Congratulations to our two finalists in the Queensland Health Awards for Excellence.

Peter McCormack’s team, the Rural and Remote Clinical Support Unit (RRCSU), were finalists for ‘Customer Focus’. The RRCSU does exemplary work with the production of the Primary Clinical Care Manual, the Chronic Conditions Manual, PARROT training, Credentialing, and Medical Advice and Support.

Also congratulations to Deirdre Murphy (Cooktown Hospital Clinical Midwifery Consultant) who was nominated by Fiona Garrett (pictured) for the ‘Excellence in Leadership’ category. Deirdre was highly commended in her category for her leadership and dedication in helping build the Cooktown Cluster Midwifery Group Practice.

We only put forward two nominations for the Excellence Awards and both were finalists. This is a testament to the quality of services and staff that we have in our HHS.

As the end of the year draws to a close, I would like to thank all staff for your contribution to improving health services in our region. I wish you all a safe and relaxing Christmas break and all the best for a Happy New Year.

Regards

Jill

Jill Newland
Health Service Chief Executive
Summary of Board Meeting

The Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board met in Cairns on 9 December which was attended by some members of the Executive Management Team (EMT) to discuss the current budget. The following are some of the topics discussed:

• The Board endorsed the Internal Audit Charter. The new internal auditor started testing last month.
• A regular monthly report was provided on current infrastructure projects, as well as an update on the backlog maintenance remediation program which is due to be completed by mid-2016.
• The Pharmacy Services Review and the quarterly NQ Continuous Quality Improvement Program Status Report were noted by the Board.
• An improvement in the collection of Own Source Revenue and an increase in compliance of pathology ordering in the North was reported and applauded.
• The next Board meeting will be held in Cairns on 28 January 2016. The Board together with the EMT will hold a Strategic Planning Day on 29 January 2016.

A recruitment process for two new Board members was completed last week when the Government In Council announced the appointment of:

Linda McLachlan is a Traditional Owner with connections to Cape York and Gulf communities and has a background in nursing. Linda is currently the Indigenous Liaison Officer with Rio Tinto and previous to that was Team Leader for Cape York Public Health Unit in Cape York District Health Service. Linda lives in Weipa.

Kaz Price lives in Cooktown and has been involved in community and regional-based roles including management of regional projects in that town for the past 12 years. She is currently Director of the Cooktown District Community Centre and is a Councillor with Cook Shire Council with portfolios across community, arts, audit and education. Kaz previously worked for Cape York Hospital and Health Service as manager of the Learning and Development Unit.

Current Board members Horace Baira and Brian Woods have been reappointed for a further 2.5 years. These appointments now bring the number of Board members to nine.

As this is the last Board update for the year the Board members extend their wishes for a relaxing and safe festive season to all TCHHS staff.

News from the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board

Seated from left: Ms Tracey Jia, Mr Bob McCarthy (Chair), Dr Ruth Stewart and Councillor Horace Baira.
Standing from left: Mr Greg Edwards, Councillor Fraser (Ted) Nai and Mr Brian Woods.

Above: New Board Member, Linda McLachlan.
Above: New Board Member, Kaz Price.

Please email any questions on the Board Summaries or the Board to TCHHS-Board-Chair@health.qld.gov.au
More than $1 Million for sexual health

Above: Nancy Gamia Lui (left) and Shona Lynch at World AIDS Day in Cairns.

Weipa Hospital, Napranum Primary Health Care Centre and the Cairns office were among facilities that coloured their foyers in red as part of awareness for HIV week and World AIDS Day on 1 December.

“We have high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) within our communities and people with STIs are at greater risk of catching HIV/AIDS” said Jess Chenery, Acting CNC, Mens and Womens Sexual Health Unit.

“Rates of HIV within Indigenous communities are rising and the community needs information and education about the risks.”

“It is also important that we do more testing in communities,” said Jess.

Jess said the good news is new treatments for HIV mean HIV/AIDS doesn't have to be fatal.

“HIV can now be managed with medications and changes to lifestyle. People with HIV who are on treatment are highly unlikely to pass the infection to others.”

In late November, Minister Cameron Dick announced that more than $1 million will be given to the Torres and Cape HHS over the next 12 months to improve residents' sexual health.

