Message from the Chief Executive

The Torres and Cape HHS annual report was recently tabled in Parliament. This is the first annual report for our HHS and highlighted achievements in birthing, dental, renal, tele-chemotherapy and tuberculosis services. You can view the Annual Report at http://tinyurl.com/tchhs2014-5

The Queensland Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, Cameron Dick, visited our health service on 29-30 September. Bob McCarthy (Board Chair) and I accompanied him on facility visits to Weipa, Napranum, Bamaga and Saibai Island. The visits were a great success.

Last week I attended the 30th year anniversary of the Torres Strait Treaty in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. While there, I participated in the Health Issues Committee with Dr Jeanette Young, Chief Health Officer for Queensland Health and discussed issues facing residents in the Torres Strait/PNG cross border area.

I was also recently involved in the steering committee for the Australia’s first Tropical Academic Health Centre. This proposed centre is being established as a partnership between Torres and Cape HHS and other north Queensland HHSs, the Northern Queensland Primary Health Network and James Cook University (JCU).

Academic health centres are typically alliances between one or more research-led universities, medical research institutes, tertiary health care providers and primary health systems. Academic health centres are well-established successful models overseas. This is potentially a great initiative for north Queensland.

Finally congratulations to Gwen Ketchell for winning the ‘My Pathways Ken O’Brien Achiever Award’ in the Torres Strait Employment and Training Recognition Awards. Gwen is one of our longest serving and hard working staff. This award is well deserved. See the story on page 6.

Regards

Jill Newland
Health Service Chief Executive

Executive support, business support and administration officers from around the Torres and Cape HHS attended an HHS Corporate Services Information Session in Cairns in October and met with Cairns-based staff. Standing from left: Melissa Dalzell, Kristine Black, Frances Abednego, Flora Majid, Dinah Sailor, Sam Donpon. Bottom from left: Nareen Edmonds, Andrew McGill and Kathleen O’Brien.

Above from left: Dr Jill Newland with Cr Fraser Nai (Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board Member) and Dr Jeanette Young (Chief Health Officer, Queensland Health) at the 30th anniversary of the Torres Strait Treaty in Port Moresby.

Above: PNG dancers at the 30th anniversary of the Torres Strait Treaty. Saibai Island dancers also performed.

Above: Operational Services Supervisor, Gwen Ketchell, has been awarded the My Pathways Ken O’Brien Achiever Award.
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.

Summary of Board Meetings

Meeting - 3 September 2015 - Bamaga

- Board members visited the Bamaga Hospital and met with local staff.
- Representatives from the NPA Family and Community Services ATSI Corporation joined the Board members for discussions around ‘hot topics’ including referral pathways and working together to develop training opportunities for current and future workforce.
- The Board discussed the recent visits from both the Director General and ex-Prime Minister. Both visits went very well and positive feedback was received.
- End of Year Financial Statements 2014/15 were tabled at the meeting.
- The Annual Report 2014/15 was tabled and endorsed by the Board.
- Board members also travelled to Thursday Island where they visited the Primary Health Care Centre and attended a live radio interview with the local radio station 4MW (Ruth Stewart, Deputy Chair, and Andy Marshall, Executive General Manager North).

Meeting - 1 October 2015 - Cairns

- This Board meeting followed a two day visit from the Minister for Health to remote facilities in Torres and Cape HHS. Bob McCarthy (Board Chair) accompanied the Minister to Weipa, Napranum, Bamaga and Saibai Island.
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- Discussion occurred around financial planning for 2015/16.

Appointment of permanent Board Operations Manager

Andrea Brophy has been appointed as the Board Operations Manager for the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board. Andrea has been acting in the position since May 2015. Andrea has worked with the Torres and Cape HHS for several years and was previously with the Quality, Safety and Risk Unit.

Dr Ruth Stewart relocates to Thursday Island

Deputy Board Chair, Dr Ruth Stewart, relocated to Thursday Island in October to accompany her husband Dr Anthony Brown as he takes on the role of Medical Superintendent at the Thursday Island Hospital. Dr Stewart is very happy to be closer to the populations that she represents and is looking forward to strengthening relationships with the community. She will also be working in the health service one day a week as a doctor.

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Berice Murray celebrated her 30 year anniversary with Queensland Health this year including over seven years working in the Torres Strait Islands. Berice started in health when she was 15 years old as an Assistant in Nursing in Bundaberg and is now a Clinical Nurse Consultant. “I worked in Bundaberg and Maryborough/Harvey Bay and then I moved to the Torres,” she said.

