

HealthMatters



directions Prof Andrew Wilson, A/ Director-General

In December, Queensland Health opened a new facility for training for home renal dialysis in Cairns.

To my surprise, sitting in one of the training chairs was an old school mate, a big Aboriginal man, whom I couldn't forget if only because he knocked me out with one blow in boxing classes in primary school.

His huge arms now bear the marks of multiple shunts, but he is successfully home dialysing, appeared remarkably well and is still carrying out a productive life.

Chronic renal disease is one of the major health issues that limit the life expectancy and quality of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Recent work on planning renal services indicates that demand for services will accelerate, particularly in Indigenous communities.

Of course, there are many major social and environmental issues that need to be addressed to reduce the inequities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

When I look at gap in life expectancy in terms of what we know works in health, I see opportunities.

Chronic renal disease prevention and treatment is great example of what we can do practically now.

Good maternity care can reduce the risk of low birth weight, appropriate screening and early treatment can reduce the risk of early renal injury, and treatment

of hypertension and diabetes reduces the risk and rate of progression of vascular disease and chronic renal failure.

Work in the Torres Strait, led by Professor Robyn McDermott (previously with James Cook University) and District Manager Phillip Mills, clearly shows that we can implement approaches at a primary care to improving diabetes care that improve outcomes.

In the broader Australian community, life expectancy has increased by more than 20 years since the late 1960s, one of the largest and fastest increases in life expectancy in human history, largely through better control of heart disease.

So in his Sorry statement to the Stolen Generation of the 13 February, the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd called for action within five years to address some of the inequities including those in life expectancy.

In health, we actually have the means to have an impact in that timeframe. I believe it is our responsibility in Queensland Health to work with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to rise to this challenge.

If we are really going close the gap in a generation we have to focus our collective efforts in the most effective way.



Chamara Kleinitz gives thanks to clinical nurse Leah Beveridge – a member of the team in the emergency department at Bundaberg Hospital when Chamara was admitted. Chamara's mum, Cathy, says the team's "quick thinking saved my daughter's life". *Picture courtesy Bundaberg News-Mail. See story Page 11.*

Queensland Health reforms

Health professionals gain pay rise

Radiographers, physiotherapists, dieticians, medical scientists and other allied health and technical professionals working for Queensland Health have received pay increases of between 18 per cent and 39 per cent.

Health Minister Stephen Robertson said the increases would occur over the life of a new three-year enterprise bargaining (EB) agreement and serve as a major pitch for a range of interstate and overseas health practitioners to move to Queensland.

The EB was certified in January, but backdated from 1 September 2007.

The new EB covers around 7800 health practitioners across 42 professions, including podiatrists, speech pathologists, social workers, pharmacists and occupational therapists.

Mr Robertson said that since the nursing and medical EBs of 2006, thousands of nurses and doctors had been attracted to Queensland Health.

"I expect this new agreement to do the same for our allied health and scientific workforce," he said.

"We've invested \$345 million towards the new EB to ensure our allied health, public health and medical scientific workforce are among the highest paid in the country.

"Since June 2005, we have increased the number of allied health professionals we employ from 5806 to 7200.

"The new EB makes Queensland Health a very competitive employer to recruit and retain more radiographers, sonographers and other key personnel to the public system."

Mr Robertson said 52 per cent of affected employees returned ballots on the new EB in December with 86 per cent voting in favour.

He said as well as significant pay increases, health practitioners would also benefit from better professional development allowance, a higher education incentive, improved on-call arrangements, a new career structure to provide more professional opportunities and a review of rural and

remote incentives.

"Under the new EB, a senior radiographer at Proserpine Hospital with a postgraduate diploma averaging three on-call shifts a week and earning around \$81,387 a year before the EB last year would be earning \$108,170 after 1 September 2009," Mr Robertson said.

"That's a 32.9 per cent increase over the life of the EB and includes base salary and yearly increments, a new retention payment of \$3500 (available to all senior level radiographers and pharmacists) and higher qualification, rural and remote, on-call, and professional development allowances.

"Similarly, a new graduate speech pathologist in Brisbane who would have earned \$46,322 per annum before the EB would progress to earn \$64,522 in the final year of the EB which represents an increase of 39 per cent (including annual increments).

"In addition they would also receive a \$1500 professional development allowance.

"I expect the positive results of the EB to flow through the health system in the next few years as more health practitioners are recruited to deliver services across the whole allied health and technical spectrum."

\$11m for care facility

A new \$11 million health care facility at Carrara will deliver at least 60 extra patient beds for the Gold Coast.

Queensland Health has purchased the vacant, former aged care home on Chisholm Road to use as a step-down facility for public hospital patients with less-acute clinical needs. The new facility will enable some patients to continue to receive free quality care in more comfortable surroundings than an acute hospital bed.

The Carrara facility is undergoing a necessary capital works upgrade before it can be opened to patients.

This includes installation of a gymnasium area for rehabilitation patients, and infrastructure upgrades to accommodate the care and safety needs of patients.

The facility is expected to be ready for its first patients from next month and should have ongoing increased occupancy from 1 July.

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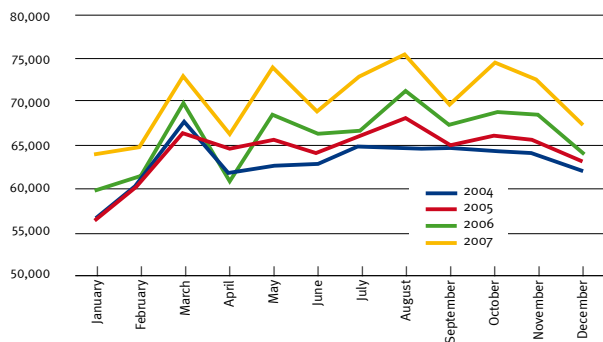
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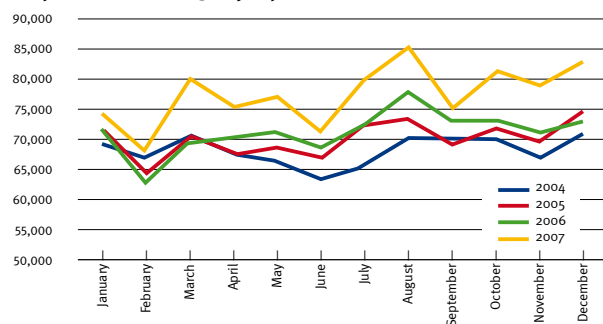
Queensland Health reforms

Record levels set by hospitals

Admissions to public hospitals



People treated in emergency departments



Queensland public hospitals set records in 2007 for the most number of people admitted to hospital and the most number of patients treated in emergency departments in a year.

The figures were released in the Public Hospitals Performance Report covering the last quarter of 2007.

“Our public hospitals are performing more surgery, treating more patients and providing more outpatient appointments than ever before,” said Health Minister Stephen Robertson.

“We’re performing record levels of activity because we have record numbers of doctors and nurses working for Queensland Health and we have undertaken widespread, patient-focused reform and renewal,” he said.

“Despite our achievements of last year, we still have a lot of work ahead of us to build a first-class health system for Queenslanders.”

Mr Robertson said during December quarter last year, 214,203 people were admitted to public hospitals, a 6.3 per cent increase on the same period the previous year (201,556).

“In total, we saw a record 842,725 admitted for hospital treatment in 2007 – that’s a 6.1 per cent increase on 2006 (794,397) and a 9.2 per cent increase on 2005 (771,959),” he said.

“We’re now averaging over 70,000 hospital admissions every month.

“August 2007 set a Queensland Health record for the most hospital admissions (75,348) in a month.”

Mr Robertson said emergency treatment continued to be a key driver of total hospital admissions.

He said public hospitals would always put emergency cases first and the number of people admitted to hospital from the emergency department was increasing rapidly.

During the first five months of 2007-08, the number of emergency admissions (153,407) increased by 8 per cent on the same period in 2006-07 (142,527).

Emergency departments also saw numbers continue to soar to record levels in 2007.

December quarter recorded 242,914 attendances at the major emergency departments (including new emergency departments at Robina and Prince Charles Hospital).

Over 2007, a total of 929,093 people were treated in the major emergency departments – an increase of 8.7 per cent

on 2006 (854,550) and 13.5 per cent on 2004 (818,199).

A total of 369,650 patients were treated as accident and emergencies around the state during the December quarter, making 1.44 million for the whole year.

Mr Robertson said that despite the peak demand in emergency cases, elective surgery had also increased.

During December quarter, 28,579 Queenslanders on the waiting list received their surgery rounding out a 2007 total of 113,406 elective procedures, which is more than the previous two years.

“However, reducing the number of people waiting longer than recommended for elective surgery continues to be a challenge for our public hospitals,” Mr Robertson said.

As at 1 January, 2008, 394 or 13.9 per cent category 1 (urgent) patients were waiting longer than recommended.

Category 2 (semi-urgent) had 3248 or 22.5 per cent of ‘long waits’ and category 3 (non-urgent) had 5445 or 29.9 per cent of ‘long waits’.

“However overall, only 1.1 per cent of the total number of patients on the waiting list (35,476) are category 1 ‘long waits’,” he said.

He said the State Government had recently undertaken a number of initiatives to improve waiting list performance.

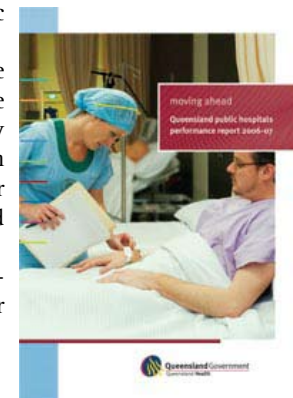
“Last November we announced an extra \$50 million to help hospitals meet record demand and undertake more surgery and, in January, Queensland was allocated \$27.8 million in Commonwealth funding to perform an additional 4000 elective procedures,” he said.

“In addition, we have committed \$8.5 million in one-off ‘Surgery Connect’ funding to use the private sector to treat around 1300 additional public patients.

“So far, as shown in the report, 64 Queenslanders have already received their surgery in a private hospital through this initiative with a further 852 people recently referred for an appointment.”

The Public Hospitals Performance Report December quarter 2007 is available on:

www.health.qld.gov.au



Queensland Health reforms

Key indicators openly analysed

Queensland public hospitals performed well against a range of different clinical indicators during 2006-07, said Health Minister Stephen Robertson.

Mr Robertson released last month the second annual Queensland Public Hospitals Performance Report (2006-07), which analyses how 40 hospitals performed in 29 key areas.

"This document is part of the State Government's commitment to openly report to the public what is happening in our public hospitals," Mr Robertson said.

"There has been robust national discussion this past week about data collecting and performance reporting by Commonwealth and States and Territories.

"The fact is the Queensland Government is now the most open and transparent state in Australia regarding the public health system.

"Through this annual report and our quarterly reports which measures activity across the board the public can judge for themselves how our hospitals are performing.

