

HealthMatters



health • care • people



Queensland
Government

Captain Clean kills dirty germs

Given the human swine influenza outbreak, it is more important than ever to practice good hand washing techniques to reduce the transmission of disease.

Queensland children can learn the importance of personal hygiene and how it can help prevent illness, with help from cartoon characters Captain Clean and Sally Suds.

Queensland Health's Germbusters early childhood kits, which can now be ordered online, enable early child care educators and carers to engage and teach young children, staff and parents effective hygiene procedures.

Kylie Cocks, Gold Coast health promotion director, said young people needed to learn that "everyday they unknowingly fight off a variety of nasty germs that have

the potential to make them sick".

"These sneaky bugs often catch a ride on people's hands after they go to the toilet, blow their noses, or even give their pets a cuddle," she said.

"Queensland Health's Germ Busters program recognises that one of the most effective ways to stop germs from spreading is to wash hands correctly."

Kylie said the interactive hand hygiene program was fun and simple to use and easily incorporated into the daily routine of early childhood services.

The comprehensive hygiene improvement program was developed by the Gold Coast Population Health Unit.

The resources were revised in 2008, in accordance with the latest evidence, to deliver a colourful,

updated and fun resource for the early childhood sector.

The Germbuster resource guide provides information about how to use the Germbuster program and involve children, staff, parents and carers.

It has a fun and energetic activities section with many activity suggestions and resources, including songs, character mobiles, games and colouring-in activities.

The resource kits, charts, posters, stickers, fact sheets, wash and brush timers, and role-playing character crowns can all be purchased online.

For more information about Germ Busters or to place an online order through SDS Publications Queensland, visit www.health.qld.gov.au/germbusters.

directions Michael Reid, Director-General



Michael Reid

The Queensland Health Strategic Plan 2007-12 version 2 was released this month and you will notice a number of changes from the original Queensland Health Strategic Plan 2007-12 document.

Since the release in 2007 of the Queensland Health Strategic Plan 2007-12, our hospitals and the health system in general have undergone significant reform and the Queensland Government released key documents of Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland and Advancing Health Action (AHA). In addition, a new National Healthcare Agreement was signed with the Commonwealth Government.

The Queensland Health Strategic Plan 2007-12 version 2 has the following four new strategic priorities which replace the old strategic directions:

- making Queenslanders healthier, focusing on the promotion and protection of the health of all Queenslanders and prevention of ill-health
- meeting Queenslanders' health care needs safely and sustainably
- reducing health service inequities across Queensland, recognising the inequities that exist across

specific population groups. Specifically addressing improving mental health care and reducing the gap in health outcomes for Indigenous and rural and remote Queenslanders.

• developing staff and enhancing organisational performance' outlines, how Queensland Health is going to best utilise its people and resources to achieve strategic priorities.

We cannot meet these challenges alone. We will continue to work with partners including other Queensland Government departments, the Australian Government and other agencies, consumers and the private sector.

Changes ease asthma treatment

Asthma management and treatment has been made much easier through changes in regulations easing restrictions on administration and sale of asthma puffer medication.

Dr Jeannette Young, Queensland Health's Chief Health Officer, said the easing of restrictions were working well and had been well received. Dr Young said changes to the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 had broadened management and treatment for asthmatics.

"The changes allow people who have completed an approved asthma management course to be authorised to administer salbutamol (ventolin) or terbutaline puffers as first aid at work or a community event," she said.

"The changes allow the sale,

by pharmacists, of asthma puffers for use in first aid kits to people who have completed an approved asthma management course.

"Winter months are certainly a time of heightened awareness for people with asthma.

"It is a time when many are more concerned about their asthma because colds are likely to exacerbate the condition – even for some who are not bothered by asthma for the remainder of the year."

Dr Young said the changes to regulations were made in response to community concerns over who was able to administer asthma puffers. She said that appropriately qualified first aid practitioners could now administer medication to those who might suffer an asthma attack at work, in the park or wherever. She said parents and

guardians had always been able to administer puffers to their children and this continued to be the case.

People administering salbutamol and terbutaline as first aid at a workplace or community event must hold a certificate that showed they had successfully completed training in an approved asthma management course.

Pharmacists must ask to see this certificate before supplying salbutamol or terbutaline puffers.

