Message from the Chief Executive

I was proud to help officially open Thursday Island Hospital’s new mortuary alongside Kaurareg Traditional Owners Elder Wigness Seriat and Elder Joseph Wasaga at a ceremony on 8 April.

The Kaurareg people are the Traditional Custodians of the land and retain a strong spiritual connection to it, so it is fitting that Elder Seriat and Elder Wasaga are involved in the long awaited opening of this facility.

The $997,000 mortuary is located on the Thursday Island Hospital precinct, adjacent but separate to the Community Wellness Centre.

The new mortuary was built in direct response to community concerns raised during 2013 about the original decision to locate a morgue within the new Community Wellness Centre.

Thanks to all the staff and community who were involved in the extensive consultation during 2014 with traditional owners, community advocates, the funeral director on Thursday Island and local councils in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area regions to ensure the new facility was entirely culturally appropriate.

Regards

Jill

Jill Newland
Health Service Chief Executive

Above: The official party at the opening of the Thursday Island mortuary.

Above: Dr Jill Newland, Health Service Chief Executive

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**Summary of Board Meeting**

The Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board met in Cairns on Thursday 17 March 2016. The following items were among those discussed:

- An infrastructure projects blitz will be undertaken over a 12 month period, to catch up on Backlog Maintenance Remediation Program (BMRP) projects across the HHS.
- Results from a survey undertaken by RDAQ/AMAQ on medical services across Cape York were discussed at length.
- The health worker workforce training schedule for 2016 to 2018 between TCHHS, Primary Health Network and TAFE North is underway.
- Torres and Cape HHS will participate as a trial site for the Australian Government Initiative “My Health Record” during 2016.

The next Board meeting will be held in Weipa on 21 April 2016.

Please email any questions to TCHHS-Board-Chair@health.qld.gov.au

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**Saibai Elders celebrate Closing the Gap Day**

*Above:* The team from the Saibai Island Project hosted a healthy community BBQ for Closing the Gap Day in March. The team were honoured to have the event attended by Saibai Island elders. The Saibai Project is part of the Torres Strait Health Protection Strategy to enhance primary health care services on Saibai Island.
Mozzie education and Mr Germ visit Saibai

The Environmental team, Ursula Sabatino, Director Public Health, and Harold Matthews, Vector Control Officer, visited Saibai Island in February to conduct education on hand washing and mosquito-borne diseases. The teams met with over 100 students and talked about:

- Mosquito control - cleaning up yards and tipping out anything that may hold water.
- Mosquito breeding cycles.
- Transmission of mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue.
- Wearing repellent and using mosquito coils with adult supervision.

The team also showed Saibai Island students how germs are spread using the Mr Germ Glitter Bug. They showed the children their hands under the ‘magic’ light and then the children were shown how to correctly wash their hands counting to 10. They then put their hands back under the magic light to see if they washed all the germs off properly.

Telehealth Pharmacist helps reduce medication errors

Telehealth Pharmacist, Chris Braithwaite provides pharmacy support through Telehealth to clinics in the southern sector.

“More than 230,000 people are hospitalised by medication-related problems every year and telepharmacy is a way to reduce this risk in our health service,” said Chris.

“I provide medication reviews via videoconference providing individualised, culturally appropriate medicine education to outpatients who have been identified by local clinicians to have complex or extensive medicine regimes or have recently been discharged from hospital,” said Chris.

The major aims of the project are to ensure quality and safe use of medicines and to enhance correct use of medicines by communicating with both prescribers and the patients themselves.

At the end of each consult, I give the prescriber a report detailing any findings/recommendations around the patient’s medications and the patient will get a personalised, culturally appropriate medicines list to enhance their understanding of what they are taking.

Chris provides the service at Weipa Hospital every Thursday for all communities across the Southern Sector (Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw, Mapoon, Napranum, Aurukun, Laura, Hope Vale, Wujal Wujal, Lockhart River and Coen).

Referrals for patients can be done by an MO, RN or an allied health professional via chris.braithwaite@health.qld.gov.au or phone 0466 431 184.