Berice worked in the Torres Strait Islands for four years including a stint at Badu Island for two and a half years. This was followed by seven years at Yarrabah and then Berice returned to the Torres. “I was the CNC in Kubin community on Moa Island for three years.”

On Moa, Berice spent time quad bike riding and enjoying the island’s beaches, sunsets and creeks. “It’s a good relief when you’re not on call”, she said.

Berice said that she learned the most about the community by participating in community events. “I enjoyed my time in Kubin and would often spend time down at the wharf, fishing and yarning with the locals,” she said.

Berice now works in the Cairns office supporting remote staff with using Best Practice software. Her experience as a remote nurse helps her understand the challenges staff face with clinical software. Each year Torres and Cape HHS staff receive recognition certificates when they reach a five year anniversary. Congratulations to all staff who received length of service certificates this month.

$7.1 Million upgrades for Aurukun and Kowanyama

Health facilities at Aurukun and Kowanyama will undergo a combined $7.1 million upgrade over the next 18 months.

Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Cameron Dick said up to $6.3 million would be spent at Aurukun and a further $820,000 at Kowanyama.

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“This work will deliver additional clinical consulting rooms, an office and accommodation for on-site security staff and badly-needed additional clinical storage capacity,” Mr Dick said.

“At Kowanyama, the funding will be directed to improving the nurses’ staff accommodation.”.

“The HACC building will be replaced by a purpose-designed modular kit building that will be delivered and assembled on-site after the wet season in 2016,” he said.

“The provision of additional consultation space as part of the Aurukun works will ensure that specialised clinical outreach services delivered by both the Torres and Cape HHS and other health providers can be accommodated now and in the future.

“The improvements to staff accommodation at Kowanyama will allow outreach clinicians to spend more time during their visits, as well as providing good accommodation for permanent staff,” he said.
Harold - a human bait for Thursday Island mozzies

Harold Matthew, Vector Control Officer on Thursday Island, helps Tropical Public Health Services (TPHS) to control and prevent the spread of the aggressive Asian tiger mosquito in the Torres Strait.

The daytime-biting mosquito, also known as *Aedes albopictus*, is capable of transmitting dengue and chikungunya and has caused serious disease outbreaks overseas.

Harold also helps controls the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito which transmits dengue fever.

Harold assists TPHS with inspecting properties on Thursday and Horn Islands. In February 2015, the officers treated 2527 containers on Thursday Island (TI) of which 175 were found containing mosquito larvae. In March 2015 one container with larvae of Asian tiger mosquito was detected on the island.

“When the team comes up I also usually support them with human baiting”, said Harold. “They have a few hot spots around TI and we stand for five minutes and bait the mozzies and then we catch them identify the mozzies and check the population numbers.”

Harold regularly does property inspections on TI for mosquito breeding. “Usually when we go round we might find five or six breeding sites so we talk to the residents and educate them,” he said. “If you drill a hole in the spare tyre or throw it away, the mozzies won’t breed there. We do recall visits to see if they got rid of it. Sometimes they forget,” he said.

Harold’s other responsibilities include treating wells and rainwater tanks to stop mosquito breeding and community education. He is also planning school visits to talk to the kids about mosquito breeding. Harold works closely with the Torres Shire Council Environmental Health Officers on the other islands of the Torres Strait. Harold is also an Indigenous Marathon Project ambassador.

New Director of Oral Health

Welcome to Dr Yvonne Mangan who has been appointed as our new Director of Oral Health. This is a newly created position in Torres and Cape HHS.

Torres and Cape HHS received an additional allocation of $890,000 for oral health in the recent State budget.

This has allowed the employment of Dr Mangan and enables the Torres and Cape HHS to support additional dental care to local residents, particularly those in the remote islands of the Torres Strait.

Dr Mangan is an experienced public health dentist and worked in the Thursday Island clinic for six months earlier this year. In addition to her dental qualifications, Dr Mangan has a Master of Public Health.

Dr Mangan will be based in Cairns but will be travelling regularly around the region.

Dr Mangan said the new funding will allow the HHS to re-establish sustainable dental services in the outer island communities.

“Another priority is to establish a central sterilising process in the major clinics that can support our outreach services,” she said.
Torres and Cape HHS computers move to Windows 7

Torres and Cape HHS computers (PCs and Laptops) have started the changeover to a new operating system Windows 7. This means we are changing the working environment of the PCs & Laptops being used across our HHS.

