

Health matters

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Queensland
Government
Queensland Health

Helping people
to better health
and well-being



Charity is their life

Raising more than \$350,000 in aid of the Queensland Cancer Fund over 22 years is the proud boast of Gold Coast Hospital entrants in the annual Nurse of the Year competition.

The five smiling nurses pictured are among the hospital's candidates in the competition, with two taking out the Statewide title, Vicki James and Trudy Bowles.

Pictured, from left are, Debbie Farrell, Vicki James, Wendy Fawns (this year's entrant), Joanie Shaw, and Trudy Bowles.

Mackay leads way on cancer program

Mackay is the only Queensland site involved in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Pilot Program, which aims to encourage early detection of the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia for men and women.

The pilot, which started late last year, is a joint initiative of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, the Mackay Division of General Practice, and Queensland Health.

Mackay's Bowel Cancer Screening Pilot Program involves more than 13,000 people aged between 55-74 years living in the postcode areas of 4740, 4741, 4750 and 4751.

Invitations to participate in the pilot are being sent alphabetically to residents, with invitations currently being sent

to people with surnames GR-HA. The invitation contains information about the pilot and a bowel cancer screening test kit.

The test kit can be undertaken by the participant at home and posted back to the laboratory at no cost to the participant.

The division's Medical Director, Dr David Parker said "if the results are positive participants will be advised to make an appointment with their GP for follow-up.

"If a follow up colonoscopy is required this will be arranged through the public or private sector at no cost to the participant as part of the pilot study," he said.

"Many bowel cancers are preventable.

"To minimise the risk of bowel cancer, people should in-

clude plenty of breads, cereals, vegetables and fruits in their diet, do regular moderate exercise and maintain a healthy weight.

"However, identifying bowel cancer early is also important, and that is where bowel cancer screening is vital.

"Early detection is the best protection. Finding bowel cancer early or before it is fully developed can significantly reduce your chances of dying from bowel cancer."

Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, said the study had received broad general practitioner and specialist support, and public participation.

"It has also provided an effective partnership between private and public sectors," she said.

"Although it's early days – results are due next June –

we're very excited about the preliminary reports.

"The evidence has shown that population-based screening using Faecal Occult Blood Test is effective, and early indicators demonstrate that FOBT is a more readily accepted, low-tech screening process.

"Several private sector surgeons and related professionals are participating in this pilot, so participants can access a broader range of follow-up services and options, at no cost.

"We already know from this pilot, that genuine health industry collaboration, equals genuine health leadership and the potential for positive health results.

"That's why Queensland Health is already positioning itself for a national bowel cancer screening program, if one is introduced."

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QHEPS



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Awards to celebrate excellence

Health Service Districts around Queensland will celebrate later this month when the winners of the 2003 Queensland Health Staff Excellence Awards are announced.

A total of 76 individual and team nominations were received in the categories of Leadership excellence, Excellence in partnerships, Excellence in innovation and creativity, and Excellence in corporate citizenship.

Director-General Dr Robert Stable will announce the winners in a statewide simultaneous videoconference at 2pm on 18 August.

This year's finalists were: RBH Executive Director of Nursing Mary Montgomery; the Reform of Wolston Park Hospi-

tal team; Rockhampton Hospital's 90-strong Operational Services team; Matt Ford and Johnathon Fong of QHPSS; Mental Health Unit Senior Project Officer Kay McInnes; the Capricorn Coast Schoolies Week 2002 Activities Committee; Dr Michael Corkeron of The Townsville Hospital; John Fitzgibbon of Biomedical Technology Services; Michelle Dodd and Chris Small of the Mitchell Health Services Kids Club; Information and Business Management Branch Director Tony Hayes; Organisational Development's Nigel Cumberland; Dr David Farlow of Whitsunday Health Service; ATSIHU Director Stanley Nangala; The Prince Charles Hospital's Dr Paul

Zimmerman; the Watchhouse Consultation and Liaison Service team; Marie Rossiter, Mungindi Health Service; and the many staff who assisted families affected by the Bali tragedy.

Dr Stable described the finalists as 'the best of an outstanding field'.

"This year, we received nominations in disciplines as diverse as medical and scientific research, preventative health, publishing, community partnerships, history, youth and family health, and employment relations – and that is just a small sample," he said.

"The fact that we have such a range of expertise in our organisation is not surprising, but nevertheless I am delighted that people have entered into the spirit of the Awards with such enthusiasm."

Dr Stable will announce the gold, silver and bronze winners in each category at the statewide videoconference.

He urged all districts with nominated staff to stage their own appropriate Awards celebrations.

"For individuals or teams to have been nominated – let alone reached the finals – proves the high regard in which they are held in their communities," Dr Stable said.

"Because most of this year's nominations were for teams, the nominations represent some 200 to 300 Queensland Health people.

"I am sure that all staff will join with me and congratulate the winners."

Small space – big story

Telling the Queensland Health story in a 17 square metre space is a challenge – but that's the aim of the display at the Ekka from 7-16 August.

What does Queensland Health represent to the Queenslanders who visit the Ekka? Typically it represents each visitor's own health experience.

The Queensland Health display, located in the Queensland Government Precinct, will provide an expanded experience through the theme "Delivering health services to you. Interactive informative displays will showcase the diversity of our

services, the methods of delivery and the client groups.

Some of the information covered in the display through activities and technology will include:

- health services and how they are delivered
- every day in Queensland Health
- some specific programs of interest to children eg, Germ Buster

The diversity of Queensland Health clients – the "you" in the Queensland Health theme will make visitors feel that the information is relevant for them no matter their age or state of their health.

Big boost for health funding

The 2003-2004 State Health Budget was recently put under the microscope at the Estimates Committee Hearings at Parliament House.