A list of approved asthma management courses is on the Queensland Health website, http://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/ehu/asthma_mgtcourses.pdf

Further information is available from Queensland Health's Health Information Directory, http://access.health.qld.gov.au/hid/Child-Health/Asthma/asthma_ap.asp

Noel Hayman award finalist

Associate Professor Noel Hayman, Clinical Director, Inala Indigenous Health Service, was selected as a finalist for last month's SunCorp Queenslanders of the Year Award.

The citation said: "Noel has worked tirelessly for the past 19 years to improve Indigenous health within Queensland. He has developed successful Indigenous focused initiatives and projects, including improved access to mainstream

health services, improved infant nutrition, a teaching unit for the University of Queensland.

"(He) contributed to Indigenous policy at both State and national level and wrote the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Nutrition Survey 2002.

"Noel is currently lobbying to create a Centre of Excellence in Indigenous Primary Health Care at the Inala Community Health Centre."

Cover photo



Gold Coast Hospital Staff Specialist in Paediatrics Dr Jennifer Deacon with husband Jay and daughter Penelope in the 5km Challenge.

More than 1000 children joined the Gold Coast Airport Marathon held on 5 July. Queensland Health sponsored the Junior Dash events for the first time to promote healthy lifestyles.

Health Matters is published by Public Affairs

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Design and layout

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Public Affairs

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ISSN 1326-575X

Print and electronic media are welcome to use stories with or without acknowledgment.

Timeframes

Lodge articles for September with the editor before 7 August.

If you have an item you consider newsworthy or require further information on articles in this edition, phone (07) 3234 1090.

Tai Chi reduces risk of slips, trips

A modified Tai Chi program to improve balance and reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls is being trialled by South West Queensland residents.

Tai Chi Master Rod Ferguson, from the Australian Academy of Tai Chi and Qigong, held a train-the-trainer workshop for eight people from Roma, Morven and Charleville during a recent visit.

The two-day training was run by the South West Health Service District Falls Injury Prevention Group and supported by the Queensland Health Outback and Involved grants program.

Susann Currie-Ranson, project coordinator, said the Tai Chi for Health and Falls Injury Prevention Program would determine the effectiveness of a 10-week, community-based Tai Chi program in

reducing falls and improving balance in people aged 60 and older.

"The train-the-trainer workshop was phase one of the project," she said.

"In the second phase, the eight trainers will present weekly one-hour Tai Chi classes within their local communities. Up to 15 people aged 60 years and older, and Indigenous people aged 50 years and older, will be invited to participate in the classes.

"They will each be given a special falls calendar to record any falls they have over the 10-week period of the program.

"We're keen to see if the modified Tai Chi program proves to be a safe, effective, cost-efficient and evidence-based intervention strategy to manage falls risk factors and prevent falls.

"Local South West Queensland data, collected during our Sloppy Slipper Exchange falls prevention project in 2008 established that one in every three applicants, aged 65 or older, reported one or more falls during the previous 12 months.

"These figures are consistent with the national average in the same age group."

Susann said the key exercise techniques in the program included weight bearing and weight transfer, low body gravity centre, directional change, symmetrical movements, dynamic balance, and postural control and relaxation.

"This form of physical activity has longer-term benefits to the immune system, arthritis, asthma, osteoporosis, stress management, and cardiovascular function," she said.



Rod Ferguson (in white coat) shows his Tai Chi technique to a group during the train-the-trainer workshop

Cooking up for fun and friendship

"While the pot boils, friendship endures" according to the Latin proverb which roughly translates to, "the person who gives good dinners has plenty of friends".

Gympie residents have the chance to do just that when the community kitchen started its first six-week cooking program this month.

Participants are learning basic cooking skills, cooking on a budget and healthy eating while making friends and sharing the fruits of their labour.

The community kitchen is coordinated by Queensland Health's community nutritionist Rhonda Skehan through a \$29,000 funding program under the State Government's Community Partnership Grant – Eat Well, Be Active.

Rhonda said the community kitchen was aimed at everyone – people cooking for a family, themselves, those who were separated, divorced or widowed and the Indigenous community.

"Cooking together builds the family unit and rather than being a chore, it can become a family event," she said.

"The community kitchen program is not just about eating good food, it's about enjoying the experience of preparing it together.

"Cooking is a dying skill because people are becoming too reliant on prepared meals and take-away.

"Quite often these meals are

promoted as healthy, but they are high in sugar, salt and fats."

Rhonda said participants were very involved in the weekly lessons which included nutrition, hygiene, budgeting, food costing and growing and eating food in season.