"Queenslanders can be kept fully informed about our public health system in a sensible, responsible way."

Mr Robertson said the report was also used by hospitals to identify areas where they are doing well and where they need to do better.

"They are analysed against their peer hospitals of similar size and against the state average," he said.

"In overall terms, hospitals were performing well against 29 surgical, medical, gynaecological/obstetric and mental health categories.

"Our hospitals are performing as good as, if not better, than hospitals throughout Australia.

"However, this report highlights areas where individual hospitals need to do better in a particular category.

"In every case, where a hospital recorded an unfavourable result, it was investigated and, where necessary, a management plan was put into place to improve performance in that category.

"An explanation for every unfavourable result has been included in the report."

Mr Robertson said some indicators did not apply to certain hospitals simply because they did not deliver that particular service.

"For example, Redland Hospital could not be marked against the hip replacement categories in the surgical section because it does not perform hip replacements," he said.

The report also showed in 2006-07:

- Queensland Health's total bed capacity increased by 280, from 9762 in 2005-06 to 10,042 in 2006-07
- 87 per cent of new mothers were satisfied with their care in hospital in a maternity services survey
- sick leave (staff morale indicator) as a percentage of leave hours to ordinary hours worked dropped from 5.24 per cent in 2005-06 to 5.21 per cent in 2006-07
- 17 selected Brisbane and regional hospitals saved a total 439,000 kilolitres of water, 100,000 gigajoules of gas, 44.7 million kilowatts of electricity and 40,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

The report can be found on www.health.qld.gov.au

Australia Day Achievement awards



Health Minister Stephen Robertson with some members of the Central Area Health Service staff following the presentation ceremony.

Queensland Health Australia Day Achievement medallions and certificates were presented in ceremonies across the state for achievements ranging from excellence in health service delivery to outstanding loyalty and contribution through many years' employment with the department.

Ceremonies took in the Northern and Central Area Health Services, as well as Brisbane for staff based in this area, including Southern Area Health Service staff.

Professor Andrew Wilson, Acting Director-General, said he would like to congratulate the staff who have been recognised through these awards, but also commend those who developed the nominations for consideration.

"It is encouraging to see this practical demonstration of respect, by staff within the organisation, for their colleagues' contribution to Queensland Health's objectives," he said.

Medallion and certificate recipients were: Corporate Office

Michael Close, Queensland Health Building, medallion and certificate. Ongoing responsiveness to urgent and unusual requests from Emergency Health Services Unit.

Policy, Planning and Resourcing Division

Dr Denis Lennox, Workforce Planning and Coordination Branch, medallion and certificate. Significant contribution to the development of sustainable rural medical services.

Corporate Services

Northern Area Catalogue Unit, QHSSP Cairns, medallion and certificate. Significant achievement in greatly improving the supply chain operations across service centres within Queensland Health from Mackay west to the Northern Territory border and all facilities north of that point – benefiting both Queensland Health and the suppliers.

Patrick Maguire, Purchasing and Logistics, medallion and certificate. Vision and commitment in the establishment, successful promotion and ongoing management of the Eco Efficiency Unit and its installation of eco efficiency initiatives throughout Queensland Health facilities, resulting in international recognition.

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Queensland Health reforms

Australia Day Achievement awards continued

Reform and Development Division

Patient Safety Officers across Queensland Health, Patient Safety Centre, certificates. Provision of a critical role in supporting clinicians and managers to improve patient safety since their deployment in November 2005.

Central Area

Debbie Zysk, Indigenous Health Worker, Community Health, Bundaberg, Central Queensland, medallion and certificate. Significant and tireless contribution to women's health in line with chronic diseases strategies and Breast-Screening.

Greg Nock, Biggenden Hospital, Wide Bay, medallion and certificate. 39 years' significant commitment to Biggenden Health Service.

Dr John Rowell, Director, Queensland Haemophilia Centre, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, medallion and certificate. Service above and beyond the call of duty to the inherited bleeding disorder community throughout Queensland and northern New South Wales.

Biggenden Hospital Auxiliary Inc, Biggenden Hospital, Wide Bay, certificate. Significant efforts through fundraising to support their local hospital by providing extra equipment and creature comforts for benefit of patients and Queensland Health.

Philomena Poldervaart, QHSSP, Fraser Coast, Fraser Coast – QHSSP, certificate. Consistent professionalism and significant contribution to implementing changes to procurement processes and training new staff.

Andrew Cousar, Manager, Administrative Services, The Prince Charles Hospital, Northside, certificate. 40 years' significant contribution to effectively managing administrative and operational staff.

Pauline Connolly, Candidate Support Officer, Redevelopment Change Management Team, Northside, medallion and certificate. Service beyond the call of duty to international registered nurses to assist them settle into their new life in Queensland Health and feel welcomed.

Denise Clark, Child and Family Health, Central Queensland, certificate. Proactive service delivery, and innovative approach and support to staff and clients of Gladstone Child and Family Health Unit.

Vicki Johnstone, Bundaberg Hospital, Wide Bay, medallion and certificate. Significant contribution as Medical

Recruitment Office at Bundaberg Hospital to recruit medical staff for Wide Bay Health Service District.

Sister Caren Tucker, CNC, Canning St Clinic for Sexual Health, HIV and Hepatitis B and C, Central Queensland, certificate. Effective management of Clinic for Sexual Health, HIV and Hepatitis B and C under difficult circumstances.

Judy Jasinski, Enrolled Nurse Advanced Practice, Sunshine Coast and Cooloola Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Service, Sunshine Coast, certificate. Successful development and operation of needle and syringe program at Nambour General Hospital.

William Smith, Pharmacy Assistance, Rockhampton Hospital, Central Queensland, medallion and certificate. 45 years service to Rockhampton Hospital.

Sara Williams, Adult Mental Health Service, Centenary Square, Nambour, Sunshine Coast, certificate. Above and beyond the scope of duties to support clients and colleagues at Adult Mental Health Service, Centenary Square, Nambour.

Megan Lowe, Education Centre, The Prince Charles Hospital, Northside, certificate. Successfully mentoring and supporting a disillusioned staff member resulting in a satisfied and productive employee.

Transition Care Team, Aspley Community Health Centre, Northside, medallion and certificate. Successful implementation and ongoing delivery of the Transition Care Team's service to their clients.

Shelley Nowlan, Caloundra Health Service, Sunshine Coast, certificate. Significant contribution to Caloundra Health Service's business and service delivery through leadership support and development of staff.

Dr Elizabeth Hoehn, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and Director Future Families Infant Mental Health Team, Royal Children's Hospital, medallion and certificate. 14 years' commitment to the development and ongoing successful delivery of the Future Families Program.

Glenda Simpson, Counsellor, Capricorn Coast Community Health Service, Central Queensland, medallion and certificate. 17 years' commitment to her role as Counsellor, Capricorn Coast Community Health Service, working to improve the lives of community members and mentoring and supporting staff.

Saras Prakash, Renal Unit, Hervey Bay Hospital, Wide Bay, certificate. Excellence in service delivery to clients of the Renal Unit and professional management in difficult sit-

uations.

Brad Peaker, Patient Flow Unit, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, medallion and certificate. Professionalism and dedication to his role as Surgical Bed Manager and commitment to customer service and patient care.

Debbie Carroll, Wide Bay District Health Service, Wide Bay, medallion and certificate. Significant contribution to restoring community confidence in the nursing staff of Bundaberg Hospital and demonstration of exceptional leadership skills to those staff.

Jacinta Elks, Sunshine Coast Cancer Services, Sunshine Coast, certificate. Proactive and successful implementation of "Moving On, Living Well" – multidisciplinary session for patients who have finished active cancer treatment.

Helen Woolls, Sunshine Coast Cancer Services, Sunshine Coast, medallion and certificate. For her vision with evidence based practice and ability to share it with, and empower, staff from all disciplines to manage complex patients.

Peter Smith, Clinical Oncology Pharmacist, Sunshine Coast, certificate. 20 years' achievement in the evolving role of Clinical Oncology Pharmacist and contribution to developing, evaluating and implementing a competency framework for pharmacists working in cancer services in Queensland Health hospitals.

John Singleton, Manager Engineering Services, Redcliffe/Caboolture/Kilcoy Hospitals, Northside, medallion and certificate. 30 years' continuous service and commitment to improving Queensland Health facilities and surrounds.

Northern Area

Vickie Maree Tamwoy, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Primary Health Care Centre, Badu Island, Torres Strait, Torres Strait, medallion and certificate. 25 years' dedicated health care as a Remote Area Nurse and advocate for advancement and recognition of Indigenous health workers.

Dr Colin Barnes, Cairns Base Hospital, Cairns and Hinterland, certificate. 17 years' commitment and dedication to the Orthopaedic Department, Cairns Base Hospital.

Vicki Carson, NUM, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Townsville Hospital, Townsville, medallion and certificate. Significant contribution to neonatal intensive care by setting up the original unit in 1986 and continuing to improve this service over the past 21 years.

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Queensland Health reforms

Australia Day Achievement awards continued

Judith Townsend-Stahre, Townsville, medallion and certificate. Significant contribution and commitment to Queensland Health through service prior to and in her current role as Director of Primary Health Care team.

Ella Bowie, Director of Corporate Services, Executive Unit, Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area, Torres Strait, medallion and certificate. Tireless effort beyond what is required of the Director of Corporate Services, balancing a range of cultural and other different backgrounds to achieve a positive outcome.

Sonja Brennan, Senior Sonographer, Ultrasound Department of Medical Imaging, Townsville Hospital, Townsville, certificate. Outstanding commitment to enhancing, delivering, promoting and the ongoing management of the ultrasound service for patients and referring doctors in Queensland, especially in the Northern Area Health Service.

Sue Doherty, Townsville Hospital, Townsville, certificate. 19 years' dedicated service for treatment of outpatients with venous and lymphatic disorders, resulting in wide acknowledgement of her expertise in this area.

Christine Anderson, Enrolled Nurse, Specialist Oncology Clinics, Cairns and Hinterland, medallion and certificate. 27 years' commitment to the Cairns Base Hospital and cancer care nursing, with professionalism and empathy.

Christine Thompson, BreastScreen Queensland – Cairns Service, BreastScreen Queensland – Cairns Service, medallion and certificate. For 40 years' dedication and commitment to BreastScreen Queensland and Queensland Health.

Cancer Care Services Team, Cairns Base Hospital, Cairns and Hinterland, certificate. For strong teamwork and innovative thinking resulting in an effective and welcoming Cancer Care Service.

Mercia Barrett, CNC, Palliative Care Service, Townsville Hospital, Townsville, medallion and certificate. 15 years' commitment to Townsville Palliative Care and setting the standard for palliative care in the North, with a focus on the patients' needs.

Janette Schneekloth, Cloncurry Hospital and Community Health/Mount Isa District, Mount Isa, medallion and certificate. Over 30 years' dedication to Queensland Health and local community.