Facing my sixth hearing as Health Minister, I was pleased to inform the committee that by 2006-07, Queensland Health will have received total budgetary increases of 70 per cent since 1997-98 for public hospitals, emergency departments, community health services, mental health services, Home and Community Care and public health services.

An area of service delivery that was particularly under focus was our record on achieving elective surgery targets.

The extra \$10 million a year provided in 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 has been directed at addressing unmet demand at particular hospitals and in the following surgical specialties:

from the Minister

Wendy Edmond
Minister for Health and
Minister Assisting the
Premier on Women's
Policy



general surgery; ophthalmology; orthopaedics; urology; vascular; ear, nose and throat; neurosurgery, gynaecology and plastic and reconstructive surgery.

In 2001/2002 an extra 4381 elective surgery patients were treated in Queensland public hospitals compared with 2000/2001, and an additional 4348 operations in 2002/2003 compared with 2000/2001.

This increased level of activity resulted in a demonstrated improvement in waiting times over the two-year period.

The June Quarter Statewide waiting list figures show the proportion of 'Long Wait' Category 1 patients was reduced from 3.4 per cent at 1 July 2002 to 2.3 per cent at 1 July 2003.

Over the same period, the proportion of 'Long Wait' Category 2 patients was reduced from 10.6 per cent to the lowest

result yet achieved of 5.3 per cent at 1 July 2003.

This is a tremendous improvement and I thank hospital staff for their efforts.

I was able to inform the committee that even before this result, the Australian Productivity Commission had found Queensland had the shortest waiting times in the country.

A tremendous amount of work goes into preparing for an Estimates Committee Hearing and my thanks go to all those staff who assisted in the process this year.

Wendy Edmond
Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy

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Directions

Dr Robert Stable
Director-General
Queensland Health

The health services of the future is likely to be very different from those of today in the technological aspects of their delivery.

Health care and medical technologies are developing at a tremendous pace across the world.

This is one of the fundamental tenets of *Smart State: Health 2020* – the 20-year strategic vision and implementation plan for Queensland Health to better meet the challenges for the future health and health care of Queenslanders.

All health facilities will need to ensure services are comparable and, where possible leading the way, in introducing innovative treatment techniques and implementing technological advances.

One of the key strategies in meeting these challenges is the allocation in this year's Budget of \$7.3 million to establish a statewide Queensland Health Skills Development Centre at Herston.

The centre aims to enhance the clinical, technical and procedural skill of Queensland Health staff, and staff and students of affiliated partners through the use of contemporary, evolving technologies and educational strategies. Comprehensive resources will be provided by the centre to assist in the acquisition of a wide range of skills.

The rapidly changing, increasingly complex, world of health care delivery is generating growing needs for new skills that are not fully accommodated in existing undergraduate and postgraduate educational programs. It is anticipated that the centre will provide a range of courses to address these needs.

In addition, the close working relationship between the State telehealth services and the University of Queensland Centre for Online Health will lead to courses being developed on a distance learning model.

The Skills Development Centre and the increased use of information technology will help ensure the Queensland health care system remains flexible and responsive to changing demand.

Dr Robert Stable
Director-General

Later-life study leads way

An innovative five-year study based at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital is proving to be the first and most comprehensive population study in Australia on the health challenges that urban women face in later life.

Scholarships announced

Scholarships have been awarded under the annual Queensland Health Rural Health Scholarships Scheme.

The Rural Scholarship scheme, established in 1944, recognises Queensland's next generation of world-class health care workers. It is one of Queensland Health's most important recruitment strategies, with funds of \$3.3 million allocated to the scheme each year.

A total of 61 scholarship were awarded to tertiary students across 13 disciplines: dentistry, Indigenous nursing, medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, oral health, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, clinical masters psychology, radiography, speech pathology, and social work.

Each year, four scholarships are awarded to Indigenous first-year nursing scholarship students, as part of Queensland Health's Indigenous Workforce Strategy.

University of Queensland's Professor Soo Keat Khoo and Dr Sheila O'Neill, Clinical Director of the Betty Byrne Henderson Centre at the Royal Brisbane Hospital campus, have been working for the past two years, with a team of researchers from the hospitals to evaluate 500 women aged 40-80 years.

The study comprises seven interlinked projects. Initial data is already producing valuable information which can be used by health policy makers to develop strategies for disease prevention and treatment, and health education. The women participating in the study are being examined for their biosociopsychological profile (life-style factors and general well-being), cardiovascular and cognitive function (memory ability for immediate and delayed recall), balance and posture, body composition and bone density, hormones, and nutrition and skin.

The women are to be assessed over a five to 10 year period and longer. To date, the study has revealed that women aged 40-80 years living in urban Australia face issues of social isolation, depression, overweight and smoking, and depend on hormone replacement therapy and nutritional supplements.

Significant health-related changes that occur with advancing age include a gradual decline in cognitive (memory abil-

ity for immediate and delayed recall) and cardiovascular function, inability to maintain posture and balance, a progressive loss of bone density, a decrease in some hormones and a redistribution of body fat and lean mass.

"By collecting this information about women as they grow older, we will be able to predict clinical disease, by interlinking the data compiled by the various projects," said Professor Khoo.

"An average Australian woman is expected to live beyond 80 years, with the average Australian man only a few years behind. What is less known is how well does each member of the population change with age, with the question, is it possible to live and grow old healthily.

"This is why this research is so important."

The study is funded by the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Foundation, thanks primarily to the local Chinese community in Queensland.

It is hoped to expand the study to include men so that a comparison can be made to determine whether men face similar health-related issues in later life.