"It is hoped that, like Jamie Oliver's 'pass it on', the participants will teach others the skills they learn each week while learning new recipes that are nutritious, easy and affordable," she said.

This is Rhonda's second year with the program, which has been totally revamped after she researched community kitchens throughout Australia and overseas, taking the best parts from each.

The facility has commercial kitchens, with enough stove tops, ovens, woks and fry pans so everyone gets a chance to be involved.

A herb garden will be planted so fresh produce can be grown and used in the recipes and to teach participants about food security – safe food which is accessible and knowing how to prepare it.

"I'm hoping participants will grow their own vegies, bring them in and swap," she said.

"It's all about enjoying food and learning, in a social environment.

"A mix of younger and older people will add flavour to the kitchen as they share skills and knowledge and enjoy a meal

together.

"They'll build friendships which can then be extended outside the class."

Fundraising will be undertaken to continue funding the pilot program if it proves successful.

It is also hoped students will gain the confidence to become instructors and take ownership of the community-based program.

The community kitchen program has an initial outlay of \$10 for the resource folder which will cover each week's lessons, tips and recipes.

There is also a \$10 weekly payment, which will cover the cost of the meals prepared with participants either eating together as a group or taking the prepared meal home.

Passing the message

Smoke-free messages are being strongly promoted by two teams taking part in a touch football competition in the Brisbane suburb of Springfield as part of players' strong focus on active lifestyles and healthy living.

Sponsored by Queensland Health, the two teams include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 16 to 35 years from Inala and Ipswich.

The players are keen to spread the word that 'smoking: it can cost us the game' and 'tobacco: it could cost us our culture'.

Daniel Yasso, team organiser, said the competition enabled young Indigenous people to participate in a positive activity to develop their self-esteem, confidence, pride and team skills.

"It encourages them take ownership of their health and well-being," Daniel said.

"Our Queensland Health spon-

sorship will also cover the teams' registration expenses.

"The weekly touch football competition involves more than 24 teams and will provide our players with an opportunity to combat smoking through sport and being active generally."

The two teams will display their smoke-free messages on their jerseys, at training sessions, on event signage and announcements and through other promotional resources. Queensland Health is encouraging Indigenous organisations and communities across the state to apply for funding to promote smoke-free messages.

The Event Support Program is designed to raise awareness of smoking and passive smoking issues, and promote a positive attitude towards prevention.

Sue Tomlinson, Queensland Health project officer, said tobacco smoking was the single most important risk factor responsible for the greatest burden of disease in Australia and the leading cause of drug-related preventable deaths.

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

"Our Event Support Program enables Indigenous communities and groups to promote the smoke-free messages within their local Indigenous sporting carnivals, recreational events, arts, dance and cultural festivals, including NAIDOC Week celebrations."

Appeal for blood donors

Queensland Health staff have been urged to become blood donors to answer a national appeal by the Australian Red Cross Blood Service following a shortage of regular donations during the winter flu season.

Dr Aaron Groves, Deputy Director-General, Division of the Chief Health Officer, said:

"Your support is appreciated over the coming weeks to meet community demand, especially if

you are an O negative donor.

"If you are unable to give blood at this time, please show your support by forwarding this message to family and friends who may be eligible.

"One in three people will need blood in their lifetime, yet only one in 30 donate."

To check eligibility, make an enquiry or make an appointment to donate phone 13 14 95 or visit <http://www.donateblood.com.au>



Senior project officer Cheryl Bray (centre) discusses the new Healthy Steps directory and Queensland Stay On Your Feet checklist with Greta Lowe and James Old.

Taking healthy steps

Health care professionals can now encourage people to take healthy steps towards healthy ageing through Queensland Health's new Healthy Steps website directory.

The website allows people to tap into a wealth of practical information to advise on falls prevention risk factors and the local resources available to address each factor. The Healthy Steps directory is designed to be a quick reference guide to healthy ageing tips and what support services and activities are on offer for older people in their local area.

General practitioners and other health care professionals are encouraged to talk with their older clients about physical activity options, help them ease into new activities, stay motivated and reduce their risk of slips, trips and falls.

Topics covered in the Healthy steps guide include:

- stay active, stay independent and stay social
- manage medicines safely and effectively
- manage and maintain good health
- eat well for strong bones, muscles, and general health
- be safe in and around the home
- report hazards in the community
- take care of feet
- have vision checked every two years.

Cheryl Bray, senior project officer, Metro South Health Service District, said that under each of topic there were relevant service directories of exercise groups, creative activities and social groups

available to help keep active, through to local support services, such as healthy lifestyle programs, allied health services, specialised footwear retailers and local government services.

