

HealthMatters

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**Queensland
Government**
Queensland Health

Sean exploring new career path

"Its funny how doors open when you decide to investigate further opportunities," says Sean Carroll (pictured right) – who has evolved from a registered nurse into a nurse practitioner candidate.

"I come from a background as a registered nurse working in the area of exercise prescription and coronary care that has led me to the path of nurse practitioner candidate, in chronic disease – heart failure.

"It has either come from divine intervention or by exploring and accepting the opportunities offered to me in our profession in furthering advancing my clinical skills.

"In April 2007, I accepted a position with Queensland Health as a clinical nurse consultant to develop a heart failure service for the Bayside campus of the Brisbane South District, Redland Hospital.

"The position is based in the community and involves the delivery of education and evidence-based strategies to provide support to patients and families with diagnosed heart failure."

Sean said that in 2005 Queensland Health's strategic plan identified the need to deliver services to prevent chronic disease by reducing risk factors like smoking, poor diet lack of physical activity.

He said the strategy recognised that people with chronic disease needed services that helped identifying and managing their disease earlier, with access to services much faster.

"Nurse practitioner scholarships were being offered by the Office of the Chief Nursing Officer through the Brisbane South District Cardiac Network, encouraging nurse-led education in chronic health and chronic cardiac conditions," Sean said.

"I was encouraged by my peers



and colleagues to apply to advance my career to becoming a nurse practitioner.

"I was awarded a scholarship and am currently undertaking a masters level nurse practitioner program in chronic health at the University of Queensland.

"Upon successful completion of the academic study and a successful period of clinical internship, I will apply for endorsement as a nurse practitioner – heart failure on the Queensland Nursing Council Register.

"Once employed in a nurse practitioner position I will be able to enhance the nursing contribution to the multidisciplinary team by bringing a new perspective and role scope to the clinical team."

Sean said he started his studies earlier this year, two years part-time. As part of the transition into becoming a qualified nurse practitioner, he had a specialist nurse mentor, Robyn Peters from the Princess Alexandra Hospital, heart failure service and clinical guidance and support from medical specialists, including Dr Daljeet Gill, cardiologist.

He said that through activities like educational ward rounds and supervised outpatient clinics he

was provided with medical support and guidance to meet the requirements of the internship.

"The University of Queensland nursing masters program provides an extensive knowledge and understanding of multidisciplinary approaches in managing chronic diseases," he said.

"Because I can access material on line, through educational modules each week, I am able to work in my role as nurse practitioner candidate as a valuable member of the interdisciplinary team, while still undertaking masters level study as well.

"My personal journey has been rewarding and has enabled me as a qualified registered nurse to gain new knowledge, while at the same time develop a greater range of clinical skills to enhance the care of clients.

"There is ongoing development of the role of nurse practitioners as the numbers across Queensland continue to expand.

"A strong clinical evidence base underpins the development of new nurse practitioner roles across many differing health care models and as roles and functions of the nurse practitioner workforce expand across Queensland."

directions Michael Reid, Director-General

Colleagues,

As you know, emergency departments in Queensland hospitals are facing massive demand pressures, with the number of people seeking treatment outstripping population growth each year.

In the June 2008 quarter alone, 372,406 people were treated in emergency departments – up by 23,693 patients or 6.8 per cent on the same quarter in 2007.

Allow me to extend my congratulations and appreciation to those on the front line of this work. The dedication and skill of our staff in emergency departments is exemplary and is the foundation of the world-class health care that is undertaken each and every day.

In that vein, I was heartened to see the Royal Children's Hospital win the Australasian Emergency Department of the Year award recently, which was richly deserved recognition.

In support of the outstanding broader emergency department work, a major construction program is under now way across the state to put us on track to cut emergency department waiting times and enhance public access to first-class care.

The Princess Alexandra Hospital, for example, will benefit through this program with a \$52 million expansion which will significantly boost emergency capacity at the hospital.

This expansion will see the introduction of a "fast track" area to reduce patient waiting times, and an emergency discharge area. A medical assessment and planning unit will ensure patients well enough to go home are discharged within 48 hours from the emergency department.

The significant statewide construction program is also being supported by \$654 million in



Michael Reid

funding over four years to specifically address demand management issues, inclusive of pressures on our emergency departments.

Expansion of emergency services is a key aim of the Toward Q2 Tomorrow's Queensland vision announced last month by the Premier Anna Bligh and Health Minister Stephen Robertson.

Toward Q2 Tomorrow's Queensland vision is a commitment to deliver the shortest public hospital waiting times in Australia – and that includes emergency departments.

The vision is also an all-out assault on the state's key health challenges – obesity, smoking, heavy drinking and unsafe sun exposure – and has set a goal to help Queenslanders become Australia's healthiest people.

It is a new phase of reform that will build on the early achievements of Queensland's \$10 billion Health Action Plan, launched three years ago, which provided unprecedented new funding and initiated widespread reform.

On the back of this major funding and extensive reforms, we are undertaking a major construction program, targeting key pressure areas, and significantly

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Cover photo



Nurse practitioner Cassandra Stone with a patient at Redland Hospital. Cassandra is to the forefront in treatment of nephrology patients, collaborating with multidisciplinary teams on disease management. The nurse practitioner role offers new scope in health care. See story above.

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Committee strengthens health consumer input

The 13 members of the inaugural Ministerial Consumer Advisory Committee of Health Consumers Queensland (HCQ) held its first meeting last month, following their appointment in August.

Establishment of the HCQ delivers on the Forster Review's recommendations for a Queensland health consumer body and the government's commitment to give health service users a strong voice in health services policy, systems and service delivery.

Appointed for a two-year term, the committee aims to contribute to the continued development and reform of health systems and services in Queensland, by providing the Minister for Health with information and advice from a consumer perspective, supporting consumer engagement and promoting advocacy development.

The committee attended a national forum held last month in Brisbane, Engaging citizens in Australia's future health policy: Building and applying the evidence, an initiative of the Australian Institute of Health Policy Studies.

The committee members are: chairman, Mark Tucker-Evans, a Brisbane health consumer, and Gwen Schreiber (Cairns); Alan Neilan (Mt Isa), Myra Pincott (Emu Park), Adele Gibson (Gin Gin), Beryl Crosby (Bundaberg), and Jeff Cheverton, Agnes Whiten, Mary Martin, Janelle Colquhoun, Brendan Horne, Melissa Fox and Odette Tewfik (Brisbane).

The committee is supported by a small secretariat, located within the Office of the Director-General, Queensland Health, headed by director, Paige Armstrong, who has been seconded from the

continued from page 2

increasing the number of nurses, doctors and health professionals in the public system.

Importantly we now have the next generation vision in Toward Q2 to get the job done.

I would like to commend this initiative to you and encourage all of you within the public health system to remain committed and vigilant in striving towards the end goal of providing first-class health care and making Queenslanders the healthiest in Australia.



Mark Tucker-Evans

Endeavour Foundation.

HCQ will operate, initially for a two-year period, with a planned review at the end of this time to determine the best governance model for the body into the future.

One of the HCQ's first project is based around the current need for and provision of health advocacy in Queensland.

It has contracted the Queensland Council of Social Service to survey the various understandings and definitions of health advocacy as they are used in current government and non-government practice in Queensland and other jurisdictions.

Stage One of the HCQ Health Advocacy project will conclude in December 2008, and the outcomes will inform HCQ's work in relation to advocacy support, by presenting best-practice approaches to health advocacy for Queensland consumers.

HCQ is developing a Consumer Network Register of grassroots community representatives interested in providing a consumer voice.

This will create opportunities for individuals interested in health issues to participate on committees, attend forums, workshops and conferences, work collaboratively with others to prepare submissions to government and to become involved in important health-related initiatives.

Anyone wanting to register their interest as grassroots health representatives or obtain more information about HCQ's role, can contact the HCQ secretariat, phone 3234 0611, e-mail DSHCQ@health.qld.gov.au or web <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/hcq/default.asp>

Alternative care leading the way

A Queensland first in caring for patients who do not require a hospital stay has started at Toowoomba Hospital with the opening the 3R Unit, a clinical unit developed from the former patient transit lounge.

The 3R Unit (Right Care, Right Setting, Right Time) includes a medical procedures recovery area, day transfusion service and a wound care clinic.

Opened in early August, the unit provides self-management strategies for patients and their carers as they move out of hospital and back into the community.

Matt Boyd, Acting Nursing Director, said 3RU was about providing patients with alternatives for their clinical care and expertise in community settings, such as the home.

"The last thing many people want is to be in hospital. They prefer their own homes, with their loved ones, pets and treasured possessions around them," he said.

"They may prefer the fresh air and sunshine of a comfortable veranda to a hospital ward, and we are now able to offer that type of care through 3RU."

Matt said 3RU was modelled on the successful 'Hospital in the Home' program being introduced elsewhere in the state, but had



Nurse Gail Jones taking the blood pressure of patient Thomas Haldare. Patients are educated in self-managing medication and use of pumps in the home.

increased links with general practitioners.

He said that on discharge, the patient had a medical or nursing review in 3RU, and phone calls were made to the patient's doctor and to other health services involved in their on-going care.

