

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until 6.30am

8 March 2016

Health service celebrates International Women's Day – and the roles of 80 per cent of its workforce

With a workforce of 80 per cent women, the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service (DDHHS) celebrated International Women's Day today.

Several sites from across the health service joined in by video conference to a special breakfast at Mt Lofty Heights nursing home to acknowledge the day.

Executive Director Allied Health and MC for event Annette Scott said it was important to mark International Women's Day and reflect on the important roles women play in delivering healthcare to communities across the Darling Downs and South Burnett.

"Across the health service, we employ more than four thousand women, with four out of five workers female," she said.

"If you combine the years of service of all our female staff, it amounts to more than 45,000 years – an amazing amount of knowledge and skills.

"We are proud that women provide leadership at the highest levels of our health service - four of our nine Board members and more than half of the executive team are women."

Ms Scott said these figures gave just a small insight to the value of women in our workforce in terms of the experience in delivering healthcare, however it went further.

"Each day in 2015 on average across the health service, we provided more than 960 episodes of care to women and girls," she said.

"The total number of female patients we treated last year was more than 90,000, so the reach of our services extends a long way.

"It's easy to see how we can demonstrate how we, as a hospital and health service, exhibit the Queensland International Women's Day theme: Good for her. Great for us. When women achieve, Queensland succeeds."

Part of the DDHHS celebration was to honour two special female members of the health service team who, later this year, will celebrate 50 years of working in the Queensland public health sector.

"It is a privilege to recognise Alison Dangerfield, an enrolled nurse who completed her training at Miles and has worked there ever since, some 50 years in September," Ms Scott said.

“It was our chance to thank Alison for all the care she has given to patients and the Western Downs community over this time, recognising such an amazing milestone.”

Barb Bishop, a nursing director at Toowoomba’s Baillie Henderson Hospital, was also recognised.

“Barb is due to celebrate five decades of service in November after starting her training at Baillie Henderson in 1966 and first registering as a mental health nurse in 1970,” Ms Scott said.

“Barb says she has always loved her job, the people and the place – so much so, she has no intentions of retiring.

“Our collective hats go off to Barb for providing care and support to mental health patients and the clinical teams at Baillie Henderson over so many years.”

Toowoomba Region councillor Sue Englart was guest speaker at the International Women’s Day event and provided some insights to what it was like as a woman to work in the 1960s.

The Toowoomba Hospital Foundation supported the event.

Background on International Women’s Day (IWD)

The first IWD was held on 19 March 1911, when more than a million European women and men rallied for the right of women to vote, work and hold public office.

The inspiration came from a New York march against poor working conditions and child labour, held in 1908. In 1910, an international conference of socialist women voted to hold a yearly International Women’s Day.

The date became fixed as 8 March in 1917, in commemoration of a strike by Russian women involved in the peace movement. Their action led to the abdication of the Czar, and the winning of the right for women to vote.

Peace, human rights, and social, economic and political issues have therefore always been an important focus of International Women’s Day. The first International Women’s Day in Australia was held on 25 March 1928. From its inception IWD has stood for equality between men and women.

The United Nations officially recognised IWD in 1975 and declared that it be celebrated on 8 March.

The International Women’s Day colours also have historical roots. The 1908 demonstration in New York was organised by the newly formed Women’s Social and Political Union. The marchers wore white, purple and green as their political colours. Symbolically, white represented purity, purple was for dignity and self-respect, and green stood for hope and new life.

Ends

MEDIA: Contact Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service Media Team 4699 8052, 0417 795 568 or DDHHS_media@health.qld.gov.au