Message from the Chief Executive

I had the pleasure of visiting several facilities with Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, Shelley Nolan; and Dr John Wakefield, Deputy Director-General, Clinical Excellence Division in early March. The pair visited Kowanyama, Weipa, Napranum, Bamaga, Injinoo and Thursday Island. They met with staff and gained a better understanding of operations in some of our facilities.

Dr Wakefield also launched the 9th edition of the Primary Clinical Care Manual (see story page 4).

There have been some recent achievements as a result of the Regional Health Partnership (RHP) project. RHP has Chief Executive membership from our partners, RFDS, Apunipima, NQ Primary Healthcare Network and Torres and Cape HHS. In a significant milestone, Apunipima clinicians can now access Torres and Cape HHS Life Support training, mandatory training and Clinical Skills learning at no cost. This is one step towards working more collaboratively with our partners.

I attended a morning tea for the Working for Queensland Action Group this week and was pleased to see that this initiative has been driven by staff to address concerns from the 2016 staff survey. The Action Group has successfully embedded some excellent training initiatives to help address concerns about fairness, leadership and recruitment (see story on page 8).

Congratulations to staff in the Northern Sector who have had a surge in patient compliments and a decrease in complaints. Twenty-eight compliments were received in February alone.

Thanks also to the staff who have taken the time to review the draft Torres and Cape HHS Strategic Plan (2017-2021). I look forward to working with the Board to finalise a robust and clear strategic direction for our HHS. Your feedback is very important.

Regards

Michel Lok
Health Service Chief Executive
The February Board meeting was held in Cairns on 16 February 2017, the following matters were discussed:

• The Board endorsed the Torres and Cape HHS Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategic Plan 2016-2020. The plan outlines a vision to improve health outcomes through connected, integrated and supported ICT across the HHS.

• The Board endorsed the TCHHS Service Agreement Window 2 Amendment 2016-2017.

• The Board acknowledged the introduction of the Mental Health Act 2016 which came into effect on 5 March 2017.

• The Chief Executive provided an update on the Transition to Community Control Action Plan, and acknowledged the commencement of Emma Pickering as the Senior Project Manager.

• The January 2017 Finance Report was tabled and the surplus noted.

• The positive turnaround in consumer feedback in the northern sector was acknowledged. The north is now leading the HHS in the number of compliments received.

• The Board supports the ongoing commitment to not only the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Training Program but also the ongoing development of the overall ATSI workforce, and looks forward to hearing of ways in which that sector can be built and maintained.

News
from the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board

• The Australian Accounting Standards Board has extended the scope of Australian Accounting Standard Related Party Disclosures to include not-for-profit public sector entities such as Torres and Cape HHS. Consequently each Board member has completed a Related Party Disclosures document.

• Queensland HHS Board member recruitment is being administered centrally by a recruitment agency with announcements due in May. Two Board members from TCHHS – Members Scott Davis and Kaz Price - were among many across the State whose term expires this year. Both Scott Davis and Kaz Price have sought to be re-appointed.

Other activities
Board members and the Executive Management Team met to review the Torres and Cape HHS strategic plan on 15 February. The draft is currently out for staff consultation and Torres and Cape HHS is on track to provide the final version to the Department of Premier and Cabinet before the 31 March deadline.

Members Ruth Stewart, Greg Edwards and Fraser Nai met with Minister Fentinan (Communities, Women and Youth, Child Safety, Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) and Minister O’Rourke (Disability Services, Seniors and Assistant to the Premier on NQ) who toured the Torres Strait during the week commencing 13 March.

Chair Bob McCarthy attended a forum with Queensland Cabinet members and local Mayors in Cairns on 13 March.

