

health matters



Dr Alex Guminski, examining cells in a laboratory as part of research into head and neck cancer at the Medical Oncology Department at Princess Alexandra Hospital. Dr Guminski was awarded a practitioner fellowship by the hospital's Cancer Collaborative Group. *See story Page 3.*

farewell *from Dr Steve Buckland*

It was with great sadness that I resigned on 26 July as Director-General of Queensland Health.

As you know there have been major changes announced within the Government, and projected changes ahead for Queensland Health and health care in general.

I am incredibly proud of the journey we began 18 months ago to reform public health care in Queensland, and with an exceptional team effort, we achieved so much more than I thought possible, in such a short space of time.

It has been humbling to see so many staff who believe in the direction Queensland Health is going, and who have risen to the challenge at every step, regardless of the difficulties ahead. I couldn't have asked for more. We've been changing the way people think about healthcare, and challenging traditional and vested interests.

Our 250 new training places at Griffith University, and our 20 new Nurse Practitioner roles will be a first for any employer in Australia.

Our new anti-smoking laws are the toughest in the country. Our efforts in quality and safety, and in innovation have brought us into line with successful private corporate structures, which has been long-awaited.

Our Strategic Plan has allowed us to move closer to an integrated model of healthcare than in any time in our history. Many of you will have heard me say (so many times!) that more Queenslanders will die from preventable diseases and illnesses than in our hospitals.

But I am proudest of my work with Indigenous communities, and my work with the people of Yarrabah who made me so welcome, and who have become such good friends.

If there is anything that should keep us

going on this journey, it is that these great people still die 20 years earlier than other Queenslanders.

I sincerely hope, as I have said from the beginning, that the changes from the Morris Inquiry and the Forster Review will fast track our reform agenda, and significantly improve patient care. It would be a tragedy if they did not.

I really want to thank everyone who has helped me on what's been a great 18 years with this organisation. I believe in Queensland Health, and I will continue to believe in the great people who work for such a great organisation. I hope that you remain committed to the reforms, and continue your efforts for the strong leadership team you have in the Senior Executive Directors.

I wouldn't have changed a thing about my support for John Scott through what have been difficult times for some individuals and the organisation in general.

And finally, let me just say that I expect every one of you to continue my Friday Walk – it says something about the culture and camaraderie of any organisation that 15,000 staff took up the 10,000 steps challenge.

Keep healthy, look after yourselves, and most of all look after the people who care for you.

Steve

• **Uschi Schreiber** has taken over from Dr Buckland as the Director-General of Queensland Health, appointed for a period of up to 15 months, along with two new Deputy Directors-General, Dr Gerry FitzGerald and Gloria Wallace.

She was formerly Deputy Director-General in the Department of Premier, while Dr FitzGerald was the Chief Health Officer and Gloria Wallace was the District Manager of The Prince Charles Hospital Health Service District.

The team will lead the development and implementation of the Government's response to the recommendations from the Morris Inquiry and the Forster Review



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New look for web page

What rights do I have as a Queensland Health patient? Can I take my mobile phone to hospital with me? How do I decide whether to go to an emergency department?

The answers to these questions, plus a whole swag of other new information for patients, will soon be found on Queensland Health's new look website.

Queensland Health is freshening up its Internet site to provide more patient-focussed information.

The site has a new look home page and site design that will make it easier for users to find health information.

Four new sites accessible from the home page will allow visitors to quickly and easily access information about using "Emergency Departments", "Being an Out-

patient", "Going into Hospital", and keeping well via "A Healthier You".

Practical tips and checklists have been included to help people better understand, and better use, our health services.

The comprehensive checklists provide such information as what to bring to hospital or what to do before going to an outpatient appointment.

Providing this information in a clear, straightforward manner will take some of the mystery out of a visit to a hospital or to a clinic.

The redesigned www.health.qld.gov.au website went live on 27 July. Log on and check it out.

Certificate intake open

Applications are sought for the next intake for the Certificate IV in Mental Health Care designed to develop expertise to work in the Queensland Health Mental Health Service.

The certificate, which is delivered by distance education, has been developed by Queensland Health in partnership with the Open Learning Institute of TAFE.

The program provides mental health workers with practical skills and knowledge to perform their daily duties and adopts a competency-based training and assessment approach.

It is applicable to all streams and classifications of mental health staff in Queensland Health and is nationally recognised.

The certificate is open to staff who have access to a

mental health setting including new graduates, Indigenous mental health workers (and Indigenous health workers), social work associates, nurses – including enrolled nurses, assistants in nursing and registered nurses, health professionals new to mental health eg. occupational therapists, psychologists, social workers, speech therapists, and any individual needing to gain specific mental health competencies

Staff can apply for a 50 per cent subsidy or full scholarship from the Learning Service Unit, Queensland Health.

Contact: OLI Call Centre, phone: 1800 657 387 or Learning Services Unit, Queensland Health, phone: 3235 9046, e-mail: pdp@health.qld.gov.au or http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/lsu/HTMLS/MH_prof_dev.htm

Planes take to the air

Two new Beechcraft B200 Super Kingair twin engine fixed-wing planes, purchased from \$38 million provided by the Queensland Government, are now in operation with the Flying Doctor Service .

The \$38 million includes \$24 million for three new fixed-wing aircraft and \$14 million towards operating

costs. Two of the planes were officially launched in Brisbane on 28 June, while the third plane was being fitted out.

A total of 49,688 patient consultations were provided last year by the RFDS and there were more than 8000 flights transporting patients.

Scholarships boost cancer research



Pictured, from left, Fang Zhou, Letitia Burridge, David Brown-Rothwell, and Dr Devinder Gill.

Three PhD scholarships and a practitioner fellowship scholarships to facilitate the training and mentoring of young investigators in cancer have been awarded by the Princess Alexandra Hospital Cancer Collaborative Group.

The scholarships, made possible by The Queensland Cancer Fund Collaborative Development Grant, were announced by the group's Chair, Dr Devinder Gill.

The PhD scholarships are:

Letitia Burridge – focus on *Gender Differences in Lay Caregiver Needs, Burden and Support While Caring for a Patient with Recurrent Cancer*.

Fang Zhou – research *The Molecular Mechanisms of Tumour Immunotherapy*.

David Brown-Rothwell – addressing the *Prediction of Hearing Outcomes in Acoustic Neuromas Surgery: Correlation between Audiological Results, Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Surgical Findings, and Histopathological Appearance*.

Dr Alex Guminski, who was awarded a practitioner fellowship, joined the Medical Oncology Department at Princess Alexandra Hospital in August 2004. Before joining the hospital, Alex worked in the Medical Oncology Unit, Churchill Hospital, Oxford, UK, as a postdoctoral fellow.

Dr Guminski, who completed his PhD in 2003 through the University of Sydney, is collaborating with Dr Nick Saunders, Centre for Immunology and Cancer Research.

They are investigating the efficacy of histone deacetylase inhibitors (valproate) in squamous cell carcinomas arising from the upper aero-digestive tract. Head and neck squamous cell carcinomas are the sixth most common cancer worldwide. The Princess Alexandra Hospital has the largest head and neck cancer clinic in Australia.