Southern Area

Maryann Schubert, Project Manager, Southern Area Allied Health Program, Princess Alexandra Hospital, medallion and certificate. Significant contribution to and successful development of the Southern Area Allied Health Program.

Danielle Griffiths, Acting CNC, Intensive Care Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital, medallion and certificate. Excellence in clinical competence and leadership through ongoing initiatives directed at caring for Sandra Gorton, her family and staff within the PAH ICU.

Simon Goddard, Toowoomba and Darling Downs, certificate. Involvement in community response to the Morgan Park equine influenza outbreak.

Dr Peter Thomas, Deputy Director, Department of Emergency Medicine, Princess Alexandra Hospital, medallion and certificate. Outstanding contribution to Queensland Health emergency medicine and aeromedical services for about 21 years.

Karen Logan, Assistant District Director, Corporate Services, South West, certificate. Significant commitment to the provision of effective corporate services to Charleville Hospital and enthusiastic team spirit.

Associate Professor Bryan Burmeister, Director of Radiation Oncology for Southern Area, Princess Alexandra Hospital, medallion and certificate. Tireless efforts to improve the prognosis and quality of life of patients with cancer through enthusiastic involvement in research through TROG and other research groups.

Ronald Barker, Integrated Mental Health Service, West Moreton/South Burnett, certificate. Tireless efforts to gain improved inpatient services for psychiatric patients admitted to Ipswich Mental Health Unit.

The Daintree Team, Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit, Southside, certificate. Outstanding healthcare provided to aged mental health clients.

Stephen Lewis, Clinical Nurse, Southern Downs Community Mental Health, Toowoomba and Darling Downs, medallion and certificate. Outstanding contribution to Queensland Health mental health services.

The Radiation Oncology-Mater Centre Team, Princess Alexandra Hospital, certificate. Effective and compassionate provision of radiotherapy services to Queensland Health cancer patients.

Emma Eaton, Undergraduate Coordinator, Nursing Practice Development Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital, certificate. Progressive enhancement of the development and implementation of undergraduate nursing placements within the PAH over the past 12 months.

Milton Martin, Nellie Clark, Di Kleidon (Volunteers, More Allied Health Services for Rural Areas Program), West Moreton/South Burnett, medallion and certificate each. Commitment and support as volunteers with the More Allied Health Services for Rural Areas Program.

Peter Dwyer, Equipment Service Manager, Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme, Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme, certificate. 35 years' dedication through empathetic assistance for disabled clients of Queensland Health.

Surgical Care Unit Administration Team, Princess Alexandra Hospital, certificate. Provision of an exceptionally high level and dedicated service over the past five years to both patients and medical staff to ensure the best outcomes.

Michele Bales, Clinical Nurse, Cardiac Rehabilitation, Ipswich Health Plaza, West Moreton/South Burnett, medallion and certificate. Consistent and tireless efforts over many years to support and educate coronary artery disease patients, as well as supporting new emerging practitioners in the area of cardiac rehabilitation.

Juanita Hynes, Nursing Director, Family Women's and Children's Division, Gold Coast, medallion and certificate. Over 30 years' commitment to the Gold Coast Hospital in the areas of maternity and paediatric services, as well as staff training.

Ron Taylor, Volunteer, Red Gum Court, Redland Hospital, Southside, certificate. Significant commitment as a volunteer to supporting the residents of Red Gum Court, Redlands Hospital.

Maureen Williams, Taroom Health Service, Toowoomba and Darling Downs, certificate. 30 years' commitment to the Taroom Health Services and contribution to the community as President of Taroom Shire Cancer and Palliative Care Group Inc and Taroom and District Hospital Auxiliary.

Queensland Health reforms



Six receive honours

Professor Monsour

Six present and past Queensland Health staff were recognised for their achievements in the 2008 Australia Day Honours list.

Professor Frank Monsour, Maxillo Facial Director, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and Royal Children's Hospital made a member (AM) of the general division for service to dentistry, maxillo facial surgery and education.

Prof Monsour said the award honoured Queensland's team of maxillo facial surgeons.

Throughout his career, Prof Monsour has been heavily involved in the training of newcomers to the specialty as well as advisory roles to government, Health Insurance Commission, President of the Australian and New Zealand Asso-

ciation of Oral and Maxillo Facial Surgeons and extended involvement within the military leading up to consultant surgeon for the Surgeon General's Office.

Prof Monsour said the Royal had become his second home and his career had been rewarding.

"It is getting close to the end of my career now, but there are many very capable people coming into the system," he said.

Judith Mercia Boyd, a Clinical Nurse CAMHT, at Redcliffe-Caboolture, received a Medal (AOM) in the general division for service to nursing and nursing education, particularly care for the mentally ill, their families and carers.

She has dedicated more than 60 years of service to mental health and psychiatric nursing. Judith moved to Queensland in 1970 and continues to work as a case manager to the Redcliffe-Caboolture Mental Health Service.

Val Tuckett, The Townsville Health Service District's Director of Nursing, received the Medal (AOM) general division service to nursing, particularly as an administrator and through nurse education and professional health services.

Val said the award was for all nurses in North Queensland rather than herself specifically.

"This award is in recognition of all the hard-working North Queensland district nurses, who I am privileged to work with," she said.

"It is a really tough job, with the 24-hour cover, but on the other hand they have good teamwork among them and I am so fortunate to be a leader of so many tremendous people," she said.

Dr Andrew Blair, former Townsville staff member, received a Member (AOM) in the General Division for service to medicine, particularly in the fields of paediatrics and child protection. Dr Blair worked for Queensland Health for many years in Townsville as a community paediatrician in child health services. He retired last year and has subsequently done some casual work at the Royal Children's Hospital.

Associate Professor Sophie Dwyer, Director, Queensland Health Environmental Health Unit, received a Public Service Medal for her services to environmental health.

Professor Michael Ward, former Senior Director of Queensland Health Clinical Practice Improvement Centre, now Commissioner of the state's Health Quality and Complaints Commission, was awarded a Public Service Medal for service in health.

from the Chief Nursing Officer



Pauline Ross

Interest in midwifery models of care has been gaining momentum in Queensland over the past few years, especially since the "Rebirthing" Report (2005), the government's response to the Report, and the Maternity Services Steering Committee work up until its completion in 2007.

A Draft Guide on Midwifery Models of Care was distributed for comment in February to midwifery leaders in the state, districts, clinical governance units and clinical networks (among others).

The guide was developed primarily in response to:

- interest in such models by women, their families and midwives

- some confusion at district and area health service level about what distinguishes a midwifery model from historical models

- the need for a consistent approach to clinical governance for the midwifery models that will improve the care pathway between services as required.

The draft guide outlines the process by which midwifery models can be introduced within districts. Essentially it is a document that goes through the steps of planning and implementing a model and establishing a clear clinical governance structure that includes consultation and referral processes.

What became clear during the development of the draft guide was the absence of some complementary policy frameworks and protocols for effective consultation and referral, as well as the referral pathways between Queensland Health facilities and private practice midwives where there is a need to transfer a woman to a higher level facility.

More work will be done on these policies and protocols in the coming months and they will be submitted for consideration in due course by the Statewide Clinical Network.

The draft guide is not a document that tells districts whether or not they should implement a midwifery model, nor does it describe the business case that has to be developed. All district directors of nursing and their midwifery leaders should be able to progress business cases with their district managers in the same way that any other service development occurs.

The Midwifery Advisory Committee (which provides advice on midwifery issues to the Chief Nursing Officer), will consider comments on the draft guide and will oversee completion of the final guide.

The committee has representation by midwifery experts, consumers, Queensland Nursing Council and Queensland Nurses Union and plays a significant statewide role in the development of policy and protocols relevant to the practice of midwifery. The closing date for comments on the draft guide was 29 February. However, copies of the draft are available, and can be obtained by e-mailing: Chiefnurse-office@health.qld.gov.au

The final guide will be submitted this month to the Executive Management Team for approval.

Queensland Health reforms

Shared career pathway



Mother and daughter: Merlin Thomas (left) and Mary.

When former school Principal Mary Thomas moved to Queensland five years ago, she never imagined she'd be going back to university with her daughter to study nursing.

Three years later, Mary and her daughter, Merlin, have finished their degrees and have chosen to start their careers together at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

The pair joined the latest intake of 172 graduate registered nurses who started work at the hospital in January.

Mary said that after she moved five years ago to Queensland from Dehli, India, she used her extensive qualifications in education to work as a relief teacher around Brisbane.

But the self-confessed study fanatic said she wanted to do something new.

"I saw Merlin's university application to study nursing and thought I would just see if I could get in, not thinking I'd even get a place in the course without a scientific background," Mary said.

"When I got in, I realised there's no age or education history barrier to becoming a nurse, so we spent the next three years studying together at Griffith University," she said.

"My happiest moments were when people said we were sisters."

Merlin said that studying with her mother was "pretty challenging" at times, with the two regularly in competition for the best grades.

"We helped each other a lot, though," she said.

"We both love studying – I think it's in our blood."

Although Mary and Merlin live in Carseldine, half an hour's train ride from the PAH, they chose to work at the hospital because of their positive experiences while on student placement.

"We did our three-week practical at the PAH and both of us decided we wanted to come back after graduation," Merlin said.

"Everyone was really encouraging and we knew we'd be given many opportunities to further our careers."

Mary has joined the coronary care unit and Merlin will be working in the operating theatres.

They both plan to continue their studies in the future, with Mary interested in completing a Masters and a PhD in cardiac nursing and Merlin wanting to get into medicine.

"I've always been fascinated by operations so I'm working in the operating theatres, hoping to specialise in surgery," Merlin said.

Through its extensive push to recruit and retain quality nursing staff, the Princess Alexandra Hospital has attracted 37 more graduate registered nurses than last year's intake of 135.

Margaret gains prestige awards

Margaret Shearer, Cairns Base Hospital cancer care nurse, picked up three prestigious awards in the past year in recognition of her work efforts and personal qualities.

Margie, Nurse Unit Manager of the Cairns Base Hospital Oncology/Haematology Services and Specialist Clinics, started the year by receiving the ANZAC Kokoda 2006 Pte Bruce Kingsbury VC Award in April.

The award is for showing a degree of leadership and teamwork (mateship) that reflects the spirit of Kokoda, ie. sacrifice, strength, endurance and courage.

Margie was nominated for this award by her peers who participated with her in walking the Kokoda Track in April 2006. Then, in August, she received the 2006 La Trobe University, Faculty of Health Sciences, School of Nursing and Midwifery Studies, Academic Prize.

This prize is awarded to the student who has shown outstanding success in cancer nursing or palliative care nursing at a postgraduate level.

Margie received the prize for her academic efforts during

2006, when she was studying for a postgraduate certificate in cancer nursing and the prostate cancer nursing program at La Trobe University.

Then she was awarded the Oncology Nurses Group travel grant to attend the Cancer Nurses Society Australia 10th Winter Congress.

Margie said she found working in cancer care a highly stimulating and deeply satisfying experience.