"There are many services that can help people keep on track to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle in the home and community," she said.

Ngairie McGaw, health promotion officer, Brisbane Southside Population Health Unit, said the Healthy Steps directory was an initiative of the Brisbane Southside Population Health Unit and the Metro South Health Service District, with the support of the Optometrists Association of Australia (Queensland and Northern Territory Division).

"The directory complements the Will you stay active and independent? Queensland Stay On Your Feet® checklist, another Queensland Health healthy ageing resource," she said.

"The checklist helps health professionals talk to clients about healthy ageing and staying on their feet as they age, and highlights key reasons why they may be at risk of falling."

The Healthy steps directory is available at www.health.qld.gov.au/southside/SOYF_healthy_steps.pdf

Copies of the Will you stay active and independent? Queensland Stay On Your Feet checklist are available from the Queensland Health Publications Unit on 3234 1053 or www.health.qld.gov.au/stayonyourfeet/resources.asp.

Rebels leading smoke-free cause

The Southern Queensland Rebels rugby union team competed recently in the Ella Seven's Indigenous Rugby Carnival in Coffs Harbour – promoting smoke-free messages, focusing on active lifestyles and healthy living.

The team, sponsored by Queensland Health, spread the smoke-free messages during the second annual carnival, which is the first step in selection of a national Indigenous Sevens team.

The Rebels' players and coaches are spreading the 'Smoking: it can

cost us the game' and 'Tobacco: it could cost us our culture' messages at their matches and in their local communities of Cherbourg, Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba and the Sunshine Coast.

Selwyn Button, team organiser said that although the team got off to a slow start, they progressed through to the finals "displaying plenty of energy and spirit on and off the field".

"The event is the only Indigenous rugby union carnival in Australia for senior players. Now in its second year, the carnival attracts

30 men's teams and 15 women's teams from across the country," he said.

"The carnival drew a crowd of 700 spectators and competitors, its games were broadcast live on the National Indigenous Television Network and replayed throughout the year.

The Rebels are keen to provide and promote active and healthy lifestyles for young Indigenous men in a drug and alcohol free environment and develop their self esteem, confidence, pride and competitive team skills."

Chronic disease probe launched

An inquiry into ways to prevent chronic disease in Queensland communities is being carried out by the Queensland Parliament's Social Development Committee.

The committee, chaired by Lindy Nelson-Carr, MP (Mundingburra), is seeking submissions from interested organisations and individuals addressing the terms of reference by 31 July. Ms Nelson-Carr said that more than one-third of all deaths in Queensland were the result of chronic disease which could have been prevented.

"The committee has high expectations of influencing the necessary legislative and policy changes," she said.

The inquiry will consider:

- programs to help communities embrace healthier lifestyles
- potential enhancements to ser-

vice delivery, particularly improvements which foster coordinated approaches, including prevention and early intervention

- impact of potential investment in new and innovative research focused on chronic disease prevention

- programs to encourage children and young people develop and maintain individual responsibility for their own health and well-being throughout their adult lives.

Ms Nelson-Carr said the committee was looking for ideas on the most effective ways to prevent chronic disease.

She said the committee would look at major risk factors behind chronic disease, such as obesity, smoking, physical inactivity, and risky alcohol consumption.

She said tackling chronic dis-

ease required policy change, probable budgetary support from the government, and behavioural change by the community.

She said the inquiry would look at:

- bans on junk food, alcohol and tobacco advertising and other forms of promotion
- major increases in physical activity and healthy eating programs
- increasing availability, affordability and accessibility of healthy foods
- altering obesity-promoting environments
- delivering workplace health promotion programs.

An inquiry information paper is available on the committee's Internet site at <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/sdc/>

Records storage contracts awarded

Standing Offer Arrangement (SOA) 747-08 contracts for the provision of records storage, retrieval and destruction services have been awarded by the Queensland Government Chief Procurement Office (QGCPPO).

Queensland Health is now able to store administrative and functional records with a compliant offsite storage provider at already negotiated rates. This applies to both regional and metropolitan districts and divisions.

It is mandatory for all Queensland Health business units to store offsite administrative and functional records with one of the successful contractors. Contracts with

other suppliers are valid until their expiry date, at which time that contract must cease, and a new account must be opened with one of the three contractors below.