Dr Gill said these scholarships and fellowship were made possible by the grant awarded by the Queensland Cancer Fund to the Cancer Collaborative Group in 2003.

Drug-alcohol addiction targeted

Reduce the impacts of drug and alcohol addiction on the community was the aim of a special information campaign conducted at Toowoomba Hospital as part of Drug Action Week.

A temporary information and advice centre was set up to assist addicts, their relatives and other members of the community with information and advice on addiction, symptoms and treatment options. Toowoomba Hospital Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Service (ATODS) Manager Michelle Cherry said national Drug Action Week raised awareness about alcohol and other drug issues and promoted the achievements of those who worked to reduce

drug-related harm.

"In particular we want community members to think about the effect of alcohol and drugs on young people," she said.

"Parents also have vastly different views about safe drinking guidelines when communicating with their children.

"We also encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are experiencing alcohol or drug issues to contact our service.

"We have two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health officers who can offer immediate assistance."

Caring for the carers



Elissa Morriss

When someone close to you acquires a brain injury, it can be tiring both emotionally and physically taking on the role of carer.

This is something that Churchill Trust Memorial winner, Elissa Morriss, is well aware of and wants to acknowledge.

Elissa, a neuropsychologist for the Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service (ABIOS) at the Princess Alexandra Hospital Health Services District, will be using the scholarship to travel to the United Kingdom and United States of America.

Elissa has been working in the area of acquired brain injury for 18 years, and plans on travelling to the UK and USA in the first six months of next year.

She will investigate ways to support adults with brain injury and their family and/or carers to manage challenging behaviour.

"I find it challenging and rewarding to work with individuals with brain injury and their families," Elissa said.

"I have worked with ABIOS since 1997 and it is clear that families and carers need more support in the long term.

"It can be very difficult and stressful for someone to look after loved ones whose personality and behaviour has changed dramatically and we need to help these people as best we can."

Brain injury is the leading cause of disability in people aged 16 to 28, and Queensland has few support services.

By travelling to the UK and USA, Elissa will have the opportunity to observe the brain injury behaviour management programs they have in place.

"They are developing innovative models to help individuals with brain injury with behavioural problems they may experience in the community," Elissa said.

"Going overseas is a great opportunity for me to learn from experts in the field, and return with practical approaches on how to help families and carers in the long term."

New Minister appointed

Stephen Robertson has been named as the new Health Minister, taking over from Gordon Nuttall, in a Cabinet reshuffle announced by Premier Peter Beattie.

Mr Robertson, formerly the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, has also be appointed to the powerful Cabinet Budget Review committee, to assist Mr Beattie in reforming those areas of health that need attention.

Mr Beattie said Mr Robertson had an impeccable track record.

"In Natural Resources, Stephen has worked successfully with the community and the various stakeholders to bring in our tree clearing legislation, improve our water resource management and negotiate Queensland's Native title agreements," Mr Beattie said.

"These are very complex and sensitive areas in which he has shown himself to be a very capable administrator.

"In relation to Stephen's work in Native title, we now have 60 per cent of Australia's indigenous land use agreements in Queensland and this has enabled us to be now experiencing a renaissance in mining exploration."

Mr Beattie said Robertson previously served as Minister for Emergency Services from 1999 to 2001.

Mr Robertson, the Member for Stretton, said he knew Health was a significant challenge and he was ready for it.

"I intend to give 110 per cent," he said.

"My immediate priorities will be receiving thorough briefings on the situation in Bundaberg, the Morris inquiry

and the Forster review.

"I believe that we have excellent people working in health and overall we have a good health system, but there are obviously some problem areas and we will deal with them with the intention of creating the best possible health system for Queensland."

Mr Robertson, born in Aberdeen Scotland, on 14 February 1962, has a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) at Griffith University and was State Secretary and National President of the United Firefighters Union of Australia before his election to the State Parliament in 1992.

Mr Robertson's Queensland Parliamentary service is:

Minister for Natural Resources and Mines from 25 August 2004. Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy 12 February 2004 - 25 August 2004. Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines 22 February 2001 - 12 February 2004. Minister for Emergency Services 16 December 1999 - 22 February 2001.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier 29 June 1998 - 16 December 1999. Member, Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee 24 April 1996 - 30 July 1998. Secretary, Parliamentary Labor Party August 1995 - 26 June 1998. Member, Public Works Committee 15 September 1995 - 2 April 1996. Member, Subordinate Legislation Committee 10 November 1992 - 20 June 1995. Member, Estimates Committee D, 1995; Member, Estimates Committee F, 1994.

Centre gains multicultural award



The Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre has been awarded the Queensland Multicultural Award in the Government category. The award recognises outstanding achievers in the promotion of multiculturalism.

For the first time this year the Queensland government has introduced the Government Category for an agency which has proven to be a leader in its dedication to multiculturalism.

Accepting the award on behalf of the centre, the manager, Rita Prasad-Ildes said that she was privileged to accept the award on behalf of the whole staff team.

Rita said they had work tirelessly to promote the mental health and well-being of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, prevent their exclusion from

mental health care and ensure culturally appropriate mental health care within Queensland Health's mental health services.

The Centre, based in West End as part of the Princess Alexandra Hospital Division of Mental Health, provides a collaborative and responsive service to Queensland in partnership with mental health service providers, ethnic communities and other agencies to address cultural diversity issues in mental health.

It does this through clinical consultation with pool of 120 bilingual mental health consultants covering more than 60 language groups, education and training, mental health promotion, policy and program input and development, and research and resource development.

Staff members pictured with the Multicultural Award, from left, Greg Turner, Rita Prasad-Ildes, Polly Nip, and Penny D'ath.

From the Chief Nursing Advisor,
Jillian Jeffery



Twenty scholarships have been allocated for nurses to study a Master of Nurse Practitioner in 2006, in order to become endorsed as a nurse practitioner in Queensland.

The scholarships were announced last month by the Premier, Peter Beattie. This announcement, together with the formation of the expert panel by the Queensland Nursing Council (QNC), effectively fast tracks the nurse practitioner project in Queensland.

Nurses participating in the current trials (who don't already have a Master's qualification) will be provided with equal assistance.

The QNC have formed the expert panel which will be responsible for assessing individual nurses who already have a Masters qualification in nursing or a related field.

The panel will then determine whether to endorse the nurse as a nurse practitioner. This arrangement will be in

place for three years. This is a first for Queensland and is part of the much-needed reform of our health workforce. Nurses are keenly seeking enhanced clinical roles.

For nurses who opt to study part time, the funding will be spread two years. This is very important as most nurses are women, many of whom have family responsibilities as well as busy working lives.

The provision of 20 scholarships is great news for nurses, together with the existing 11 demonstration nurse practitioner positions. It means that Queensland will be placed comparably on the map nationally.

The scholarships will cover the costs of the fees associated with the Master of Nurse Practitioner program and will be awarded based on a merit selection process.

Further details of how to apply for these scholarships will be available shortly.

Working with elderly has many rewarding experiences

Val McGlynn, Wendy Buchanan, and Pam Rika have some 90 years of nursing experience between them. They have penned their thoughts on caring for the elderly in order to share with others the satisfaction and joy that comes with working in the aged care sector.

