Dr Jill Newland and I accompanied the Director-General of Queensland Health, Michael Walsh, on a busy three day visit to our region on 18-20 August. We were accompanied by Bob McCarthy (Board Chair).

We visited facilities at Cooktown, Aurukun, Weipa, Bamaga, Injinoo, Thursday Island, Yorke Island and Saibai Island. The highlight of the visit was the official opening of the Thursday Island Renal Dialysis Unit. The event was a success with a great deal of support and involvement from the local community. A total of 388 Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area residents are estimated to have some form of chronic kidney disease and some of these people will eventually require dialysis.

The new unit has 3 dialysis chairs and will gradually build up to its full capacity to allow up to 24 patients to be dialysed. This unit will make a great difference to people with renal disease in the community.

Thank you to all staff and community members who met with the DG. It was clear that many staff made a special effort to ensure that the DG was made welcome and that the trip went smoothly.

These visits are very important to help us showcase our achievements, our excellent staff and our health services. It also helps senior management understand first hand the challenges we face delivering health services in remote areas.

Regards

Ian Pressley
Acting Health Service Chief Executive
News from the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board

From left seated: 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.

Summary of Board meeting August 2015

The Board summary is a brief report on issues discussed at Board meetings and Board activities. The Board meeting was held in Weipa in August.

- The Board members met with the Weipa Community Advisory Network (CAN) which provided an opportunity to discuss important issues
- Updates were provided by the Board Chair of the recent Board Chairs’ Forum in Brisbane which was attended by the Minister for Health attended.
- The Board Chair reported he is attending regular meetings of the North Queensland Primary Health Care Network
- The draft End of Year Statements were presented to the Board
- The Internal Audit Plan was endorsed by the Board
- A new Cost Centre Management Report was presented to the Board through an interactive presentation by Tony Coombs (Management Accountant TCHHS). The Board commended Tony on his great work and dedication to such a quality improvement.
- A summary was presented to the Board of the current research being undertaken within the TCHHS. The processes involved in obtaining research authorisation were also discussed. The Board acknowledged the research projects and encourage more research in the TCHHS.

Bob McCarthy (Board Chair) accompanied the Director-General of Queensland Health on a tour of Torres and Cape HHS facilities in August. Any questions or queries on the Board summaries can be forwarded to Andrea Brophy, andrea.brophy@health.qld.gov.au
Napranum Hepatitis Day success

The staff at Napranum Primary Health Care Clinic were the successful recipients of a Hepatitis Queensland grant to raise awareness of viral hepatitis prevention, testing, treatment and management.

The team used the grant to sponsor a World Hepatitis Day Fun Walk around the Napranum Oval followed by an informative Health Day held at the clinic, concluding with a healthy salad and burger lunch.

The Napranum community young and old, united for the day with children from the Pre-school, HACC clients, My Pathways, Men’s Group, Queensland Health, RFDS, Apunipima, and many local residents participating in the activities.

Spot prizes, manicures and even face painting for the little ones rounded off a very positive and fun, day’s events.

The day was the brainchild of the clinic’s much-loved and respected chronic disease doctor Dr Fiona Purcell. Dr Purcell unfortunately has taken sick leave to care for a sick family member and was unable to attend the event.

“Staff and the community alike are missing Dr Fiona terribly,” said Clinic Manager Karen Akhtar. “As well as promoting awareness of Hepatitis, the day was also a celebration of the great work Dr Fiona has done in raising awareness of the fight against Hepatitis in the Napranum community.”

Feedback from the World Hepatitis Day was extremely positive with many walk participants asking for more activity based programs at the clinic. As a result the very first exercise class at the clinic commenced last Monday. With the support of Physiotherapist Amy O’Hara, clients did a low impact exercise class followed by a 30 minute educational session and then time to yarn afterwards. The later being the most popular component! Local elders named the group the “Korrop Group” which means big red kangaroo, hops, skips and boxes!