Please contact Chris to find out how to get the service going in your clinic.
Sexual health clinics promoting services

Sexual health clinics are more important than ever in the light of an ongoing syphilis outbreak across northern Australia. Staff are encouraged to promote sexual health clinics to their patients and communities and encourage more testing. Clinic services include:

- STI screening
- Contraception
- Emergency contraception
- Pap smear screening
- HPV & HBV vaccination
- Condoms and lube
- Pregnancy advice


New speech pathologist for Eastern Cape

ABOVE: Welcome to Emily Hetherington, Snr Speech Pathologist based at Cooktown (right), pictured with colleagues Lauren Reardon, Snr Speech Pathologist (Torres and NPA) (centre) and Bernadette Cantral Snr Speech Pathologist, based in Weipa.

Promoting No Smoking on Saibai

Above from left: Alice Pearson (Renal Health Worker), Rotona Martin (Administration Officer, Saibai Project), Cecileah Warusam (Generalist Health Worker, Saibai Project), Aggie Hankin (Advanced Health Worker, Saibai Project).

Above: Men’s, Women’s and Sexual Health clinics are now running in Weipa (Mondays and Tuesdays) and in Napranum (Wednesdays and Thursdays). Pictured are Alexandra Beasley, Patrick Wasiu, Jess Stecko and Melora Pearson.

Above: Les Unwin and Sarah Furness run the Men’s, Women’s and Sexual Health Health Clinic at Bamaga Hospital. Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm or ring 4090 4235. They are next to the dental unit at the north wing of the Hospital.

MEDICINE NAMES ARE CHANGING

From April 2016, some medicine names will change to align with names used internationally.
EDIS and HBCIS Training

Above from left: Leeandra Wone, Kodee Nobbs, Megan Baxter and Sharron Fahey

Kodee Nobbs (Business Practice Improvement Officer) trained 22 staff in EDIS (Emergency Department Information System) and HBCIS over five days recently.

All sessions included a presentation and then a hands-on scenario-based activity on the computers.

Topics covered EDIS simplified, using only 4 screens (tracking, daily list, register & clinical) HBCIS, doing a registration - adding new and updating existing patients, and printing labels.

‘Information support’ visits

Above: The PHCISS team: Wendy Brand, Paula Thomason (Paula Lush), Richard Olearczyk and David Woodman.

The Primary Health Care Information Systems and Support (PHCISS) team provides strategic advice to facilities for information management and Information and Communications Technology.

They will be visiting a number of clinic locations around the southern sector and key sites within the Torres Strait in the next month.

The team has extensive knowledge and a broad understanding of Queensland’s Hospital and Health Services business, information and reporting needs to support the effective delivery of primary and community health care services.

Visits will include talking to staff about:

• Improving data quality in Ferret for reporting and in preparation for future data migration to new systems
• Mapping work information and processes to identify transition opportunities for work practices
• Training staff in Ferret and helping them make the most of the demographic and clinical data available

Visit schedule

12-14 April: Weipa, Napranum and Mapoon
21 April: Lockhart River
26 April: Aurukun
5 May: Coen
9-13 May: Cooktown, Hopevale, Laura and Wujal Wujal
17-20 May: Bamaga, Injinoo, New Mapoon, Seisla, Umagico
Late May/Early June: Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama

Above: The Public Health Unit (South) has developed a new Scabies poster using specially developed illustrations. The posters have been sent to all facilities in the southern sector. If you’d like to get a copy of the poster, ring 4226 3020.

Steps to clear scabies!

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Step 6

Now wash off the cream

• The cream needs to be on the skin for about 8 hours to kill the scabies mite.
• The skin may stay itchy for the next week. Please speak with the clinic staff if it doesn’t settle.

Get rid of the scabies in the house

• In the morning wash sheets, clothes and towels in hot water.
• Hang washing in sun all day (8 hours)
• Put mattresses in the sun, keep them off the ground and flip them over after a few hours.

Repeat after 1 week

In one week do all these steps again.

Treat everyone and visitors in the house and do the washing and put the mattresses in the sun.

If you or your children have sore or itchy skin see the staff at the clinic, you may need scabies medicine.
A dengue fever outbreak is continuing in the Torres Strait with 16 cases so far.
Torres Strait staff and residents are encouraged to spread the word about the importance of letting dengue teams indoors to spray and kill mosquitoes.
Residents can also use mosquito repellent and use long-acting ‘surface’ or ‘cockroach’ insecticide spray in places around the home where mosquitoes can hide.
Tropical Public Health Services (Cairns) Director Dr Richard Gair said mosquito control was continuing across the region.
“Teams have finished spraying on Darnley, Badu and Mer,” Dr Gair said, “and continue on Thursday Island, Horn Island, as well as the St Paul’s and Kubin communities on Moa.”
“Torres Strait residents also need to do their part and take action to get rid of mosquito breeding sites on their properties. Some mosquitoes lay their eggs in containers around the home.
Tip out any water in things like plastic containers, tarpaulins or buckets.
Store anything that can hold water undercover or in a dry place, including work equipment, surplus materials or trailers, and keep bins covered.
Throw out any rubbish lying around like unused or empty containers, tyres, additional materials and keep worksites tidy
See a video guide for spraying your home at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVoahCf6j5E