Val McGlynn



Val McGlynn, Clinical Nurse, Bramble House: I have been a registered nurse for 30 years and have spent the past 15 years working in aged care.

I initially came to aged care because of the flexibility of shifts when my children were young, but stayed because I found I could use all my skills and continue to develop professionally, particularly in dementia care.

During this time I have experienced many changes, working in a dementia unit where a multidisciplinary team, volunteers and families have worked together to improve the environment for the elderly residents.

In line with Eventides' model of care (Eden/Eltos) our working and living environment has become very home-like and includes lovely gardens, walking tracks, birds, ducks and chickens.

We also have a playgroup collocated in our unit, so the residents able to interact with children.

With the introduction of plants, animals and children there is more spontaneity and variety in the residents life.

Staff promote opportunity for residents to give as well as receive (feed animals, water plants) which provides our

residents with a feeling of self worth.

Volunteers come and take residents for walks, assist the recreation officer with sing-alongs and other activities or just spend time listening or holding the residents hand.

I find this environment a very enjoyable one to work in.

Staff support each other, give tender loving care, cater for residents spiritual and medical needs, fund raise to provide residents with extra treats and comforts (we have a great decorative display at Christmas time) and their support family and friends through happy and sad times.

In a day, staff and residents experience many episodes of humour, frustration, joy and sadness.

I work with dedicated caring people and that is one reason I enjoy working in aged care.

Opportunities for ongoing professional development and working within a dynamic multidisciplinary team are other reasons I would encourage anyone thinking of aged care as a career path to go ahead and try it.

Wendy Buchanan, EENAP, Bramble House: I enjoy nursing. All aspects of it appeals to me, but I enjoy aged care far more

Wendy Buchanan



Pam Rika



than nursing in other fields. I feel that aged care is what comes naturally to me.

Aged care gives one insight into caring for another individual holistically, giving more of yourself and beyond the job description without necessarily getting something in return.

The aged and often frail and or confused person has needs that must be met.

I get a sense of pride when I manage to meet a need, if I have relieved boredom, made a resident feel loved or made them feel that they have mattered, that's important to me.

It is a very gratifying feeling when you achieve something with an aged person that another has not been able to do.

It may be something as simple as getting them to eat, drink, smile, show recognition when they see you or hear your voice. Maybe you were able to de-escalate a difficult behaviour – it's a good feeling.

The community needs good aged care nurses that aren't afraid of admitting their love for this field of nursing and want to succeed in it as I want to.

Aged care gives me a passion to find out how I can improve and learn more of what makes the elderly tick.

It also makes me very aware of the complexity of their

minds and I know that I must never be presumptuous, judgemental, or intolerant of them because, I firmly believe in my heart, what I do to others can and will be done to me. What turns around comes around.

Aged care is something I do because I have chosen to do something that gives me a sense of satisfaction.

I am proud to be involved in aged care. I love the feeling of unconditional love I get from the aged person. I also like the fact that I can love them back just as unconditionally.

Pam Rika, AAIN, Bramble House: I have been working in Aged Care for 38 years in various areas of nursing as an AAIN.

In that time I have spent 25 years working with dementia residents. I have been employed by Eventide Nursing Home for 10 years.

Aged care is something I chose to do as it gives me great satisfaction in interacting with and acting as an advocate for the residents.

The aged are often frail or confused and I get pleasure at meeting their needs be it with grooming – eating or just being there with a smile and kindness, to help relieve their boredom and to make them feel loved.

I get a sense of pride at the end of each shift to know I have done my best for my residents.

health
career
advancement

Since studying a **Master of Public Health** at QUT, Chanelle Clark has worked as a team leader in health promotion in alcohol and drug services in Roma.

Working in a rural health district, Chanelle developed health promotion programs, delivered training, lead staff, facilitated community development, and contributed to policy development.

Chanelle says the job was challenging and the friendships and working relationships within the local community were very rewarding.

You too can make a rewarding health career move and choose from the wide range of postgraduate health courses. Graduate certificates through to masters are available in areas including:

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- Health promotion
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Artist teaches history



Charlie Chambers, holding one of his emu egg carvings, is pictured with some of the Indigenous artworks.

Ready for emergencies

Indigenous artwork, craft exhibitions and traditional dancing were a feature of Reconciliation Week celebrations held at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

A feature of the celebration was a display of unique emu egg carvings by popular artist Charlie Chambers. Charlie was born and raised in the Cherbourg community and his art is inspired by the country where he grew up and the stories passed on to him by the elders of the Cherbourg community.

"In my work I try to teach stories of what was taught to me and was passed down from generation to generation," Charlie said.

"It's good to get the chance to pass on stories that were never actually written down, so that they're not forgotten."

National Reconciliation Week, from 27 May to 3 June, builds awareness of reconciliation for all Australians

– Indigenous and non-Indigenous. National Reconciliation Week began in 1996 on 27 May, which marks the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum where 90 per cent of Australians voted to remove clauses from the Australian Constitution which discriminated against Indigenous Australians.

The last day of the week, 3 June, commemorates the 1992 Mabo High Court decision to recognise the Native Title rights of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Professor Richard Olley, District Manager of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital said the hospital showed its support for National Reconciliation Week by holding a range of activities throughout the week.

"The activities at the RBWH during Reconciliation Week were aimed at supporting reconciliation and building cultural awareness," he said.

Ensuring Queensland Health is prepared and equipped to respond to terrorist incidents is the aim of the Emergency Preparedness and Continuity Management (EPCM) Project being implemented across the state.

The project team was set up 12 months ago to implement the key principles of the whole-of-government Queensland Counter-Terrorism Framework.

The framework is based on preparation, prevention, response and recovery in relation to terrorism-related incidents.

The EPCM team is Noel Gillard, Project Manager; Alex McGill, David Sell, Nick Whittle, Allen Marr, Senior Project Officers; and Noreen Walton, Project Officer.

The team has reviewed, analysed and coordinated the development and implementation of a policy framework, guidelines and planning templates to enable both compliance with the whole-of-government framework, and a consistent approach to emergency preparedness and continuity management arrangements for Queensland Health.

Noel Gillard said statewide consultation had taken place

with district managers and key stakeholders. He said project team members had assisted some facilities undertake vulnerability assessments of their existing Business Continuity and Emergency Response Plans using the planning templates developed.

He said that under the policy each accountability area would assign a contact officer to develop the specific requirements of that area for the implementation of EPCM policy and framework.

Educational tools and support requirements would assist officers with the implementation of the emergency preparedness and continuity management arrangements.

Training workshops to ensure a consistent approach to the implementation have been held in Brisbane and Townsville.

Noel said continuation of core services was crucial for Queensland Health, which had a lead role in providing essential services to the community.

Copies of the policy, guidance documents and planning tools can be accessed through http://165.86.8.41/hssb/risk/epcm/policy_guidance.htm

Pharmacists look forward

Medicines managers: The next generation is the theme of the 27th federal conference of The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre on 10-13 November.

The aim of the conference is to encourage members of

the pharmacy profession to share their experiences and learn from authoritative practitioners.