The three successful contractors for the tender are (in no particular order): Grace Records Management (Australia) Pty Ltd; Iron Mountain Australia Pty Ltd; and Recall Information Management Pty Ltd.

A copy of the pricing schedule for all suppliers is available at: <http://qcd.govnet.qld.gov.au/Pages/Details.aspx?SOANumber=QGCPPO747-08>

Districts and divisions are encouraged to look at the prices and the geographical area covered by each provider to select the con-

tractor who is most appropriate for their needs.

Information and updates in relation to QGCPPO747-08 Records Storage, Retrieval and Destruction Services will be included in QGCPPO's quarterly publication "Procurement Update."

Officers may register with QGCPPO (<http://www.qgm.qld.gov.au>) to receive an electronic copy of this publication as well as eBulletins for procurement updates.

If there are any enquiries contact the Strategic Records Management Team at <http://qhps.health.qld.gov.au/bpsu/content/srmt.htm> and complete a Request for Advice form.

PA retains Magnet tag

Princess Alexandra Hospital has been awarded Magnet designation for the second time, cementing its reputation as an international leader in nursing services.

The hospital is the first health care organisation in the Southern Hemisphere to be twice granted Magnet status. The four-year recognition was first awarded in 2004.

Magnet is an international program bestowed by the American Nurses Credentialing Centre, the largest nursing credentialing organisation in America, and recognises hospitals that demonstrate excellence in all aspects of nursing services.

In a mammoth effort, hundreds of the hospital's nurses and support staff worked towards applying for this year's re-designation, which involved the submission of a 725-page application document and a four-day site inspection by Magnet appraisers.

Veronica Casey, Executive Director of Nursing Services, said both aspects of the hospital's application were highly regarded by the appraisal team.

"We were recognised as achieving the highest levels of excellence," she said.

"They have commended each and every one of our nursing staff for their passion, knowledge, education and focus on patient outcomes."



One of the donated historic photographs, from left, John Joseph Harland, Dr Feather, Virgil Power, Dr Dodson and Dr Main in the Roma Hospital grounds.

Historic link for Roma

What was simply a family photograph for Hillary Harland has become a valued part of Roma Hospital's history.

The 81-year-old former Roma resident has donated two photographs from her father's private collection to Roma Hospital.

"The photographs were taken very early last century," Hillary said.

"While they are sentimental to me, I thought it would be nice for the Roma Hospital to have them from a historical perspective."

Hillary said her family had a long and proud history with Roma Hospital.

"My father, John Joseph Harland, was one of the first hospital secretaries in Roma, my stepmother, May Murray, was a matron at that time and my mother, Isabelle Lines, was a former nurse at the hospital before I was born," she said

Maree Geraghty, Chief Executive Officer, said she was proud to be able to showcase the two photographs in the Roma Hospital.

"Mr Harland was a prominent figure in both the community and the hospital early last century and to be able to hang these two pieces of historical significance is quite exciting," she said.

Health links boosted

Improving health in urban and rural environments is the aim of a cooperative approach being taken by communities in the Southern Downs, Goondiwindi and Western Downs areas.

The project encourages greater involvement and cooperation between communities, industry and government organisations.

The Healthy Communities project, planned over five years and beyond, includes construction of fitness trails, bicycle/cycling infrastructure audits, shade structures and training of local people to carry out community-based fitness programs.

Richard Henshaw, Darling Downs Population Health Unit, said a range of interrelated strategies would focus on capacity building and environmental supports to health-enhancing behaviour.

"The project is based on the Healthy Cities model, inspired by the World Health Organisation's 'Health for All' Healthy Cities framework, created under the Ottawa Charter for health promotion," he said.

The project has been developing for the past 12 months through the efforts of Queensland Health's Craig Osborne, Nick Whittle and Richard.

Darling Downs Population Health Unit collaborated with the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation, local health services, local government and non-government organisations in the region to develop the Healthy Communities project proposal.

The project has received Connecting Healthcare in Communities (CHIC) funding through the Primary Health Care Partnership Council. Southern Downs will receive \$43,000, Goondiwindi \$35,000 and Western Downs \$43,000.

The Goondiwindi 2020 Forum was held earlier this year to plan for the future liveability of the southern Darling Downs community.

Richard said the funding would be used on practical strategies for healthy lifestyles and community development identified through the forum, in conjunction with the local Goondiwindi Regional Council. He said the Healthy Communities project involved partnerships with government and non-government organisations, predominately local councils.

