Message from the Chief Executive

We have several strategic projects in the early stages which will bring important changes and improvements to our HHS.

The Regional eHealth Project is well underway with the selection process for the organisations to deliver the eHealth solution almost completed. (See story inside.)

We are soon to appoint a Transition Project Manager to help us work with Apunipima to transition primary health services in Aurukun to community control from July 2017. The Project Manager will be working closely with the Regional Health Partnership team.

We are hosting the Project Officer for the Sexually Transmissible Infections Action Plan for North Queensland. The Project Officer is supporting the CEs of five HHSs to address the syphilis outbreak which is disproportionately effecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in north Queensland. $15.8 million has been allocated to this Action Plan over three years.

I am also meeting regularly with the Quality, Safety and Risk Unit in the lead up to the accreditation of our HHS in September 2017. (See story inside.)

This month the Board and Executive Management Team are reviewing the 2016/17 TCHHS Strategic Plan and preparing an update for the 2017/18 year.

Regards

Michel Lok
Health Service Chief Executive

Marita wins Australia Day award

Congratulations to Marita Sagigi, Senior Scientist with the Pathology Unit on Thursday Island, who has won a Torres Shire Council Australia Day award for her work improving pathology services in the northern sector.

Marita nominated the Badu Island Health Check team for a Torres and Cape HHS Quality Improvement Excellence Award in May 2016 and they successfully won the award for achieving excellent pathology results for the health check. Not only were there 154 samples with no invalid samples, almost 100% were eligible for Medicare billing.

Marita said that initially she was shocked to have received the award for her day to day work.

“I was under the impression I had been nominated for my involvement as a volunteer in community events over my past 11 years living on Ti,” she said.

“Then to realise it was in recognition of the work I do day in and out at the Pathology laboratory on Thursday Island made me feel very proud and that my work is appreciated by people in the community,” said Marita.

“The award was not only recognition for myself BUT for the great team I work with,” she said.

Marita’s team has also exceeded the National Standards for Blood Safety and achieved zero blood product wastage for the Northern Sector last year.

Well done Marita and the team!

Above: Marita Sagigi (far left) with the Pathology Unit team (from left) Penny Mills, Kathy Lewin, Moana Ahwang and Narelle Bennett.

The Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Board will then hold its monthly Board meeting on Thursday 16 February. A full summary of the Board meeting will be provided in the next newsletter.
Congratulations to the Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) Working Group for winning a Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service (HHS) Excellence Award for Improvement in Health Service Delivery.

In March 2016, the Working Group was formed to deliver a solution to the problem of fragmented and ad-hoc ENT services in Cape York which caused many Cape York children to be on waitlists for surgery. As a result of six months of determined attention, The Working Group facilitated surgery for 16 children from Cape York who were flown to Cairns in September 2016.

Working Group members are Ann Richards (Manager, Public Health, South), Denise Newman (Ear Health Coordinator, South), Debi Dean (Telehealth Nurse Manager, South) and Karyn Dermanis (ESO, Medical Services).

The Working Group partnered with CheckUP, and ENT surgeon Dr Sukhbir Ahluwalia (Dr Suki) with support from Apunipima Cape York Health Council, the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) and the RoyalFlying Doctor Service (RFDS).

Denise Newman, Ear Health Coordinator, Torres and Cape HHS, coordinated and organised the delivery of the project including the planning and logistics of getting the children and their families to Cairns and meeting each of the children and their families to help them understand what was involved and gain their support.

Torres and Cape HHS Executive Director of Medical Services, Dr Kate McConnon, nominated the group for their dedication and the outstanding outcomes for Cape York children.

“The Working Group had a high level of commitment and worked very hard to help these children,” she said.

In November, nine of the children had follow up assessments with Dr Ahluwalia using Telehealth in Aurukun. The Telehealth consultations were coordinated by Debi Dean and Denise Newman and were very successful.

“The children were very happy and excited to see Dr Suki again and to see him on the Telehealth screen,” said Denise.

“All the parents were very happy,” said Denise. “All the kids can hear well. Of the nine children seen, only one needed further follow up.”

Furthermore, the attending community paediatrician has advised of reported improvement in the children’s attention and concentration in school.

“This ENT project was a great project benefitting Cape York children. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children experience some of the highest levels of ear disease and hearing loss in the world, with rates up to 10 times more than those for non-Indigenous Australians,” said Dr McConnon.
The oral health leaders from across the Torres and Cape HHS met in Cairns in January to plan out the year’s services - and practised what they preach with a healthy food choices. This was the first Business and Operational Planning Day for the senior team of the Torres and Cape HHS oral health service. It was an opportunity for the team leaders to discuss the implementation of the Business and Operational Plan 2017 that has been prepared for the dental team in accordance with the TCHHS service objectives.

The team works geographically apart and the opportunity to have two days for face to face discussion was very valuable and productive. There were a number of guest speakers on specific topics including the Central Sterilisation progress; Building partnerships with Rheumatic Heart Disease services in the Cape; the Fluoridation debate in Queensland; Demonstration of intra oral cameras for use in the Dental Telehealth Project; Accreditation and the implications for the oral health service; and, Linking with the media.

Lexine recognised for her dedication

The Cooktown community recognised Lexine Schaper with a nomination for Cook Shire Council Australia Day Award, Citizen of the Year.

Although Lexine didn’t win the title, staff at Cooktown are very proud of her nomination and say she is an unsung hero.

Dr Tash Coventry, Medical Superintendent, said that Lexine is a great community support person and has been a Clinical Nurse Child Health for many years.

“Lexine provided a back-up service for regional pet owners prior to Cooktown having a dedicated veterinary service. Known to many local families, Lexine is dedicated to her work and continues to support our community,” said Tash.
Getting ready for accreditation

TCHHS is undergoing an organisation-wide accreditation survey, for the first time since its amalgamation in 2014. The survey team will be visiting the Torres and Cape from 4-15 September 2017.