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Library services for staff

Cairns Hospital Library is a great resource for Torres and Cape HHS staff. Standing from left: Katrina Streich (Library Technician) & Fiona Jensen (Librarian). Seated from left: Juliet Marconi (Manager) & Thomas Ang (Library Officer).

The Cairns Hospital Library and Knowledge Centre (LKC) provides services to Torres & Cape HHS staff including:
• Loans (posted out to your nominated address)
• Supply of articles or books (not held by our library) via document delivery or interlibrary loan
• Literature searches for patient care or work related purposes
• Training in the use of CKN, research databases and EndNote and research support
• Current awareness services (CAS) to keep your professional knowledge current (eg auto-alert emails with latest articles, special topics, journal table of content alerts)
• Specialty guides based on topics that provide access to library, CKN and other online resources including consumer health information

You can access the library site and catalogue from work or home:
Web: http://cairns.health.qld.libguides.com/lkc-home
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If you are visiting Cairns please drop in and use the facilities (WiFi for work purposes, newspapers, internet access and quiet areas). We are at A Block, Level 2 Cairns Hospital, 165 The Esplanade, Cairns. Ph: 4226 6679
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Gwen is the Operational Services Supervisor at Thursday Island Hospital and leads 45 staff. Gwen has been with Queensland Health for 33 years making her one of our longest serving staff. Gwen has been instrumental in developing and implementing innovative process at the Hospital. She is the driving force for the implementation of new standards in operational services. Operational services including cleaning, ward services and patient food services support the clinical divisions across Thursday Island. The efficient functioning of operational services are essential in providing quality health care to our patients and clients.

Gwen’s management skills are exceptional in what is often a very challenging role. Her leadership style is very effective and she is popular with staff.

Gwen is recognised as one of the most influential and positive leaders within Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service.

Congratulations Gwen!

Ear and Hearing Health training in Cairns

Participants included Frances Ahwang (Snr Indigenous Mental Health Officer), Vera Asssan (Indigenous Health Worker), Nazareth Mosby (Indigenous Health Worker - Child Health) and May Laifoo (Advanced Health Worker). Topics included:

- Physiology and anatomy of the ear
- Identifying different types of Otitis Media
- Communication strategies for hearing loss
- Health promotion
- How to use hearing equipment (Otoscope, Tympanometer and Audiometer)
- Preparation for hearing screenings

Denise Newman (Ear Health Coordinator, Southern Sector) helped with the assessment. Students had to conduct hearing screening at Boopa Werem, Indigenous Day Care Centre in Cairns.

The delivery and assessment strategies that were used acknowledged the cultural safety and cultural appropriateness for everyone involved.

The feedback from the learners was very positive. They said that the training gave them more confidence, more in-depth knowledge around ear health, how to identify ear health conditions and strategies to use with clients, as well as how to use all the equipment for screening.

The training was run by the Central Australian Remote Health Services (CARHDS) which is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Registered Training Organisation.
**Syphilis cases increase**

The Torres and Cape HHS has had an increase in syphilis notifications particularly in young heterosexual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Syphilis is a serious disease because pregnant women can transmit it to their baby, resulting in congenital syphilis, problems with baby growth or stillbirth. Syphilis infection can also increase the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission. Early syphilis is highly infectious, even when there are no symptoms.

Torres and Cape HHS staff are encouraged to increase testing, encourage condom use, and follow through with contact tracing where required.

For further information contact the Mens’ and Womens’ Health Program staff in your Primary Health Care Centre.

**$3.5 million for sexual health**

In October, the Queensland Health Minister announced that he has allocated a total of $3.5 million in 2015-16 to improve sexual health in north Queensland. Funds have been allocated to support Cairns, Torres and Cape, Townsville and North West Hospital and Health Services to address syphilis.

**Syphilis case figures**

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**Syphilis prevention**

Clinics should provide easy access to condoms for clients to help prevent the spread of syphilis and other STIs. Napranum clinic (above) has condoms readily available.

**Syphilis awareness**

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**Syphilis notifications**

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**Jack wins Aurukun ‘River to Ramp’ fun run**

Jack Potter, Clinical Nurse Consultant at Aurukun Primary Health Care Centre, has won the inaugural River to Ramp fun run in Aurukun recently.

Jack ran the 7km race in 30 minutes and 40 seconds beating a very competitive field. Other runners included Paula How, Clinical Nurse who came second in the women’s division and Lyndsay Dent, Clinical Nurse who finished strongly!

The event was supported by the clinic who supplied hydration and encouragement along the run. The event was sponsored by Skytrans, with Jack winning a return flight to Cairns.