Contact: Event Planners Australia, phone 3858 5584, fax 3858 5510, e-mail: shpa2005@im.com.au, web: www.shpa.org.au

Projects gain funding

Four research projects have been awarded funding in this year's round of the Allied Health Research Scheme. The scheme was introduced in 2004 to support projects which will directly contribute to increasing the research capability and commitment of Allied Health services or employees in Queensland Health.

Award winners are:

Brooke Noble (Abdominal Binders – giving breath and voice to spinal cord injured patients); Jenny Kay-Sharpe (The relative contributions of energy expenditure, physical activity and food intake to changes in body composition and weight associated with antipsychotic usage); Angela Dean (Safety and efficacy of prn sedation in children and adolescents – a naturalistic controlled trial in a mental health inpatient unit); and Liam Dunstant (Cross cultural mental

health assessment).

Paula Bowman, Principal Allied Health Adviser, said the scheme assisted in building a strong research culture within Queensland Health and increasing the evidence-based approach to health care practice.

The research scheme is limited and competitive. Each year \$50,000 is available and distributed among the following categories: novice (\$10,000), non-metropolitan (\$15,000) and other (\$25,000).

Paula said applications for the 2006 round of the scheme would be called in February. Staff interested in applying for funding should regularly check the Health Advisory Unit website for updates

http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/odb/hau/allied/html/taskforce/research_scheme.htm

Nursing home work on track

The new \$16.9 million aged care nursing home on the grounds of Maryborough Hospital is on track for completion, with residents expected to move into the home in February.

The nursing home, on the corner of Yaralla Street and Winston Noble Drive, has three 32-bed residential wings including a 16-bed dementia special care unit. The home has been specially designed to Queensland Health's requirements and the latest Commonwealth standards to provide the highest levels of care with a safe, secure, friendly, home-like environment.

Residents will have their own air-conditioned bedroom and access to a shared en-suite. The flexible design will enable couples to stay together in twin or double share rooms and for relatives to share a room if they wish.

Each residential wing will have its own sitting area for quiet relaxation in addition to discrete lounge and dining facilities.

The facility includes a large activity area for group therapy activities and social occasions and comfortable shaded verandas and landscaped courtyards with easy access.

BreastScreen schedule

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

Scheduled services:

Mobile Services

Toowoomba: 1-3 August, Augathella; 10-17 August, Oakey; 30 August-6 September, Allora; 8 September until December, Warwick.

Townsville: August until 7 October, Mt Isa.

North Brisbane: 2-23 August, Strathpine; 25-31 August, Deception Bay.

Mackay: 1-25 August, Proserpine; 26 August-15 September, Cannonvale.

Rockhampton: 1-10 August, Winton; 12th August-7 September, Longreach.

Relocatable Services

Cairns: 1-2 August, Georgetown; 5-16 August, Wu

Chopperen; 22-24 August, Tamwoy; 25 August-8 September, Thursday Island.

Gold Coast: Until 4 August, Robina; 22 August-13 October, Beenleigh.

Nambour: Until 14 August, Bribie Island; 17 August-2 September, Kawana; 3-23 September, Coolumb; 5-16 September, Beerwah.

Ipswich: 27 September-18 November, Queen St, Goodna.

Services have been opened at Hervey Bay, Brisbane City at Shop 11, City Plaza and Nambour Service is now located at Block 4, Nambour Hospital.

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: Cancer Screening Services Unit on 3234 1596.

DNA test results upheld by independent reviews

Three independent scientific reviews have upheld the integrity of DNA results tested using quantification at Queensland Health Scientific Services (QHSS).

The reviews quashed statements reported in *The Courier-Mail* and other media in March, which alleged that quantification at QHSS may have resulted in incorrect DNA results, wrongful convictions and breaches of NATA accreditation.

Quantification is a process used at QHSS to estimate the amount of DNA in a sample. The aim of quantification is to estimate the amount of template DNA required to provide the best quality DNA profile.

It is not an essential step (as it is not used in all laboratories), but can create greater efficiency in a laboratory, reducing the need to retest samples to obtain a DNA profile.

An independent review of QHSS Forensic Sciences was recently conducted by the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR), a Crown Research Institute and leading provider of forensic science services in New Zealand.

One aspect of the ESR review was to focus on the use of the Quantifiler™ Human DNA Quantification system at QHSS.

The ESR reviewer Susan Petricevic's findings included:

- there is no evidence that any DNA sample tested after the introduction of the Quantifiler at QHSS resulted in incorrect DNA profiling



Dr Peter Lewis-Hughes

- the development validation of Quantifiler complies with recognised industry requirements and standards (DAB Guidelines – internationally accepted Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories)
- the internal validation of the same system, completed at QHSS before implementation into case-work complies with the requirements of these Guidelines

Two secondary reviews of the ESR Review were sought from Simon Walsh, Centre for Forensic Science University of Technology, Sydney, and Dr Peta Stringer, Manager DNA Science Branch, Victoria Police Forensic Services Centre.

Their reports agreed that QHSS had appropriately validated the instrument, in line with NATA guidelines, and that the DNA profiling process had not been compromised by the use of the Quantifiler.

Queensland Health Pathology and Scientific Services Executive Director Dr Peter Lewis-Hughes said he had been disappointed with

Parents with children who are fussy eaters are the focus of a new Queensland Health early intervention workshop.

Fun not Fuss with Food was developed in 2000 by a multidisciplinary team of health professionals at the Gold Coast Health Service District (GCHSD).

Successful evaluation of the program at the Gold Coast and a recent pilot evaluation in the Toowoomba Health Service District and the Charleville Health Service District support the dissemination of the program to interested communities across Queensland.

Fun not Fuss with Food is a single session, two-and-a-half-hour workshop for parents that covers nutrition for children and behavioural management strategies.

The workshop is delivered by child health nurses, child psychologists/early intervention specialists and dietitians/nutritionists at the community level.

It aims to reduce problem eating behaviours and improve dietary intake for children aged 2-10 years.

"Food refusal and fussy eating are common problems experienced by parents that can make children's

media reporting of the matter and feared it may have wrongly damaged public confidence in the justice system.

"It was unfortunate that despite being informed that the validation process had been correctly completed by QHSS, and that the quantification step was an inessential step in gain-



mealtimes a difficult and stressful time", said Lyza Norton, Paediatric Dietitian (GCHSD).

"Behavioural problems such as food fads, picky eating and food refusal can lead to poor childhood nutrition which may lead to a child's failure to thrive.

Fun not Fuss with Food provides an alternative to one-to-one consultations for both parents and health professionals and was designed to improve efficiency in the delivery of a service.

It has been particularly useful in reducing waiting lists in instances when professional time is limited.

Anyone interested in offering the *Fun not Fuss with Food* workshop to parents, resources can be obtained free of charge for community and child health units.

Order forms will be available soon on QHEPS on the Public Health Services Branch – Nutrition webpage.

ducted by QHSS be submitted to an internationally refereed scientific journal for publication.

"QHSS is committed to continuous improvement and best practice, and encourages active staff participation to ensure our place as one of Australia's leading forensic institutions."

Waiting times in Queensland Health hospital emergency departments are shortening because patient pathology results are returning from the laboratory at a faster pace.

The Queensland Health Pathology Service (QHPS) has formed a taskforce focused on improving the turnaround times for pathology test results for patients in hospital emergency departments.