For further information about the project contact the Foundation's Betty Byrne Henderson Centre at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, phone 3365 5205 or e-mail: s.khoo@mailbox.uq.edu.au



Director of Gynaecology Professor Soo Keat Khoo; Clinical Director The Betty Byrne Henderson Centre Dr Sheila O'Neill; Physiotherapist Jill Boughen; Subject Jan Milliken, and physiotherapist Nampech Goeldner, checking Jan's results.

New guide for hip patients

A resource package has been developed at the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hospital to assist patients recovering from hip surgery.

The package consists of an information booklet for patients, family and carers to guide them in safe day-to-day practices at home. It also includes best practice guidelines for aged care facilities to care for residents after surgery for a broken hip.

The resource package is funded by the Queensland Health, Quality Improvement and Enhancement Program.

The hospital each year treats

around 100 patients with broken hips. Hospital staff identified the need to improve the care of these patients, who return home or to residential aged care facilities within a few days of receiving surgery.

Staff have improved the management of patients with fractured neck of femur, assisted family and carers in their role once patients return home, and improved information provided to other health professionals.

Falls in older people account for the largest proportion of all injury-related deaths and hospitalisations in Queensland.

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Openness a crucial principle

As the countdown to the implementation of Information Standard 42A continues the focus in this issue is highlighting National Privacy Principle (NPP) 5 which deals with Openness.

This principle states:

5.1 An organisation must set out in a document clearly expressed policies on its management of personal information. The organisation must make the document available to anyone who asks for it.

5.2 On request by a person, an organisation must take reasonable steps to let the person know, generally, what sort of personal information it holds, for what purposes, and how it collects, holds, uses and discloses that information.

The requirement under NPP 5.1 is similar to the department's obligations under Section 19 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*.

The process and contact of officers for accessing departmental policies is set out in the department's *Statement of Affairs*.

The department is also required to report on the following:

- the nature of the records of personal information kept by or on behalf of the department (including public registers managed within the department)
- the purpose for which each type of record is kept
- the classes or types of individuals about whom records are kept
- the period for which each type of record is kept
- the persons who are entitled to have access to personal information contained in the records and the conditions under which they are entitled to have that access
- the steps that should be taken by persons wishing to obtain access to that information

Queensland Health has met this requirement through the compilation and publication of a Personal Information Digest.

The digest is concerned with information collections of personal information held by the department. It reports on all cat-

egories of information held, and significant individual collections of personal information.

Digest entries include a description of the type of information typically held by the department, the location of the collection, the Queensland Health staff who are entitled to access the collection and the organisations to which Queensland Health staff may disclose the information collected.

The number of collections or records is also specified.

Information collections have been grouped into four broad types: clinical collections; administrative collections; human resource management collections; financial collections.

The Queensland Health Privacy Plan, which incorporates the digest, satisfies the requirements of the openness principle.

The Privacy Plan is available on the Queensland Health website at: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/privacy/> and is also accessible through the privacy pages on QHEPS.



Tracey Lawrence (background) and Donna Kostellar from the Herston ISU preparing for a training session.

Training under way for standardised systems

Within 18 months all Queensland Health computer workstations will have a standard operating environment, featuring consistent software and hardware.

Jan Sterkenburg, Project Director for the Information Services' Work Management Program said all computer users would have Windows XP, Office XP and GroupWise 6 installed, along with software that allows remote support by Information Services staff.

"To ensure the roll out of software is as smooth as possible, Information Services is currently training Information Services trainers and Help Desk staff around the State," Jan said.

"A total of 86 Information

Service trainers and Help Desk staff around the State will be trained, and 50 of those were trained at the end of June.

"This two-day intense training session will allow effective delivery of training to end users throughout Queensland Health.

"Some of the training tools we developed include manuals, online training, videos, information sessions and hands-on sessions.

"The tools were tested with excellent results in a pilot at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital."

Queensland Health computer users will be trained in using the new software when it is delivered on their workstations.

Special tax guide assists nurses

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has produced a special publication, *Occupational Ruling Summary - Nurses*, aimed specifically at helping nurses organise their taxation returns.

The booklet includes information nurses need to know when claiming work-related expenses and other useful tips to help complete tax returns and ensure all entitlements are claimed.

An ATO officer said that nurses may be able to claim the cost of work-related telephone calls.

"You can claim a deduction for your telephone rental if you can show that you are on call or are regularly required to telephone your employer while you are away from your workplace," she said.

"If you also use your phone for private purposes, you must appropriate the cost of telephone rental between work related and private use.

"You cannot claim a deduction for the cost of connecting a telephone, mobile phone, pager or any other telecommunications

equipment as it is a capital expense.

"Nurses may be able to claim the cost of journals, periodicals and magazines that have a content sufficiently connected to their employment, and the cost of renewing their annual practicing certificate.

The officer said copies of occupational rulings could be downloaded from the Tax Office website www.ato.gov.au or ordered by calling the publication distribution service on 1300 720 092.

How to avoid the super fee bite

Queensland Health employees have been warned that there are "a horde of fees and commissions that superannuation funds can sting you with".

A QSuper representative said that superannuation fund members should think of fees as a deduction from their return.

"Paying higher fees will not guarantee higher returns, in fact, by nature, quite the opposite," the representative said.

"The lower the fees, the less impact on your return. This is particularly important in a low-return environment.

"With QSuper, you can feel protected by knowing there are

no entry fees, no exit fees and no commissions.

"What's more, QSuper's fee is one of the lowest in Australia. This means there's more money in your QSuper retirement savings working for you.

"By consolidating your super and rolling it into QSuper, not only will you take advantage of paying just one fee, it will be one of the lowest in Australia.

"Before consolidating, consider all fees that may be payable when you exit a fund. QSuper does not charge entry or exit fees."

The representative said QSuper had developed an easy transfer process for members to roll over other super to QSuper by completing a QSuper *Easy transfer form*.

