

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Health workers take over airwaves to share kidney health messages**

HEALTH workers in the South Burnett took over the radio airwaves to spread the message of good wellbeing during Kidney Health Week.

Kingaroy Hospital Renal Unit Nurse Practitioner Andrea Rolfe and Cherbourg Community Health Chronic Disease Team Leader Genette Simpson were invited to speak about kidney health on local community radio station, Us Mob FM.

The pair encouraged all listeners to have their blood pressure regularly checked, to maintain healthy eating habits, and take part in regular exercise to avoid kidney disease.

“During Kidney Health Week, we are highlighting what the kidneys actually do in the body,” Ms Rolfe said.

“Kidneys perform vital functions in the body like cleaning the blood of waste products and controlling blood pressure.”

Ms Rolfe explained one of the simplest measures to ensure good kidney health was knowing your blood pressure.

“Ideally your blood pressure should be 130 over 80, or lower,” she said.

“By having your blood pressure and other health checks done regularly, health workers can identify any problems early enough to avoid late-stage kidney disease and dialysis.”

Us Mob broadcaster Rory Boney is a dialysis patient at the Kingaroy Hospital.

He, along with friend Henry Hegarty, visit the renal unit three times a week for the life-saving dialysis treatment.

Health worker Genette Simpson said promoting good kidney health was particularly important in communities like Cherbourg.

“One in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, over the age of 18 years, are showing signs of kidney disease,” Ms Simpson said.

“And Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are four times more likely than non-Indigenous people to experience end-stage kidney disease resulting in dialysis.”

Ms Simpson also spoke first hand about her experiences as a renal patient, and the importance of maintaining good health.

“For 15 months, I underwent dialysis before receiving a kidney transplant in March 2012,” she said.

“After my transplant, I felt a lot better and I regained a lot of freedom.

“Many people don’t realise that a transplant isn’t a cure. I will be a kidney patient for the rest of my life.

“I have to take my tablets, eat healthy food, continue to exercise and go to my doctor’s appointments.

“That’s why I encourage everyone to visit their medical centre or community health clinic for a blood pressure check. It takes less than five minutes and it could save your life.”

The radio interview was such a success that plans are in place for future chats about other health matters.

“What we do want is to help the community have good kidney health” Ms Rolfe said..

“We can all do our part to change those statistics that say Indigenous people are more likely to suffer with kidney disease.”

### **Andrea’s tips to improve your kidney health**

- Check your blood pressure. Aim for 130/80 or below
- Drink plenty of water
- Eat a healthy diet
- Participate in exercise or activities
- If you smoke; stop
- Talk to your children about why avoiding smoking is good for your health
- Get a health check to assess your blood pressure, weight, urine and blood sugar levels

**Caption:** Cherbourg Community Health Chronic Disease Team Leader Genette Simpson (left) and Kingaroy Hospital Renal Unit Nurse Practitioner Andrea Rolfe meet with US Mob radio broadcaster and dialysis patient Rory Boney to discuss the importance of good kidney health.

### **Ends**

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