He said that in 2006-07, Toowoomba Hospital admitted 864 patients who might have

been successfully treated without admission to hospital, or whose length of admission in the hospital may have been decreased through 3RU.

These people were admitted with conditions including cellulitis, respiratory infections or inflammations, chronic obstructive airways disease, heart failure and diabetes.

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from the Chief Nursing Officer

Advanced education and training are vital for the nursing and midwifery professions to continue to provide high quality health care for patients and the community.

The public rightly expects high standards of safe, quality, evidenced and informed care provided by skilled and competent nurses and midwives.

To achieve this, there must be fulfilling career opportunities for nurses and midwives.

This can be achieved through building on the traditions and values of the profession of nursing and midwifery and stepping up to the leadership challenges of the future.

There is already much innovative work under way throughout the state and we will use this work as a springboard from which to bring nursing and midwifery to the highest possible standard.

I wrote last month about the concept of a best practice model for clinical education and training for nurses and midwives, at the pre and post-registration level.

There is strong evidence that clinical education and training is the key to safe, competent and qualified nurses and midwives. This will be fundamental in reforming the way we provide adequately prepared, highly skilled and competent nurses and midwives.

It is important nurses and midwives clearly understand their roles and responsibilities to be prepared for the significant increase in population growth, the aging population and the burden of disease.

Advancing nursing practice will play a significant role in contributing to the changing



Pauline Ross

health landscape.

These changes will influence the educational and training preparation for nurses and midwives

I expect to see nurses and midwives of the future working in a range of very different settings across more integrated services, participating across the entire patient journey, not just segments of care.

The role of the nurse and midwife will change as acute care in the home and self-care by the consumer models continue to grow as an alternative to the traditional "bed-based" care and treatment for managing acute and chronic car

The challenge is to consider how community nurses and midwives roles across the public, private and non-government sector can evolve to meet these challenges.

Innovation, commitment, cohesiveness, strong clinical leadership and education and training will ensure nurses and midwives meet new challenges.

Fifty years' work for on-loan nurse

Toowoomba nurse Aileen Bradley has notched up an amazing 50 years working in nursing, and has seen changes many younger nurses find hard to believe.

Aileen, Nursing Director, Surgical, at Toowoomba Hospital, says she has come a long way, considering she wanted to be a hairdresser. Of her 50 years as a nurse, Aileen has been with Queensland Health for 30.

She began as a 16-year-old at the tiny Central Queensland Hospital of Baralaba in 1958.

"My mum loaned me to the hospital, to help out after the local matron came to dinner at our place," Aileen recalls.

"The next day I arrived in my work clothes, and they gave me a uniform, and I've been nursing ever since."

In the intervening 50 years, Aileen has graduated with three degrees – Bachelors of Education, Business and Science (Psychology) – and worked in virtually every field clinically, as an educator, and as a manager.

Stopping only for three years in the 1960s to have three babies, she says it's been quite a journey.

Aileen says: "I've enjoyed nursing immensely. There's been so much variety. You can really vary your role. I tell the younger nurses that registering is only the beginning of the journey. You have to keep up your skills and evidence-based knowledge otherwise you just won't get there."

And those changes along the way?

"When I started there very few disposable items, unlike today," Aileen said. "We used to sharpen the needles with pumice stone, put



Aileen Bradley: "In no hurry to retire."

them in metho and re-use them.

"We'd make our own dressings, swabs, eye pads, make up our own fluids to administer subcutaneously, so we've come a long way.

"It was all learning on the job. On virtually the first day I was giving injections and medication. The

rule was you'd watch one, do it yourself under supervision once, and from then on you would do it yourself.

"It's been quite a journey. I'm starting to think now that after 50 years, it might be time to think about part time," she said.

Centre expands birthing choices

A midwifery service in Townsville, the Townsville Hospital Birth Centre team of midwives, gives mothers one-on-one midwife care from pregnancy to post-birth.

The midwifery service started operating in July and it gives Townsville women more choice when it comes to giving birth, with a team of four Townsville Hospital midwives providing home visits and on call service to the expectant mums involved in the program.

Construction on the \$2.2 million Townville Birth Centre build-

ing on the hospital site is progressing well and is expected to be completed in December, with the first of the women in this program to give birth in the Birth Centre in mid-December.

Philippa Scott, Townsville Friends of the Birth Centre spokesperson, said the commencement of services at the centre was a major milestone for the women and families of Townsville.

"The women who have booked in are now receiving what the World Health Organisation

describes as the 'Gold Standard' of maternity care for healthy pregnant women," she said.

Mandy Ostrenski, Townsville Hospital Birth Centre project officer, said the centre was an important new asset for the growing Townsville community.

"We expect the number of women booked into the Birth Centre will increase to around 20 by the end of the year," she said.

"The feedback we have had from the community is that this choice will be very popular."

Training idea delivered

The Perioperative Introductory Program (PIP), a concept that has long been bandied around as a great idea within the perioperative education arena, has been introduced this year in Queensland Health.

Danielle Clark, Perioperative Nurse Educator at Princess Alexandra Hospital, said the aim of PIP was to pool existing human and physical resources to deliver a high-quality, consistent novice education program.

Danielle said PIP was founded on evidence-based practices, giving perioperative orientation a supported framework, consisting of a five-day block program operating once a month, every month.

"It is open to novice registered and enrolled nurses, re-entry and refresher nurses as well as overseas recruits employed in the perioperative area," she said.

"Queensland Health employees attend PIP free of charge, but PIP is open to private hospitals for a nominated fee."

Danielle said three PIP pilot programs were run earlier this year and funds had been secured for future programs held as closely as possible to local orientation dates.

She said the outcome of PIP pilots would be published as a peer review article by herself in collaboration with Dr Brigid Gillespie, perioperative nurse researcher and visiting Griffith University lecturer.

"By doing this we aim to add an Australian contribution to the international abundance of literature supporting the need for evidence-based practice initiatives such as PIP," Danielle said.

"This data, process and framework will be disseminated to the perioperative education network."

Junk food TV ad ban bid : Healthy choices now made easier

A ban on junk food advertising on children's television to help reverse the alarming rate of overweight and obese children in Queensland is being considered by the State Government.

A discussion paper on the proposal, an initiative under the Advancing Health Action – Australia's Healthiest People, has been circulated since 26 August with feedback sought by 31 October.

Health Minister Stephen Robertson said that on average Queensland children who watched television did so for more than two hours a day – exposing them to at least 60 ads a week promoting foods that were high in energy and low in nutrients.

"Three out of every four food ads on children's TV now promote junk foods or drinks – it's increased from two out of three food ads in two years," he said.

"We have the highest number of food ads during children's shows out of 13 OECD countries tested.

"And it's abundantly clear that fast food chains, confectionary

and soft drink companies target our children through television.

"A 2007 University of Sydney study for instance, found more than 10 junk food ads an hour were shown during children's television, while only two were shown during programs popular with adults."

Mr Robertson said the Queensland Government had the power to restrict TV advertising in state legislation.

He said South Australia had also released a discussion paper inviting public feedback on junk food advertising.

The discussion paper can be viewed at www.qld.gov.au or health.qld.gov.au or by e-mailing a request to tvfoodads@health.qld.gov.au

The discussion paper includes three possible times to ban junk food advertising: children's peak viewing – 7-9am and 5-8.30pm weekdays and weekends, children's general viewing times – 7-8.30pm daily, likely unsupervised times 7-9am, 3-6pm weekdays and 7am-6pm weekends.

The A Better Choice strategy, increasing the availability of nutritious foods and drinks for staff and visitors, while limiting less healthy options, is now mandatory in all Queensland Health facilities.

At least 80 per cent of food and drinks on display for visitors and staff at Queensland Health facilities, such as hospitals and community health centres, should be healthy options.

The strategy, compulsory since 1 September, uses a green, amber, and red colour code based on the food's nutritional value.

Green foods and drinks (most nutritious options) must always be available, promoted and displayed in prominent areas, such as beside cash registers.

Amber foods and drinks (with some nutritional value) cannot dominate menus, nor be actively advertised or promoted.

Red food and drinks (lacking nutritional value) must be limited to a maximum of 20 per cent of the foods and drinks displayed in food outlets.

Dr Amanda Lee, Manager Nutri-



A selection of healthy food being displayed by canteen staff at Cairns Base Hospital.

tion and Physical Activity, Health Promotion Unit, said Queensland Health had a responsibility to promote healthy lifestyles across the state and lead by example.

She said Queensland was the first state to implement the initiative, with New South Wales and Western Australia announcing similar strategies since the release of A Better Choice in August 2007.

With growing rates of obesity,

it was important food outlets provided and promote a wide variety of nutritious foods to encourage healthier choices.

"Queensland Health is providing a model for the broader community by creating an environment that supports and promotes healthy eating," she said.

For more information see <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/abetterchoice/>

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Teaching role a focus for parents

The Hanen It Takes Two to Talk, a family-focused program for children with speech difficulties, is to be reintroduced this month in Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay.