The Turnaround Time Taskforce is an initiative gener-

Faster results improve turnaround

ated from the QHPS client survey in 2004 which highlighted areas where the organisation could improve its services.

The taskforce is working with pathology laboratory staff across the state to identify work processes that can be altered to increase service efficiency.

Taskforce leader, Geoff Simon, said some laboratories had excellent procedures and QHPS hoped to share these with laboratories

across the organisation and create the best, unified approach.

"We are trying to identify laboratories with best practice so that we can implement these practices across the breadth of the organisation," he said.

"At the moment our taskforce is focused on what will increase the process speed from the point of receipt at the laboratory through to validation of results and reporting to the doctor."

The findings of the taskforce have assisted turnaround times in Townsville where, it was revealed, a high proportion of full blood count results were undergoing additional processes requiring human intervention. Geoff said most other laboratories performed screening of this sort using automated analysers.

"Only results that fall outside established limits are manually reviewed under the microscope,

while the majority of results are automatically validated and released to clinicians without microscopic review," he said.

"The manual review process adds significantly to the amount of time taken to release results and uses up valuable scientific resources."

The changes made in Townsville have dramatically reduced the number of full blood count specimens being examined under the microscope, reduced cost and improved turnaround times.

focus on> Information Directorate



Wendy Balachandran

Help a phone call away

A new InfoService Centre providing a single point of contact for all products and services offered by the directorate is being established by the Information Directorate.

This is a progressive move away from the multiple, disparate and geographically dispersed information technology and communications customer service desks.

The InfoService Centre supports about 23,000 desktops and provides access to information and communication technology support services to all Queensland Health employees.

Wendy Balachandran, Director of the InfoService Centre, said the aim of the centre was to minimise the information technology related disruptions to the business of healthcare.

She said one of strategies to achieve this was for customer ser-

vices officers to take responsibility for managing a reported 'incident' to its resolution or closure, monitoring progress and keeping the user informed.

"Over time, the centre will improve its capability to resolve more problems and restore services through standardising work practices and achieving a level of consistency in the solutions we provide," Wendy said.

"We are also preparing for an eventual extension of operating hours in response to customer need for 24x7 support for information systems, many of which clinical staff rely on for patient care at all hours of the day and night."

The InfoService Centre transformation was completed by end of last month, when the team of about 30 staff moved into the new purpose-built InfoService Centre in Block 7

of the Herston campus.

For Queensland Health staff, it will be business as usual as the old Service Desk phone number will also move to the InfoService Centre.

Continue to call 1800 198 175 for all ICT related enquiries, service requests and requests for advice, including calls regarding non-enterprise applications which will be forwarded through the InfoService Centre to the appropriate district information technology resources.

2005 timeframes for articles

email: rossi@health.qld.gov.au

edition	closing date
October	9 September 2005
November	7 October 2005
December	4 November 2005
February	5 January 2005

Industry leaders meet executive

The presentation by the Queensland Health Information Directorate to the Australian Information Industry's Queensland Branch June breakfast, received very positive feedback from attendees and organisers.

Sabrina Walsh, Senior Executive Director, Information Directorate, addressed more than 350 industry representatives at the gathering.

Instead of concentrating on the rules, regulations, restrictions and requirements information and communications technology organisations must meet when dealing with Queensland Health, Sabrina introduced her executive team.

Each of the team gave an overview of their key responsibilities and indicated where there would be future opportunities for partnerships with industry.

Director-General, Dr Steve Buckland, addressed the gathering, emphasising the importance of information to the delivery of quality healthcare and the need for Queensland Health and the information technology industry to work together.



Sabrina Walsh

"We have received some very positive comments from people who welcome our efforts to consult with industry," said Sabrina.

"Comments such as 'This interaction with industry was so successful I hope the word can spread among other government agencies' and 'Managers themselves were very impressive in their own right, which again created a great feeling of confidence in the Information Directorate' were an indication that we are on the right track," she said.

The executive team members are:

- Walter Robb, Executive Director InfoInvestment – responsible for vendor engagement, strategy, planning and governance
- Jim Ramsay, Executive Director InfoOperations – responsible for managing end to end enterprise systems
- Bernie Woodcroft, Executive Director InfoSolutions – responsible for enabling new capability
- Wendy Balachandran, Director InfoService Centre – responsible for serving customers
- David Rowlands, Executive Director Clinical Informatics Program – responsible for delivery of approved clinical information system projects
- Sue Cornes, Acting Executive Director InfoAccess – responsible for information access and interpretation
- Danielle Hornsby, Executive Director Transformation Program – responsible for managing the Information Directorate transition to a new organisational structure based on industry best practice.

Smooth transition to new roles

The first transition to the new Information Directorate operating model has been successfully completed. About 50 staff from the former West Moreton and Toowoomba Information Service Units (ISUs) are now in their new roles either in the InfoOperations South West Cluster or in one of the health service districts.

"A lot of time and effort has gone into preparing for, and working through, this transition," said Danielle Hornsby, Executive Director of the ID Transformation Program. Transformation is not just about moving boxes on an organisation chart.

"It involves seeing our services differently, working differently with our customers and each other, and positioning our operations differently for the future.

"One of the main differences in how the Information Directorate will operate is its focus on enterprise applications and infrastructure, while health service districts will take on responsibility for meeting their own local requirements.

"This means that, for each of the 16 ISUs, we need to identify their current enterprise and non-enterprise functions and determine what resources and funding will be transferred to enable the district to support local information system initiatives."

Danielle said the functional split for each ISU would vary to some extent, but the decisions would be in accordance with an agreed set of transition principles, developed in consultation with the pilot health service districts and the Information Directorate.

"The learnings from the pilot have enabled us to hit the ground running with subsequent transitions, currently involving about 130 Information Directorate staff from Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Bayside and QEII Hospital ISUs," she said.

"With the Information Directorate roles, responsibilities and structures now in place, we expect a comparatively streamlined rollout for remaining ISU staff transitions, all of which are due to be completed by the end of November this year.

"Running in parallel with this activity is the transitioning of the InfoOperations, InfoSolutions, InfoInvestment and InfoService Centre branches of the Information Directorate.

"As a result of the Transformation Program, the Information Directorate will significantly enhance the value that Queensland Health recovers from its investments in information, systems and technologies."

2005
timeframes for articles

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edition	closing date
October	9 September 2005
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Changes for workforce initiatives : New technology makes for speedier recoveries

Changes in workforce initiatives have been introduced in hospital emergency departments following a review by the Queensland Health Emergency Department Skills Mix and Work Analysis project.

Cang Dang, Principal Consultant, Workforce Design and Participation Unit, said the review was in response to ongoing workforce shortages and service delivery challenges.

"Emergency departments face complex challenges, which vary between individual services according to local needs and influences," he said.

"The initiatives cover local effectiveness through the optimisation of available staff and skill mix, use of new positions (eg. nurse practitioners) and revision of existing models of care.

"The review looked at emergency department challenges, local initiatives and objectively evaluated site specific needs."

Three main emergency departments took part in the project; Ipswich (pilot site) Royal Brisbane

and Women's and Gold Coast hospitals.