The clinic continues to aim to provide increased proactive health education and lifestyle programs (rather than reactive care), in our drive to improve the overall health of our community.
Saibai Youth Week - *stay safe play safe*

Saibai was treated to a series of creative workshops in June/July for the Saibai Youth Week – Stay Safe Play Safe. The week of activities were a partnership between Torres and Cape HHS Men’s and Women’s Health Program, Tropical Population Health Services (Cairns) and 2Spirits. The Saibai Youth Week concept focused the delivery of sustainable sexual health messages through music, dance, art, and sport (basketball). The Torres and Cape HHS Men’s and Women’s Health team provided ‘one on one’ education around HIV and other sexually transmissible infections in conjunction with health checks.

Torres Strait hip hop artist Patrick Mau (Mau Power) and Torres Strait Islander musician, Chris Tamwoy, a self-taught guitarist, worked alongside artist Arone Meeks to help convey health messages creatively.

The musicians worked with young people on Saibai Island to create music with lyrics to promote appropriate messages concerning Men’s and Women’s health.

The 2Spirits team (Arone Meeks and Nikki Hill) provided a ‘whole of community approach’ to improve the sexual health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gay men and sistergirls through education, prevention, health promotion, and community development activities.

Cairns Taipans Development manager and Saibai Island national, Kerry Williams, and Cairns Taipans player, Shaun Bruce conducted basketball workshops.

In addition to the basketball workshops, Kerry and Shaun talked with the Saibai Island young people about Men’s and Women’s Health, healthy relationships and healthy lifestyle choices.
Hepatitis education

A Hepatitis B update was held at Weipa hospital in early August as part of a wide range of activities to mark World Hepatitis Day 2015. The update was coordinated by Karen Akhtar (CNC Napranum) and featured a comprehensive clinical update by Dr Heather McNamee from Cairns Sexual Health Service. Around 25 medical, nursing, health worker, allied health and pharmacy staff participated in the event with discussion ranging from prevention and testing to treatment and management.

Deaths from primary liver cancer are climbing faster than any other cause of cancer death in Australia and untreated chronic hepatitis B is a major contributor. The Australian Government and all States and Territories have signed on to the Second National Hepatitis B Strategy 2014 - 2017 which aims to reduce morbidity, mortality and the personal and social impacts of hepatitis B.

Rhondra Lewis (Viral hepatitis Health Practitioner) and Carla Gorton (HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Coordinator) attended the training and can be contacted at Cairns Sexual Health Service for further information and resources.

Dr Heather McNamee also delivered clinical updates about Sexually Transmissible Infections at Napranum Primary Health Care Centre and another well attended talk about Medical Termination of Pregnancy and Long Acting Reversible Contraception at Weipa Hospital.

The theme for Hepatitis Week was “Get tested, have a liver check-up, and ask about treatment”.

Credentialling support

North West HHS received expert support in credentialling thanks to a visit from Torres and Cape HHS Senior Credentialing and Scope of Clinical Practice Officer, Gordon Mayne.

Gordon helps assure that doctors and dentists have the right skills and credentials to work in regional HHS facilities.

Gordon visited the Medical Workforce Unit based in Mount Isa and retrained them on the customized database. This database shares credentialling information across the Rural and Remote Clinical Support Unit and four regional HHS (North West, South West, Central West and Torres and Cape).

Gordon also took the opportunity to audit the database - confirming that the Rural and Remote services are one of the busiest in Queensland. Over 530 applications for “scope of clinical practice (SoCP)” were processed during the last calendar year.
Dental research will help NPA kids

Children in the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) will be able to access a special annual dental treatment and preventative program as part of an innovative research project which started in August this year.

The research, led by Griffith University and funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, will investigate the cost-effectiveness of a single annual dental visit to apply known preventative measures to all children.

This involves application of an antiseptic, filling grooves in susceptible teeth with resin or dental cement, and painting fluoride varnish onto tooth surfaces.

“It is necessary to treat all existing decay before application of the preventative measures,” says Emeritus Professor Newell Johnson from the Menzies Health Institute Queensland and the leader of the project.

“The research team will supplement Queensland Health resources and treat all children enrolled in NPA schools by the end of the year. There will be follow-up by the research team once a year for the next few years.

Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service are supporting the research by providing access to a dental surgery at Bamaga Hospital and to the health service mobile dental van which will be located at Bamaga Primary School.