It Takes Two to Talk seeks to enable parents become their child's primary language facilitator, maximising opportunities for communication development in everyday situations.

The program, to be conducted by speech pathologists Hannah McGhee and Kara Murray, involves engaging and educating parents in language development with their child.

Hannah said the program was considered by Queensland Health as a gold-standard intervention for language delayed children.

She said the Speech Pathol-

ogy Service for infants and young children included Nambour and Gympie hospitals and community health services in Caloundra, Noosa and Maroochydore.

"Speech pathologists work with children from birth to before school entry in areas, including feeding (breast, bottle and transition to solids), speech, language, voice, and stuttering," Hannah said.

"Speech pathologists are part of the multidisciplinary teams at Nambour Hospital. They provide an early intervention service, for children from 0-2 years, and the child development team, for children with needs in more than one area of development from two years of age to Grade One.

"The clinicians have been working for some years to provide an accessible, consistent and uniform service for children requiring speech pathology support.

"This process includes a monthly screening clinic across the district, the initial contact for all speech pathology paediatric outpatients. Each service uses the same questionnaire for the intake process to ensure there is no duplication of paperwork.

"The children are initially seen using a short screening assessment and then future management plans are decided in consultation with the parents."

Hannah said management strategies included groups for language stimulation and sound skill development, individual therapy or referral to other agencies that manage speciality services.



The speech pathology team, from left, Chelsea Larkman, Kara Murray, Liza Bergstrom, Hannah McGhee, and Annette Hunt.



Roma-based speech pathologists Melissa Reed (left) and Bridget Palmer.

Helping to voice ideas

Communication: More than just words was the message reinforced by speech pathologists in the West Moreton - Darling Downs District in raising awareness about their work during Speech Pathology Week in August.

Melissa Reed, one of five Queensland Health speech pathologists working in the district, said the focus of the week was on the communication options available for people who had severe speech difficulties.

"We are specialists who work with people of all ages who have communication difficulties," she said.

"It is crucial to give residents with speech difficulties a 'voice' to be able to share their needs, thoughts, opinions, ideas and

emotions."

During the week, the speech pathology team erected displays in the district's hospitals and health facilities and promote information sessions for child care workers and parents.

"People who have complex communication needs often have problems making themselves understood and understanding what is being said. This can lead to social isolation and extreme frustration for many people," Melissa said.

"Conditions that can lead to complex communication needs include cerebral palsy, autism, stroke, brain injury, intellectual disabilities and hearing impairment. The conditions vary in severity and duration."

Melissa said that when speech was impaired, alternative communication (AAC) was used to enhance or replace speech.

She said many people assumed speech pathologists only assisted with speech, but they also helped people to communicate through picture boards, gestures, signing, writing as well as computer programs and speech-generating devices.

Speech pathologists work with individuals who have complex communication needs, and the people around them, to find an AAC system which maximised their opportunities for communication.

People concerned about a friend or family member who might have a complex communication need, should encourage them to visit a speech pathologist or consult their local general practitioner for a referral.

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Assets can be managed

Strategic Asset Management Initiatives. It can be done is the theme of the asset management workshop being held by Queensland Health at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre on 27-28 October.

The theme was derived from feedback from the Asset Management Unit's May workshops where attendees sought more information on application of initiatives.

As part of the workshop, a separate forum of Building, Engineering and Maintenance Staff (BEMS) managers will discuss current BEMS issues and look for solutions from within the group.

These workshop will give par-

ticipants the tools to access the latest updates on best practice and major topics, including emerging trends, ecologically sustainable development and legislative changes.

Participants have the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences with others and build professional relationships.

District managers, directors of corporate services, facilities managers, building engineering and maintenance managers, and asset managers will benefit from the twice-yearly workshop.

Contact: Adrian Duff, Manager, Asset Management Unit, phone 3131 6653 or e-mail Adrian_Duff@health.qld.gov.au

Plans on show

Detailed plans of the new \$1.55 billion Gold Coast University Hospital were unveiled in August at a community expo at the Sharks Southport AFL Club.

Work on the tertiary training hospital at Parklands is expected to start in the middle of next year with completion in 2012.

Premier Anna Bligh said the new hospital would be about four times the size of the current Gold Coast Hospital with a range of expanded services, including cancer, cardiac, neurosciences, trauma and neo-natal intensive care.

She said the new hospital would have 750 beds, almost 300 more than the current hospital, and have room to grow as the demand for services in the region increased.

She said that up to 2500 people were expected to be employed at the peak of construction and the workforce within the new hospital was expected to be twice that.

Carers gain time off under new agreement

Carers of people with a mental illness or intellectual disability now have the chance to take a well-earned break when they need it, thanks to a new agreement in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs.

Access to more services to help carers have time off from their round-the-clock duties is now available under a Memorandum of Understanding between Queensland Health's local Mental Health Services and the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre (CR&CC).

Shirley Wigan, Executive Director of Mental Health Toowoomba and Darling Downs Health Service District, said the agreement meant a range of flexible respite options were available for carers of people with a mental health or psychiatric illness and carers of people with an intellectual disability.

"Flexible respite options may include social support, community access and overnight emergency and planned short breaks," she said.

"It gives additional peace of mind, knowing there is good back-up available."

Bernice Wareham, CR&CC South West Queensland Service Manager, said the program was being coordinated by CR&CC and delivered by local service providers.

"We work closely with Queensland Health to assess and ensure a smooth and safe time for care recipients while their support person gets a break," she said.

"For example, if a carer needs some time off, they just contact us and tell us what they need to do, and what the person they care for needs, and we will try to match that with a local service provider.

"They might want a night off for something special, so we would negotiate the arrangements with a care provider who would supply a worker.

"This worker could stay in the home for the night, or stay in a motel with the care recipient and do whatever the carer normally does."



Pictured at the signing, from left (back), Jenny Ryan (Respite and Carelink Coordinator Darling Downs and South West); Shirley Wigan; and (seated) Bernice Wareham and Michelle McKay (Queensland Health District Manager Toowoomba and Darling Downs).





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Perils of pretty plants

Gardens in Queensland are flourishing this year as Spring brings good rainfall and warmer weather, but may people are unaware that "pretty" flower or plant may bring hidden dangers.

One example, the fruit of the Duranta plant, also known as Aussie Gold, a popular ornamental shrub often cultivated as a hedge, can cause gastro-intestinal irritation, vomiting and diarrhoea if eaten.

Queensland Health is encouraging Queenslanders to educate themselves about the potential danger of poisonous plants in a joint campaign with Nursery and Garden Industry Queensland.

Michael Tilse Health Promotion Director, Queensland Health, said with more people heading out into their gardens, it was a good time to highlight the fact that some of the most popular common garden plants and fungi could be poisonous.

"Plants identified as poison-

ous all pose some risk if consumed or, in some cases, handled by people, however the risk varies by plant species," he said.

"Reactions to poisonous plants can include skin and eye irritation, respiratory problems, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and in some cases, injury and death.

"Small children are particularly at risk of poisonous plants and fungi because of their inquisitive nature and their low body mass."

Michael said parents and day care workers should visit the Queensland Health website to learn more about potentially poisonous plants, their effects and how to identify them.

He said information about poisonous plants, including first aid tips, was available at www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonousplants

He said anyone concerned about a suspected poisoning should phone the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26.

Elmo welcome relief to rural nurses

Hard-working rural nurses have been given a break from work over the past few months by a relief experienced nurse travelling around south west Queensland.

The relief Director of Nursing is travelling around western parts, helping out senior nurses in the rural hospitals, and using a four-wheel drive vehicle towing a 7 metre caravan. The first relief DON, Elmo Koelmeyer, a retired nurse manager from Oakey Hospital, started his 12-months posting on 29 July working in Miles.

Elmo said the position was an opportunity to support rural nurses and had given him a unique opportunity to share skills, visit local beauty spots, and meet people.

Judy March, Toowoomba and Darling Downs Director of Nursing and Midwifery, says she had mapped out a 12-month posting for Elmo.

"I think it will be a popular job. Already I've had three people say to me that when Elmo's finished they'd be interested in taking it on," she said.



The first relief DON, Elmo Koelmeyer, about to embark on his 12-month assignment.

"He will work in Miles for two weeks, then relieve at Texas Hospital for two weeks, before going on to Inglewood and Tara.

"As part of the agreement, the relieving DON sets up the mobile home in a caravan park in town, while they work at the local hospital. For each eight weeks of work for Queensland Health, the nurse is entitled to two week's private use of the van.

"It's a great way for the nursing profession to keep experienced nurses with their wealth of nursing experience in the workforce and combine this with their desire to travel."

If successful, the idea will be introduced to relieve DONs throughout the state and may be applied to other disciplines, such as medicine and allied health professions.

Advance your career with UQ's new Master of Social Work Studies

With an increasing demand for qualified social workers and continued growth in the Health and Community Services industry, there has never been a better time to enrol in UQ's new **Master of Social Work Studies**.

Extend your current qualifications and expand your career opportunities by becoming a professional social worker in two years of full-time study or less*.

Accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and with a focus on mental health, our program is particularly suited to: recent graduates looking for a clearly defined career path; mid-life career changers; and human service workers looking to upgrade their skills.

Find out more at **UQ's Postgraduate Advice Night** – **Wednesday 15 October**, Customs House, Brisbane or contact the School of Social Work and Human Services, phone (07) 3365 2068 or visit www.uq.edu.au/swahs

* Dependent on previous studies



CHICOS Provider Number 00025B

Solutions to improving outcomes

"Why Corporate Services leadership matters in this time of reform" was the theme of the opening address by Director-General Michael Reid to the Corporate Services Forum in Brisbane in August.

More than 300 senior corporate service directors, managers and functional service leaders attended the annual Leadership does Matter forum.

Michael Kalimnios, Deputy Director-General Corporate Services, reinforced the vital role corporate services staff have in identifying and understanding the challenges being faced by the health system. He said they provided and implemented workable solutions to improve business outcomes.

He urged staff to progress the top four priorities for this financial year. These were:

- progressing the corporate services leadership agenda
- strengthening the professional networks, focusing on capability development
- improving performance management
- progressing the key agendas of enterprise bargaining implementation and the replacement of the

human resources/payroll system.

Michael said his expectation from the leaders was to "implement the reform agenda through demonstrating exceptional leadership".

More than 20 exhibitors displayed their services at a trade exhibition, showing the latest trends and advice within the corporate services sphere. A total of 34 entries were entered for the inaugural poster display, giving staff the opportunity to showcase what they achieved or are undertaking in the workplace.

The inaugural Corporate Services Division Awards of Excellence were judged on the poster display showing how values and Queensland Health strategic direc-

tions were enhanced through projects.

Gold Coast Health Service District won the gold award for "LEAN" Corporate Services, the silver award went to Northern Area Supply Services (QHSSP) – New approach to Supply Services, the bronze award went to South West Supply Services (QHSSP) for Value in Quality Service, and the business improvement award was won by Princess Alexandra Hospital with their collective posters.

HeartKids Queensland, a support group for families and children with heart disease, congenital or acquired, received \$503.55 for emergency care packs for families, raised from the inaugural charity raffle.

Yeppoon work on target

Construction is advancing on Yeppoon's new \$20.6 million state-of-the-art hospital precinct, with community, mental and oral Health facilities on the same site as the hospital campus. The new hospital, replacing the old hospital building on Anzac Parade, will have 34 beds – 22 for inpatients and 12 day beds – and is scheduled for completion by April next year. A general practitioner's private practice has been incorporated in the plan, and the design takes into account the possibility of future expansion – including the ability to accept a private collocation facility if required.



James Zigterman with the new glucose monitoring system.

Pump gives James a sporting boost

The sporting life of a Bundaberg teenager, James Zigterman, 13, who has type 1 diabetes, is about to dramatically improve thanks to new technology.

James has been fitted with the closest thing to an artificial pancreas – the MiniMed Paradigm REAL-Time System which continuously monitors glucose levels.

James, who also wears an insulin pump which administers the exact amount of insulin he needs, was fitted with the new system at Bundaberg Hospital.

Janelle Babare, diabetes educator, said the MiniMed System gave the patient a solution to control their diabetes and meant more freedom to live a healthier life.

The technology combines a “smart” insulin pump with the new benefit of continuous glucose monitoring. The system displays glucose readings, trend graphs and directional arrows so the patient can discover how their diet, exercise, medication and lifestyle impact on their glucose levels.

The system is designed to protect the patient by warning them

of low and high glucose levels.

For James the new sensor will be used as a diagnostic tool to monitor and try to stop the onset of hypoglycaemia – the “lows” he currently experiences after he plays sport. It was hoped the sensor would improve his lifestyle by helping prevent these lows which make James feel extremely unwell. James is passionate about tennis,

soccer and BMX.

The sensor is very small and is inserted under the skin. It is attached to a small, waterproof transmitter that sends the glucose data wirelessly to the insulin pump. James, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 2004, has been a Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Youth Ambassador for the past three years.

RCH gains major award

The Royal Children’s Hospital has won the Australasian Emergency Department of the Year award from the College of Emergency Nursing Australasia, presented at the college’s third national conference in Perth in August.

Health Minister Stephen Robertson said the prestigious award was a reflection of the dedication, commitment and teamwork of all the staff from the hospital’s emergency department.

Mr Robertson said emergency

departments across Queensland were facing massive demand pressures, with presentations outstripping population growth.

“Workers at the Royal Children’s Hospital emergency department deserve credit for meeting these pressures head on and delivering the excellent standard of care our kids deserve,” he said.

The Royal Children’s Hospital emergency department treated almost 20,000 patients from January to August this year.

emergency and disaster management programs

QUT’s Faculty of Health is offering a suite of postgraduate programs in Emergency and Disaster Management in 2009.

The programs are built on the Faculty’s extensive experience in the delivery of public health, paramedic and health management programs and disaster management short courses.

The programs are led by Professor Gerry FitzGerald, an expert in emergency medicine and health administration, previously the Commissioner of the Queensland Ambulance Service and Chief Health Officer for Queensland Health.

The programs being offered in 2009 are:

- Master of Public Health (Emergency and Disaster Management)
- Master of Health Science (Emergency and Disaster Management)

- Graduate Certificate in Emergency and Disaster Management

Students with a four-year degree or equivalent may be able to obtain advanced standing in the Master of Health Science.

Similarly, students with a four-year degree and additional one year’s relevant work experience may obtain advanced standing for the Master of Public Health.

This would enable students to complete either of the Master programs in two full-time semesters or an equivalent period of part-time study.

More information

For further information on these programs, please contact Professor Gerry FitzGerald on (07) 3138 3935, email gj.fitzgerald@qut.edu.au or visit www.hlth.qut.edu.au

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making tracks in Indigenous health

Cathy helping recruit more nurses

Olympic gold medallist Cathy Freeman has joined a Queensland Health recruitment campaign aimed at getting more Indigenous Queenslanders into the nursing profession.

The 35-year-old Mackay-born athlete features in a new DVD, *Nurses – Helping Our Mob*, which presents nursing as a rewarding career for young indigenous people. Cathy says in the DVD that of the 26,000 nurses in Queensland, there are only 300 Indigenous nurses and 250 Indigenous nursing students.

“For too many years now, the belief and value system in Indigenous culture didn’t encapsulate education. Young people today are stepping forward and elders are understanding the importance of education,” she said.

Health Minister Stephen Robertson said at the DVD launch-

ing that recruiting more Indigenous nurses would lead to better health outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders.

“We’re delighted to have Cathy Freeman involved in this campaign because she’s such a positive role model for young indigenous people,” he said.

“We know that Indigenous people are sometimes deterred from seeking conventional medical treatment because of a lack of culturally appropriate care.

“The evidence is that more Indigenous people will access health care if there are more Indigenous health professionals available.”

Mr Robertson said the campaign would target 14 to 17-year-olds, with the DVD being used in Indigenous schools and at community events such as NAIDOC Week and Croc Fest.

He said the government was committed to a number of schemes to boost the Indigenous health workforce, including offering 40 cadetships across Queensland to support nursing students through undergraduate nursing programs.

He said the cadetships would provide a basic level of financial support aimed at retaining students to complete their nursing studies.

“In January we created 15 cadetships aimed at those undertaking Enrolled Nursing Program via the TAFE sector in communities such as Cherbourg and Yarrabah,” he said.

“We have provided scholarships for midwives undertaking undergraduate midwifery studies and refresher programs and have an Indigenous Nurse Advisor attached to the Office of the Chief Nursing Officer.”

Oakey people learn healthier living

Indigenous people in Oakey have given the thumbs up to a Queensland Health healthy lifestyle program run by Indigenous health workers.

Jonathan Kelly, nutrition promotion worker, said the five participants enjoyed a six-week program focusing on maintaining a healthy weight and enjoying a healthy diet.

“The program was all about making a healthy lifestyle change,” he said.

The Living Strong Program was run by Queensland Health staff from the Toowoomba and

Darling Downs Health Service District’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit.

Jonathan said all the participants had started making important changes to their eating habits and physical activity to gain a healthy lifestyle that best suited their needs.

“In fact they found it so valuable that most of the participants are looking at starting their own walking group in Oakey,” he said.

“They are looking at walking to each person’s house, picking them up, then doing a lap or two of the block, then dropping people off at

their houses.

“They were talking about doing this on a regular basis, so they can start to get some real benefits from additional exercise. The people selected to take part in the course were generally carers – mothers and grandparents who have a large influence on children’s lives. Not only will they be able to help children, the information they learned will be of benefit to them as well.

“Some of them had medical conditions that weight gain could adversely affect, and the information about eating and physical activity will reduce medical risks.”

New health centres open on islands

Health services in the Torres Strait have received a major boost with the official opening by Health Minister Stephen Robertson of primary health centres on Warraber and Erub Islands.

The \$6.84 million Erub Island facility includes a three-bedroom doctor’s residence, two two-bedroom staff accommodation units, expanded clinical areas, includ-

ing a dental chair, a morgue, and a conference room for video conferencing.