Members can phone QSuper Member Services on 1300 360 750 or visit the *Forms* section on the QSuper website at www.qsuper.qld.gov.au for copies of the form.

Workshop to highlight mental health nursing

The role of mental health nursing will be in the spotlight at a one-day workshop held at The Park - Centre for Mental Health on Friday, 26 September.

The workshop, entitled "Dimensions and Directions" is designed to help celebrate the completion of The Park's Contemporary Mental Health Nursing Project, which examined the roles and values of the mental health nurse.

Nurse Researcher for the project, Di Briffa of The Park's Service Evaluation and Research Unit, said widespread changes in mental health services and the introduction of new models of service delivery meant many mental health nurses were unsure of the role and scope of their nursing practice.

"This ambiguity has led many skilled and specialised nurses to re-examine their perceived value and role in contemporary mental health nursing," she said.

"The workshop is a great opportunity for mental health nurses in Brisbane and surrounding areas to explore the dimensions and directions of mental

health nursing from an international, national, State and local perspective".

Keynote speaker Professor Michael Clinton (Division of Health Sciences, Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia), will discuss international directions in mental health nursing.

Other presentations by mental health nursing leaders will include John Quinn (ADON, The Park and Secretary/Councillor ANZCMHN Qld), to discuss national directions in mental health nursing; Sue Norrie (Acting State Manager, Organisational Development Branch Queensland Health) to discuss State directions in mental health nursing and Margaret McAllister (Senior Lecturer, School of Nursing Griffith University) to discuss educational and professional issues.

Attendance at the workshop is free, and all mental health nurses are encouraged to attend.

Contact: Di Briffa: phone 3271 8654, e-mail: dianne_briffa@health.qld.gov.au and Janet Foster: phone 3271 8653, e-mail: janet_foster@health.qld.gov.au

New laws help protect victims

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Ms Leanne Clare, has praised Queensland Health for its efforts to help victims of crimes committed by mentally ill offenders.

She said the new Mental Health Act 2000 gave new protections to victims, including confidentiality orders on statements by victims and non-contact orders against offenders.

Speaking at the launch of a series of fact sheets to explain the workings of the Mental Health Court, Ms Clare said the project should help to dispel public misunderstanding about the forensic mental health system.

"The new protections for victims mean very little unless people are aware of their rights and they are helped to work through the system.

"We are very proud and grateful that Queensland Health has cooperated so fully in this joint program" she said.

Ms Clare said the Justice Department's Victim Liaison Officers had become part of the landscape of the justice system throughout Queensland and the new fact sheets would help them to pass on clear, accurate information to victims who were often in emotional turmoil.



The Director of Public Prosecutions, Ms Leanne Clare, and the Acting Director of Mental Health, Dr Arnold Waugh, discuss details of new fact sheets concerning the Mental Health Court.

The Acting Director of Mental Health, Dr Arnold Waugh, said Queensland Health had created a specific position of Victims' Support Coordinator to address the special needs of victims of crimes by mentally ill offenders. Dr Waugh said the vast majority of people with a mental illness did not commit offences – and the vast majority of people who committed offences did not have a mental illness.

"Unfortunately, however,

some people with a mental illness do commit offences and this can be a most devastating event for the victims of their actions," he said.

"In recent years there has been increasing recognition of victims' needs and rights and this has been addressed in the new Mental Health Act 2000.

"Victims need to be included in the process. They need to know what they can do and, equally, what they can not do."

The three Fact Sheets in the joint Queensland Health / Justice series are headed "The Mental Health Court", "Forensic Orders" and "Making a Statement for the Mental Health Court". They are available publicly on the Internet at <http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/courts/about/victims.htm>.

Network offers support to prevent elder abuse

Paid and unpaid remote area workers have joined together in a network linked to city-based agencies to provide greater support in their response to the abuse of older Queenslanders.

The network, a Multidisciplinary Peer Support Network for elder abuse prevention, will be the first of its kind in Australia and will operate by establishing relationships among service providers and community workers across the more remote areas of Queensland.

The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit, part of Lifeline Brisbane's Older Person's Programs, is coordinating the network, which was launched by the Minister for Families, Judy Spence.

Workers at nine regional sites linked to the launch via video and had the opportunity to speak to Ms Spence and a range of Brisbane-based policy makers and experts about their community and the challenges they face.

Queensland Health staff from Corporate Office and metropolitan hospitals attended the launch.

Front-line health and aged care workers from rural and remote areas have been integral to the development and implementation of the network and several Queensland Health facilities took part in the video link-up.

Staff from Queensland Health and non-government organisations funded by Queensland Health report increasing numbers of both suspected and confirmed cases of elder abuse

occurring.

It is especially difficult for health and aged care workers in remote areas who feel extremely isolated, to respond appropriately.

The peer support network provides an opportunity to connect communities and resources, reducing isolation for front-line workers across a range of disciplines. This innovative solution represents a coordinated cross-government approach to tackling the significant problem of elder abuse.

Workers will be provided with greater access to the knowledge and expertise usually located in Brisbane or larger regional centres.

This will involve the use of the Internet, e-mail, teleconferences and any other available technology.

Elder abuse affects around five per cent of seniors and can be particularly hard to respond to in country areas where services are few and distances are great.

Older people in these areas can often become isolated as friends and younger family members migrate to the city.

The network will assist workers to develop responses to elder abuse through support, education and training and the provision of resources.

The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit provides an information and referral help line 1300 651 192 which can be accessed anywhere in Queensland during business hours for the cost of a local call.

Major study to examine long-term injury effects

The long-term effects of serious injuries are being examined in a new study which aims to help improve the lives of seriously injured people.

Each year a substantial number of Queenslanders die as a result of injury and nearly one in every 100 patients in Queensland hospitals is there because of an injury.

