

MEDIA RELEASE

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Volunteers use iPad technology to gather feedback

Toowoomba Hospital volunteers are accustomed to helping patients and visitors to be as comfortable as possible during their time at Toowoomba Hospital.

Now they are also making things easier when it's time to head home.

Sam Savva, Manager Volunteer and Consumer Participation Services, said the hospital's volunteers provide a multi-faceted service.

"When we see a new patient in a ward our volunteers inform them of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, let them know about the services available such as the delivery of newspapers and magazines, and generally try to make them as comfortable and relaxed as possible," he said.

"We get a lot of patients from rural areas, and outlying areas all over southwest Queensland, and they may not have any family here, so to speak with a volunteer can be like having a friend to talk to.

"We've had cases where a patient may feel uncomfortable expressing some concerns to a medical staff member, but they will open up to a volunteer, so in that way our volunteers can be a conduit between patients and medical staff."

Mr Savva said the role of volunteers had evolved to include collecting feedback through patient surveys.

"When the time comes for a patient to leave the ward, we do a patient survey, and we're happy to say that in the vast majority of cases the feedback is overwhelmingly positive," he said.

"People seem to speak freely to a volunteer.

"This helps us to gather honest feedback we can learn from, so we can make any improvements to our service."

Consumer group volunteer Diane Fitch said the introduction of iPad technology had made the process of doing patient surveys quick and easy.

"We start by explaining to the patient that we use the results to improve the care we provide, so we ask patients to give us their honest opinions," Ms Fitch said.

"With the iPad it's all done electronically, there's nothing to fill out so it's no imposition on the patient and when the survey is completed we hit 'Submit' and away it goes.

"The last question we ask is whether the patient would like to speak with someone from our consumer liaison team, and if the patient answers "yes", the team is notified electronically when the form is submitted.

"This way the patient knows they will be contacted and their concerns will be addressed."

Completed patient surveys are submitted for review at the office of Dr Peter Gillies, Toowoomba Hospital General Manager.

Diane's fellow consumer group volunteer Joan Crowther described the use of iPads as "an excellent idea".

"It certainly gives patients the opportunity to provide real feedback, so we're getting their genuine opinions," Joan said.

"I feel this will give us much more constructive information and it's far better than the way we used to it by filling out a brochure.

"It's very easy to use and a worthwhile thing to do to improve our service."

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MEDIA: *Contact Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service Media Team 4699 8725, 0448 996 296 or DDHHS_media@health.qld.gov.au*

Subject	Volunteers use iPad technology to improve service		
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