"I love cancer care because you have more of a personal and spiritual nursing relationship with the patients because they are coming to terms with their own mortality," she said.

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Gold Coast planning on target

With extensive planning under way, Queensland Health's new Gold Coast University Hospital development is rapidly taking shape. The master planning stage, involving 59 working groups comprising staff and consultants, has just been completed and the schematic design stage is under way on what will be a world-class teaching hospital.

Bill Geerlings, Project Director for the Gold Coast University Hospital, said the new hospital will enable patients

to access more complex medical care closer to home than ever before.

"Instead of having to travel to the major hospitals in Brisbane for some services, patients will have a tertiary referral hospital on their own doorstep," he said.

The 750-bed tertiary level hospital is set to provide new cancer and cardiac care centres, neurosciences, a major trauma centre and neonatal intensive care.

Bill said a working group consultation process enabled the architects and project team to apply 'lean thinking' principles in considering how patient flows could be streamlined through the hospital.

"Queensland Health clinicians and staff have been work-

ing alongside the project architects to ensure the master plan for the hospital meets the needs of patients, staff and visitors as outlined in the district's health service plan.

"We are incorporating innovative design technologies to ensure we deliver a hospital that best meets the needs of this community – not just now, but for many years to come."

The schematic design stage, running until August, will provide an opportunity for all staff, key stakeholders and the broader community to provide input into the layout of the new hospital.

"During this stage, staff and the wider community will be able to view initial designs and nominate to participate in workshop reviews," Bill said.

Focal point for knowledge precinct

The Gold Coast University Hospital will provide the focal point of the State Government's new knowledge precinct at Southport.

The precinct development is being driven by the Office of Urban Management (OUM) and will include the new hospital, nearby education facilities and a new public transport system. Jeff Hollywood, District Manager, Gold Coast Health Service District, said the Gold Coast is the fastest growing region in Australia.

"The government's decision to invest in major urban developments in the region is good news for our expanding local community," he said.

"The city of the Gold Coast is progressing rapidly and access to first-rate services like the new development heralds, will be welcome."

Jeff said the precinct development presented many opportunities. As a teaching and research hospital, the hospital would enable closer links with the co-located Griffith University, nearby Bond University, the newly opened Queensland Academy for Health Sciences and other educational facilities.

"The once in a lifetime opportunity to co-locate the new hospital with Griffith University will see learning and

research integrated with the delivery of patient services," he said.

"Our future doctors, nurses and allied health staff will be able to learn their speciality in a hands-on, world-class facility alongside experienced staff attracted to work and teach on the Gold Coast."

The hospital's project team is working closely with all key stakeholders including OUM, Department of Infrastructure and Planning, Gold Coast City Council, Translink and Griffith University to ensure the precinct will be a dynamic, integrated and easily accessible centre for education and health services on the Gold Coast.

The Office of Urban Management will be releasing details of the new precinct in the near future.

Extra beds in Caloundra upgrade

Work is progressing well on a \$27 million upgrade of Caloundra Hospital that will deliver 30 extra beds and improved health services for the Sunshine Coast by the end of the year.

The redevelopment is an emergency department expansion to include a new 8-bed observation ward, a 12-chair renal dialysis unit, a 10-bed palliative care wing, and a two-storey oral health facility with 12 chairs plus dental laboratories.

Improved ambulance drop-off bays, upgraded car parking, better services and support infrastructure will be a feature of the redevelopment.

The medical imaging unit and pharmacy department will

be expanded, while the Red Cross rooms and Community Health Unit will be relocated to refurbished areas.

The Caloundra upgrade is part of a program to increase Sunshine Coast bed capacity by 90 beds, at a total cost of \$203 million over five years.

The 90 new beds are scheduled to be in place before completion of the Sunshine Coast's new \$940 million 650-bed capacity tertiary hospital which opens at Kawana in 2014.

deadlines for 2008

May edition
June edition
July edition
August edition

Friday, 4 April
Friday, 2 May
Friday, 6 June
Friday, 4 July

September edition
October edition
November edition
December edition

Friday, 1 August
Friday, 5 September
Friday, 3 October
Friday, 7 November

Reducing record risks



Poor recordkeeping increases the risk an organisation may face.

The need for formal responsibilities in the creation and management of administrative recordkeeping standards across the whole of Queensland Health has been addressed

with development of the Administrative Recordkeeping Business Improvement Project.

Professor Andrew Wilson, Acting Director-General, said the project would create a more effective and compliant Queensland Health by improving administrative recordkeeping capacity and capability throughout the organisation.

“The project aims to decrease exposure to risk and improve accountability by providing staff with the tools and resources to make best practice choices in recordkeeping on a daily basis,” he said.

“It is a significant initiative for Queensland Health and its success requires the involvement of all staff throughout the organisation.

“The project is expected to take up to five years to complete and will be an important enabler for a number of current and planned change initiatives in Queensland Health.”

Professor Wilson said there included:

- improved handling of executive and Ministerial correspondence
- creation of a more flexible and collaborative working environment for staff
- the facilitation of evidence-based and local decision making

- increased support for organisational learning.

The project focuses on administrative recordkeeping, but does not cover clinical recordkeeping or web content management.

A steering committee has been established to provide strategic direction and advice to facilitate the successful development and implementation of recordkeeping capability and capacity building.

Committee members have been selected to represent a wide range of key stakeholders and can be contacted directly for more information regarding the project.

Professor Wilson said there were a number of initiatives that would require collaboration by representatives from all divisions, area health services and district health services. He said these included development of Queensland Health’s Business Classification Scheme and Metadata Standards.

“These documents are critical in preparation for the implementation of an electronic document and records management system,” he said.

Contact: Darren Quinn, Manager, ARBIP, phone 23234 1019 or Darren_Quinn@health.qld.gov.au Further information can be found at the ARBIP website, <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/bpsu/content/records.htm>

Pathology course offer

A postgraduate course on Surgical Pathology of the Urinary Tract, organised and sponsored by Pathology Queensland, will be held on 18-19 April 2008 in the Westpac Auditorium, Bancroft Centre of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research.

The program includes a clinico-pathological course on surgical pathology of the urinary tract including kidney, bladder, prostate and testis.

Speakers include Professor Brett Delahunt, and Doctors Hema Samaratunga, Catherine Campbell, Joanna Perry-Keene, Frances Malczewski, Kris Kerr, John Yaxley, Ben Shepherd and David Clouston.

Registration is free for Australian and New Zealand registrars or Queensland Health staff.

Contact: Wendy Thomas, phone 3636 6399 or e-mail: Wendy_Thomas@health.qld.gov.au

UK endorses disaster planning

Disaster planning for emergencies at Brisbane airport were endorsed following an overseas study tour by the Brisbane Airport Response Group, a multisectoral response group convened by the Brisbane Airport Corporation.

The group includes the corporation, Queensland Health, Federal Police, Brisbane City Council, Red Cross, Aviation Fire Fighting and Rescue Service, Department of Transport

and Regional Services.

Trevor Barnes, from the Queensland Health Emergency Management Unit, said the tour visited the United Kingdom late last year to validate that emergency planning at the airport was appropriate. Field trips were held during the first week to disaster management groups, fire brigades, police and two airports.

In the second week Queensland Health representatives visited the London Ambulance Service, Department of Health, and St Mary’s Hospital, Paddington, while other members visited airports in Amsterdam and Hong Kong.

“It was reassuring to discover that our planning assumptions and strategies are appropriate and in accordance with

overseas policy,” Trevor said.

“Our whole-of-government approach to emergency management is ahead of the United Kingdom practice, something they learned in recent floods.

“Information on Exercise Cumpston, pandemic planning at airports, and major event planning, such as the Olympic Games and APEC, has been provided to a number of United Kingdom agencies.

“Resource material and information has been shared within the Office of the Chief Health Officer and other units. A number of strategies were explored during the tour on patient surge and ambulance block and it is recommended that they be explored within Queensland Health.”

Climate smart building target set



The equivalent of CO₂ emissions from 48,000 cars will be achieved under the new energy reduction policy.

The equivalent of carbon dioxide emission from 48,000 cars will be eliminated by 2015 under a new energy efficiency policy aiming for a reduction in energy consumption in all Queensland Government buildings.

The policy has set a target to reduce energy consumption by five per cent by 2010 and a 20 per cent reduction by 2015.

The Queensland Health energy management plan to support the policy is being prepared by the Eco Efficiency Unit (ECU) of Health Services Purchasing and Logistics.

Unit Manager, Pat Maguire, said the policy was approved by Cabinet in December last year as part of the government's commitment to meet the national greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 60 per cent by 2050.

He said it had been estimated that achieving the 2015 all-of-government target would cost \$150 million over the next eight years, but would deliver annual outgoing savings of \$18 million.

He said specific actions to be looked at under the policy were mandatory set points for air-conditioning levels, mandatory switching off of non-essential computers and other equipment outside normal office hours, and minimum energy rating standards.

"The policy aims to ensure energy is used efficiently in government buildings and greenhouse gas emissions are minimised," Pat said.

Perfect planning helps fill up rainwater tanks

Perfectly timing the installation of eight large rainwater tanks has helped the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital save 300,000 litres of water from December to early February.

The hospital is saving every drop, installing water tanks across the Herston campus, each able to hold 50,000 litres, equivalent to the average Brisbane person's individual water usage each year.

Gregg Butler, the hospital's Environment and Waste Manager, said the tanks enhanced the water-wise strategy implemented two years ago.

"The tanks have been working to decrease the water used in the cooling towers, with water sent to a filtration tank when the tanks fill, which is then pumped straight into the

cooling towers," he said.

"The system has already used more than 300,000 litres of water and the tanks are constantly filling with every deluge. The tanks can fill very quickly during a wet spell, but then automatically empty to the cooling towers so that they can refill."

Gregg said the water tanks combined with previous water wise tactics to ensure the hospital was using water as efficiently and sparingly as possible.

"Works carried out over the past two years on water efficiencies has seen the hospital achieve its aim to significantly reduce water consumption, by up to 33 per cent," he said.

"The reduction is a significant achievement. It's a real saving for the hospital and the environment."

Along with the water tanks, associated pumps and pipes were installed to connect the various tanks to facilities that could use the captured water.

The works required the installation of the control panel and associated electrical work to make the system fully operational. A further three rain water tanks were installed to be

"The ECU will develop and implement a management plan for Queensland Health and carry out ongoing recording and monitoring of energy consumption.

"Energy consumption figures for 2005-2006 will be used as the comparative baseline and will be calculated as net reductions across Queensland Health's building portfolio.

"Energy conservation principle will be incorporated into the construction and purchase of new buildings and, where practicable, the refurbishment and maintenance of existing buildings.

"ECU will apply energy conservation and management principles, procurement practices, technological solutions and alternative energy sources.

"Education and trainings programs will be introduced to change staff behavioural and usage patterns, and a central register will be maintained to record energy consumption and greenhouse emission levels.