While the extent of the problem at the hospital level is known, not much information is available on the long-term outcomes for those who survive an injury.

The Queensland Trauma Registry (QTR) is taking part in the study in collaboration with the Australian Centre for Prehospital Research.

The registry, in the University of Queensland's Centre of National Research on Disability and Rehabilitation Medicine, at Mayne Medical School, Herston, is funded by Queensland Health and the Motor Accident Insurance Commission.

It collects and analyses data on injured people who are admitted for treatment at 14 public hospitals at metropolitan, rural and remote locations across the State.

Dr Desley Kassulke, QTR manager, said the study, together with findings from a

similar study last year on childhood injury, would help complete the picture on outcomes and the cost of injury in Queensland.

Queensland University researcher, Tamzyn Davey, said there was little information available on the health and well-being of injured people and their families after they leave hospital.

"People who were admitted to hospital in recent months and have consented to follow-up will be part of this important survey that will examine the quality of life of patients who have been injured," she said.

"We hope that everyone who receives a questionnaire will complete it and return it to us because every response is valued in this important project.

"It is possible that the quality of life of people who have sustained a serious injury will be poorer than others in the community.

"Information about long-term effects of such injuries may lead to recommendations for changes in treatment and follow-up of such patients.

"This will help reduce the impact of the injury and thus reduce the negative outcomes of injury."

Clearing confusion over recruitment/selection

Confused about the impact of the new "Directive – Recruitment and Selection" recently issued by the Office of Public Sector Merit and Equity?

Wonder what the impact is, and whether you need to do anything differently in your next selection exercise?

Employment Relations and Strategies Unit has produced a set of six Industrial Relations Manual instructions (IRMs) to explain the recruitment and selection process.

"The IRMs follow the 'life cycle' of the process, from job creation to appointment," said Anne Crossland, a Team Leader of the Employment Work Practices Team.

"They fill a gap in support and advice for staff and managers in Queensland Health in dealing with the recruitment and selection process."

A series of presentations introducing staff to the IRMs was held across the State from late July to mid-August. Major areas covered in the IRMs include:

- merit
- job descriptions
- advertising
- selection methodology
- appointment processes.

Processes are included in the

IRMs for managing new provisions under the directive for promotion after a job upgrade, promotion after acting in a higher position and appointment of temporary staff and trainees in certain situations.

For more information, talk to your local HRM area or contact any of the Employment Work Practices team in Employment Relations and Strategies Unit.

Investigating and mediating!

Employment Relations and Strategies will be conducting an investigation skills training course at the end of August as well as a post accreditation workshop for trained Queensland Health mediators in September.

Medical Jobs @ Health

Just how successful is our own in-house process to manage expressions of interest by non-Australian trained medical professionals? Our most recent international telephone interviews gave districts a list of 17 suitable medical officers.

Within three hours, six hospitals had sought details on eight doctors to potentially fill vacant positions. Congratulations to the medical superintendents who help out with the interviews.

Service support training gains strong enrolments

The Support Services Reform Unit (SSRU) continues to develop and support the implementation of the Queensland Health Assessment and Training Program for Operational Stream staff in the areas of cleaning, food, client/patient, and laundry support services and grounds maintenance.

More than 50 candidate enrolments have been received for the Certificate II in Health Support Services qualification, with many more expected over the coming months.

The candidates are either being assessed in the workplace using assessment tools developed by Queensland Health, or are applying for Recognition of Prior Learning.

Workshops are gradually being conducted in each district by Karen Gibb and Claire Moore from the Support Services Reform Unit to better equip the workplace assessors to plan

and conduct the assessments and to assess evidence.

These workshops cover the assessment process, types of evidence, how to review evidence against the requirements of the Units of Competency, the assessment tools, and the forms to be completed as well as allowing face-to-face interaction.

Feedback from workshops conducted to date indicates that this is beneficial for all involved.

Other positive feedback has been received from the national industry training body, Community Services and Health Training Australia (CSHTA) on the quality of the assessment tools and supporting materials which SSRU have developed in conjunction with the Open Learning Institute of TAFE.

In a national teleconference, a consultant for CSHTA described the tools as "the gold standard".

These resources have recently been listed with the Centre for Training Materials, through which the resources will be available to other potential users.

For further details on the operational program or other resources phone the Support Services Reform Unit, 323 41797.

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Story Bridge a conference icon

The Story Bridge will become the symbol for an international convention of office professionals to be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre in September next year.

The conference is being organised by The Australian Institute of Office Professionals (AIOP), while the symbolic reference is the brainchild of Janelle Bostock, Executive Assistant to Central Zone Manager, Dan Bergin.

Janelle is Vice-President and Director-elect of the Queensland Division of the Australian Institute of Office Professionals.

"The theme of the convention is The Story Unfolds – Bridge the Mindset, and what better way to identify it with Brisbane than by using the Story Bridge," she said.

Queensland Health office professionals from Corporate Office, Bayside, West Moreton and Mackay districts are expected to be among the 500 delegates from Australia, New Zealand, USA, UK, Asia and South Africa attending the convention.

"The convention is an opportunity for Queensland Health's office professionals to build on the broad range of qualities and skills acquired and incorporate the changes that are occurring," Janelle said.

"We will be symbolically building a bridge throughout the three days of the convention.

"On the first day we will build the foundations which encourages office professionals to think laterally, to look at things differently so that we are not doing the same things the same way.

"That includes ways of improving health and well-being and reducing stress in the workplace.

"We will be looking at recognising the different strengths in yourself and others and mak-



Janelle Bostock (left) with Liz Simmonds, Executive Support Officer, Central Zone Management Unit.

ing the best use of those strengths to help the team as a whole.