Richard said the project would prioritise infrastructure development and creation of environments supporting active and engaged communities.

Gestational diabetes aid available

A series of educational resources for patients and health care workers to assist in caring for women diagnosed with diabetes during their pregnancy has been launched by Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

The two initiatives, developed as part of the hospital's Diabetes in Pregnancy Innovation Project, aims to achieve a coordinated approach for the management of diabetes in pregnancy and improve outcomes for women and their babies.

The Education Package was designed for midwives and other health professionals to up-skill in the management of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM).

The bright coloured package includes an activity book, CD and

self-assessment section.

Alison Barry, Statewide Diabetes in Pregnancy Innovation Project coordinator, said the educational package covered all aspects of the management of GDM.

"Midwives and other health professionals in metropolitan, regional and rural Queensland will gain valuable knowledge from this resource," she said.

Alison said the patient-focused brochures and fact sheets were developed for women with GDM and included What is Gestational Diabetes?; Commencing Insulin Therapy; Post-natal Advice and Healthy Eating.

She said the resources would give Queensland women up-to-date and accurate information.

"The brochures and fact sheets have been developed so readers fully understand this condition," she said.

"The information focuses on their current pregnancy, future pregnancies and general health for the future."

The educational tools were developed by a team of health professionals across the state – midwives, dietitians, endocrinologists, diabetes educators and obstetricians. The project includes a pilot midwife-led clinic for women with Gestational Diabetes in metropolitan and regional Queensland; and a Telehealth Diabetes in Pregnancy clinic (RBWH), originally servicing the Central Area Health Service and now covering wider Queensland.

Keep Cherbourg safe

A five-year collaborative program of injury prevention and safety promotion is being established in the Cherbourg community, with a \$700,000 grant from Health Promotion Queensland.

The program is being organised through the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, the University of Southern Queensland's Centre for Rural and Remote Area Health, Queensland Health's Darling Downs Population Health Unit and Health Promotion Queensland.

Andrew Beckett, Project Coordinator, said the Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council was a key driver of the project, with its Mayor Sam Murray and Deputy Chief Executive Officer Ross Higgins active reference group members.

Andrew said the program's first planning day in April was facilitated by Selwyn Button, Director of Queensland Health's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Unit.

The reference group included

Elders representatives, Barambah Regional Medical Service, Cherbourg Community Health, Cherbourg Hospital, Cherbourg State Primary School, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, Nurunderi TAFE, Cherbourg Respite, Department of Community Services, Wunjuada Rehabilitation Centre, Darling Downs Population Health Unit and the University of Southern Queensland's Centre for Rural and Remote Area Health.

Andrew said the group discussed community's issues and decided major focus for the project could be grouped under categories linked to children, environmental health, road safety, housing, mental health, and alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

He said available literature would be reviewed under each category, with the group working closely with the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit on data collection needs.

Toowoomba turns 150

More than 200 present, past and retired staff of Toowoomba Hospital helped celebrate the hospital's 150th birthday last month at a gala dinner, part of a series of celebratory events held from June 22-26.

The special events included a re-enactment of 19th century hospital care at the hospital's original site (Russell Street, Toowoomba), a series of historical lectures, historical walks and a hospital history display.

Aiden Cook, Toowoomba Hospital Acting Executive Director,

said the gala dinner reunited old friends, ignited many memories and brought years of experience together in the one room.

"Almost everyone in our community would have some connection to this hospital – having been born here, been treated as a patient, worked as a staff member or have a family member who does," he said.

"This was our night to honour Toowoomba Hospital's long and proud history. This really was a once-in-a-lifetime event," he said.

Network supports staff

A network to provide support and information to attract and recruit Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders and South Seas Islander staff has been launched by Queensland Health.

The network was launched on 16 June, in conjunction with a new website, and is designed to keep members up to date with special events, training programs and professional development opportunities.

In launching the network, Director-General Michael Reid said there were about 146,429 Indigenous people in Queensland, the majority of them living in or having grown up in remote communities in the north and north-west of the state.

"The Queensland Government acknowledges that their living standards, quality of life, opportunities and expectations in general are vastly different to the comfort levels enjoyed by a majority of non-Indigenous Australians," he said.

"To help redress this situation, Queensland Health has made the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a priority outcome, and is committed to closing the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation.

"One of the major tools to help us achieve this outcome is the department's new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network. The long-term aim of the network is attract Indigenous people, including those of South Sea Islander descent, to work for Queensland Health and retain them so they can contribute to the goal of improved health outcomes

in the community.