The \$4.45 million Warraber Island facility includes two two-bedroom staff accommodation units, expanded clinical areas, a dental chair, and a conference room.

Mr Robertson said at the official openings in August that the

new health centres were designed to meet the demands of the health challenges faced by the Torres Strait communities.

“There has been a rapid escalation in the incidence of type 2 diabetes, renal disease, and other chronic diseases worldwide,” he said.

“This part of Queensland is not immune to these problems.”



Jennifer Hill, Chinchilla community nutritionist (left), and Phyllis Mills, from the Ninnie Indigenous Playgroup, spread the Go for 2&5 message. Photo courtesy of Northern Downs News

Games boost lifestyle

Celebrating traditional culture and healthy lifestyles for people of all ages was the theme of a NAIDOC Family Fun Day at Dalby.

Activities included boomerang painting, boomerang throwing, didgeridoo playing, cheerleading workshop and traditional Indigenous games of kuchi and march fly.

Queensland Health’s Go for 2&5 healthy eating messages were promoted alongside the cultural and physical activities by the Ninnie Indigenous Playgroup and RHealth (Chinchilla).

Children were encouraged to

try apples peeled, pared and cored on an apple slinky machine and bananas. Their parents, carers and elders were invited to learn more about how many serves of fruit and vegetables are recommended as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Goondir Health received funding and support from the Department of Communities, Queensland Health’s Darling Downs Population Health Unit and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, to assist the local NAIDOC committee stage the community celebrations.

Injury risk by animals

Improving environmental health conditions in communities and reduce the incidence of animal-related injuries and illnesses is the aim of an animal management training in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities.

Queensland Health has been supporting Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island local governments to develop community-based animal management programs.

Councils are funded to employ an animal management worker to undertake community education, planning, and managing animal health and welfare to minimise the impacts on human health and the environment.

A training project to deliver a Certificate II in Rural Operations was funded by Queensland Health and the Queensland Rural Indus-

try Training Council coordinated workplace-based training, including a mentoring program.

The training sessions and workshops were supported by Queensland Health environmental health staff in the Population Health Units and Indigenous environmental health workers.

Ten community trainees, from communities as far north as Badu Island in the Torres Strait and south to Cherbourg, have successfully completed their training.

Some of the trainees have provided input into a manual being developed by the Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities organisation.

The manual, which is being funded by the Federal Government, will be launched this month and will be available nationally.

focus: how I keep fit

Four conquer Kokoda challenge

Four Queensland Health staff have shown their determination and fitness by achieving the challenge of trekking the Kokoda Track across the Owen Stanley Range in Papua-New Guinea.

The four, Dusty Millar, Eric van der List and Bev Carruthers, from Redland Hospital, and Kristi Lacey-Powell, from Bundaberg Hospital, were in a party of 12 who completed the trek along the 96km track in July.

Arriving in Port Moresby on 6 July, the group started their trek at Owers Corner and spent seven days following the footsteps of Australian soldiers through the infamous jungle to Kokoda.

Having completed the Kokoda trail before, Dusty trained specifically with Bev for the event, while Eric focused on attaining his fitness level through regular hill walking.

Although a reasonably high level of fitness is required, Eric revealed that their group con-

sisted of individuals with varying capabilities and motivations, with all but one completing the task.

"It wasn't easy and naturally the fitter you are the easier it is, but the mental demands are something else again, he said.

They said the memorials on the trail at Brigade Hill and Isurava, were emotive and sacred places, sparking inspiration to continue the journey.

Impromptu ceremonies were held at each site to pay tribute to the Australian soldiers and Papuan helpers (known affectionately as the 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels) who never returned, and those lucky to survive.

The Papuan trekkers, who assist tourists with carrying equipment, joined the Australians for the memorial services, maintaining the special bond between the countries.

Villagers also looked forward to visiting trekkers, offering paw-paw, rice, sweet potato and

roasted corn, which fared well in comparison to their pre-packed freeze-dried meals. In return, children were given small toys and mementos from Australia.

"The children knew that we might have something for them, so they were excited to see us, but they didn't pester us – they were very shy," Eric said.

"There were a few very determined girls who finished about three hours behind everyone else by the end of each day, so for the last two days we walked with them for support," Eric said.

"It was a joy to see them finish."

"For the last leg which led us into the Kokoda Village, all members of the group came together to walk as one and, when we arrived, staff and trekkers formed guards of honour for each other," he said.

"I think the historical and emotional significance of the area make people treat it with the greatest respect – you minimise all your rubbish, waste and your overall impact," Dusty said.

Kristi said that as there are no hills in Bundaberg training was plenty of walking with a full pack, swimming and running until she tore the meniscus in her right knee.

"So training was some what hindered but nevertheless I thought it should be okay," she said.

"The first day was certainly a wake up call letting me know that this was not going to a walk in the park. I made it though with the help and the support of the guides, porters and my fellow trekkers."



Tina's caring collection

Do you have a bathroom drawer that won't open properly because you have stuffed all those little complimentary hotel bottles of shampoo and conditioner into it?

Tina Wallace, (pictured above) Wide Bay Health Service District Director of Allied Health Services, is one of those people who habitually collects those care items during her many travels.

But, instead of shoving them into a cupboard, she throws them in a box and drops them off at the Bundaberg women's domestic violence shelter Edon Place.

"We've all collected those little soaps and shampoos thinking we will use them one day but we never do and three years later we find

them at the bottom of a drawer," Tina said.

"Refuges have very little resources or money to buy fancy extras, so this is a small way we can help provide a nice little pamper pack. These women often leave in a hurry, almost by stealth, with little or nothing."

Tina said she urged others to follow her lead and donate the items to charity.

"If you travel a lot and have the opportunity to pick up these items, then why not give them to a suitable charity," she said.

"It doesn't have to be the women's shelter, it can be church groups or the Salvos or someone who works with the homeless."

Monto set an example

Monto Hospital staff are making a healthy choice and setting an example for the community by taking part in the Biggest Health Lifestyle Program aimed at them not only losing weight but leading a healthier lifestyle.

Tracey Pattie, Director of Nursing, said the 12-week program, which started last month, was being coordinated by fitness consultant Liz Younger.

"Each staff member is designed an individual training program and then meets with visiting dietician Kellie Butler on a regular basis," she said.

"We want to set an example to our community – leading a

healthier lifestyle will help reduce chronic disease such as asthma, diabetes and heart problems."

Staff members will look at their eating habits, exercise regime and lifestyle to ensure a better, long-term healthy outcome.

Tracey said staff see the program as an investment in their future health.

She said that if the program proved successful it would be opened up to community members who may want to take on the challenge.

She said there would be a prizes at the end of the program for the most weight lost, fitness levels, and lifestyle changes.

Inspire others to keep fit

How Queensland Health staff keep fit and the exercise lifestyle that they have adopted is the aim of the How I keep fit feature. We would like to publish your story on what motivates you. If you would like to help others follow the same path, send your information (with pictures if possible) to Ian Ross, Editor, Health Matters, e-mail rossi@health.qld.gov.au

Sport builds up a sense of belong

Cunnamulla residents are being encouraged to get to know one another better through a Queensland Health-sponsored six-week program of team sports from 26 October to 29 November.

The Alcohol and Drug Free Sports program is being run by the Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health.

Every Saturday from 3-9 pm, young people and adults will be able to play in or organise teams

in touch football, swimming, netball, basketball, bowls, softball, tennis and mind games.

Melissa Bryan, Corporation member, said the program would provide healthy physical activity, socialising and develop new skills in a supportive alcohol and tobacco free environment.

"It's an opportunity for young people and the community to come together on the sporting field, to get to know each other as

individuals as well as team members. In Cunnamulla, people come from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.

"We want to encourage everyone to get involved so that everyone in our community feels they have a stake in the place in which they live.

"We're aiming to involve up to half of our community of 1300 people in the Cunnamulla sports program."

Solomons a real life sea change

Taking six months off to go on operational deployment with the Australian Army in the Solomon Islands was a big change in surroundings for Noel Matson, Acting Director of Corporate Services in South West Queensland Health Service District.

While Noel has a health administration background, in his other life he's a warrant officer in the Army Reserve, where he's qualified as an advanced medical assistant.

"I was very fortunate in having a district manager who supported my application for six months off," Noel said.

"This meant I could do six weeks training in Townsville and four and a half months in the Solomons.

"I was part of the civilian military liaison team, liaising with the community on projects, and assisting the commander in working with the participating police force – which was made up of police from 16 Pacific countries whose role was to assist in maintaining law and order."

Noel says it was an experience which left him humbled. "I feel I learnt a lot and was also able to contribute," he said.



Noel Matson with children at a beach on Florida Islands in the Solomons.

"It is great to know I have been able to offer something to a community where there is absolute poverty compared with our lifestyles.

"One of the projects I was involved in was planning for a new water system in Kakabona west of Honiara, where mains water was destroyed in the 2003 tensions."

Noel said that one of the fun projects came from a "walk about

talk-talk" where he worked with the Lungga community to set up a volleyball club, helping write up by-laws, a constitution, and fundraising which led to three volleyball teams being established.