Snapshot data collection of the allied health model in emergency departments was carried out at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

The main findings of the project are:

- role expansion and/or flexibility is a meritorious workforce strategy
- wider implementation of established, locally effective, initiatives should occur following appropriate evaluation of site-specific needs
- existing roles and models of care should be reviewed to optimise the effectiveness of new strategies

The project recommended that individual emergency departments should objectively evaluate local needs to either select the most appropriate workforce option or develop new strategies, based on optimal models of care to efficiently and effectively meet local need.

The project developed and successfully trialled (at the pilot site) a methodology for emergency depart-

ments to achieve the project's recommendations.

Implementation of recommended initiatives had a number of positive outcomes during the trial periods.

These included a significant decrease in the number of patients in the waiting room, no backlog of patients at the beginning of evening and night shifts, a marked reduction in waiting times for all patient categories (Australasian Triage Scale), a 'noticeable' decrease in the level of patient aggression, and improvements in patient flow through the department.

"The methodology developed for the skill mix and work analysis of emergency departments is highly transferable to many other service areas across Queensland Health," Cang said.

Contact: Cang Dang (cang_dang@health.qld.gov.au) or Christopher Setter (christopher_setter@health.qld.gov.au), Workforce Design and Participation Unit, phone 3234 1770.

New and innovative technology is making a significant difference in Queensland Health by improving clinicians' ability to diagnose disease, treat patients, improve survival rates and improve the quality of life for patients.

As new and innovative technology is introduced to Queensland Health it becomes the responsibility of the Technology Assessment Team within the Innovation Strategy Unit.

The team evaluates new health technology to determine its clinical effectiveness, technical performance and if it is as effective as the technology it is replacing.

Team Leader for the Health Technology Assessment Team, Joan Kennedy, said that many Queensland Health patients have benefited from new health technologies. "A recent technological breakthrough helping patients with heart problems is the use of implantable devices such as coronary artery stents," Joan said.

"The use of coronary artery

stents doesn't require complex open heart surgery which enables a much speedier recovery without admission to intensive care units.

"This technology has spared many patients the pain and discomfort associated with open heart surgery and a stay in intensive care, attached to drips, tubes and monitoring devices. "Recent technological developments are also improving health care outcomes by significantly reducing the length of hospitalisation for patients.

"For example, some minimally invasive surgical procedures can now be performed as day only procedures enabling a speedier recovery and return to work."

Emerging technologies being investigated include diagnostic technologies providing 3D images rather than 2D images which enable more accurate diagnoses, gene therapies to treat a range of diseases, and vaccines to treat cancer.

Training support site updated by Learning Services Unit

A new intranet site has been launched by the Queensland Health Learning Services Unit.

The changes aim to provide all Queensland Health employees with a single, coordinated and up-to-date point for easy access to training and development information.

The new site can be found at <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/lసు/home.htm>

The Director of the Learning Services Unit, Paul Stafford, said "his-

torically, training and development information on QHEPS has been widely dispersed and often difficult to locate".

"The new site will make it easier for employees to locate their desired training and development information," she said.

Paul said the intranet pages offer insight into a broad range of training and development topics including:

- a comprehensive list of internal and external training providers, and train-

ing policies, resources and venues

- a comprehensive list of corporate professional development programs, many of which include full or partial corporate subsidy
- information on e-Learning and Learning Management Systems
- links to various methodologies and resources (eg: PM Plus, HR Foundations, Change Management Guides, Performance Management Guides)
- audio summaries of statewide Training and Development Forums

- a 'What's New' section highlighting upcoming events and relevant dates

Paul said a feedback function had been incorporated into the intranet site so that the users could make suggestions on how the site could be improved.

He said the Learning Services Unit would regularly review and market the site to ensure Queensland Health staff had access to the latest training and development informa-

tion.

"It is anticipated future additions to the intranet site will include features such as an on-line discussion forum called iParticipate," Paul; said.

"This feature will enable users to have real time text based conversations concurrently with multiple other learning and development officers and other employees.

Contact: Karen Finn, Learning Services Unit , phone 3235 9054.

Unit plays key role in whole-of-government services

Oversight and coordinate the implementation of the whole-of-government shared service initiative within Queensland Health is one of the key roles of the Shared Service Coordination Unit.

Two other key roles are to support the Executive Directors of Queensland Health's Shared Service Providers in the implementa-

tion of the Shared Service Initiative in Queensland Health; and provide an interface with the Shared Service Implementation Office (SSIO) and the other SSP's including CorpTech.

The unit has five team members. They are Director, Andrea Sams, Principal Shared Service Officer, Liz John and two Shared Service Officers, Fiona McDonald

and Michelle Webb.

Paul Colch also works with the unit to deliver training and development initiatives on behalf of SSIO.

Liz John has recently joined the unit from a position with CorpTech and she has extensive knowledge of the SSI from a whole-of-Government perspective.

Both Fiona and Michelle have been with Queensland Health for a number of years.

Fiona most recently held a position within the Decision Support System Unit and Michelle left Queen Elizabeth II Health Service District to join SSCU when it was established in 2003.

Paul Colch was previously with the Redcliffe/Caboolture District Health Service.

He is responsible for coordinating training activities related to the business preparation and implementation phases of the Shared Service Solution (SSS) Sub Programs. In particular his focus is the key priority skill areas identified by SSIO, SSS and the SSPs.

The priority areas of activity for the SSCU for 2005/06 include:

- development of a more user friendly Operating Level Agreement for the SSPs and their clients
- implementation in Queensland Health of the whole-of-Government Service Standardisation model
- development and implementation of a customer and client reporting framework
- development and implementation of a system based performance management system

The SSCU will also take a major role in assisting the Finance Branch and HRMIS Unit with preparation for the rollout of the new whole-of-Government system solutions.

If you have any questions on the SSI or the work of the SSCU take a look at the website on QHEPS or contact Andrea Sams on Andrea_Sams@health.qld.gov.au

Andrea has vital task

Andrea Sams, Director, Shared Services Coordination Unit, joined Queensland Health in July 1999 after 17 years in the Commonwealth Public Service in a variety of corporate service functions.

Andrea came from the role of Resource Manager with Area Brisbane, Centrelink to undertake the role of the FAMMIS Client Support Coordinator with Queensland Health.

Andrea's corporate service background includes HRM, Property and Fleet Management, Recruitment and Selections, Finance, Risk Management and Policy development.

Andrea was chosen by the Chief Finance Controller of Centrelink to undertake a review of the risk management strategies surrounding their SAP R/3 application.

She was also responsible for the training, security, configuration and rollout of both the Finance and HR solutions within Centrelink for Area Brisbane, and employee self service implementation for the integrated solution.

Andrea also spent considerable time with the previous Office

of the CES.

She was the Resource Manager in the SE Queensland corner responsible for the transition of staff into the newly formed Centrelink.

The transition of these corporate services was part of a wider shared service delivery initiative by the Federal Government.

Andrea is currently the Director Shared Service Coordination Unit.

The unit has a key role in implementing the Shared Service Initiative within Queensland Health.

The unit provides support for the Executive Directors Shared Service Provider Corporate and State-wide and Shared Service Provider Districts.

The unit also provides an interface with SSIO and the other SSPs including CorpTech.