"This network is designed for Indigenous staff to share relevant health information, and also to be a support network for them.

"The network will build and share knowledge, provide a central point for promoting training and development opportunities, and strengthen links between all health services districts."

Mr Reid said the network had been open for just over a month and already had more than 80 members represented from all over the state with very diverse professional backgrounds.

He said the network would let members contribute and talk to each other through:

- bi-monthly statewide video meetings teleconferenced from the Queensland Health headquarters in Brisbane
- forums developed especially for network members to talk to each other anywhere across the state (there had been more than 200 hits already since this facility went live)
- the network website.

Mr Reid said there were endless opportunities for network members to gain the latest insights into programs, project and particular activities that had special relevance for them, and share in success stories of colleagues as the gap is closed within governments and the community in general.

He said members were asked to share relevant health and related information to the network.

"We are looking at developing a statewide mentoring program to help network members to be strategic in their approach to planing careers and to achieve professional goals," he said.



Atherton Hospital as it was in about 1917... and (below) the present hospital.

Atherton celebrates its centenary

A fashion parade of nursing uniforms through the ages is a feature of celebrations being held next month to mark the centenary of Atherton Hospital.

The celebrations, being organised by midwife Linda Weyman, enrolled nurse Joanne Nott and a committee of volunteers, will include a memorial dinner on August 15, followed by a historical open day in the Atherton showgrounds.

Linda said the open day would include displays from various hospital units, some historical displays and other bits and pieces of memorabilia, as well as stalls by various service clubs and organisations.

"Atherton Hospital always has been regarded as a community hospital and we're hoping the community will get into the spirit of the celebrations and get behind the various events and contribute their support and memorabilia," she said.

Atherton Hospital opened its doors to its first patients in September 1909 after a campaign of several years by local residents to have a hospital built in the town.

By that time, hospitals already had been established at Cairns (1878), Herberton (1883) and Mareeba (1894).

The campaign for a hospital at Atherton began in 1897, with an application by local residents to the Land Commission to set aside a block of land for hospital purposes.

In 1908, a public meeting was held to consider establishing a hospital, a committee of local residents was then formed to pursue the matter and fundraising began in earnest.

Construction began in January 1909 and was completed by September that year at a total cost of 2213 pounds, 19 shilling and threepence, all subscribed by



the local community and businesses.

The first patients were accepted on September 15, 1909, with Dr H.C.C. Shaw as the first Medical Superintendent and Nurse Hazel McKie as the first Matron.

Since then, Atherton Hospital has undergone a number of expansions, renovations and redevelopments, with the latest refurbishment having been carried out in two stages between April 2004 and March 2006 at a total cost of \$3.75 million.

The hospital now is a 57-bed facility offering a wide variety of services, including dialysis, birthing, chemotherapy, endoscopy and surgery.

Atherton Hospital continued to be supported entirely by the local community until 1926, when the hospital board agreed to be reconstituted with State Government representatives to be included in the new membership.

This allowed Atherton Hospital to receive a State Government subsidy of 60 per cent of its annual operating costs – with the local government authority being responsible for the remainder.

Ann Aitken, Atherton Hospital Director of Nursing, said almost

every aspect of nursing and the health care profession in general had changed since 1909.

"For instance, one of the early matrons at Atherton Hospital came to the hospital from Cooktown, where she had been taught nursing by her mother," Ann said.

"Of course, today, all new registered nurses are expected to have a university degree and, even after that, their career in nursing basically is one of lifelong, continuing education.

"They have access to a vast range of additional compulsory and elective programs designed to upgrade or maintain their skills or allow them to specialise in various fields.

"But there is one core pillar of the profession that has remained unchanged since the days of Florence Nightingale in the mid-19th century – and that's caring for people who need care.

"When you put aside all the science and technology available today, it still comes down to that one vital theme – caring for people – and that's something the nurses of 1909 would recognise in the nursing profession today despite all the vast changes that have occurred since then."

infomatters

Tackling threat of bowel cancer

Tackle Bowel Cancer Before It Tackles You! – urging men to take part in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program – was the title of a promotion launched to coincide with Men's Health Week on 14–21 June.

A giant inflatable Super Colon on display in Queen's Park Brisbane showed the progression from healthy bowel tissue, to polyps and how they can result in cancer.

The Super Colon is a major attraction in Queensland Health's campaign to get more men and women undergo screening for bowel cancer.