"The policy forms an important step towards implementing the Carbon Reduction Strategy which mandates that all government-owned buildings will be carbon neutral by 2020," Pat said.

used for the gardens across the campus.

The hospital has installed three 3000 litre water tanks in the Waste Management Department so that recycled water can now be used in the day-to-day cleaning of waste bins, dock areas and cleaning machines.

The hospital started work on its water wise strategy in late 2005, and in early 2006 work began on flow restrictors with more than 4500 dual flush valves fitted to toilets, showers, urinals and hand basins across the campus.

"This work alone has seen the water consumption drop from 127,782 kilolitres in the 2005 December quarter before installation of site wide water initiatives down to 100,501 kilolitres for the same period in 2007 post installation.

That's a saving of 27,431 kilolitres," Gregg said.

"Water conservation has a significant environmental impact and we all need to be aware, particularly in South East Queensland. As such, water awareness has been incorporated into the hospital's orientation and education sessions to ensure all staff members are contributing to this initiative wherever possible."

Teamwork inspires achievements

Queensland Health's Clinical and Statewide Services staff have a reputation for achieving great things – and the people who choose to work there have a lot in common.

They're experienced, creative, motivated and hardworking, and have engendered a workplace culture that nurtures and sustains these energies.

But they also look after their physical and mental health by getting out and about. There are many silent exercise achievers. This article looks at the fitness achievements of some of the fitness devotees.

Greg Bryson – Project Manager:

With family and work commitments, I find it hard to be involved in organised sport, so I go to the gym in the mornings before work and find it's a great start to the day.

As well as all the physical benefits, it really does help to keep the stress levels down. I do a combination of weights and cardio training, mixed with boxercise and spin classes, so I don't get bored with just one routine.

Although I don't participate in a team sport, there is a lot of social interaction with the early morning regulars.

Some of us have been going to the same gym for over 10 years and have become good friends. (Greg was a star performer in his age group in the recent RBWH Race to the Roof so his fitness regime really paid off.)

Kylie Chippendale, QIS Liaison Officer:

I play netball and have since I was five years old. In addition, I go to the gym regularly. For me, I just enjoy exercising and find it a great time to think things through without interruption and reduce stress. Having exercise as a part of my routine helps me keep balance in my life, and also lets me watch some television at the gym.

Peter Thirkettle, Director Workforce:

After a full medical check up in 2000 I found that I had high cholesterol. Not wanting to spend the rest of my life on medication and wanting to better manage the demands of a challenging job I started to take steps to a lifestyle change.

That involves healthy eating and a diverse weekly exercise regime of weights and cardio at the gym 3-4 times a week and at least one bike ride.

A group of us started to ride regularly on Saturday or Sunday mornings. We found that we formed friendships

A special focus on how Queensland Health staff keep fit, their sporting and lifestyle approach. We would like to publish stories on the average everyday person and how they have changed their eating and exercise habits of a lifetime. Hopefully, your story will be an inspiration for others. Send your article and pictures to Ian Ross, Editor, Health Matters.

and enjoy each others company, especially at the obligatory coffee stop along the way.

Stephanie Christiansen, Clinical Support Pharmacist:

I started dragon boating several years ago with an RBWH corporate team. Despite the colour of the Brisbane River, I found I really enjoyed being on the water so I joined a club and found myself getting fitter and stronger without even noticing. Then, having become more competitive, I spent the first half of 2007 working towards the world titles.

A great experience – albeit very demanding – and now, with gold medals in hand, it's hard to decide on the next goal. The benefits are exercises that feels like fun – most of the time. I love participating in a sport which is perfect for our climate and which keeps me in shape while I enjoy the club camaraderie.

Chris Hall, Senior Director, Business Performance:

Why do I cycle? My sporting passion is golf. A few years ago I started to find it hard to complete 18 holes.

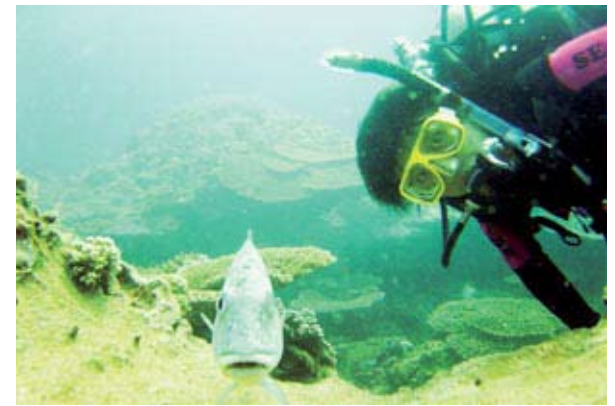
At about the same time I started cycling with a group of friends on a more regular basis than previously. When I was younger I was a distance runner and played squash. The combination of the two had wrecked all my joints, so a non-impact fitness routine was essential.

Each weekend the number of kilometres cycled increased until now the group is riding more than 70km in a session.

I now find that I can complete my round of golf without crippling myself. In general my level of fitness assists me in everyday life so that I am not so fatigued at the end of a



Executive Director Peter Lewis-Hughes shows his skills at a staff barefoot bowling day.



Alison comes face to face with a fellow exerciser.

long day. The other benefit is a great bunch of friends who enjoy a social get together while keeping fit.

Jane Hedger, Manager – Strategic Communications Unit:

I took up kickboxing over year ago to help me lose weight that I just wasn't shifting in the gym. I do two sessions a week. I've lost weight, my body shape is changing and I'm breathing normally at the top of the stairs. The best part is that I really enjoy the work-outs – and it's great stress relief.

Alison Slater, Communications Officer:

I took up scuba diving in 2000 after watching documentaries on television and wondering why should I be a couch potato when that person on television is having so much fun? I wasn't a good student at first. However, on my first open water dive, I saw a huge manta ray, and immediately all my fears and apprehension disappeared.

Diving is a great way to exercise every muscle in the body, especially when you have to swim against strong currents and surges and have the stamina during a long dive (60 minutes or more).

Diving also forces me to be observant of my surroundings, while I take in all the beauty of the underwater world.

I have to make sure I do not brush against stinging corals or put my hands on to deadly poisonous stone fish.

To keep up my fitness, I walk, kayak and swim regularly. Scuba diving is fun, I get to experience the colourful silent world that is teeming with life and activities and it makes me appreciate and respect nature.

Smoke-free to cut disease burden

Indigenous communities and organisations across Southern Queensland are being encouraged to apply for Queensland Health funding of up to \$5000 to promote smoke-free messages.

The Event Support Program is designed to raise awareness of smoking and passive smoking issues in Indigenous communities, and promote a positive attitude towards prevention. Karen Badcock, Southern Area Population Health Services project officer, said tobacco smoking was the single most important risk factor responsible for the greatest burden of disease in Australia and the leading cause of drug-related preventable deaths.

“This is of particular concern in Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities where more than half of the Indigenous adults reported smoking, compared with less than one quarter of the general adult population,” she said.

“Our Event Support Program enables Indigenous communities and groups to promote the smoke-free messages,



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students take a break at the 11th National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games. The event was sponsored by Queensland Health's Event Support Program.

of ‘Smoking: It can cost us the game’ and ‘Tobacco: It could cost us our culture’, within their local Indigenous sporting carnivals, recreational events, arts, dance and cultural festivals, including NAIDOC Week celebrations.”

Karen said that in 2006/07 more than 15 events received funding, including the 11th National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games in Brisbane, NAIDOC Week cel-



More than 300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from West Moreton participated in the Children of the Dreaming event sponsored by Queensland Health's Event Support Program.

ebrations in Cunnamulla and Toowoomba, ‘Pathways – Past, Present and Future’ at Murgon State High School, Emu Fest in Murra Murra via Cunnamulla, Black on Track Program in Roma, Quandamooka Camp on North Stradbroke Island and the Indigenous rugby youth development program in Ipswich.

Contact: Karen Badcock, phone 4631 9820.

Major health funding for community groups

Health care groups running programs for Indigenous children, suicide prevention and active lifestyles across Toowoomba and the Darling Downs will share in a \$720,000 grant over the next four years.

The grant will be shared by community groups who work in partnership with Queensland Health delivering primary health care services. The funds are part of Queensland Health's Connecting Healthcare in Communities (CHIC) program, jointly funded by a State and Commonwealth initiative. The long-term goal of CHIC is to improve the quality of life by reducing disease risk factors, having access to better clinical care, reducing avoidable hospital admissions and inappropriate referrals to outpatient services.

Locally, CHIC is managed by a partnership council made up of key local stakeholders who meet regularly and discuss ways of pooling resources to come up with innovative ways

of delivering primary health care.

The funding total \$720,000 is made up of \$180,000 per year, most of which has been allocated for 2007–08.

Opportunities still exist for other groups to access funds in the next three years. To find out more about future grants that may be available, community groups can contact Connecting Healthcare in Communities Partnership Council Chair on 4616 6440.

The funding committed so far has been allocated to:

- Toowoomba Leg Club –\$91,674 (over three years). Run by OzCare, this will enable expert leg wound care in a community owned, social environment
- Healthy Piccaninny Program – \$55,015 (over four years). The Carbal Medical Centre will provide an early intervention, prevention and harm minimisation approach to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family relationships
- Southern Downs Suicide Prevention Program – \$30,000. RHealth will support this project which aims to reduce the number of people in the Southern Downs who are at risk of suicide and self harm by increasing the capacities of communities to deal with local mental health issues

• Mental Health Respite Skilling Program – \$58,572 (over four years). Blue Care is running this project to support the training of mental health support workers which is aimed at reducing the number of avoidable hospital admissions for mental health needs

• Healthy Kulila Kids – \$2,500. Carbal will demonstrate healthy lifestyle choices and skills to the children at Kulila Indigenous kindergarten and their caregivers

• Learning for Life – \$11,500. Carbal Medical Centre will deliver education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children about healthy lifestyle choices and skills

• Expansion of mapping survey of community services across Toowoomba and Darling Downs – \$16,440. GP Connections will expand the mapping of community services from Toowoomba to include the flow of patients from across the Darling Downs to identify gaps in access to services

• Connecting an Active Community – \$135,000 (over two years). The Roma Therapy Centre will coordinate and implement an integrated multidisciplinary approach that provides exercise, dietetics, and physiotherapy to target groups across the region.

Artworks spreads health message



Original paintings by Aboriginal artist Gene Blow (Koonarang Nunuccal) are now brightening the walls of the Oral Health Clinic at Redcliffe Hospital. There are two pieces of artwork, one of which features the Five Keepers of Health as the hand-maidens of Biaime, the spiritual creator.

The five keepers are holding the health determinants above their heads as they emerge out of the sands at Sutons Beach with Moreton Bay as a backdrop.

The blue border gives the illusion of looking through a window and the artist has created original Indigenous

designs to represent the health determinants which are mental health, chronic disease, oral health, sexual health and alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

The second piece of artwork features representations of the five health determinants.

