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Anaesthesia isn’t sleep – it’s so much deeper

When most people think of anaesthesia, they think of going to sleep.

But being under anaesthesia is very different from having a snooze. Which is why this National Anaesthesia Day (16 October), the theme is ‘Anaesthesia isn’t sleep. It’s so much deeper’.

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service Specialist Anaesthetist Dr Fiona Barron said when a patient was under general anaesthesia, they were in a carefully monitored state of unconsciousness that was adjusted according to their needs.

“Anaesthetists are qualified doctors who have undergone a minimum of 10 years post graduate training to become specialists,” Dr Barron said.

“General Anaesthesia is a finely controlled safe state of reversible unconsciousness, limiting memory formation and pain sensations. Anaesthetists monitor your brain, breathing, heart rate, blood pressure and circulation, throughout.

“Anaesthetists keep the patient safe and comfortable during surgery and after the operation, as they recover,” she said.

“Anaesthetists provide many different and important roles within the hospital setting. Their clinical roles extend far beyond local, regional or general Anaesthesia provision for patients undergoing a procedure. The services Anaesthetists provide also include provision of pain relief in labouring women, attending to critically ill patients in emergency departments, provision of safe sedation and being part of the hospital wide emergency response team.”

Dr Barron said anaesthetists also educated medical students, junior doctors and nursing staff through a range of teaching programs, and were actively involved in quality reviews and processes.

“Outside of the local health service setting they also contribute to medical care on missions to low resource areas or assist Australian defence forces,” she said.

“The Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) anaesthetic department has over 40 specialists and 20 doctors training to be specialists. Care is provided for patients in Nambour General Hospital, Caloundra Health Service and Gympie Hospital as well as Sunshine Coast University Hospital.”

To help increase public awareness on the important role anaesthesia plays in our health service, the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service anaesthesia team is holding a
display in the main reception of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital for National Anaesthesia Day on October 16.

Staff will be holding a series of information and demonstration sessions surrounding anaesthesia.

ENDS

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