The next Board meeting will be held in Cairns on 23 March 2017.
Baby boom hits Thursday Island Hospital

Above in no particular order: Meretha King from PNG via Saibai following the birth of her son on 3rd Jan; Patricia Kaigay from Murray Island and baby son born 4th Jan; Cessa Nai from Kubin Village and son born also on 4th Jan; Jade DeBruyn from Bamaga and daughter born on 5th Jan; Cheryl Tamwoy from Umagico with son born on 6th Jan; Seerah Nadredre from Bamaga with son born on 9th Jan; Elisha O’Shea from Horn Island with son born on 9th Jan; some of the staff Flo Ketchell, Pip Cox and Jan Presnell; and some of the proud dads and siblings.

It was a baby boom at Thursday Island Hospital in January. Seven babies were born in five days! Usually only two babies are born each week at the hospital. Six boys and one girl were born between 3 and 9 January.

Mums came from Kubin community on Moa Island, Papua New Guinea via Saibai Island, Bamaga and Umagico (both on the mainland in the Northern Peninsula Area), and Horn Island. Congratulations to the families and thanks to our wonderful staff for rising to the challenge.

ENT team new plans

The Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Working Group, pictured with their Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service (TCHHS) Excellence Award for Improvement in Health Service Delivery, is keeping up initiatives to help children in Cape York. The group is currently organising 12 more children for ENT surgery in March.

Five children from Wujal Wujal and seven from Hope Vale will be travelling to Cairns Day Surgery on 22 March for various ENT surgical procedures. The Working Group won an Excellence Award for their work in facilitating ENT surgery for 16 children from Cape York who were flown to Cairns in September 2016.

ENT surgery has an immediate impact on children’s overall health and wellbeing, as well as their social interactions. Improvements in their sleeping, breathing, hearing, and concentration at school, can occur almost immediately.
The 9th edition of the Primary Clinical Care Manual was officially launched in Cairns for all rural and remote health services in Queensland. The manual is developed every two years in a long-standing partnership between the Royal Flying Doctor Service Queensland and the Rural and Remote Clinical Support Unit which is hosted by the Torres and Cape HHS.

A wide range of clinical specialists and the various state-wide clinical networks also contribute to the work of reviewing, editing and endorsing each edition of the manual.

Launching the manual in Cairns, Department of Health Clinical Excellence Division Deputy Director-General Dr John Wakefield said many rural and remote health facilities had no medical officer immediately available and were generally staffed by nurses and health workers.

“In such situations, there needs to be clear protocols about what can be done and how to do it, as well as clear guidelines as to when a medical officer should be called,” he said.

“To aid this process, the manual sets out the precise scope of practice for endorsed and non-endorsed nurses, as well as for Indigenous health workers and isolated practice area paramedics and midwives.”


Healthier drinks for TCHHS

Lisa Jolliffe (Senior Dietitian, Weipa) will be reviewing the current drink supply for staff and visitors within our primary health centres and hospitals as part of a new project to implement the Healthier drinks at healthcare facilities: Best Practice Guide.

“Healthcare facilities play an important role in promoting the health and wellbeing of patients, staff and visitors,” said Lisa.

“Changing the supply of drinks and promoting water is important to encourage healthier behaviours.”

The project sites for the Healthier Drinks project within Torres and Cape HHS include: Weipa, Napranum, Mapoon, Cooktown, Wujal Wujal and Thursday Island.

Lisa will be visiting these sites throughout March and April to meet with staff and start collecting data about staff attitudes, access to healthy drinks, and barriers. Look out for the exciting initiatives that will be rolled out over the next six months.

The project will work in collaboration with the Apunipima ‘Tackling sugary drinks project’.

Welcome to Tegan Fahey who will be backfilling the Weipa Dietitian position during the project. Tegan completed her community and public health nutrition placement in Weipa in January 2016 and is excited to be back working in Weipa.

If you would more information on the project please feel free to contact Lisa Jolliffe at lisa.jolliffe@health.qld.gov.au
Welcome to seven new nursing and two new midwifery graduates who started with Torres and Cape in March.

Torres and Cape HHS Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery Lyn Wardlaw said the nine new nurses and midwives would work in a variety of different clinical areas throughout the region.