"They have now created feeder teams with two other villages which have led to a new volleyball competition, which in turn has had an immediate effect of decreasing the crime rate in Lungga," he said.

Rural workforce training boosted

A special unit aimed at establishing training pathways and coordinate clinical education and training for rural and remote health professionals is being set up by Queensland Health.

The Allied Health and Oral Health Clinical Education and Training Unit will coordinate clinical education and training for pre-entry students, new graduates, and long-term employees of Queensland Health by establishing training pathways for each discipline.

Health Minister Stephen Robertson said that one of the cornerstones of Queensland Health's approach to delivering quality health services to rural Queensland was to have a highly trained and properly prepared workforce.

"It doesn't matter if people live in the Brisbane CBD or Birdsville, they have a right to quality health care, but providing this care to rural and remote areas needs special services delivered by special

people.

"Allied health professionals are a vital part of the service delivery team and we not only have to attract more of them, we have to make it attractive for them to work and remain in rural areas."

Mr Robertson was addressing the National Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Conference in Yeppoon in August.

He said \$2.05 million had been allocated over the life of the 2007 Health Practitioners Certified Agreement for rural and remote employees' clinical education and training requirements.

He said this was in addition to specific professional development and rural living allowances.

Queensland Health had a number of schemes designed to expose allied health students to a range of clinical experience that could only be gained through service outside the metropolitan and major regional centres.

These included the Rural and Remote Scholarship Scheme, the Allied Health Area of Priority Scholarship Scheme, and the Allied Health Clinical Placement Subsidy Scheme.

"We have recognised the vital importance allied health professionals play in the delivery of health services in rural and remote communities," Mr Robertson said.

"The demand for their services is growing and will continue to grow as more and more emphasis is placed on primary health care and preventative care."

Mr Robertson said there were more than 600 Queensland Health employees working in rural and remote areas who were covered by the Health Practitioner Agreement.

He said isolation and lack of support mechanisms had made it difficult to retain the workforce in the past, but major improvements were now in place to reverse the trend.

Blood infections rising

Reducing the incidence of bloodstream infections is the main focus of activities by the Centre for Healthcare Related Infections Surveillance and Prevention (CHRISP) during this month's Infection Prevention Week.

Dr Jeannette Young, Queensland Health Chief Health Officer, said Infection Prevention Week, from 20-24 October, highlighted an important health care issue.

"Each year more than 12,000 blood stream infections are likely to occur in Australian health care facilities, and many of these relate to the use of intravascular catheters," she said.

"Blood stream infections cause significant illness and in some cases death. They also result in

increased costs because of the need for longer hospital stays, and drugs such as antibiotics.

"I urge health care professionals to implement the strategies being promoted to reduce bloodstream infections."

Dolly Olesen, Director of CHRISP, said a number of initiatives had been developed to help prevent health-care associated intravascular device (IVD) related bloodstream infections.

Dr David Paterson, Infectious diseases specialist, will make an address during a CHRISP Infection Prevention Week satellite broadcast on Monday 20 October.

Details of the statewide campaign are on <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/chrisp/icare/about.asp>

Sandy values planning

Sandy McBean, clinical nurse at Proserpine Hospital, attended a series of workshops at the hospital on program planning and evaluation for health practitioners working in Mackay, Proserpine and Moranbah. The workshops were presented by the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) Queensland Collaboration.

Sandy is working on planning development and implementation of a chronic disease management clinic as part of the Healthy Lifestyles Strategy for Chronic Disease 2005-2015.

She said that following the

workshop she felt that she was better able to articulate and describe the projects she has planned.

"During my work on the project plans I have been appalled by how much I have failed to plan and how much has been sitting in my head," Sandy said.

"I don't know how I thought I was going to translate it all into action – now I can, and more importantly I can explain it and report it. I am thrilled by how much I am on track with the project."

PHCRED plans to hold Introduction to Project Management workshops in the Darling Downs region next month.

Focus on ward design

Emerging issues in acute inpatient units and ward design were the focus of a national workshop in Brisbane in August with more than 150 delegates sharing ideas and experiences on design of health care facilities.

The workshop was held by the Queensland Health Design Standards Unit of Capital Works and Asset Management Branch of Queensland Health, in conjunction with the Health Capital and Asset Management Consortium.

Clinicians, managers and architects focused on designing for efficiency, risk minimisation and future technology.

Mungo Smith, Director of

Medical Architecture and Art Projects Architects, was the keynote speaker.

As a former head of design at the Medical Architecture Research Unit, University of North London, he coordinated many design and research projects.

Issues addressed at the workshop included the changing patient profile, health care facility design, the health care clinician, process engineering, functional ward and room design and cost issues.

Outcomes of the workshop will be used to develop and refine the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines, the basis for design of new and redeveloped health facilities.

Mitchell painting the town read

People of all ages in the south-west community of Mitchell dressed up in red to join in the fun as part of local Book Week celebrations to show they are well read.

Local businesses mounted 'paint the town READ' displays and business people read stories to the young and the young-at-heart outside their stores.

Staff of the Mitchell State School presented a play of Red Riding Hood revolting rhymes for students and parents.

Mitchell's librarian Glenda McKnight read a story to the crowds and some students helped act out another story about making 'vegie soup'.

Roma's Reading Bug flew into town to 'bite' as many Mitchell people as possible, and leave

behind families enthusiastic about the benefits of reading together.

The Roma Bug even laid an egg which will eventually hatch into the Mitchell Reading Bug as local children learn how to nurture the bug by reading it lots of books.

The more these children read, the more Mitchell's very own Bug will grow and develop over coming months.

Carlie Watson, South West Population Health Unit's mental health promotion officer, said Mitchell's Book Week celebrations showcased how enjoyable reading could be and how important it was for a child's development and positive family relationships.

"Mitchell is aiming to become a 'reading town' – where everyone

Mitchell children celebrating the laying of their own Reading Bug Egg.

knows and acts on the importance of reading, and reads together," she said.

"Reading to babies and infants right from birth is very important for getting all children ready for school and ready for life.

"A child's first three years is a crucial time for their brain development and reading strengthens their 'brain wiring' for later learning. It's simply too late to wait until school starts to develop their literacy skills.

"Reading together helps children develop self esteem, self confidence and positive social behaviour."



Helping youths grow

Developing the resilience of Bayside youth is the focus of Queensland Health-funded project at four Brisbane state high schools to promote and support the social and emotional well-being of students.

Wynnum, Wynnum North, Victoria Point and Alexandra Hills State High Schools are taking part in the Resiliency in Bayside Schools partnership project, funded by Queensland Health through the Connecting Healthcare in Communities Initiative.

Forty-two staff from the schools, along with staff from health and community organisations, took part in August in Mind Matters level one training.

Olivia Fisher, South East Alliance of General Practice (Brisbane) project officer, said Mind Matters was a resource and professional development program supporting secondary schools.

"The project was developed as a result of consultations by the

Bayside Chronic Disease Forum, through which it was realised more could be done to support our young people and better use local resources," she said.

"Over the next two and a half years, we'll be working with these four Bayside schools to develop stronger relationships with local primary health care providers, mental health services and community organisations.

"We will be inviting other state high schools in the Bayside area to be involved."

"By engaging with guidance officers, principals and school-based youth health nurses, we're aiming to improve knowledge of mental health referral options.

"There will be an emphasis on promoting resiliency, as well as identifying those at risk early, preventing mental health problems developing, as well as reduce inappropriate referrals to hospitals, mental health services and other non-government organisations."

Symptoms survey helps mothers

Expectant mothers will be a lot more comfortable talking to their midwife or doctor about their symptoms thanks to a new Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital project.

Katie Foxcroft, Internal Medicine Commercial Studies Coordinator, is helping to take the embarrassment out of pregnancy-related symptoms with the new Pregnancy Symptoms Inventory.

Katie, who has been involved in research at the hospital for eight years, said the hospital cared for 5000 pregnant women each year.

"I've collected more than 200 surveys from women in all stages of their pregnancy, looking at things like fatigue, nausea, back pain, sleep problems, pelvic pain

– there were 50 distinct symptoms described from doing focus groups," she said.

Katie said her career as a midwife had sparked her interest in pregnancy issues, such as the need to develop a pregnancy symptoms survey for use as a risk assessment tool.

She said the basis of the study was that early detection and treatment of symptoms would reduce the severity of their impact on the day-to-day lives of mothers-to-be.

Some of the symptoms could have a huge impact on the ability to work, such as with severe nausea, or could affect a woman's confidence, such as incontinence.

When a patient was sitting waiting to see her midwife or doc-

tor, she could take a look at the survey – sometimes it was a lot easier to tick a box than to remember all the things they wanted to ask the doctor during your consultation.

"It's also not always easy to talk about some embarrassing symptoms to your midwife or doctor," Katie said.

"We've already found out that in the month I conducted the survey, the referrals to the incontinence nurse jumped dramatically.

"People are more comfortable ticking a box. Then the midwife can look at it and say, 'I see you've got some waterworks problems', discuss it with the woman and refer her to a physiotherapist or an incontinence nurse to give them some exercises to help."

