

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Hospital thanks staff and volunteers of Emergency Blood Donor Panel**

There was laughter rather than tears when community members and staff gathered at the Goondiwindi Hospital last week to thank those who had been involved with the hospital's Emergency Blood Donor Panel (EDP).

A decision was made in September this year to disband the panel due to advances in modern medicine and improvements in aerial retrieval services.

Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service General Manager Rural Michael Bishop paid tribute to those who had been a part of the panel over the years.

"One of the great things about rural areas is that people are willing to go above and beyond to help others.

"The people on the panel have given of their time and of themselves and so we thank you on behalf of the community and hope that you will keep on supporting the Goondiwindi Hospital," Mr Bishop said.

Goondiwindi Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr Sue Masel said the emergency donor panel had been an amazing experience and spoke to the spirit of the community.

"Whenever the list was running short, all we had to do was make a few calls and there were people willing to help out.

"However, we recognise that there have been changes to the medical technology available and we want to support these advances," she said.

Director of Nursing Lorraine McMurtrie especially thanked those staff who had been involved in coordinating the panel as well as those who were donors on the panel.

"I've only seen part of the journey since becoming Director of Nursing but the staff have put a lot of effort in and shown a lot of passion and vigilance.

"I didn't realise until recently how many of the hospital staff were actually on the panel – that's how well the coordinators have maintained the confidentiality of the panel," Ms McMurtrie said.

Goondiwindi Hospital Social Worker and panel member Betsy Turner recalled being involved in the last activation of the panel several years ago, when a local man was seriously injured.

"One of the nicest things about being on the panel was getting to see our emergency response in action.

"I remember giving blood and then going outside to be the social worker to the family," she said.

Registered Nurse and one of the former coordinators of the panel Kathryn Smith was also involved in the last activation of the panel.

“The first man on the panel who was contacted couldn’t donate because he had to go outside and fuel up the helicopter.

“So even if he couldn’t give blood he was still involved in assisting that patient,” Ms Smith said.

The panel members, volunteers and coordinators received certificates of appreciation from the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service’s General Manager Rural Mr Michal Bishop.

## **Ends**

Photo caption 1: Registered Nurse Kathryn Smith and Social Worker Betsy Turner remember their involvement in the last activation of the EDP.

Photo caption 2: Staff, panel members and volunteers gathered at the Goondiwindi Hospital to remember the work of the EDP.

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