However, this painting explains that people often forget about oral health in favour of other health priorities.

In the painting, oral health is linked to the other four health determinants to indicate the important role it plays in holistic health.

Medical team save Charama's life



Emergency department clinical nurses Maria-Louise Balchin (left) and Leah Beveridge with Chamara Kleinitz.

A Moore Park family is grateful that their daughter is alive and say it is all thanks to the dedicated medical team at Bundaberg Hospital's Emergency Department.

In just one day the life of 13-year-old Chamara Kleinitz's life changed forever. The timeline says it all:

July 29: Chamara is at home happily playing with her three younger brothers.

Noon - July 30: 13-year-old Chamara is admitted to Bundaberg Hospital, unresponsive, with flu-like symptoms.

8pm - July 30: She is in a coma at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane struggling for her life.

Mum Cathy said they had a lot to be grateful for, and owed special thanks to "the amazing team at the Bundaberg emergency department".

"If it wasn't for the doctors and nurses I don't know where we'd be today," she said.

"Their quick thinking saved my daughter's life."

Chamara's story is an amazing reflection of a young girl's will to live and the medical staff who saved her life.

Cathy didn't think Chamara's sore throat was anything severe as two of her other children had a viral infection. But her condition deteriorated and Cathy made the lifesaving decision to take Chamara to the emergency department.

"I could have waited to see our family doctor, but if we had she might not have survived," Cathy said.

"Within 10 hours she had gone from a normal child to so gravely ill, it was terrifying.

"Our lives changed in a heart beat . . . we were living on a knife's edge between life and death."

The team at Bundaberg Hospital Emergency Department diagnosed that Chamara was diabetic. Her blood sugar levels were at a life-threatening level.

Paediatrician Dr Judy Williams said that Chamara was critically unwell when she arrived at the hospital.

She was ventilated and stabilised before a retrieval team was flown from Brisbane to transport her to the Royal Children's Hospital.

"The care offered by the nursing staff in the emergency department on that day was exceptional," Dr Williams said.

"It is a credit to the nurses, their care of Chamara is cer-

tainly instrumental in her being with us today.'

Chamara spent three weeks in the Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Children's, a week of that in a coma.

Cathy said that Chamara also had such a shocking strain of influenza and she developed viral, bacterial and fungal infections and septicaemia. She had fluid on her brains and lungs and the doctors were not sure she would survive. They also were concerned about her brainwave activity.

"It was touch and go there for a while she was so gravely ill," she said.

When Chamara finally woke up one of the first things she asked for were her favourite pyjamas. A few days later she was reading her favourite Harry Potter novel.

She was transferred back to Bundaberg Hospital paediatric ward where she stayed for three days before returning home.

"We are just so lucky that our daughter is a fighter. She has stunned us and the staff both here in Bundaberg and Brisbane."

Chamara, who is now insulin dependent for life, is beginning to return to a normal life and the difficulties that come with changing her lifestyle to adapt to her medical condition. Cathy said the incredible work done by the staff at Bundaberg Hospital's emergency department was second-to-none.

"Not only did they help save Chamara's life, but the kindness and compassion they showed to myself and husband Bruce will never be forgotten," she said.

"They organised our accommodation and travel for Bruce and our three boys, the little things that we weren't even thinking about, we were so worried for Chamara."

Food safety laws start

New food safety laws designed to protect the public were introduced on 22 February for licensed food businesses in Queensland.

All businesses involved in the manufacture, preparation and sale of food to the public now have to nominate a food safety supervisor.

However, an enforcement amnesty will apply until 1 July to allow businesses time to train their food safety supervisors and fully comply with the new requirements.

The new rules apply to all licensed food businesses, including small mobile food vans selling sandwiches, restaurants, food manufacturers, suppliers, caterers and all other organisations that prepare or sell food.

Organisations exempt from requiring a food licence or a food safety supervisor include community not-for-profit organisations that hold sausage sizzles and cake stalls, plus food businesses only selling low-risk food such as soft drinks, packaged food and whole fruit and vegetables.

Also exempt are people who prepare food in their home and donate it to non-profit organisations; or food prepared in private homes as part of a home support service.

Food safety supervisors will have the expertise and responsibility to supervise and give directions about food safety to staff in their business. A food safety supervisor is a person who:

- knows how to recognise, prevent and alleviate food safety hazards of the food business
- has skills and knowledge in matters relating to food safety relevant to the food business

• has the authority to supervise and give directions about matters relating to food safety to persons who handle food in a food business.

Food business will fall into three categories:

Low-risk businesses such as those only selling for example, packaged food and whole fruit and vegetables will comply with the Act but not hold a licence.

Medium-risk businesses such as manufacturers, cafes and restaurants, will need to hold a licence with their local government.

High-risk businesses currently defined as caterers and private hospitals, will need to hold a licence and have an accredited food safety program in place.

Information on the food safety laws, including resources to support food businesses, can be found at:

www.health.qld.gov.au/industry/food/

Benefits from e-health

Brisbane residents living with chronic illnesses such as type II diabetes, heart disease and asthma will benefit from a new communication tool that allows hospitals, general practitioners and other healthcare providers to share information.

Healthcare teams are able to share patients' essential clinical information – such as current patient medica-

tions, diagnoses and allergies – through the shared electronic health record, known as the Health Record eXchange (HRX).

GPpartners, the division of general practice in Brisbane's north and west, has developed and implemented the HRX over the past three years.

Health Minister Stephen Robertson officially launched the HRX at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital on 24 January.

There are now more than 150 GPs and a number of community health services, allied health professionals and major Brisbane hospitals, including RBWH and Prince Charles Hospital, using the HRX to access the information of more than 800 patients.

GPpartners is working with other divisions to extend the HRX to Brisbane's southern suburbs and also to include the information of shared care working on a trial for shared care maternity patients.

First allied health forum

The Queensland Health Allied Health Forum, the first for the year, will be held in the Auditorium at the Education Centre at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital on 4 April.

Keynote speakers are Karen Middleton and Jacqui Lunday, the Chief Health Professions Officers for England and Scotland respectively.

Karen and Jacqui will be presenting their findings and discussing recent work on Developing a Competency Based Workforce and the latest Model of Support and Strengthening Leadership.

This forum will be of value to all allied health professions interested in the future for the professions. All health professionals are welcome to attend. The morning forum will start at 9.30. Register your attendance at HAUTEMP@health.qld.gov.au

Contact: Maryann Schubert, Allied Health Workforce Advice and Coordination Unit, phone 3239 6430.

Complex to attract staff

Making Roma Hospital more attractive to health professionals is the aim of a new \$9.5 million staff accommodation complex at the hospital.

Work started in January on the new complex, which will provide quality accommodation for doctors, nurses and

allied health staff working at the hospital.

The new complex was funded through Queensland Health's \$91 million Regional Accommodation Program and will comprise seven free standing buildings on the north west side of the campus.

The complex will include a communal recreational building, two two-bedroom units, two four-bedroom units, and two two-storey buildings, each housing 12 people.

The new quarters will be adjacent to the six motel-style single bedroom units already completed at a cost of \$1.62 million.

The new \$9.5 million complex is scheduled for completion by December.

A total of \$91 million has been allocated through the Regional Accommodation Program to expand and improve housing for health staff in rural and regional communities.

Zippering round the world

The distance that Pat Maloney travelled in the past five years is equivalent to circumnavigating the earth more than 12 times.

Except, Pat had clocked up the milestone of travelling 500,000 kilometres delivering pathology specimens for the southside pathology run.

Pat Maloney, Pathology Courier, has worked for ZIP since the inception of the courier service in December 2002. Averaging 350km a day, Pat's run starts at Logan when he departs at 8.45am.

Enroute to the Pathology Queensland Central laboratory, he picks up specimens at Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, Princess Alexandra Hospital and Sexual Health.

He then returns to PAH and then back to Logan lab, only to repeat this trek four more times during the day to make his final delivery to the Central laboratory at 6.50pm.

For the first 18 months, Pat also provided a round the clock service for urgent after hours specimens from Logan to PA. Pat must have frequent flyer points at the local service station as he 'tops' up every day, averaging 140 litres of fuel a week.

How many times has he opened and closed the back door on the van is anyone's guess, as is the number of cooler boxes that have been in and out of his van.

He is a master at reading traffic conditions and knows all the back ways when the freeway is blocked.



Pat Maloney: set to clock up more kilometres.

Blood analyser network links state



David Porter (left), Group Laboratory Manager, Queensland Pathology – Townsville examining the I-stat handheld analyser with Dr Michael Whiley, Senior Director of Queensland Pathology, at Doomadgee Hospital.

As the sun rises over Thursday Island, another busy day begins for the world's largest integrated hand-held blood analyser (I-stat) network.

The network connects 117 public health care facilities across the 1.7 million square kilometres from Goondiwindi to the Cape, feeding information into the Pathology Queensland Central laboratory in Brisbane and to the clinical reporting network across Queensland Health.

Hand-held blood analysers used at the patient bedside have been in use for a number of years.

However, most systems around the world are stand alone units and do not provide information that is accessible to clinicians outside the local facility.

Pathology Queensland has installed 144 units across the state since 2000 and has 4000 registered users.

"The I-stat analyser is used on an average of 440 patients a day around Queensland," said Cameron Martin, Statewide Point of Care Testing (PoCT) Coordinator.

"When the user connects the analyser to the cradle, information is uploaded to the server in Brisbane via the Queensland Health network.

"The server automatically uploads results to the statewide Auslab pathology computer system."

Pathology results sent by the server to Auslab are used by doctors in referring hospitals if a patient is transferred from one facility to another.

Doctors from major hospitals can also access informa-

tion about patients for cases which require assessment via teleconference.

From the server, the PoCT team monitors all activities carried out on each analyser and is able to identify test errors or wrong data entered.

If an analyser is due for quality control tests, the server can lock that particular analyser until a staff member carries out the tests.

"The network system is working so well in Queensland that it is now used as a case study for health services in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory," Cameron said.

With his district health experience in Pathology Queensland, Cameron Martin now sits on the Australian Association of Clinical Biochemists (AACB) Point of Care Testing Working Party, assisting various working parties in other states and territories in setting up their own PoCT networks.

"In Queensland, we have seen the benefits of the I-stat analysers and networking them to a central location," said Dr Peter Lewis-Hughes, Executive Director of Clinical and Statewide Services.

"A well organised and operated point of care service has the potential to enhance the health care of all Queenslanders. "Statewide access to patients' results has improved the quality of care and avoided inconvenience for patients and their families."

Volunteer Val wins Premier's Award

Women who have had their mammogram at the Chermside BreastScreen Queensland clinic may well have been looked after by Val Ferguson. This year Val has been recognised for her outstanding contribution and dedication to her voluntary work, not only for BreastScreen Queensland but to the community in general.