Amanda to head national council

Dr Amanda Lee, Manager, Nutrition and Physical Activity, Health Promotion Unit, Queensland Health, has been appointed chair of a national committee revising dietary guidelines.

The Dietary Guidelines Working Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council is overseeing the dietary guidelines work program for the next two years.

The guide will provide up-to-date advice on healthy eating to

improve the health and well-being of the community, and reduce the risk of diet-related disease.

"The revised dietary guidelines will be based on the principles of good nutrition, environmental sustainability and social equity" Dr Lee said.

The program includes revision of core food groups and all existing dietary guidelines, including infant feeding, the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, and development of dietary guidelines

for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Dr Lee, who is also Con-joint Associate Professor at the University of Queensland and Adjunct Associate Professor at Queensland University of Technology, said dietary guidelines provided an important foundation for nutrition and dietetic practice.

The guidelines are expected to be published in 2010 following an extended period of public consultation.

Training to listen, learn

Communication, teamwork and their direct impact on patient safety are the messages of a training program being run by the Clinical Governance Unit (CGU) at Logan Hospital.

The communication and patient safety training curriculum was developed by Dr Peter Lee, Human Error and Safety program, CGU, and Waring Consultants, a communications specialist company.

The course focuses on:

- communication and its direct impact on patient safety
- communication within the team and their role as a team member
- practical tools for addressing communication deficits
- understanding the link between human error and communication.

Training is delivered in three modules, each of three and a half hours, with a total of 97 sessions at the Logan Hospital campus for all staff who work in selected pilot units.

Dr Mark Mattiussi, Logan District Medical Superintendent, said the program would be evaluated through a research study run by the University of Queensland and Griffith University.

He said there was a pressing need for evidence to show that such training programs were effective in changing attitudes and behaviour. He said the outcome of the research would assist in obtaining financial commitments to deliver wider-scale communications training across Queensland Health.



Pictured signing the agreement are, from left, Ray Fairweather, Dr Ross Phillipson, and Michelle McKay.

Improved training for specialists

Training psychiatrists will for the first time gain experience in both the public and private health care system in Toowoomba following the signing of a memorandum of understanding.

The agreement was signed between the Toowoomba District Mental Health Service, St Andrews Hospital Toowoomba, and supervising psychiatrist Dr Ross Phillipson.

Michelle McKay, District Manager, Toowoomba and Darling Downs Health Service District, said that historically psychiatrists were trained at major teaching hospitals in the public health system.

She said the Federal Government had allocated funds to the Expanded Specialist Training Program so training psychiatrists could work in the private health system and also maintain their work and training in the public health system.

She said this was an important milestone in the training of specialist mental health doctors and had been achieved through the co-operative approach from St Andrew's Hospital Toowoomba and Dr Phillipson.

Ray Fairweather, St Andrews Hospital Chief Executive Officer, said there was an urgent need

for private mental health services across the Darling Downs.

"Working collaboratively we can prepare specialist doctors to take on this workload," he said.

Dr Phillipson, who will supervise the first training psychiatrist this year, said the new program would give training psychiatrists a more rounded education.

"Training psychiatrists gain a lot of experience in treating moderate to severe mental illness in the public system," he said.

"Now they can also gain comprehensive experience in the high prevalence disorders, including depression and anxiety disorders."

Excited over selection

Michael Burge, Consumer Consultant, Toowoomba District Mental Health Service, has been selected as a member of the Federal Government's National Advisory Council on Mental Health.

Michael said he was excited about the prospect of influencing policy and decision-making about mental health issues on a national level.

"I have worked in mental health for six years and I have been advocating for people with mental illness for 12 years," he said.

"I believe the next few years will be critical in preparing for a

new era of mental healthcare."

Shirley Wigan, Executive Director of Toowoomba Mental Health, said Michael was known for his total commitment to mental health issues.

"He has been instrumental in a number of community mental health initiatives, including the highly successful Breaking Free concerts," she said.

"Michael has been active in a number of other state advisory committees for mental healthcare so he is an ideal candidate for providing sound advice and information at a national level."

Carolyn gains honours

Carolyn Ehrlich has been awarded first-class honours for her Griffith University Masters of Advanced Practice thesis research on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Carolyn, currently on leave from Logan Hospital, is investigating the way patients with COPD access information and use that information to manage their condition on a daily basis.

Findings from her research will help health professionals understand this process, improve health-

related outcomes, and avoid risk-taking behaviour in patients with COPD.

The idea for the project came through Carolyn's work with Queensland Health on a Place-Based Initiative, a holistic approach to health planning and delivery designed to promote and protect health and prevent and manage chronic disease.

She found that people with COPD rely extensively on how they are feeling to determine how to look after themselves.

Sowing seeds for healthy minds

Improving the social and emotional well-being of infants, children, parents and staff is the aim of a new 'head, heart and hands' mental health promotion framework.

The Social and Emotional Early Development Strategy (SEEDS) framework was developed by Queensland Health's Southern Area Population Health Services, in collaboration with professional staff, parents and staff in child care centres.

Liz de Plater, Mental health promotion clinical consultant, said that just as there was 'no health without mental health' – there was 'no social and emotional well-being without the heart'.

"The heart is the key to quality relationships. Life experiences shape your values and who you become (heart) and those experi-

ences influence what knowledge (head) you take in, and how you apply your skills (hands) in practice," she said.

"The framework provides caregivers with a way to reflect on their own combination of knowledge (head), values (heart) and skills (hands) and how their particular combination supports the social and emotional well-being of the children and adults in their lives.

"The importance of early development, particularly early attachment experiences, brain development and emotional development has been well documented over decades of independent research in economics, neuroscience and developmental psychology."

The SEEDS project uses a gardening metaphor to highlight the importance of nurturing the

social and emotional well-being of young children and their caregivers, both parents and child care staff.

Supporting resources take the form of a seed packet containing a CD and a flower which opens up to five petals containing practical strategies.

The SEEDS project was funded to develop and pilot an evidence-based comprehensive mental health promotion framework for child care services to enhance the social and emotional well-being of children, their parents and staff.

The resulting SEEDS framework was developed collaboratively with parents and staff of child care centres.

Following a needs assessment, staff and parents from 15 child care centres attended a series of three workshops.

Bundaberg gains McGrath nurse

Bundaberg Hospital is the first Queensland Health facility to gain the services of a McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurse, with the appointment of nurse Margie Mears.

The McGrath Foundation aims to raise money to place breast care nurses in rural and regional Australia, as well as educating young women to be "breast cancer aware". The foundation was co-founded by the late Jane McGrath and her cricketing husband Glen.

Margie will be employed by Queensland Health, with the

new position fully funded by the McGrath Foundation.

She has been nursing since 1976 and is an experienced cancer nurse with a passion for caring for patients with breast cancer.

She has worked in the private and public hospital sector in both Queensland and Victoria in a range of fields, including oncology and surgical, palliative care, family counselling and home visit services for cancer patients.

Pattie Hudson, District Manager of the Wide Bay Health Service District, said breast care

nurses provided valuable support for women diagnosed with breast cancer.

"The appointment will ensure the care of breast cancer patients in the district is further enhanced with the provision of a nurse solely dedicated to coordinating care and providing support during diagnosis and treatment," she said.

Margie said her role was to primarily coordinate the care and support the breast cancer patients, but extend to providing support for carers and families, enabling them to continue on with their lives.



Pictured with the achievement award are, from left, Pamela Siebrecht, (Project Peer Mentor), Sophie Morson (Project Coordinator), Dr Janice Wilson (Deputy Director-General, Population Health Directorate, Ministry of Health NZ), and Kate Wensley (Project Coordinator).

Calendar scores gold

The Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) at Royal Children's Hospital has won a Gold Achievement Award for its calendar celebrating the resilience of young people with mental health problems.

The award, announced last month at the annual Mental Health Services Conference Auckland, New Zealand, recognises and encourages best practice, excellence and innovation in mental health service delivery.

The service received the award in the mental health promotion or mental illness prevention category for the Images of a Hero 2008 calendar celebrating the resilience of young people with mental health problems.

Project coordinators, Kate Wensley and Sophie Morson, worked with 11 clients (aged 13 to 18 years), two peer mentors, a professional photographer and CYMHS

staff to produce the calendar with the mental health week theme of 'everybody's life is a heroes journey'.

The calendar showcases photographs taken by the participants, together with the story of their own hero's journey. The calendar presents mental health information in an accessible way and aims to reduce community stigma and enhance awareness of mental health support services.

Funding from the Mental Health Association of Queensland and the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation was used to print 5000 free calendars.

A second print run of 10,000 copies, funded by Queensland's Mental Health Branch, was distributed nationally and internationally. A similar calendar has been produced and was launched this month during Mental Health Week.

\$49m work contracts let

Contracts have been awarded to planning and design teams for the \$446 million redevelopment of the Cairns Base Hospital, and \$49.09 million has been allocated to appoint five companies to begin hospital works.

Following expressions of interest in June, short-listed companies were invited to prepare detailed submissions evaluated by a panel comprising district representatives, together with the Major Hospitals Project Office and Project Services.