Jennifer Muller, Senior Director of Queensland Health's Cancer Screening Services Branch, said that while bowel cancer could affect anyone, men were more at risk of the disease. She said they were generally less likely to be proactive about the prevention and early detection of bowel cancer.

"In Queensland one in every 10 men will develop bowel cancer before the age of 85. Many of these cancers could have been prevented through a healthy lifestyle or early detection of polyps," she said.

Bowel cancer can develop without any obvious symptoms. Screening for bowel cancer involves completing a test before any obvious symptoms of bowel cancer develop.

Like most Aussie blokes, Ian



Beth Wardle, clinical nurse consultant, Bowel Cancer Screening Program (right), shows Maureen and Geoff Ivison through the Super Colon.

'Bluey' Bromley from Cooktown spends a lot of his spare time fishing. The thought of making time for screening for bowel cancer had never entered his mind until he received the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program's free screening test in the post.

One year on, Bluey, now 66, is thankful he did make the time to complete the test, which revealed a positive result, requiring further investigation.

Much to Bluey's surprise, pre-cancerous cells were detected at colonoscopy.

"Who knows what could have happened if I didn't take the test", Bluey said.

Bluey's advice to all men and women eligible for the Program is not to be embarrassed and do the

test, as it could save their life.

Bluey can now relax knowing that he has even more time to focus his energy on tackling the local barra.

"The fact that the disease can be present without symptoms makes participating in screening even more important," Jennifer said.

As well as screening, there are also general lifestyle measures people can put in place to reduce their risk of developing bowel cancer.

These include maintaining a healthy body weight through healthy eating and regular physical activity, limiting alcohol consumption and not smoking.

For more information: phone 1300 766 927 or web <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/bowelcancer>

Right information at the right time

The successful May launch of the Queensland Health Policy Records Management for Administrative, Clinical and Functional Records has further enhanced Queensland Health's strong commitment to record keeping.

Nataliya Johnston, Senior Records Officer, said managing information was an increasingly important function for Queensland Health.

"Informed decision making requires staff be given access to the right information, at the right

time," she said.

"The Strategic Records Management Team and Clinical Information Management are available to help Queensland Health staff increase their records management knowledge and skills.

"Our capacity to manage government information appropriately, directly impacts on the success of Queensland Health business objectives and goals.

"For administrative and functional records management advice, further information and

the Queensland Health records management policy, visit <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/bpsu/content/records.htm> or e-mail SRMT_Help@health.qld.gov.au

"For clinical records management advice visit <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/iib/html/clinical.htm> or e-mail CIM@health.qld.gov.au"

Contact: Julie Quinn, Strategic Records Management Team, phone 3239 0928 or Joanne Buckland, Clinical Information Management, 3167 1528.

diary

JULY

- 1-31** JulEYE 2009
The Eye Foundation
Phone: (02) 8394 5220
- 5-12** NAIDOC Week
National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee
Phone: 1800 079 098
- 12-18** National Diabetes Week
Diabetes Australia- Queensland
Phone: 1300 136 588
- 18-31** Leukaemia Doorknock Appeal
Leukaemia Foundation
Phone: 1800 620 420

Updated on-line version on www.health.qld.gov.au
(under Health Information/Events)

Study grants available

Study awards are available from Cancer Council Queensland for young Queenslanders who have been affected by cancer.

The Seize the Day Study Awards are financial grants offered to Queenslanders aged between 16 and 21 who have been diagnosed with cancer or have had an immediate family member diagnosed with cancer.

Cancer Council Queensland will this year award \$50,000 in the form of study grants to young people affected by cancer.

Applicants must be planning to undertake or continue post-secondary school education at univer-

sity, TAFE, tertiary college or vocational training centre.

The funding grants help with the cost of textbooks, stationery, fees, transport and accommodation expenses incurred during post-secondary education and training.

Juliana Buys, General Manager of Community Services at the Cancer Council, said the awards program acknowledged the courage of young people coping with cancer and encouraged them to look to the future with hope.

She said the awards aimed to foster the personal growth and development of young people coping with cancer in Queensland.



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

Scheduled services Mobile Services

Rockhampton: early July, Alpha; early to mid July, Winton; mid to late July, Longreach.

Toowoomba: early to mid July, Oakey.

Relocatable Services

Cairns: early July, Croydon, Mornington Island; mid July, Karumba, Normanton; late July, Doomadgee, Burketown, Georgetown.

Gold Coast: early to late July, Robina.

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.

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.