Val has earned an award for the coveted 2007 Premier's Award for Queensland Seniors, acknowledging her significant contribution to the Queensland community and her commitment to her volunteering activities

"The breast screening clinic was in the Lady Ramsay Wing in the old Royal Women's Hospital when I started volunteering for BreastScreen Queensland," says Val.

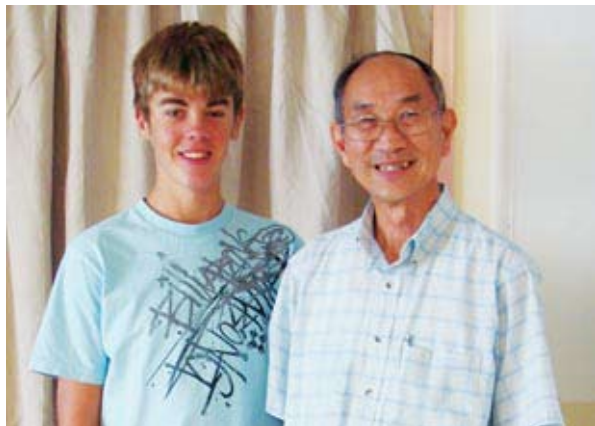
"I think there was five staff and women from all over Queensland had to travel great distances to come for their mammogram. That was 21 years ago and things have changed since then."

Through the annual Premier's Awards for Queensland Seniors, the Department of Communities acknowledges the key role many older people play in the community. Hundreds of nominations are received each year and winners are recognised in a special ceremony in Brisbane.

Val recommends to anyone who is thinking about doing some volunteering to do so.

"It can be really rewarding and you can get so much out of it. It keeps you healthy and the mind active and there are so many older people out in the community that have so much to offer," says Val.

Dr Ong reflects on surgical career



Dr Ong with liver transplant patient Nicholas Morland

As Director of Paediatric Surgery at the Royal Children's Hospital since June 1988, Dr Tat Hin Ong nears the time when he is winding down his surgical practice.

He has been reflecting on his career achievements. Dr Ong said that it is as a surgeon in the Queensland Liver Transplant Team that have been the most significant and challenging years.

"Prior to the first liver transplant operation we had to first research and practice our technical expertise in the laboratory, much of which was very new," he said.

In January 1985 Queensland's first liver transplantation was performed on an adult by the Queensland Liver Transplant Surgical Team consisting of Professor Russell Strong with Dr Ong and Dr Daryl Wall who had been fellow registrars many years earlier.

Then in March of that year, a two-year-old from Brisbane made Australian medical history as the first paediatric liver transplant recipient in Australia. The toddler waited almost two months for a compatible donor organ, eventually undergoing a marathon 12-hour operation.

"I commenced the operation here at the RCH while Pro-

fessor Strong was at another hospital operating on the donor patient – the process of liver transplantation is always a team effort," he said.

"I am pleased to say that I recently received a photograph of that patient, now an adult, with her two children, looking very healthy indeed."

Dr Ong received a visit recently from another of his liver transplant patients. Nicholas Morland received his transplant in April 1993 at only 8 and a half weeks of age.

Nicholas went on to represent Australia in swimming at the World Transplant Games in Thailand in 2007 and holds eight records. Kaylene Morland, Nicholas' mother, said that Dr Ong is just someone you trust.

"I trusted him with my baby – I never questioned him," she said.

Inspired by Dr Ong, Nicholas wants to be a surgeon. "Dr Ong is just awesome," he said.

Dr Ong's said he couldn't stress enough the importance of organ donation, giving the Liver Transplant team the chance to save the lives of these young patients who would otherwise be lost.

Self-care renal unit eases stress



Renal patient Robert Nixon with Nursing Director of Cherbourg Health Service, Elaine Berlin.

A self-care renal unit has opened at Cherbourg Hospital, giving local residents the ability to dialyse themselves without the need to drive to Toowoomba or have machinery at home.

Pam Lane, West Moreton South Burnett Health Service District manager, said the Joanne Murray Self Care Renal Unit, named in memory of the work and support of renal client Joanne (Sissy) Murray, provided many benefits for local clients.

“Dialysing in the self care unit is less stressful for the clients, as in the past they faced a two hour drive to Toowoomba, dialysed, then faced the journey back,” she said.

“By self dialysing in the hospital, as opposed to at home, the clients have the benefit of more robust machines that experience less burn out than the home-based machines, uninterrupted water and power supply and a safe storage space for supplies in a secure environment.”

Pam said clients had access to a superior water treatment plant that produced quality water, benefiting long-term dialysis.

Self-care renal unit clients are trained to connect themselves to the haemodialysis machine and disconnect and clean the machine when finished. Clients self dialyse three times a week, taking around six hours each time.

Cherbourg’s two self care chairs have come from a funding recommendation made by the Central Zone Renal Disease Plan 2003-2008.

Pam said Cherbourg Health Service Staff worked in partnership with the local community and business groups, investigated the impact of renal disease on the local community, and as a result decided to seek funding to expand services in the region.

Funding for the renal unit came from a number of organisations and support groups. For example, the Wakka Wakka Bunya Working Groups in partnership with Rio Tinto supported the implementation of the unit by donating \$150,000, Queensland Health contributed \$170,000, plus additional operating costs, and non-clinical items were donated by the Dalar Diabetes Renal Support Group and Cherbourg Hospital Auxiliary.

Practical help for Roma parents

Roma parents will now be better equipped to bond with their newborn babies and promote early brain development, thanks to a new local health initiative.

Parents who give birth at the Roma Hospital, or visit the town’s child health services, will receive Birth Bags packed with practical parenting information, a new children’s book and a discount book voucher to encourage reading and storytelling at home.

The Birth Bags are an initiative of Queensland Health’s South West Population Health Unit and Roma Community

Health Team, Spiritus and the Roma Reading Bug Committee.

Graeme McMillan, Queensland Health early intervention specialist, said the bags provide parents with information about their baby’s development, especially brain development, as well as tips and techniques to read, sing, talk and cuddle their child in the crucial early months after birth.

“This information reinforces the messages provided at antenatal classes about the importance of the parent-child relationship,” he said.

“Positive interactions with nurturing caregivers stimulate young children’s healthy brain development.

“As parents, you’re the first and one of the most important teachers of your children and you may strongly influence your children’s ability to maximise their potential.”

Carlie Watson, mental health promotion officer, said the bags complement other local parenting initiatives under-

taken by South West Population Health Unit, such as Butterfly Wings programs to encourage parents to bond with their babies through stories and song.”

“Reciting rhymes, reading, telling stories and singing with babies help parents and their babies feel relaxed and comfortable,” she said.

“Your child’s first three years are an important time for language development. By listening to nursery rhymes, songs and stories young children begin to recognise words and language patterns and respond to sight, sound, movement and touch.

“Early language interaction and acquisition are critical to the development of the brain.

“Interacting with language and early exposure to sounds, music, singing and rhymes are also critical to later learning, not only for intellectual growth but for healthy social and emotional development as well.”

Genetic testing hopes to cut risk of sudden death

People from families with inherited heart conditions can have their risk of developing similar health problems assessed at a cardiac genetic service clinic at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

Clinicians from Royal Children's Hospital and Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital started the clinic in February last year, offering genetic counselling and testing through the statewide cardiac genetic service.

The service is for patients, and their families, with various inherited heart conditions, including hypertrophic car-

diomyopathy (HCM) and long QT syndrome, which are both associated with abnormal heart rhythms and an increased risk of sudden cardiac death.

The clinic currently operates once a month at the Royal with patients travelling from Toowoomba, Hervey Bay and the Gold Coast for testing.

With demand for the service continually growing, it is hoped this will be expanded to a fortnightly Brisbane clinic and also a clinic to be run in North Queensland to alleviate travel problems for potential patients.

Medical Director of Genetic Health Queensland, Assoc Prof Julie McGaughran said inherited heart conditions were a cause of sudden death in children and young adults.

"These conditions can however present at any age and in many different situations, and genetic testing is more accurately able to determine the risk to each individual tested,"

Assoc Prof McGaughran said.

"We have at-risk family members attending regular appointments with their cardiologists, and also having annual echocardiograms (a picture of the heart and blood vessels using reflected high frequency sound waves) and electrocardiograms or ECGs (a graphic record of the electrical activity of the heart).

"As the condition may present at a later age, this clinical screening may go on for years."

The results of these genetic tests can determine if there is a genetic mutation and determine if further clinical screening and/or intervention is necessary.

"If the genetic mutation is not present in other family members, this will save the personal and financial burden of further tests and regular trips to hospital," Assoc Prof McGaughran said.

Andrew facing Afghan challenge



Andrew Cameron discussing ward management with Assunta Ladu, Head Nurse of the Isolation Ward, Juba Teaching Hospital, Sudan.

Project managing a public hospital in Afghanistan is the new challenge for Andrew Cameron, who has been the relieving Director of Nursing at Richmond Health Service, Townsville District.

Andrew leaves this month to work for nine months at a hospital in Jalalabad, between Kabul and the Khyber Pass.

"If I survive that I will look forward to coming back to rural Queensland where I very much feel at home," he said.

Andrew's recent past has been a little out of the ordinary.

"In a nutshell, I have been working for Queensland Health as a registered nurse and midwife since 1992 when I went to Mornington Island Hospital as DON and remained there for seven years," Andrew said.

"Since then, besides a couple of years over in Western Australia, I have mostly been employed as a "rural and remote nurse" in places like Quilpie, Chinchilla, Thargomindah, Saibai Island, and Richmond. Two years ago I went to Africa with the Red Cross as a humanitarian aid worker.

"In many ways, it was the most difficult work I have

undertaken in my 30 year nursing career.

"I was first employed as a surgical ward nurse for six months in a war-surgery field-hospital at Lokichokkio, northern Kenya.

"Considering the geographical and climatic conditions, the standards of care were first rate. Gunshot wounds were the most common presenting condition."

Andrew said the Red Cross then sent him to be the director of nursing at the 600-bed Juba Teaching Hospital in the Republic of the Sudan, with 400 nursing staff from a total staff of 900.

"This was even more daunting, but I did well and enjoyed the challenge. It was not so easy," he said.

Andrew said the most common pathologies apart from trauma, were malaria, diarrhoeal illnesses (including cholera) and respiratory infections and TB.

"The hospital had been devastated by 20 years of civil war and my job involved helping to improve the standards of infrastructure and of clinical nursing care," he said.

"On occasions we had neither running water, nor electricity, so conditions were not optimal."

Richelle an inspiration



Richelle Carta with some of the ABM equipment used in training.

Through a bear hug, a knife-block and a breakaway, Richelle Carta is an inspiration to her colleagues. Richelle, who incurred a spinal injury after a diving accident at the age of 13, is the first quadriplegia to receive a Statement of Attainment in Modules 1-5 in Aggressive Behaviour Management (ABM) within The Townsville Health Service District.

Marie Davis and Charlie Carmichael, district ABM trainers and facilitators, said Richelle could be identified as an easy or vulnerable target, so certain training moves were altered to adapt to her abilities.