“We are very pleased to be able to support this research,” says Dr Jill Newland, Health Service Chief Executive, “as it could potentially have a big impact on the oral health of young people in our region”.

The researchers have conducted extensive community consultation with stakeholders and received permission from relevant authorities. These include the Community Elders, Queensland Health Chief Dental Officer, Cape York Health Council (Apunipima), Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service, Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council (NPARC) and the Northern Peninsula Area State College (NPASC).

Dr Newland says she is impressed with the researchers’ strong community focus.

“We are always ready to assist researchers who follow the due process and whose work can lead to an improvement in health for our communities.”

Walk for women’s cancer

Emma Broe (Multimedia Officer) is taking part in the ‘Walk for Women’s Cancer’. The fundraiser which started 11 years ago has raised over $500,000 for Queensland Cancer Council.

To sponsor Emma, go to: www.walkforwomen.org.au and follow the links.

Or join in. Registrations are now open. The Cairns event is 25 October.

Flu is still here

Spread the facts not the flu.

Ward off colds and flu through good hygiene practices.

- Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Stay at home if you have flu-like symptoms
- Dispose of tissues in the bin and washing your hands immediately after use
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Get the flu vaccination
Continuous quality improvement (CQI) in action

Working together to improve health

Staff from across three HHSs met for three days in Cairns recently for a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Workshop. Forty eight staff attended the workshop from Torres and Cape HHS, Cairns and Hinterland HHS and Townsville HHS. Staff attended both in person and via videoconference.

CQI in health care is a way of working that supports front line health care staff to get on with the business of delivering good quality care. The core of CQI is a simple, practical process of using information at the health service level to understand the quality of services being provided to clients, working to improve those elements that are not working well, and measuring the change and giving feedback.

CQI is an ongoing and cyclical process to achieve positive changes and to focus energy on local health needs and priorities.

The workshop was facilitated by KPMG supported by Menzies School of Health Research.

Participants included health workers, nursing and midwifery staff from across the region, and staff from information system services, ATSI unit from CHHHS, Casemix, Public Health, Practice Management, Chronic Disease, HHF, the CQI team, KPMG and Menzies facilitators.

Attendees were able to showcase current areas of excellence and commitment to health improvement and to workshop opportunities for CQI in action for primary health care. Foundation education was provided by Menzies on Day One. On days 2 and 3, participants looked at a review of the current state, developing a workable CQI framework for the Collaborative, looking at data and working on issues identification and goal development, some work on barriers and enablers and a communication plan.

The North Queensland CQI project is a partnership between three North Queensland HHSs and will support each HHS to identify their priority health issues.

The Project also aims to provide information and assistance for evidenced based approaches to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in priority areas.

These priority areas include improving health and delivery of health care, addressing chronic disease and reducing potentially preventable hospitalisation (PPH).
New Chronic Conditions Manual

Australia's first comprehensive one-stop clinical manual for use by anyone involved in dealing with chronic conditions was launched at Torres and Cape HHS in Cairns in August.

Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board Chair Bob McCarthy said the new manual was designed for use not just by doctors, but also nurses, health workers and allied health professionals.

“It can also be used in both public and private facilities,” he said.

The Chronic Conditions Manual had been developed by the Torres and Cape HHS’s Rural and Remote Clinical Support Unit in association with the Royal Flying Doctor Service Queensland Section and Apunipima Cape York Health Council.

More and more people are presenting with not just one but two or three related chronic conditions. Previously, this would have required a clinician, particularly a non-medical clinician in a rural and remote area, to go to one source for information on chronic respiratory conditions and then another source for information on chronic heart conditions, thereby making the management of a patient’s condition more difficult, complex and very time consuming.

This new Chronic Conditions Manual gathers all that information together into the one comprehensive quick reference document.

View or download the new manual at https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/chronic-conditions-manual

For more information see www.health.qld.gov.au/rrcsu/

Congratulations to our staff members: Thomas Loban who was recently awarded the 2015 Torres Strait NAIDOC* Person of the Year Award, and to May Seriat who was awarded a NAIDOC Community Tribute Award.