This will fund an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men’s Health Program, and a Women’s Health Program, and an ‘Improving Sexual Health’ program to combat the growing incidence of syphilis in remote Torres Strait and Cape York communities.

“Men’s and women’s health is an important priority in our region and these interventions will help in the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections,” said Dr Jill Newland, Chief Executive.

Length of service

Above from left: Michael Solomon, Lucy Pullen and Ethías Jawai at Bamaga were among staff across the HHS who received of Length of Service certificates recently.

Cost centre training

Above: Staff from across the HHS enjoyed Cost Centre Training at both Cairns and Thursday Island recently. Staff were trained in fraud awareness, cost centre literacy, managing teams and identifying cost savings.
Four new nurses for Aurukun and Saibai

The Saibai Island and Aurukun Primary Health Care Centres will each receive two additional permanent senior nurses to meet fast-growing demand for services.

“Saibai and Aurukun are now the two busiest clinics in our health service and demand for services continues to grow at both locations,” Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board Chair Bob McCarthy said.

“Between August 2014 and August 2015, the number of occasions of service at Aurukun increased by 57 per cent, while the increase at Saibai was 51 per cent.

“With this sort of sustained spike in demand, additional clinical staff clearly are needed.”

Mr McCarthy said both health centres were seeing patients present with a much larger proportion of acute conditions than other clinics, as well as experiencing growing demand for primary healthcare services.

“In the case of Saibai Island, a substantial part of the increase in patient presentations is attributable to a steady rise in the number of Papua New Guinea residents of the Torres Strait Protection Zone seeking treatment,” he said.

Mr McCarthy said the Department of Health had allocated the Torres and Cape HHS an additional $692,000 annually to fund the employment of the four extra clinical nurses.

Executive visits
Pormpuraaw & Kowanyama

ABOVE from left: Vince Connellan (Director of Nursing Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw), Faye Spencer (CNC, Kowanyama), Jill Newland (Chief Executive), Ian Pressley (Exec General Manager South), Vonda Moar-Malone (Exec Director Primary Health Care) and Lyn Wardlaw (Exec Director of Nursing and Midwifery) at Kowanyama.

ABOVE from left: Tim Koo-aga (Operational Officer), David Kepper (Health Worker), Beverly Horoyd (Health Worker), Melanie Durden (CNC), Lyn Wardlaw (Exec Director of Nursing and Midwifery), Vonda Moar-Malone (Exec Director Primary Health Care) and Ian Pressley (Exec General Manager South) at Pormpuraaw Primary Health Care Centre.
Three new speech pathologists positions have been funded for the Torres Strait and Cape York regions thanks to a government-funded rural health service improvement program.

Bernadette Cantrall (Weipa) and Lauren Reardon (Thursday Island) started work in November and a new recruit will be based at Cooktown from early next year.

“These new, locally-based professionals will deliver significantly better access to speech pathology services throughout our region,” said Dr Jill Newland, Chief Executive.

“They will conduct outreach clinics at smaller communities, both in person and via telehealth technology, thereby vastly expanding the footprint of speech pathology services across the region.”

Dr Newland said speech pathologists were able to provide assessment and management for a range of swallowing and communication difficulties.

“They can provide an early intervention service for pre-school age children with various speech and language impairment issues,” she said.

“They also look after patients with swallowing difficulties as a result of neurological, head/neck cancer or other conditions and those with communication difficulties resulting from stroke, Parkinson’s disease or other issues.

“It’s a vital service that patients and clients in the Torres Strait, Cape York and Northern Peninsula Area will now be able to access much closer to home.

The State Government had provided the Torres and Cape HHS with additional funding of $528,467 annually to deliver the expanded speech pathology service.

Bala the crocodile teaches clean teeth

Above: Bala the toothy crocodile helps Saibai Island Advanced Health Worker Nellie Enosa (left) and generalist Cecileah Warusam teach Saibai Island State School students how to clean their teeth.

Health staff in the Torres Strait are using an innovative educational puppet show to promote good dental hygiene among children in the region.

The puppet show, “Bala’s Beautiful Teeth”, uses a series of friendly animal characters to highlight the importance of cleaning and looking after your teeth.

Characters include Bala the toothy crocodile and his friends Totol the turtle, the leopard shark Twins and Sugu the wise elder octopus.