“We will have one new registered nurse each allocated to Weipa, Napranum and Cooktown and four to Thursday Island,” she said.

“They will work in the clinical areas of acute medical, surgical, emergency and community and primary health.

“We will also have the two midwifery graduates who will rotate between the birthing units at Cooktown and Thursday Island.”

“We are very excited to welcome these new nurses and midwives as they begin their careers with the Torres and Cape HHS,” she said.

“They are an important part of our team, and we value the contribution they will make.”

The new nurses and midwives would undertake a 12-month graduate training program that involved theoretical and practical assessments.

“Graduate nurses and midwives are provided support and mentorship by experienced staff to help make the transition from studying at university to life in the workforce,” she said.

“They have chosen a rewarding and fulfilling vocation that provides many pathways for career development, and is a fabulous way of serving our communities,” said Lyn.

New nurse graduates join Torres and Cape

Family Health Planning Day

Above from left: Midwife Rosemary Neale, with new registered nurses Courtney Pert, Clare Candler, Voleak La, Amylou Browne and Shari Wilcox. The other graduates will start in August.

Above: Family Health Staff participated in team building, training, and education workshops as part of their annual planning day.

Staff from the three program areas of the Family Health Unit were spotted in Cairns in December buzzing with enthusiasm about key performance indicators, targets, and strategic, operational and work plans.

The Unit comprises the Men’s Women’s & Sexual Health; Maternal and Child Health; and Senior Social Workers Child Protection Liaison Officers.

Melissa Dalzell facilitated an extremely powerful Team Building Program for the group - many of whom do not see each other face-to-face all year. Team work produced innovative spaghetti towers to say the least! The group used this opportunity to brainstorm the unit Charter which will be consolidated in the New Year. Denise Mansfield facilitated and kept us on track allowing for all participants to have honest input and robust conversations at the table.

Other highlights over the activity included - mandatory training with Basic Life Support, manual handling, drug calculations, and child safety ticked off the ‘to do lists’. Guest speakers included topics such as the Service Delivery Model, Transition Project, transition to Community Control, Check up funding, local visit reports, travel, Community Paediatrician presentations, cervical testing, mycoplasma genitalium, the prison project officer role, FNQ Hep B and Hep C, syphilis, the public health aspects of sexual health, and the social determinants of national and state health strategies. Phew! What an agenda! Participant evaluation feedback was very positive from all.

The Family Health Unit would like to sincerely thank our speakers for their time and efforts to ensure our activities were a wonderful success.
The Regional eHealth Project has started analysing the Information, Technology and Communications (ICT) infrastructure across far north Queensland in collaboration with Torres and Cape HHS and eHealth Queensland.

Acting Technical Delivery Manager, Brad Skerman said if ICT services are limited it can cause issues for staff across Far North Queensland, particularly at the most remote facilities.

“We are considering ways to make ICT more accessible for all remote facilities across the region,” said Brad.

“An important part of what we are doing is getting an understanding of the current ICT environment at each facility.”

“Soon we’ll start inspecting the Wi-Fi network currently available at facilities and begin negotiating plans for upgrades to meet future needs. We’ll do this with eHealth Queensland.

“Over the next couple of months you will see technical staff spending time testing the Wi-Fi networks to identify where we need to do more work,” said Brad.

Welcome to Tom Quinton who is our new podiatrist for Cooktown and Weipa. Tom’s position has been created as part of the Queensland Health’s Revitalisation of regional, rural and remote health services funding.

Tom will be based in Cooktown and will travel to Weipa each month. He will be particularly focussing on patients with diabetic foot disease.

Diabetes can damage the nerves and blood vessels in the feet, putting people living with the condition at risk of ulcers, infections and amputations. Every year, diabetes causes 4,400 amputations in Australia.

People with diabetes should ensure that their feet are routinely checked by either a podiatrist, doctor or educator but self-care can identify problems before they escalate.