Thomas is a Health Promotion Officer (Chronic Disease) with the Quality Lifestyle Program with Torres and Cape HHS based on Thursday Island, with 20 years experience with Queensland Health. Thomas is an inspirational role model in Health Promotion and his work over the years has raised awareness of healthy lifestyle choices. Thomas is very creative in implementing health promotion strategies that attract participation and interaction with the communities in the Torres Strait. Thomas is the creator of Kombat Chronic Disease (KCD) and is well known in the community for his commitment and dedication towards young people and adults.

May Seriat was awarded an NAIDOC award for her work in the Elsie and Harold Welcome Back To Community Night. This night was an event to recognise Harold Matthew and Elsie Seriat after they completed the New York Marathon last year.

May is a registered nurse at Thursday Island Hospital and has worked for Queensland Health for 37 years. Harold and Elsie also work for Torres and Cape HHS.

The awards were presented at a gala event on Thursday Island on 17 July. * NAIDOC stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Observance Committee.

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Outreach eye services give sight

Ghislaine Wharton (CNC Ophthalmology, Thursday Island) recently escorted specialist Dr Garry Brian on community visits.

“Dr Brian has been visiting the region for thirty years delivering sight saving care including cataract surgery, removal of pterygia and laser treatment for diabetic eye disease,” said Ghislaine. “It’s part of the excellent outreach eye services we provide.”

Eyedentity Optometrists also visit most communities twice a year. They primarily check the eye health of community members and refer patients to Dr Brian, or Cairns or other specialists if necessary. They also organise prescription glasses for community members. Eyedentity visit schools around the district and do a full eye health check for children.

Ghislaine travels with a suite of equipment for the clinics. Amongst the boxes is a portable laser, which means those who are not so mobile can have sight saving treatment from the Ophthalmologist at Bamaga - without the need to travel to TI or Cairns.

“We visit Bamaga once a year,” she said. “We had a great turn out in Bamaga in late July, with around 30 patients in one day but we could always fit more patients in,” said Ghislaine.

For more information, or to discuss eye health concerns, call Ghislaine on 4030 6003 or email ghislaine.wharton@health.qld.gov.au

Weipa hand hygiene is tops

Nursing staff at Weipa Integrated Health Service have achieved 100% compliance in the Aseptic Technique training.

Barb Milner (Clinical Nurse Educator at Weipa) said that Aseptic technique is a procedure used by staff to prevent the spread of infection. “The goal is to have a clinical environment that is free of harmful microorganisms,” said Barb.

The nursing staff have also achieved 97% compliance in their hand hygiene training. The team is proud of the training achievement.

“Hand hygiene is the single most important measure in reducing the risk of cross-infection,” said Barb.

Congratulations team!
To update your training, visit the QHEPS page: http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/torres-cape/html/ld-home.htm

AWARDS nominations now open

Nominate someone for their contribution to health care in the Torres Strait Islands, Cape York and Northern Peninsula Area.
Breastscreen visits Thursday Island

BreastScreen Queensland’s mobile screening van visited Thursday Island in August, offering free breast screens to women on Thursday, Horn, Hammond and Prince of Wales islands.

Thursday Island Mobile Women’s Health Nurse Gaynor Hampel said BreastScreen Queensland and the Mobile Women’s Health Service teamed up to offer women a one-stop shop.

“As well as getting a free breast screen, women attending were able to access Pap smear tests, information about menopause, period problems, and any women’s health issues” she said.

Ms Hampel and Women’s Health Worker Sue Gibuma said they encouraged all women to make the most of the opportunity to access such a wide range of women’s health services in their local area.

Ms Hampel said one in eight Queensland women would develop breast cancer at some stage in their life. “Early detection can save your life,” she said.

“A breast screen is the best way to find breast cancer in its earliest stages for better health outcomes.”

Managing RHD

Rheumatic Heart Disease Control

Check out the new RHD video for clinicians and health workers who give injections to prevent RHD. View the video at http://tinyurl.com/phnxchj

For HHS staff using the Best Practice patient information system, more resources on how to manage and recall RHD patients can be found within the Template List at RHD Register Update.

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