The educational puppet show was developed by our Oral Health Consultant Dr David Walker, in association with Torres Strait Island Regional Council Health and Wellbeing Manager Ella Kris.

The show forms part of the Federal Government-funded Saibai Island Health Protection Strategy that is currently being delivered on the island.

“Prevention is always better than the cure.

“Tooth brushing is an important message to get across to children to ensure they continue to enjoy good oral health as adults.

“So we wanted to develop a culturally appropriate way of catching and holding their attention while teaching the principles of good dental hygiene.

“We decided a puppet show was the best way to engage with young children and we hit upon the idea of using local Torres Strait-specific animals that the children are familiar with to promote our oral health message.”

Dr Walker said the educational puppet show would be rolled out to all the outer islands in early 2016.
Stephen Island, Yorke Island and Coconut Island Primary Health Care Centres had more than 95% compliance with entering patient information onto Best Practice in November.

Best Practice is a software package used in the Northern Sector to capture patient information, and assist staff to identify where improvements are needed. Doune Heppner and Berice Murray offer Best Practice support and are now tracking facilities’ use of Best Practice.

“We are measuring how often staff complete the patient’s Medicare number and the reason for the visit in Best Practice,” said Berice.

“We are focusing on the information we need to meet the National Key Performance Indicators. Our initial reports focus on improving the accuracy of patient registration and reasons for the visit,” said Doune.

“Most sites can improve their result for reasons for the visit by using the dropdown list within Best Practice,” said Doune.

Reports for facilities will be produced each month and will follow a traffic light system with green for 95% or more compliance, yellow for 80-94% and red for under 80% compliance.

To see your facility’s results contact Doune or Berice in Best Practice Support on 4226 3031 or email TCHHS-Best-Practice-Support@health.qld.gov.au
Christmas across the HHS

Above: The Primary Health Care Information Systems and Support Team.

Above: Adam Rowden moonlighting as a reindeer while working as the OHS Advisor based out of Cairns.

You've got to hand it to Napranum Primary Health Care Centre. It'll certainly be a hygienic Christmas.

Farewell Maud Donas

ABOVE: Pictured are some of the staff at Kowanyama Primary Health Care Centre who farewelled Maud Donas (in the centre) recently.

Maud Donas retired in late November after working at Kowanyama Primary Health Care Centre since 2008 as our Senior Health Worker and before that in Cairns and Hinterland HHS since 1997.

Vince Connellan, Director of Nursing Pormpuraaw and Kowanyama said he wished Maud well in her retirement.

Maud will be greatly missed by all staff and community members. All the best Maud.

Domestic and family violence is never acceptable.

Domestic and family violence — Not now, Not ever.

For counselling and support, contact your employer assistance provider on 1800 604 640.

In an emergency situation, always call 000.
Profile: Lenore Berry
Clinical Coder Educator

As Clinical Coder Educator, Lenore Berry’s role takes her all around the the Torres Strait, NPA and Cape York. Here she describes her job.

“The Clinical Coder Educator role involves classification of diseases and procedures on site at four facilities each month and by coding episodes from Admission Sheets for the Primary Health Care Centres.”

What do you consider to be your greatest challenge?

“Completing a months’ coding in a short time frame when so many other issues can impact on achieving this – such as:
- travel delays,
- incomplete patient records,
- admission anomalies that require amendment,
- the need to improve clinical documentation computer/server issues.”

What is the best thing about working in your location?

“Being able to implement positive change to staff who previously had been working with little or no training and limited understanding of appropriate processes.
Must add that the one hour ferry ride to and from one facility to another each month surely beats peak hour city traffic.”

Originally produced in the HIM-Interchange (HIM-I) newsletter http://www.himaa2.org.au/?q=HIM-Interchange

Mums and Bubs in Weipa focuses on health and play

Mum’s and Bubs group in Weipa had their Christmas party recently. The group meets weekly at Weipa Hospital and is coordinated by Mary Hindmarsh, Child Health Nurse.

“I organise a variety of health information sessions for parents with new babies and infants,” said Mary.

Topics include parenting, solids, sleep, teeth, behaviour, development, play and toys.

“We also have guest speakers like the dietitian, physiotherapist, dental therapist, child and youth professionals and specialist community members.”

Mary said that the group provides social support for those living remote with usually no extended families.

“Fathers, grandparents and other carers are also welcome,” Mary said.

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.