Dengue fever outbreak in Torres Strait

Flu vaccine best protection from flu

Vaccination is the most effective method of preventing influenza!
Groups most at risk of being severely impacted by flu can receive a free vaccine. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged between six months and five years, and 15 years and older. Also, people over the age of 65, pregnant women and those with medical conditions which increase their risk to severe influenza.
Torres and Cape HHS staff are also offered a free flu vaccine.
For more information please contact Lyndall Finn CNC Infection Prevention and Control (South) on 0457 710 746 and Joanne Campbell CNC Infection Prevention and Control (North) on 0438 611 678.

Dengue symptoms
People usually experience a combination of symptoms including:
• sudden fever and extreme tiredness
• intense headache (especially behind the eyes)
• muscle and joint pain
• loss of appetite
• vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain
• a metallic taste in the mouth
• red or macular (small, flat red spots) rash occurs in half of cases
• minor bleeding from nose and gums.
See your clinic if you display any symptoms.
Staff must notify the Tropical Public Health Unit immediately on clinician suspicion of dengue at 4226 5555 or call Kristen Ellis, Public Health Nurse (North), on 40306827/0429891876.
Interferon-free therapies can now cure hepatitis C in over 90 per cent of cases, with shorter treatment durations and far fewer side-effects than previous therapies.

If your service needs some assistance in developing pathways for clients to access treatment in your community – then please contact Rhondda Lewis, Viral Hepatitis Health Practitioner at Cairns Sexual Health via email rhondda.lewis@health.qld.gov.au or phone 4226 4761.

“New hepatitis C treatments can now be prescribed by primary care practitioners (in consultation with a specialist), and in a variety of medical settings including allied health, general practice and Aboriginal Medical Services, and there are opportunities to up-skill and to begin prescribing,” said Rhondda.

“It is vital that healthcare professionals are proactive and offer people living with the hepatitis C virus a liver check-up to assess liver damage and discuss treatment options,” she said.

There has never been a better time to treat and cure hepatitis C. Talk to Rhondda about how this new treatment can help your patients.


Kate graduates with support from colleagues

Congratulations to Kate Rutherford who has just graduated as a Social Worker. Kate is acting in the Child and Family Advocacy role in the Family Health Unit in Weipa.

Kate has been studying externally, part-time with JCU for 8 years and has worked in administrative roles with Queensland Health in Weipa, Napranum and Mapoon.

Kate said that her colleagues were very supportive of her studies.

“While I want to thank my close family, I also want to thank my ‘work family’ for their support over the better part of a decade,” said Kate.

“Thank you to the staff who would pass me academic journals with articles relevant to my studies,” she said.

“Thank you to a certain Health Promotion Officer who looked over my assignment on community engagement.

“Thank you to the nursing staff for always looking out for me. Thank you to a certain MO and his wife who let me babysit for them while I undertook my last (17 week) placement, and thank you to the crew at the Napranum Clinic as you put up with the brunt of my ‘stressed out, no sleep, caffeine overload, melt down, assignment due tomorrow’ type of days and kept me motivated and inspired.

“Thank you to all my colleagues for being my extended support network during my academic journey.”

Well done Kate!
Healing in Erub and Mer: Family Days

The Community Healing Project is a 12 month healing response to support families and communities impacted by the tragic loss of eight children in Cairns in late 2014.

The Community Healing Project consists of teams that work out of the Manoora Community Centre in Cairns and Mental Health & ATODS in NPA and Torres Strait.

As part of the healing and trauma recovery, these teams have been conducting family days at Cairns, Thursday Island, Yorke Island (Masig), Bamaga, Darnley Island (Erub) and Murray Island (Mer). These days honour the children, and all children, and the importance of family and community.