**AWARDS nominations now open**

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

Aurukun cheered on the Cowboys at NRL final night at an event organised by the Western Cape Mens' and Womens' Health team to help engage the community with sexual health services.

“It’s always a challenge to get the community talking about sexual health”, according to Guy Davies, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Mens’ and Womens’ Sexual Health. “But throw the football finals into the mix and the community will be keen to be involved.”

Guy and his team wanted to understand how sexual health service delivery could be improved in Aurukun. So they decided to do a survey with young people in the community and combine it with a huge outdoor NRL Grand Final event at the Aurukun Primary Health Care Centre.

The team hired a big screen and PA system from the Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) and had a BBQ so the community could watch the Grand Final in a fun alcohol-free setting.

After the event Guy and his coworker Yvonne Mandie (Indigenous Health Worker) handed out a five question survey to 15-39 year olds about sexual health. They also gave out information packs to community members which included a Condoman DVD and Comic Book and condoms. The survey showed some surprising results.

“We found that that 50% of respondents didn’t know what a sexually transmitted infection (STI) is. They hadn’t heard of the STI names like chlamydia or syphilis. They did know that you can get a bug that’s passed on from sex,” said Guy.

Another finding was that people don’t want to be visited or treated at home for sexual health. “We thought home visits helped overcome the shame factor but young people told us they are happier to come to the clinic. They wanted invitations to come to the clinic in a confidential envelope,” said Guy.

Two hundred people came to the event which is 20% of the population of Aurukun.

“People loved the event,” said Guy. “It was a very positive evening and the local Island and Cape shop has offered to support similar events in the future.

“The PCYC were great. They helped with the labour and staffed three BBQs for free. I spent three hours hand mowing the clinic lawn beforehand,” said Guy. “It was literally 65 catcher loads full of grass!”

Aurukun PHCC offers 24 hour access to condoms from a dispenser located on the wall outside the centre. The centre provides on average 50 condoms a week to the community.

Guy organised similar events in Mapoon earlier in the year which also has strong support from the community.

Guy Davies is moving to Brisbane this week after nine years with the Torres and Cape HHS. “My successor will have a lot of community based ground work that they can build on,” said Guy. Thanks Guy. We wish you all the best with your move.
Aged care residents enjoy outings to country

Weipa Aged Care Residents enjoyed a day outdoors recently with Julie Smith (Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Weipa) and Sarah Jackson (Relieving Physiotherapist).

The group visited Napranum which is traditional country for a couple of the residents. They then enjoyed morning tea in the Cultural Centre park at Evans Landing. After that they visited Mission River which is country to Colin Hall who is one of the residents.

“It was absolutely beautiful to listen to their stories and see the smiles on their faces,” said Julie.

Outings to country are now a regular part of the residents’ activities program.

Above: Julie Smith (Director of Nursing and Midwifery) with Aged Care Resident Roy Jingle.

Medical Imaging tops the State

If you need medical imaging results, Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service now has one of the best turnaround rates in the Queensland with 99.9% of results reported back to clinicians and 84% of these specialist reports are back to our clinicians within 24 hours.

This means that our clinicians have the tools to diagnose injuries and illnesses more quickly, resulting in a better quality of healthcare and services for our patients.

In July this year, Torres and Cape HHS engaged a new Medical Imaging provider, I-MED, for reporting of medical imaging which has led to the impressive reporting results.

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.
News from the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board

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• Discussion occurred around financial planning for 2015/16.

The Board held their September meeting at Bamaga Hospital. From left: Greg Edwards, Cr Fraser Nai, Bob McCarthy (Board Chair), Andy Marshall (Executive General Manager North), Ian Pressley (Executive General Manager South), Cr Horace Baira, Dr Ruth Stewart, Andrea Brophy (Board Liaison) and Brian Woods.
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- How to use hearing equipment (Otoscope, Tympanometer and Audiometer)
- Preparation for hearing screenings

Denise Newman (Ear Health Coordinator, Southern Sector) helped with the assessment. Students had to conduct hearing screening at Boopa Werem, Indigenous Day Care Centre in Cairns.

The feedback from the learners was very positive. They said that the training gave them more confidence, more in-depth knowledge around ear health, how to identify ear health conditions and strategies to use with clients, as well as how to use all the equipment for screening.

The training was run by the Central Australian Remote Health Services (CARHDS) which is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Registered Training Organisation.
Jack wins Aurukun ‘River to Ramp’ fun run

Jack Potter, Clinical Nurse Consultant at Aurukun Primary Health Care Centre, has won the inaugural River to Ramp fun run in Aurukun recently.