Health Minister Stephen Robertson said last month that the high calibre companies were selected after rigorous evaluation.

Mr Robertson said the project team would design a hospital to meet North Queensland's unique health care needs.

"To achieve this goal, the project team will work closely with health and education sector representatives, local and State Government, health community councils and local community members," he said.

Ship offers care for sick Liberians

Two Queensland Health staff served as volunteers offering medical treatment on board the world's largest charity ship, the *Africa Mercy*, currently on a 10-month outreach program in Monrovia, the capital of the West African nation of Liberia.

The two volunteers are Terry Culleton, a public health nurse from Brisbane Southside Population Health, and Toni Mitchell, a dental technician from the Cairns Oral Health Service.

Africa Mercy is operated by Mercy Ships, an international Christian charity which has had a fleet of hospital ships visiting some of the world's poorest countries since 1978.

Africa Mercy is crewed by 400 volunteers from around the world and includes doctors, nurses, water engineers and agriculturalists, carrying out a range of free health treatments to sick Liberians, and conducting community development and medical training programs.

Terry Culleton said that adjusting to shipboard life had taken a bit of doing, quite a culture shock to say the least.

"Work has been quite interesting. I have spent my time so far, between the eye team and the operating rooms. I spent the first

two weeks working with the eye team out in a MASH style tent on the dock," she said.

"Here we see all the pre and post operative eye patients for various assessments and treatments. We had been seeing anything between 70 to 110 patients a day.

"We have done some incredible surgeries on huge thyroid tumours and other types of masses.

"The Liberian people just have no way of accessing any form of health care, so have to let these tumours just grow.

"It has only been when they have been able to find their way to one of the Mercy Ship assessment clinics that they have been able to access any care."

Terry said the dental team on board went out into the community each day to provide dental care to the people.

She said one of the dental team was a dental technician from the Cairns District, Toni Mitchell, who was on her second term as a volunteer with the charity.

Terry said that the main operations on the ship were cataract surgery, while there was a general surgeon "doing thyroids and just about anything else that needs doing".

"We have an orthopaedic guy

on board doing some of the club feet and other corrective surgeries this week, and there is a gynaecologist doing vesico-vaginal fistula repairs."

Terry said Monrovia was a city in total disrepair. "Everywhere you look, you see the ravages of the civil war. There is no running water, sanitation or electricity for the majority of dwellings," she said.

"Most people in the city area live in very poor conditions. As you go out from the city, people living in the villages seem to be marginally better in that there is a little more space."

Operations add smiles

The stigma of being born with a broken or cleft lip and cleft palate can be traumatic, but thanks to Operation Smile many Papua-New Guineans with these deformities have a new life after they underwent surgery.

Operation Smile, a not-for-profit volunteer medical service organisation, spent three weeks working with organisations, including the Port Moresby General Hospital (PMGH), to help people with these deformities.

The volunteers saw patients who visited the United States naval hospital ship USNS Mercy when it came to Port Moresby in August.

Four members of the volunteer team were from Queensland Health: Gold Coast paediatrician Susan Moloney, Royal Children's Hospital clinical nurse Louise Spooner-Jackson and registered nurse Courtney Richardson, and Nambour Hospital registered nurse Sue Pitman.

Patients, mostly children, came from all parts of the country for the final screening at PMGH for referral to the volunteer doctors and nurses.

The Operation Smile medical team was allowed to use to use five operating theatres aboard the *USNS Mercy*.

In addition to Papua New Guinea, the *USNS Mercy* visited the Republic of the Philippines, Vietnam and East Timor to provide medical, dental, engineering and veterinarian assistance as part of Pacific Partnership 2008.

BreastScreen Queensland mobile and relocatable services schedule

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

Scheduled services

Mobile Services

Rockhampton: until 12 December, Gladstone.

Toowoomba: until 31 October, Nanango.

Townsville: until 15 January 2009, Ayr.

Relocatable Services

Cairns: until 3 October, Yorke Island; 13-16 October, Boigu Island; 20-24 October, Badu Island; 28-31 October, Bamaga.

Gold Coast: until 17 October, Beenleigh; 20 October to 17 December, Beaudesert.

Mackay: until 17 October, Cannonvale.

Nambour: until 17 October, Buderim; 20-24 October, Buderim Gardens.

All BreastScreen Queensland Services are required to meet National Accreditation Standards to be accredited as part of the BreastScreen Australia Program. These standards are monitored every six months.

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.

infomatters

diary

Colourful characters right on tune

An array of colourful fruit and vegetable characters dancing to popular fruit and vegetable tunes was the flavour of the night in August at the Mount Isa Mardi Gras.

Dawn Kraft, Tropical Population Health Network Public Health Nutritionist, said having a fruit and vegetable float at the Mardi Gras was a fun way to get the healthy eating message out to the Mount Isa people.

"The Go for 2&5 Vegie Man has proven popular in Mount Isa, and his presence at the rodeo reminded everyone to consume more fruit and vegetables," she said.

"Eating two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables each day is an easy way to protect ourselves against poor health.

"It can also help prevent heart disease, type two diabetes and some forms of cancer."

Dawn said the national Go for 2&5 social marketing campaign reinforced this message, and it was important that the campaign reached people in rural and remote areas such as Mount Isa.

She said promotional products distributed included Vegie Man stickers, bookmarks, brochures, and recipe cards.



Vegie Man and friends at the mardi gras.

Growth affects health

Staff from government and non-government organisations have been trained to assess how urban and regional development affects our health.

The two-day introductory training at Roma is part of a project

subsidised by Queensland Health's South West Population Health Unit. Training covered the reasons for a health impact assessment (HIA), what could be to be achieved by a HIA, the levels of assessment, and tools and methods used.

The training was conducted by Jessica McCormick, from Monash University's Department of Health Science. Deb Alick, South West public health officer, said that a HIA could help avoid or reduce the negative impacts on health and enhancement of the positive impacts.

She said this was achieved by addressing issues of employment, income, housing, education, social capital and transportation.

Health impact assessment was a rapidly expanding discipline, with Australian research and development work in recent years focused on exploring HIA and its practical application in policy development.

"There's a great deal of evidence suggesting that development can have a beneficial effect on health and well-being, through employment, promotion of economic advancement and providing improved living standards," Deb said.

OCTOBER

- 1-31** Girls Night In
Cancer Council Australia
Phone: 1300 656 585
- 1-31** Lupus Awareness Month
Lupus Association of NSW
Phone: (02) 9878 6055
- 1** International Day of Older Persons
United Nations
Phone: (02) 6273 8200
- 3** National Walk to Work Day
Pedestrian Council of Australia
Phone: (02) 9968 4555
- 4** World Hospice and Palliative Care Day
Palliative Care Australia
Phone: (02) 6232 4433
- 5-11** Mental Health Week
Mental Health Association Queensland
Phone: 3271 5544
- 5-11** Sleep Awareness Week
Sleep Disorders Australia
Phone: (02) 9990 3514
- 9** World Sight Day
Vision 2020 Australia
Phone: (03) 9656 2020
- 10** World Mental Health Day
United Nations
Phone: (02) 6273 8200
- 11-19** Down Syndrome Awareness Week
Down Syndrome Association of NSW
Phone: 1800 623 544
- 12** Gold Coast Cycle Challenge
Bicycle Queensland
Phone: 3844 1144
- 12-18** Haemophilia Awareness Week
Haemophilia Foundation Australia
Phone: 1800 807 173
- 12-18** National Nutrition Week
Nutrition Australia
Phone: (02) 4257 9011
- 13-17** Sock It To Suicide
White Wreath Association
Phone: 1300 766 177
- 15** National Ride 2 Work Day
Bicycle Queensland
Phone: 3844 1144
- 16** World Food Day
United Nations
Phone: (02) 6273 8200
- 18-26** Children's Week
Children's Week Association of Australia
Phone: (08) 9489 4022
- 20** World Osteoporosis Day
Osteoporosis Australia
Phone: (02) 9518 8140
- 20-24** Infection Prevention Week
Queensland Health Centre for Healthcare Related Infection Surveillance and Prevention
Phone: 3895 3117
- 27** Pink Ribbon Day
The Cancer Council Australia
Phone: 1300 656 585
- 28** Big Breakfast
Australian Thyroid Foundation
Phone: (02) 9890 6962
- 31** National Bandanna Day
Canteen
Phone: 1800 226 833

in retrospect

A review of some articles from previous Health Matters

April	Fluoridation set for wide introduction Bid to boost nutrition in outback Futuristic design for smart therapies site
May	Airport sales boost new hospital financing Junior doctors pass with flying colours Equal Employment Opportunity featuree
June	Record \$8.325 billion Queensland Health Budget Leading the way in patient openness Cardiac unit celebrates decade of treatment
July	Easier access to data benchmarks Show displays spread good food messages Indigenous strategies aim to close the gap
August	Digital technology helps ear treatments Mental Health Service 10-year plan launched Exercise tests responses to influenza disaster
September	Queensland Health reform changes announced Advancing Health Action Plan launched \$3.5m robotic surgery leading the way

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(under Health Information/Events)