"The second day we will be looking at the 'nuts and bolts' such as work place ethics and the Privacy Act.

"Office professionals will be encouraged to looking at their responsibility in the workplace, taking ownership of their job including soft skills such as communications and time management.

"The third day constructs the 'girder' which includes executive coaching and mentoring, encouraging and supporting younger office professionals, as well as issues such as managing office politics and developing and maintaining professional image among office professionals.

"We want them to look, feel and dress not just for the job they have now but for the job they want in the future."

Janelle said that as a professional organisation, they wanted to promote the fact that the office professional was far more than the stereotype of a secretary who just types letters all day.

She said one member organised a global conference for a mining industry, while another was required to organise a luncheon for 700 people with only a week's notice.

"We are raising the profile and professional standing of office professionals throughout public and private sectors and promoting it as a challenging and rewarding career path in its own right," she said.

"Queensland has the strongest membership of the Australian Institute of Office Professionals with Queensland Health alone currently having 21 members.

"The international convention is an opportunity to network with interstate and international colleagues to see how we can do our job better, to improve our work skills and to add value to our organisation.

"It is an opportunity to think laterally and bridge the mindset."

For more information about the Australian Institute of Office Professionals including other professional development opportunities, visit their website www.aiop.com.au or phone the Secretariat on 3211 4687.

Nursing home sets new standards

Construction is due to begin later this year on the new \$19 million Moreton Bay Nursing Home on the Redland Hospital Campus.

The project will see the construction of a four 32-bed nursing care units in a modular design facility, which will include a central administrative building on a vacant portion of the north-east corner of the hospital campus.

The collocation will allow residents easy access to Redland Hospital for services such as rehabilitation.

The new nursing home is part of a Queensland Government five-year \$120 million program to improve residential aged care facilities throughout the State in line with new Commonwealth standards.

The Department of Works consulted with clinical and architectural experts in aged care

design to create the new modular design on which the nursing home will be based.

The design gives residents as much independence as possible and enables all residents to have their own private rooms with a shared en-suite.

It has the flexibility to allow twin or double share rooms to enable couples to stay together and for relatives who wish to

share a room.

A feature of the design is comfortable shading, landscaped courtyards with easy access and safe outdoor spaces.

The nursing home is a great significance for Bayside residents because the Bayside Health Service District is expected to see a 145 per cent increase in people aged between 60 and 74 years of age by 2016.

Good health a challenge

Health – a Risky Business is the theme of the annual State conference of Australian College of Health Services Executives Queensland Branch at Legends Hotel, Surfers Paradise on 5-6 September.

Director-General, Dr Robert Stable, will present the opening address, while Deputy Di-

rector General (Policy and Outcomes) Ms Norelle Deeth, will present one of the plenary addresses.

The theme of her address is Risky Lifestyles – Quality Health, a Challenge of the New Millennium.

Contact: ACHSE phone 3840 1091, fax 3840 2485.

Helping ease waiting frustration

Ipswich Hospital's Emergency Department has launched a new project to help with frustrating waiting times through a project that targets non-urgent Category 4 and 5 patients.

Executive Director of Medical Services, Dr Michael Daly, said the project would help non-urgent patients better understand why waits for treatment occur, as well as to help boost patient comfort and ease distress and aggression during some waits.

"Our response to resuscitation patients is spot-on (100 per cent), and we are also performing to standard for Category 2 and 3 patients, but 70 per cent of our emergency clients are Category 4 and 5," he said.

"This growing number is leading to frustrating and sometimes lengthy waits."

The project introduces new practical waiting process improvements, and a study component measures how well these help combat patient distress during longer waits, which can be up to eight hours for some Category 4 and 5 patients at hectic times.

"We hope by giving people clearer and better information, along with practical changes to the wait area, will help make waiting less annoying, and will allow people to feel they have more of a say in their visit," Dr Daly said.

Almost 300 emergency patients agreed to take part in the study, which measures and tracks their satisfaction with key aspects of their emergency department visit, such as waiting times, perceived care and concern of staff and their confidence in the skill

and care of clinicians.

Study Investigator and A/Director of Psychology Services Pene Svensson, said scores from patients in the initial part of the study was 'positive on the whole', with the average score for overall satisfaction listed as 'good', and ratings on staff care and competence nearing the 'very good' range.

"Since the initial baseline collection, we have introduced a number of strategies such as patient education pamphlets and signage, making the waiting room more comfortable, and notifying waiting patients when there are extra delays when we are overwhelmed with those most urgent patients," she said.

Emergency staff said they had also received the 'thumbs up' from patients since introducing new, more comfortable chairs and relaxation areas.

The waiting room strategy follows recent improvements such as appropriate early pain relief by nurses, improving the flow-through of patients needing admission from emergency, and boosting pathology turnaround times.

Dr Daly said the project was a 'novel' and patient-focused interim approach to an issue common in Australian emergency departments.

Literature reviews conducted as part of the study have not uncovered any substantial body of work in the area of patient education within Australia's emergency departments.

"This is a smart way to use patient feedback to help shape the service we provide to the community, and may indeed be a useful tool for other emergency departments interested in exploring local solutions," Dr Daly said.



Pictured sitting in the new seats in the Ipswich Hospital Emergency Department are, from left, Dr Michael Daly, Executive Director of Medical Services; Pene Svensson, A/Director of Psychology Services; Shirley Brown, clinical nurse consultant, Emergency Department; and Dr Stephen Brierley, Director of Emergency Department.



Indigenous staff grows

The number of Indigenous staff at Princess Alexandra Hospital increased from 15 to 41 between July 2001 and June this year, Health Minister, Wendy Edmond, said at the hospital's NAIDOC Day celebrations.