Andrea is studying for her Bachelor of Arts. Her majors are History, Anthropology and English Literature.

When the Bachelor of Arts is completed Andrea hopes to undertake further study focusing on her particular interest in Paleo-Anthropology.



Andrea Sams

Sign donor register and save lives

Queensland Health staff are being urged to sign on to the new Australian Organ Donor Register.

During May and June 1.5 million information packs were sent to all Queensland households encouraging Queenslanders to sign on to the new register.

As from 1 July 2005 the Australian Organ Donor Register changed from an "intent" to a "consent" register. This means a registered decision to donate has legal weight.

Tina Coco, Manager, Queenslanders Donate (Queensland Health's coordinating agency for organ and

tissue donation) said the strengthened register meant families would not be able to over ride a recorded decision.

"However, families would still remain central to the donation of a loved ones organs and tissues and if they have sincerely held objections, even in the event of a deceased person's legally recorded consent, then donation would not proceed," Tina said.

"Even if you signed on to the previous register, you now have to re-register on the new one to legally record your decision to donate. Most importantly discuss your decision

with your family.

"Giving people a second chance at life depends on potential donors registering their consent and discussing it with their families, friends and partners."

The change to the register is in response to Australia's donor rate which lags well behind other developed countries and was unanimously agreed to by all State and Territory health ministers.

Contact: Australian Organ Donor Register, phone 1800 777 203, website www.hic.gov.au or pick up a brochure from your nearest Medicare office.

The Sunshine Coast Health Service District has been recognised for its high standards of care with a four-year accreditation by the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS).

The ACHS looks at the health service standards from a consumer point of view and rigorously examines evidence of outcomes, a strong commitment to quality improvement, a culture

Sunshine Coast gains accreditation

encouraging best practice and strong leadership.

In addition to the four-year accreditation, the district's Mental Health Service has been issued a Certificate of Recognition following a review by the ACHS.

The then Health Minister Gordon Nuttall said the Sunshine

Coast health service was to be congratulated on achieving this accreditation which is independent recognition of their high standard of health service to the community.

"The external evaluation of the quality of the services provided on the Sunshine Coast recognises the professionalism

and dedication of the staff," he said.

"The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards is a not-for-profit organisation which works with health care professionals and consumers to develop and continually review standards for health care in Australia.

"These standards have been

widely reviewed and subjected to rigorous pilot testing so that they reflect contemporary best practice principles and are achievable and measurable.

"As an indication of the high standard of services on the Sunshine Coast, only 39 per cent of healthcare organisations surveyed in 2004 received the full four-year accreditation status."

focus
on>

Strategic Policy and Government Liaison Directorate

Effective liaisons strengthen cross-sector partnerships

The need for cross-sector partnerships to achieve more effective linkages between different parts of the health system was emphasised by the Premier, Peter Beattie, in his recent Ministerial statement *'The Future of Health'*.

The Strategic Partnerships Unit was established after the Spring Forum in 2004 to advance these effective linkages.

Developing healthier partnerships is one of five strategic intents identified in the Queensland Health Strategic Plan.

It will see the organisation working with others to harmonise programs and activities that impact on health.

Queensland Health has committed to:

- work in partnership with other federal, state and local governments and non-government organisations to ensure their policies, programs and activities actively support good health



Dr Claire Runciman

- work in partnership with other health care providers to plan and deliver innovative, cost-effective and integrated health services

Dr Claire Runciman, Acting Director, acknowledges the strong strategic partnerships that Queensland Health has developed and maintained in the past, however this had occurred without extensive coordination and collaboration.

"We aim to establish a framework that will support partnership formation, rather than partnerships being established in isolation from the organisational context," she said.

"We need to seek out and support those partnerships that can deliver outcomes for us.

"Partnerships have a life cycle that is not always well understood. The unit can contribute by coordinating the development of a common language and conceptual clarity which will assist other areas of the department with partnership development and planning.

"Relationships with others may take the form of collaboration, integration, partnership, strategic alliances, networks, coordination of activities and coalitions.

"Each of these terms indicates a relationship aimed at achieving a common goal, but they have different characteristics and life-cycles.

"We need to be clear how far Queensland Health wants to go in partnering. In what circumstances will partnering contribute more to our outcomes than it costs us?"

Claire said that realistic expectations by Queensland Health staff and

our partners, regarding what partnerships can deliver, would reduce wasted effort and retain staff morale and enthusiasm for partnering.

She said relationships in any sphere of life took effort and they could leave a bitter taste if people entered them without realistic expectations, or without the ability to communicate these expectations to other parties in the relationship.

She said the unit would identify and foster the strategic partnerships required to improve health outcomes for all Queenslanders.

"We are particularly interested in supporting partnerships that will improve services for people with disabilities and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," Claire said.

"These strategic partnerships will be with key partners, in both government and non-government organisations, such as the human services departments at the state and Commonwealth level, local government, private and non-government service

providers and advocacy groups, universities and the public.

"Our objectives include support to other areas of the department to build and maintain partnerships at a state-wide and local level. This will encompass the development of tools for partnering, providing ongoing advice and support and monitoring progress."

Claire said that significant projects the unit was engaged in include:

- a Memorandum of Understanding with Disability Services Queensland; a joint project with Disability Services Queensland to develop and pilot a methodology to profile the needs of people under 50 years (younger people) residing in Australian Government subsidised aged care facilities

- a bi-lateral agreement with the Department of Housing and supporting both the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Partnership and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnership.

Strategies to boost health outcomes

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia have poorer health outcomes than other Australians.

For many years Queensland Health has recognised the need to work in partnership with others to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland.

Formal tri-lateral partnerships were established in the 1990s between the Australian Government, Queensland Health and relevant community organisations, on the mainland and in the Torres Strait, to assist in this work.

The Strategic Partnerships Unit currently leads Queensland Health involvement in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnership* and the *Torres Strait Health Partnership*.

These partnerships support joint planning, resource allocation and policy decisions in order

to integrate services and maximise investment outcomes.

The strategies that have been developed over the years include liaising with other agencies across the Queensland Government to address underlying factors in poor health outcomes; developing strong and sustainable approaches to workforce development; and establishing and supporting local and regional planning.

Acting Director, Dr Claire Runciman says: "The partnerships have grown from an initial period of grim determination, through periods of bare tolerance, into mature problem-solving arrangements.

"As the partnership has matured it has become clear to the parties that the differences that once caused tension and distress are the very differences that enable the partnership to achieve outcomes that the organisations could not achieve working on their

own."

Claire said that in supporting the work of these Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, the Strategic Partnerships Unit sought and coordinated contributions from many business areas.

She said the unit played a key role in identifying linkages between partnership activities and other initiatives undertaken at the state level, and endeavoured to strengthen partnership links with the state office of the Australian Department of Health and Ageing.

The involvement of the Strategic Partnership Unit enabled a coordinated approach to be taken by the organisation and its representatives at statewide forums and in national committees including Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council's Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (SCATSIH), and the National Aboriginal and Torres



Partnerships in Action, from left, Stephanie Button, Jean Hughes, Nikki Laver, Charmaine Coogan, and Indrani Ganguly.

Strait Islander Health Council.