“People with diabetes can lose feeling in their feet which means they may not feel a cut that could lead to an ulcer,” said Tom.

“They need to check their feet daily for any problems, wear appropriate shoes and moisturise their feet. I can work with patients to help them prevent and heal foot ulcers that can lead to hospitalisation and amputation.”

Tom will working closely with staff in the Endocrine and Wound Care Clinics.

To set up an appointment for a patient with Tom, please send a referral to either Weipa Integrated Health Service or Cooktown Community Health, or call 4043 0170.
Congratulations Sharon on 20 years

Congratulations to Sharon Booth, Senior Health Worker, Mapoon Primary Health Care Centre (pictured right). Sharon was recently awarded her 20 year service badge by Julie Smith, Director of Nursing - Weipa, Napranum and Mapoon.

Haemodialysis on TI expands

Thursday Island Hospital has been successful in obtaining funding to expand our current Haemodialysis Service. In the coming weeks there are plans to commence dialysis on our seventh patient.

“Our key priority is to allow patients to receive their haemodialysis as close to home as possible in the Torres Strait” said Andrea Mann, Nurse Unit Manager.

In order to continually improve this service Torres and Cape HHS has engaged with water technicians to offer specialist advice; purchased three more haemodialysis stations to accommodate the extra patients; and recruited staff to meet this demand.

“When the appropriate infrastructure has been installed it is expected that we’ll be able to increase our service to accommodate another two patients,” said Andrea.

“The unit is currently being equipped to manage nine patients with the capacity to increase,” said Andrea.

The Thursday Island Haemodialysis Unit is on the ground floor of the Community Wellness Centre (CWC) next door to the Thursday Island Hospital.

Health check on Mer (Murray Island)

The recent Child Health Screening on Mer (Murray Island) was great success in partnership with Tagai School and the Primary Health Care Centre. Pictured above are some of the staff enjoying the beautiful scenery during time off between health checks!

Above: Haemodialysis Registered Nurse, Hape Manaena, performing the weekly water tests to one of the new water filtration devices.
Working for Us

Action Group

Morning teas are being coordinated by the ‘Working for Queensland Survey Action Group’ to share initiatives in response to the results of the 2016 ‘Working for Queensland Survey’ (formerly known as the Employee Opinion Survey).

The Action Group comprises staff from all over the HHS in a range of professional streams. So far the Action Group has facilitated changes in feedback processes; training to ensure fairness in recruitment; line manager training; performance appraisal training; and customised training for units on topics like communication, conflict resolution and team building.

The Action Group is working on addressing key concerns with regard to organisational fairness and trust; performance and development; leadership and engagement; and eliminating bullying.

Please look out for the morning tea in your facility and pop down to have a cuppa, a chat and find out more.

Remembering

Jack Sagigi

The late Jack Sagigi will be fondly remembered as a hard worker and a valued and long-standing employee of the Torres and Cape HHS family. He was well liked and respected by all who knew him.

Jack started Torres Strait Northern Peninsula Health Service in 2006 as a wardie at the TI Hospital and later moved across to be a courier driver up until his retirement.

Jack made many great contributions to the health service. He was always willing to go the extra mile for anyone who needed a ride. Every new person was welcomed on his bus and he took a lot of pride in his job, keeping the bus clean and fresh. The thing that most visitors will remember about Jack is that he entertained his passengers with music and songs. Riding in the bus with Jack was a pleasure for staff and patients alike. Jack’s love of life and enthusiasm was infectious.

Jack was a remarkable man and for those of us that had the privilege of calling him “Uncle Jack or Awa Jack” we were humbled by his kindness and compassion. He was a joy to be around, always a willing hand and anxious to please.

Our deepest sympathies are with Jack’s family and friends at this time. Jack, you will be well-remembered by your friends and co-workers.

Excerpt from eulogy by Charlotte Tamwoy

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 5974