"During the same period, 21 trainees were employed under the 'Breaking the Unemployment Cycle' Scheme and 16 under the Community Development Employment Program," she said.

"A total of 51 staff members have participated in Reconciliation Learning Circles and 450 staff members have completed Indigenous Cultural Awareness

Training.

"Queensland Health has prioritised Indigenous health in order to improve the health of Indigenous peoples.

"NAIDOC Day provides the opportunity to focus attention on the cultures and heritages of our Indigenous people and to demonstrate the culturally inclusive policies of Queensland Health."

Guests at the hospital's NAIDOC Day celebrations included Elders Aunty Jianna Richardson, principal elder of the Torres Strait Islander people and Aunty Munijarli, representing the Jaggera Traditional Owners.

Schedule for services

Queensland Health, through the BreastScreen Queensland Program, provides dedicated and accredited breast cancer screening services through a statewide network of screening and assessment services.

Scheduled services are:

Mobile Services

Toowoomba: until 13 August, Charleville; 14-16 August, Quilpie; 18-19 August, Augathella; late August, Oakey.

Townsville: until 10 October, Mt Isa; 13-17 October, Julia Creek; 20-24 October, Richmond; 27 October-7 November, Hughenden; 10-12 November, Pentland; 14 November-23 January, Charters Towers.

Rockhampton: until 27 August, Longreach; 29 August-2 September, Tambo; 3-16 September, Blackall; 17 September-1 October, Barcardine; 6-17 October, Sapphire; 20-29 October, Springsure; 30 October-7 November, Capella; 10 November-11 December, Yeppoon.

North Brisbane: until Mid August, Herston; 1-19 September, Strathpine; 23-26 September, Deception Bay; 17-24 November,

New Farm; 25 November-9 December, Herston.

Relocatable Services

Gold Coast: 18 August-17 October, Beenleigh; 20 October-12 December, Beaudesert.

Bundaberg: until 12 September, Harvey Bay.

Cairns: until 6 August, Normanston; 8-12 August, Georgetown; 22 August-5 September, Thursday Island; 16-23 September, Dimbulah; 25-26 September, Chillagoe; 29 September-1 October, Kowanyama.

Toowoomba: September-December, Gatton.

Statewide Service

8 August, Bribie Library; 11-29 August, Kawana; 1-9 September, Beerwah Library; 10-19 September, Burpengary; 6-10 October, Buderim; 3-14 November, Noosa (tba).

Women can arrange a free breast screen by calling 13 20 50, for the cost of a local call, and will be connected to their nearest BreastScreen Queensland Service. Individual and group bookings are also available.

Contact: Women's Cancer Screening Services on 323 41596.

Software program saving money

A new software program which will save Queensland Health money, which can be directed to patient services, has been launched by Health Minister, Wendy Edmond.

And, because of a partnership arrangement between the State Government and the private company QTECH, Queensland Health stands to earn royalties from the sales world wide of the "Lifecycle Plus" software.

QTECH is a Queensland-based company and an IBM Premier Business Partner.

LifeCycle Plus provides for the best possible use of the health technology equipment in Queensland public hospitals.

It categorises the equipment by age, condition, and several other factors so that it can be maintained, shifted or disposed of according to requirements.

"It means that Queensland Health will no longer be dou-

bling-up on equipment 'just in case' the original breaks down," Ms Edmond said.

"Not only will we save money and redirect it to where it's most needed, we can replace older equipment before it becomes a safety risk."

Ms Edmond said she had been advised that the Queensland-owned software was already attracting interest from other health care providers around Australia and overseas.

Children needed for speech study

Children with speech defects are needed to take part in a University of Queensland study. Researchers from the university's School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences are examining children who have difficulty moving parts of their tongue independently during speech.

"Some children have difficulty speaking and make the wrong sounds because they cannot move parts of their tongue independently," said research officer Petrea Cornwell.

"We hope to discover whether these children only have trouble

moving their tongue or whether they also have difficulties moving other parts of their body independently," she said.

Petrea said the multidisciplinary study would involve speech pathologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

She said researchers would examine the tongue, jaw and lips as well as the neck, arms and hands to establish a more effective assessment and treatment approach for children with persistent speech disorders.

Participants must be aged be-

tween six and 12 years, have difficulty saying sounds and have received speech therapy sessions for at least two years.

They will be required to attend three to four appointments primarily at the university's St Lucia campus.

Tasks completed during the appointments will include tape-recording of speech, observations of movements, handwriting tasks and various measurements of the head, neck, mouth and hands. Contact: Petrea Cornwell, phone 3365 8560 or e-mail: p.cornwell@uq.edu.au

Exploring new horizons

Exploring New Horizons in Public Health is the theme of the ninth international health summer school to be held at the Queensland University of Technology's Kelvin Grove Campus on 17-21 November.

The school is being held in association with the Asia Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health. Keynote speakers are Professor Anuar Zaini, former Vice-

Chancellor, University of Malaya, and President, Asia Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health; John Mendoza, Chief Executive, Australian Sports Drug Agency; and Dr Pilvikki Absetz, Senior Researcher, Department of Epidemiology and Health Promotion, National Public Health Institute, Finland.

Contact: Julie-Anne Carroll, phone 3864 5611 or jmc.carroll@qut.edu.au

infromatters

Support for rural care volunteers

Annie Liston, Palliative Care Coordinator, Charleville District Health Service, visited Cunnamulla recently to train volunteers to assist health professionals in the area in the care of palliative patients.

Director of Nursing, Maggie Wade, said volunteers were now available to assist in Charleville, Quilpie, Augathella and Morven.

"The volunteers can visit patients in their home, hospital or residential facility to support families and friends in the care of palliative patients," she said.

"They meet regularly, often using telehealth medicine facilities and have a coordinator in each area who links in the various health providers.