“Richelle is a gutsy young lady and her drive and can-do attitude really enabled her throughout her two-day course,” Marie said.

Richelle has been a social worker with the North Queensland Spinal Service and Queensland Health since 2003 and is currently working at The Townsville Hospital.

She said techniques she has learned with the ABM have enabled her to teach her patients some lessons relevant to their condition.

“I have been a part of aggressive situations in the past with various clientele, but my mouth is normally my tool and being physical is always a last resort,” she said.

“Learning blocks, breakaway techniques and the importance of tactical breathing have been essential components for me should I ever be in an unsafe situation.

“It is great to be able to pass that training on to people and have that assurance for myself.” Richelle has fulfilled another dream recently, walking down the aisle for her wedding day.

“I was assisted by a hopper frame but I think I was the only one who remained calm for the big event,” Richelle said. “Where there is a will there is a way.”

Pushing prams a fitting exercise



Toowoomba mothers Leanne Leclair, Nicola Chant, Janet Murphy, Dianne Bonell, and Melissa Brett receive their healthy lifestyle information kits after their first pram exercise workout in Queen's Park.

Every Friday morning, Toowoomba's Queen's Park is transformed into a sea of prams as 80 Toowoomba parents follow their New Year's resolution to become fighting fit through pram walking exercise.

Over eight free weekly sessions, mums and prams are being put through their paces by personal trainers.

Fighting Fit's Serge Apostol says the fitness program will show mums what exercise they can do in the park with the equipment that's already there.

It includes walking warm-ups and bodyweight exercises through to exercises using the pram itself.

Craig Peut, Darling Downs Population Health Unit's health promotion officer, says it's all sensible, practical and low-impact exercise.

“We'll also be providing parents with good nutrition tips, together with a log book to help keep track of their progress,” he said.

“Our program will help new mums who are keen to get back into shape with a fresh approach to a new healthy family lifestyle and link up with other pram walkers to keep each other motivated.

“Many mums have said they're keen to continue their

exercise after the eight-week program, so we're helping them establish pram walking groups in their own neighbourhoods.

“Pram walking can help you increase your energy and cardio vascular fitness, lose weight, tone muscles, boost self esteem, decrease depression and anxiety and improve your sleep.

“In the longer term, regular low impact walking can reduce your risk of osteoporosis, high blood pressure and diabetes and lower your cholesterol levels.

“It's a great way to get your 30 minutes of exercise each day, plus it's free and baby-friendly too!”

Craig says it's not just about exercise. He said a pram walking group gets people out of the house and meeting other people so that they feel less isolated.

He said connecting with other local mothers can help you make new friends and share ideas and parenting tips.

The Darling Downs Population Health Unit is working with local community agencies to help mothers join existing pram walking groups or establish new groups in their neighbourhood as part of Safer Toowoomba's Active Neighbourhoods project.

Players help disease awareness

Two Townsville Crocodiles National Basketball League players have thrown their support behind promoting awareness of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Crocs skipper John Rillie and guard Michael Cedar took time out between training sessions to support the Townsville Hospital's Respiratory Unit.

The pair swapped basketballs for balloons to help Respiratory Unit nurse Cheryl Oats and Dr Anthony Matthiesson explain the causes and treatments available for the debilitating condition.

The disease affects hundreds of Townsville people every year, and is one of Australia's leading causes of death in people over 55.

"Not many people realise they have COPD," Cheryl said.

"Anyone over 45 years old is in the top risk group. If people are more out of breath or have more chesty coughing every day or bringing up more and more mucus, it's a good idea to get diagnosed.

The basketball players were challenged to a balloon blowing competition by hospital staff – a battle which most would think was weighed heavily in the professional athletes' favours.

Simon Mitchell, Institute of Medicine Nursing Director, relished the opportunity to test himself against his more fan-

ciated rival and did the hospital proud with his effort which left Cedar gasping.

However, Rillie proved he wasn't all hot air when he joked about being a superb physical specimen during spirometry tests. He faced off against Dr Jerry Minei and then still had enough breath to do an interview explaining his involvement. For Rillie it was more than a chance for him to show off his trademark sense of humour. There was also a serious message.

"When you're running up and down the court and you're gasping for air I guess you realise how people with COPD feel all the time," Rillie said.

"I'm really happy to be involved in anything which can help promote awareness of conditions like this and the things people can do to avoid it, or deal with it."



BreastScreen
Queensland

mobile and relocatable services schedule

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

Mobile Services

Mackay: until 5 March, Middlemount; 6-17 March, Dysart; 18-26 March, Tieri.

27 March until 15 April, Clermont.

Toowoomba: until 12 March, Stanthorpe; 14 March until 3 April, Inglewood.

Townsville: 31 March until 16 April, Northern Beaches (Woodlands).

Relocatable Services

Bundaberg: until 7 March, Maryborough; 24 March until April, Gin Gin.

Cairns: until 28 March, Innisfail; 31 March until 10

April, Babinda.

Gold Coast: until 3 April, Palm Beach.

Ipswich: until 17 March, Toogoolawah; 18 March until 18 April, Boonah.

Nambour: until 14 March, Maroochydore.

North Brisbane: until 25 March, Golden Years Seniors Centre, Nundah; 27 March until end of November, Pine Rivers Community Centre.

Rockhampton: until 25 April, Emerald.

As age is the biggest risk factor in developing breast cancer, the program targets women aged 50-69 years. Women over the age of 40 are also eligible to attend.

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.

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Family (1 adult/3 junior or 2 adults/2 junior)	\$63.00	\$50

To receive this offer call Ticketek on 13 28 49 or visit an outlet and quote "Queensland Health".

As major supporting partner of Firebirds Queensland, Queensland Health is looking forward to an exciting season of netball in 2008.

500 days milestone achieved

Fraser Coast Building, Maintenance and Engineering team achieved a milestone in safe practices at the end of last year with the achievement of 500 days without a lost time incident.

This is the first time this has been reached in the Fraser Coast Health Service District.

Shane Adams, Occupational Health and Safety Manager, Fraser Coast Health Service District, said this was considered a major achievement because of the high-risk activities undertaken by Building, Maintenance and Engineering service staff.

"It also is a credit to all members of the team and is a demonstration of their commitment to safety in the workplace," he said.

The 15-member team covers both Hervey Bay and Maryborough hospitals.

Shane said most of these workers were tradesman who knew their work and the associated risks.

"They are exposed to risk on a daily basis and they take the necessary precautions. They take a great deal of pride in their work," he said.

"To reach 500 days without lost time is a great achievement."

Kerry Winsor, District Manager, praised the staff on reaching this milestone.

"It is obvious that they showed a high regard for the work they do and while quality workmanship is important their commitment to safety is paramount," she said.

Kerry presented staff members of the team with individual achievement certificates and an achievement plaque to the department.



Kerry Winsor presents an achievement certificate to members of the district's Building, Maintenance and Engineering team.

Making a better choice

A series of workshops have been organised to help Queensland Health facilities introduce the A Better Choice Healthy Food and Drink Supply strategy. These workshops aim to assist staff, volunteers and managers of food outlets to implement this initiative.

The program contains sessions illustrating how to apply nutrient criteria, classify menu items, assess the proportion of products displayed and introduce alternatives.

A concurrent session is also available outlining how to apply the strategy's associated catering guidelines, including an overview of healthy eating principles and case study illustrating how to apply the guidelines when organising internal and external catering.

For more information and registration details visit <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/abetterchoice/>

Dates for the workshops are:

Monday 3 March – Freshney House, Toowoomba Hospital; Tuesday 4 March – Conference Room, Roma Hospital; Monday 10 March – Education Centre, Gold Coast Hospital (Southport); Wednesday 12 March – Block 7 Level 7, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital; Friday 14 March – Education Services, Logan Hospital; Monday 17 March – Glasson House, District Office, 139 Eagle St, Longreach; Wednesday 19 March, Block 1 Level 4, Princess Alexander Hospital;

Thursday 27 March – Community and Population Health Centre 82-86 Bolsver St, Rockhampton; Friday 28 March – Nambour Hospital, Hospital Rd, Nambour; Monday 31 March – Staff Development Unit, Mackay Hospital. Thursday 3 April – Level 1 Training Classroom, Maryborough Hospital; Friday 4 April – Education Centre, Bundaberg Hospital; Monday 7 April – Conference Room, Esk Hospital.

Asthma plan now on-line

A new asthma action plan specifically for Indigenous Australians has just been published on-line by the National Asthma Council Australia.

The plan, developed by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, is effectively Australia's first official Remote Indigenous Australian Asthma Action Plan designed for national use. The plan is available for free download at: www.nationalasthma.org.au

The plan uses illustrations of Indigenous people and photographs of common medications as well as colour coding; sun and moon graphics to indicate when to take medications; and the colloquial term for asthma – short wind – to ensure it is relevant to people with asthma living in even the remotest communities.

The reverse side of the new plan features the Asthma Foundation of the Northern Territory's Short Wind Danger Plan.

in retrospect

A review of some articles from previous Health Matters

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| August | Strategic Plan 2007-2012 summary
Meeting the challenges of Indigenous diabetes
Protecting patients from adverse medical events |
| September | e-health improves patient care and safety
Staff survey encourages changes
Queenslanders changing their lifestyles |
| October | \$3 billion three hospitals planning on track
New statewide interpreter service starts
Festival embracing diversity and harmony |
| November | Health Action Plan – delivering reform
Marketing award for healthy eating campaign
Roma rehab gym a major winner |
| December | Centre receives Premier's Award for Excellence
Director-General pursues new career
Extra \$50m to boost health Budget |
| February | Young doctors start in record numbers
\$27m boost to tackle surgery waiting lists
Hip hop dance skills program on show |

March

- 1-31** Scleroderma National Awareness Month
Scleroderma Association of Queensland
Phone: 3411 3558
- 6** World Glaucoma Day
Glaucoma Australia
Phone: 800 500 880
- 8** International Women's Day
Queensland Office for Women
Phone: 1800 177 577
- 10-14** Orthoptic Awareness Week
Orthoptic Association of Australia
Phone: (03) 9521 9844
- 13** World Kidney Day
Kidney Health Australia
Phone: 1800 682 531
- 13-15** The World's Greatest Shave
Leukaemia Foundation of Queensland
Phone: 1800 500 088
- 13-20** Coeliac Awareness Week
Queensland Coeliac Society
Phone: 3839 5404
- 14** Bandaged Bear Day
The Children's Hospital, Westmead
Phone: (02) 9845 3481
- 17-23** Brain Awareness Week
Brain Aware Australia
Phone: (02) 9437 5967
- 19** National Youth Tobacco Free Day
Quit Foundation
Phone: (02) 9391 9111
- 21** World Down Syndrome Day
Down Syndrome Association of Queensland
Phone: 3356 6655
- 24** World Tuberculosis Day
World Health Organisation
Phone: (02) 9223 3144

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