"One role of the Strategic Partnerships Unit is to ensure that the policy, funding and planning work that is undertaken in the department and across government is integrated into a coherent strategy for progressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health," Claire said.

"In recognition of the impor-

tance of the social determinants of health, the Strategic Partnerships Unit also supports the involvement of Queensland Health in whole-of-government initiatives, such as Queensland's Implementation Plan for the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Partnerships Queensland."

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Three win researchers scholarships

Three Queensland Health clinical researchers have been awarded a total of \$600,000 in five scholarships granted under the Queensland Clinical Research Fellowships Program of the Smart State Health and Medical Research Fund.

The program will provide \$2.7 million in funding over three annual rounds for the appointment of clinical researchers to undertake research in Queensland hospitals and health services.

The Queensland Government's allocation of \$900,000 for the five fellowships is being matched by more than \$3 million in co-sponsor funding support from Queensland hospitals, research institutes, universities and Commonwealth granting agencies.

The funding will help boost research into priority health areas such as cancer, lung disease, patient nutrition and paediatric medicine, and will assist Queensland researchers in building collaborative links with the international health and medical research community.

The three Queensland Health scholarship winners are:

Professor Kwun Fong, from Prince Charles Hospital, awarded \$300,000 over three years.

Professor Fong's research is focused on finding better ways of diagnosing lung cancer, and treating it more effectively in patients. This will include using state-of-the-art technology to test lung cancers to reveal specific lung cancer genes and pathways to understand the biology of lung cancer, develop new tests and more effective treatments.

Dr Ian Yang from the Prince Charles Hospital was awarded \$150,000 over three years. Dr Yang's research is focused on developing a better understanding of chronic lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma, and on slowing the progression of these diseases to improve the quality of life of patients.

Dr Maher Gandhi from the Princess Alexandra Hospital was awarded \$150,000 over three years. Dr Gandhi's research is into a new immunotherapy strategy to treat "chemotherapy-refractory Hodgkin's Lymphoma".

Currently, patients with this particular type of Hodgkin's Lymphoma have limited treatment options.

If successful, this research may also have a wider application as a prototype

infomatters



Birthday celebrations

More than 2000 people attended a birthday festival held at Roma St Parkland to mark the 10th anniversary of the Birthing Centre at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. Pictured are some of the past and present midwives from the centre after receiving key-rings from the festival organisers, the Friends of the Birthing Centre Queensland Association.

Pharmacists overcome the deluge

The tenacity of Queensland Health staff to overcome adversity was shown on 30 June in the deluge which flooded many parts of the Gold Coast.

Andrew Petrie, Director of Medicines and Pharmacy Services Unit, said pharmacy staff efforts on the Gold Coast following the rainstorm was a reminder of the staff's commitment.

He said he knew staff were "normally really pressed and putting in the extra effort when there are additional pressures is fantastic".

Liz Coombes, Director of Pharmacy, Gold Coast Health Service District, said 20 staff phoned in unable to come in because of flooded roads.

"That left us with three pharmacists and one pre-reg to run the dispensary and front reception counter for most of the day," she said.

"The two oncology staff joined us in the afternoon as their patients were cancelled. I also had a pharmacist who lives nearby come in with her child for a few hours on her day off, knowing that we would be down.

"One of my pharmacists had to drive through flooded roads and horrendous conditions to get to Miami for methadone dosing.

"We had only one pharmacist at Robina, instead of the three staff who normally work there. I think they did a fantastic job."

Sharon wins

Sharon Evans, Thargomindah Director of Nursing, is the Queensland winner of the National Care category of the 2005 Australian Nursing Awards.

Sharon was nominated by patients at the Thargomindah Outpatients Clinic. In their nomination they said: "In this remote country town, Sharon is often on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, manning a one person clinic.

"She is a compassionate and professional nurse and her commitment to care in this close-knit community is

exceptional.

"Nursing in an isolated town often means wearing many hats in a variety of circumstances – doctor, surgeon, paediatrician, physiotherapist, psychologist, dentist, radiographer, sometimes even a vet! Sharon does so with great commitment and selfless dedication and her patients think she is a truly remarkable person.

"Larger communities have the luxury of having many professionals together in their town – we have Sharon."

diary

August

- 1-31** Blood Donor Awareness Month
Australian Red Cross
Phone: (03) 9345 1800
- 1-31** Climb to the Top
National Heart Foundation
Phone: (02) 9219 2415
- 1-5** Dental Awareness Week
Australian Dental Association
Phone: 3252 9866
- 1-6** National Healthy Bones Week
Arthritis Foundation of Queensland incorporating
Osteoporosis
Phone: 3857 4200
- 1-7** World Breastfeeding Week
World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action
Phone: 4796 2314
- 5** Jeans for Genes Day
Children's Medical Research Institute
Phone: (02) 9687 2800
- 5-13** SIDS Motorcycle Trek 2
SIDS and KIDS Qld
Phone: 3849 7122
- 7** Bridge to Brisbane Fun Run
Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland
Phone: 3358 8027
- 7-13** Continence Awareness Week
Continence Foundation
Phone: 1800 330 066
- 8-12** Princess Alexandra Hospital Week
Princess Alexandra Hospital
Phone: 3240 2767
- 8-14** Healthy Bones Week
Osteoporosis Australia
Phone: 1800 242 141
- 11-20** EKKA Strawberry Ice Cream Stalls
The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation
Phone: 3350 8636
- 12** Toowoomba Seniors Expo
Blue Care
Phone: 4639 1417
- 14-20** Cerebral Palsy Awareness Week 2005
Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland
Phone: 3358 8027
- 19** Daffodil Day
Queensland Cancer Fund
Phone: 1300 656 585
- 20** Works for the Blues
Blue Care
Phone: 3213 7370
- 20-28** Seniors Week
Department of Families
Phone: 1300 132 654
- 21-27** Home and Community Care Awareness Week
HACC Resource Unit, Queensland Health (TPCH)
Phone: 3350 8127
- 21-27** Hearing Awareness Week
Better Hearing Australia Brisbane Inc.
Phone: 3844 5065
- 22** Endometriosis Awareness
Endometriosis Association (Qld)
Phone: 3836 3752
- 27-28** Relay for Life, Nambour
Queensland Cancer Fund
Phone: 1300 656 585
- 28** Out of the Blue
Blue Care
Phone: 3377 3333
- 29** Challenge for Cancer
Queensland Cancer Fund
Phone: 1300 656 585
- 31** Doctors for Doctors Day
Medecins Sans Frontieres
Phone: (02) 9552 4933

A review of some articles from previous Health Matters

February	New technology aids Team Foxtrot Innovation program launched E-mail service boosts library access	May	Walkers-cyclists strive for healthier lifestyle Ipswich doctor says dry wit helped in Iraq E-learning a new tool for carers
March	Recognition for staff achievements \$20m extra funding for operations Diagnostic imaging a world leader	June	Sam's new liver was a life saver Partnership seeking answers to challenge Block 7 dream nearing fruition
April	Life-saving lung surgical procedure available Broncos partnership aims for healthier lifestyle Helping women overcome depression	July	Record \$5.3 billion Health Budget Bali burns specialist awarded OAM Moranbah – Small district with big vision



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