"The coordinator has access to specialised equipment which is available throughout the district for use in both hospital and the home.

"At these meetings they discuss any problems they face and, if necessary, access the social worker for advice.

"They also have regular education sessions from various health professionals within the district, enabling our volunteers to have ongoing support for the terrific job they do."

Event grows

Oral and poster abstracts are due for submission by 15 August for the annual Queensland Health and Medical Scientific Meeting to be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Brisbane, on 25-26 November.



Pictured after a training session are four new palliative care volunteers from Cunnamulla, from left, Patricia Hartley, Ellen Lyons, Colleen Howlett, and Violet Langley.

Since the inaugural meeting in 2001, the event has grown to be one of the largest meetings of its kind held in Australia.

Last year's two-day event attracted about 600 participants, including senior researchers, medical practitioners and health systems managers from all major Queensland universities, health research institutes and major public and private health systems.

More than 150 oral papers and 100 posters were presented covering all aspects of health research and 14 prizes were awarded for research excellence totalling \$19,000.

Ten prizes will be awarded this year for best paper and best poster for Indigenous health, addressing the burden of disease – basic research, clinical research, public and environmental health; and balancing the health investment – health service organisation and delivery.

Information and a guide for online submission of abstracts is available on http://www.health.qld.gov.au/sci_meet

Contact: Conference secretariat, Michelle Bordignon, e-mail: info@iamevents.com.au phone, 3256 2444, fax: 3256 2666 or web www.iamevents.com.au

Future talks

Sue Norrie, Principal Nursing Advisor, Queensland Health, will officially open the fourth joint conference of the Infection Control Practitioners Association of Queensland and the Queensland Wound Care Association.

The conference, which has the theme *A Gold Standard, Promoting the Future*, will be held at the Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort, Gold Coast, on 9-11 October.

The conference will strengthen wound care and infection control education and practice and provide a forum for professionals to share their experiences and learn first hand from respected practitioners.

Invited speakers include Bill McGuinness, senior lecturer, Latrobe University/Alfred Clinical School of Nursing; Dr Geoffrey Playford, infectious diseases physician and clinical microbiologist, Princess Alexandra Hospital; Dr Jonathon Stewart, consultant vascular surgeon, Gold Coast; Geoff Sussman, Senior Lecturer and Director of Wound Education and Research in the Department of Pharmacy Practice Victorian College of Pharmacy, Monash University; and Rachel Thomson, Vice-President of the Australian Infection Control Association.

Contact: Intermedia Convention and Event Management, PO Box 1280, Milton Qld 4064, phone 3858 5538; fax 3858 5510, e-mail: wic03@im.com.au

Diary...

AUGUST

- 1-31** Dentistry for Children Awareness Month
Australian Dental Association
Phone: 3252 9866
- 1-8** World Breastfeeding Week
Australian Breastfeeding Association
Phone: 3844 6488
- 1** 100% IN CONTROL Rock Eisteddfod Challenge – Cairns
Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services
Phone: 3234 0344
- 1** Jeans for Genes Day
Children's Medical Research
Phone: (02) 9687 2800
- 3-9** National Health Bones Week
Osteoporosis Australia
Phone: (02) 9901 3422
- 3-9** Speech Pathology Week
Speech Pathology Australia
Phone: (03) 9642 4899
- 3-9** Continence Awareness Week
Continence Foundation
Phone: (03) 9642 4899
- 3-10** Breastfeeding Awareness Week
Australian Breastfeeding Association
Phone: (03) 9885 0855
- 3** Bridge to Brisbane Fun Run
The Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland
Phone: 1800 819 906
- 4-8** Post Polio Awareness Week
Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of Queensland Inc
Phone: 1800 819 086
- 9** Bluey Day
Royal Children's Hospital Foundation
Phone: 3852 1199
- 9** International Day of World's Indigenous People
United Nations
Phone: (02) 9262 5111
- 11-17** National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Week
The Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland
Phone: 3358 8027
- 11-17** Endometriosis Awareness Week
Endometriosis Association
Phone: 3836 3752
- 12** International Youth Day
United Nations
Phone: (02) 9262 5111
- 15** Dress Differently Day
Autism Queensland
Phone: 3273 0000
- 17-24** Seniors Week
Department of Families
Phone: 1300 132 654
- 22** Daffodil Day
Queensland Cancer Fund
Phone: 3258 2241
- 22** Parliamentary Golf Day
The Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland
Phone: 3358 8125
- 22** 100% IN CONTROL Rock Eisteddfod Challenge
Brisbane Grand Final
Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services
Phone: 3234 0344
- 23-5** Blue Care Appeal Week
Blue Care
Phone: 3377 3333
- 24-30** HACC Awareness Week
Home and Community Care
Phone: 3350 8653
- 24-30** Hearing Awareness Week
Better Hearing Australia Brisbane Inc.
Phone: 3844 5065
- 27-30** Internet Media and Mental Health International Conference
Intermedia, Convention and Events Management
Phone: 3858 5576
- 29** Abused Child Trust Annual Luncheon
Abused Child Trust
Phone: 3857 8866

In retrospect...

A review of some articles from previous Health Matters

- February** Actors add reality to trauma exercise
United effort reunites family
\$510 million hospital redevelopment completed
- March** Healthy heart program gains award
Mother-daughter graduate together
Innisfail district pilots rural project
- April** Healthy heart program gains award
Dynasty of doctors boost Ipswich
Program a magnet for nurses
- May** Rural vaccination campaign targets Q Fever
Indigenous health involved in all planning
New program explores telemedicine
- June** Cairns midwives celebrate caring success
Family connections show change in nursing
Quality project achievements praised
- July** Staff saved my baby's life, says mum
Hi-tech surgery link to NZ operation
Record \$4.6 billion health Budget