baby. As an avid sports fan, the same team-first mindset that shaped his sporting days now guides the way he works - supporting colleagues, sharing knowledge and celebrating collective success.

For Luke, the decision to join EHA all those years ago has paid off in more ways than one. It’s a place where he keeps growing while making a difference and staying connected to the community that shaped him.

“EHA is a place where the work matters, the people care, and you’re supported in a way that’s very real.”

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