Jack ran the 7km race in 30 minutes and 40 seconds beating a very competitive field. Other runners included Paula How, Clinical Nurse who came second in the women’s division and Lyndsay Dent, Clinical Nurse who finished strongly!

The event was supported by the clinic who supplied hydration and encouragement along the run. The event was sponsored by Skytrans, with Jack winning a return flight to Cairns.

Syphilis cases increase

The Torres and Cape HHS has had an increase in syphilis notifications particularly in young heterosexual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Syphilis is a serious disease because pregnant women can transmit it to their baby, resulting in congenital syphilis, problems with baby growth or stillbirth. Syphilis infection can also increase the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission. Early syphilis is highly infectious, even when there are no symptoms.

Torres and Cape HHS staff are encouraged to increase testing, encourage condom use, and follow through with contact tracing where required.

For further information contact the Mens’ and Womens’ Health Program staff in your Primary Health Care Centre.

$3.5 million for sexual health

In October, the Queensland Health Minister announced that he has allocated a total of $3.5 million in 2015-16 to improve sexual health in north Queensland. Funds have been allocated to support Cairns, Torres and Cape, Townsville and North West Hospital and Health Services to address syphilis.

ABOVE: Clinics should provide easy access to condoms for clients to help prevent the spread of syphilis and other STIs. Napranum clinic (above) has condoms readily available.

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

Aurukun cheered on the Cowboys at NRL final night at an event organised by the Western Cape Mens' and Womens' Health team to help engage the community with sexual health services.

“It’s always a challenge to get the community talking about sexual health”, according to Guy Davies, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Mens' and Womens' Sexual Health. “But throw the football finals into the mix and the community will be keen to be involved.”

Guy and his team wanted to understand how sexual health service delivery could be improved in Aurukun. So they decided to do a survey with young people in the community and combine it with a huge outdoor NRL Grand Final event at the Aurukun Primary Health Care Centre.

The team hired a big screen and PA system from the Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) and had a BBQ so the community could watch the Grand Final in a fun alcohol-free setting.

After the event Guy and his coworker Yvonne Mandie (Indigenous Health Worker) handed out a five question survey to 15-39 year olds about sexual health. They also gave out information packs to community members which included a Condoman DVD and Comic Book and condoms.

The survey showed some surprising results.

“We found that that 50% of respondents didn’t know what a sexually transmitted infection (STI) is. They hadn’t heard of the STI names like chlamydia or syphilis. They did know that you can get a bug that’s passed on from sex,” said Guy.

Another finding was that people don’t want to be visited or treated at home for sexual health. “We thought home visits helped overcome the shame factor but young people told us they are happier to come to the clinic. They wanted invitations to come to the clinic in a confidential envelope,” said Guy.

Two hundred people came to the event which is 20% of the population of Aurukun.

“People loved the event,” said Guy. “It was a very positive evening and the local Island and Cape shop has offered to support similar events in the future.

“The PCYC were great. They helped with the labour and staffed three BBQs for free. I spent three hours hand mowing the clinic lawn beforehand,” said Guy. “It was literally 65 catcher loads full of grass!”
Medical Imaging tops the State

If you need medical imaging results, Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service now has one of the best turnaround rates in the Queensland with 99.9% of results reported back to clinicians and 84% of these specialist reports are back to our clinicians within 24 hours.

This means that our clinicians have the tools to diagnose injuries and illnesses more quickly, resulting in a better quality of healthcare and services for our patients.

In July this year, Torres and Cape HHS engaged a new Medical Imaging provider, I-MED, for reporting of medical imaging which has led to the impressive reporting results.

Above: Kara Croft, third year Sonography student, on a recent eight week clinical block placement at Cooktown Multi-Purpose Health Service. Kara enjoyed honing her sonography skills.

Medical Imaging tops the State

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

Aged care residents enjoy outings to country

Weipa Aged Care Residents enjoyed a day outdoors recently with Julie Smith (Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Weipa) and Sarah Jackson (Relieving Physiotherapist).

The group visited Napranum which is traditional country for a couple of the residents. They then enjoyed morning tea in the Cultural Centre park at Evans Landing. After that they visited Mission River which is country to Colin Hall who is one of the residents.

“It was absolutely beautiful to listen to their stories and see the smiles on their faces,” said Julie.

Outings to country are now a regular part of the residents’ activities program.

Above: Julie Smith (Director of Nursing and Midwifery) with Aged Care Resident Roy Jingle.