Lucy Stephen and Sainty Kaigey (Eastern Cluster Coordinator - Mer) worked really hard in the months before the Meriba Omasker Gizem Family Day in Erub & Mer Family Day, planning and meeting with families and community members and coordinating partner agencies in preparation for the family days. They were supported by Michael White (Project Coordinator - Red Cross), (Principal Project Officer - Red Cross), Libby Camey, Kezia Vonarx (Senior Project Officer) and Eric Toby.

Other Torres and Cape HHS staff involved were Marsat Ketchell (Program Manager, Social & Emotional Wellbeing/ATODS), accompanied by Bobby Kaigey and Maria Tapim (S&EW Eastern Support Team). They spent hours painting a banner for each location with the eight rays of sunshine to represent the eight children and eight “Waumer” (red bill) frigate birds (totem for the eight children). An extra ray of sunshine and “Serar” (seagull) in memory of the sad loss of the child in late 2015 was incorporated into the Banner for Mer.

Above from left: Arriving at Erub. Bobby Kaigey, Libby Camey, Eric Toby, Maria Tapim and Lucy Stephen.

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Above from left: Arriving at Erub. Bobby Kaigey, Libby Camey, Eric Toby, Maria Tapim and Lucy Stephen.

Above from left: Bobby Kaigey, Marsat Ketchell and Maria Tapim painting the banner.

generously handmade and sent up “Care Bears” (trauma teddies) from Cairns that were given out to children.

Along with activities and stalls, the families in Erub led a parade with the banner that the families painted and Island songs to a family house for a touching candle vigil. The families in Mer attended the grave of the small boy and released eight red balloons and one blue balloon.

A dhari was made by Joshua Thaiday from Erub. Joshua and Erub elder Mrs Colina Sailor presented the dhari to Michael White and asked that it be taken back to Cairns to be placed at the Manoora Community Centre.

The Family Days gave families and communities the opportunity to come together to remember the children, value our children and to unite in healing as we continue into the next phase in our journey to healing.

The Community Healing Project and the Eastern Island Teams would like to say Au Esoau and Koeyma Esso to all of the services, businesses and families for their consideration and support for our Communities and for us all to be at peace for Meriba Omasker Gizem.
Midwives and child health staff train in PEDS and ASQ3

In March a number of very experienced Child Health Professionals in the Torres and Cape HHS were trained in PEDS (Parents Evaluation of Development Status) and ASQ3 (Ages & Stages Questionnaire).

These tools have been recommended and researched extensively by the Child Development Sub Network, State-wide Child and Youth Clinical Network (SCYCN).

The training was co-facilitated by Jenny Morton (Nurse Educator Cunningham Centre) and Jenny Aspinall (Family Health CNC TCHHS).

“As Midwifery and Child Health Professionals we are all aware that these screening tools are considered best practice state-wide and are being adopted by all HHS across the state, including TCHHS,” said Jenny.

Over the day and a half training sessions there were many robust conversations around the two tools as the group worked together to gain a better understanding of its use and how to roll out the tools with parents and communities.

The workshop was well received and the evaluation responses were positive. The group looks forward to using the tools in their everyday work.

Jenny Aspinall
Family Health CNC 40823612

Calendar of culturally significant days

26 May, National Sorry Day
National Sorry Day, held on 26 May, is held to honour the Stolen Generations.

27 May, Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum
In 1967 over 90% of Australians voted in a Referendum to remove clauses from the Australian Constitution which discriminated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

27 May–3 June, National Reconciliation Week
National Reconciliation Week celebrates the rich culture and history of the First Australians.

3 June, Mabo Day
Mabo Day, held on 3 June, marks the anniversary of the High Court’s historic decision on native title. The day celebrates Eddie Koiki Mabo whose name is synonymous with the decision.

1 July, Coming of the Light
Coming of the Light, held on 1 July, marks the day when the London Missionary Society arrived in the Torres Strait for the first time. Religious and cultural ceremonies are held.

6–11 July, National NAIDOC Week
National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee week is observed to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

4 August, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
This day highlights significant concerns or hope for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

9 August, International Day of the World’s Indigenous People
International Day of the World’s Indigenous People, held on 9 August, is observed to protect and promote the rights of Indigenous peoples.

13 September, Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

Submissions

Please email submissions to: TCHHS-COMMS-MEDIA@health.qld.gov.au
Photos of people need to be accompanied by a signed photo consent form
Phone: Heather Robertson: 4226 5689

The Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service respectfully acknowledges the Traditional and Historical Owners, past and present, within the lands in which we work.