Accreditation broadly falls into two categories:

- The assessment of how the organisation ensures the delivery of safe quality care for patients
- The assessment of safe, effective and efficient provision of services by staff.

The overarching purpose of accreditation therefore, is to maintain patient safety and quality of care.

TCHHS services will be assessed against two sets of Standards:

1. The National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS) and
2. The Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Health & Community Services Standards.

Michel Lok, Chief Executive, said that a lot of emphasis is put on preparing for accreditation and providing evidence to the survey team that we meet the Standards.

“However accreditation should not be seen as a ‘stand alone’ event,” he said.

“It is a reflection of how we run our services every day. We don’t just ‘do things for accreditation’. Our systems are set up to comply with the Standards to ensure that we deliver safe and effective care – every day - regardless of when the next accreditation visit is happening,” said Michel.

“Accreditation is the opportunity to showcase the good work that TCHHS does in providing care to the residents of the Torres and Cape,” he said.

Often we forget to document and create evidence of all the things we do that support the services we deliver. For example, recording quality improvement activities, or community engagement events, or documenting staff meetings. It is these activities that provide invaluable evidence for accreditation.

The Quality Safety and Risk (QSR) Unit has undertaken an organisation-wide gap analysis and has developed workbooks and task lists that will guide all our facilities through the activities that need to be completed or monitored for accreditation. These will be distributed shortly.

In addition to this, Isobel Moase (Quality Coordinator) and Alison Males (Patient Safety & Quality Manager), will be visiting a number of sites to conduct pre-accreditation assessment visits to help the facilities prepare for accreditation. More information about these visits will be sent out soon.

Accreditation will be undertaken by TCHHS’ accreditation agency - Quality Innovation Performance (QIP).

For queries about accreditation and the Standards visit the QSR homepage.
The Regional eHealth Project (ReHP) has completed the initial assessment of the partner organisations shortlisted to deliver an eHealth solution for Torres and Cape HHS.

Three detailed assessment processes have been undertaken with important contributions from Torres and Cape HHS and Cairns and Hinterland HHS staff.

ReHP Director, Scott Pickard, said the teams have been carefully evaluating companies to partner with us to tailor an eHealth system to best meet the needs of patients and clinicians across the whole of the Far North Queensland.

“We will then work closely together to implement a system that will allow enhanced and secure access to patient information.”

“The ultimate goal is to provide better patient care and improve the delivery of local healthcare services,” said Scott.

“We are very happy with the high standard of the proposals we have received from our shortlisted partners and we are very confident of bringing a high quality solution to our region. This will be coordinated with our ongoing mapping of local work processes,” said Scott.

Principal Business Analyst, Caroline Taunton said the Business Analysis team had been visiting sites in our region to have a chat with staff about what they are doing.

“We have a new member, Therese Reade, who has worked at Weipa, Cooktown and Thursday Island. We will be visiting Napranum and Mapoon and revisiting Weipa in the coming weeks to keep improving our understanding about the work they are doing,” said Caroline.

Patients in the northern sector now have a new physiotherapist and podiatrist based on Thursday Island.

Betty Mareko is a new Physiotherapy Rural Generalist. Her training program position is funded for two years by AHPOQ and includes a study program provided by JCU for early career professionals to develop rural and remote practice skills.

The Program will also allow the team time to develop a skill share service model to improve allied health services to the Outer Islands. Betty is passionate about Indigenous health and hails from the central cluster of the Torres Strait Islands. We also look forward to welcoming a dietitian Rural Generalist trainee next month.

Christopher Paea is a new podiatrist with his position funded by the Revitalisation of Regional, Rural and Remote Health Services Program. Christopher is enthusiastic about helping patients with their feet and lower limbs. Christopher will be particularly able to help diabetic patients with their foot problems.

Betty and Christopher commenced in January 2017 and are based at Thursday Island Community Wellness Centre.

Please contact the Director of Allied Health North, Robyn Glynn, for further information about Allied Health services on 4030 6148 or robyn.glynn@health.qld.gov.au
Champions visit Wujal Wujal

The Wujal Wujal Queensland Government champions visited staff at the Primary Health Care Centre recently. Above from left: Director-General, Dept of Science, Information Technology and Innovation, Jamie Merrick; CMPHS Medical Officer, Jane Tierney; Senior Health Worker Wujal Wujal, Anna Cleary; Hon. Leanne Enoch, Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business; and Vince Connellan, Director of Nursing, TCHHS.

New aged care funding for Weipa and NPA

The Commonwealth Government has announced a total annual funding package of $708,882 for the provision of additional aged care places at Weipa and Bamaga.

Torres and Cape HHS Board Chair, Bob McCarthy, said this is great news for both communities. “The $282,882 allocated annually for Weipa will deliver an additional four high-care beds within our existing aged care facility at the Weipa Integrated Health Service and expand aged care services to meet growing demand on the Western Cape,” said Mr McCarthy.

“We also have an 11-bed aged care unit already servicing the Eastern Cape at Cooktown Multipurpose Health Service,” he said.

At Bamaga, the $426,000 annual funding allocation will help deliver a brand new aged care service not previously available in the Northern Peninsula Area.

NPA residents requiring aged care support in a residential setting currently have to relocate elsewhere, generally to Cairns, to access such accommodation.

“They have to leave their families and friends behind and this is gut-wrenching for them,” said Mr McCarthy.

“But thanks to this funding support, they will be able to access those services close to home, family and friends once we have made some necessary structural changes to Bamaga Hospital to accommodate the six aged care beds that will be funded.”

eTravel for staff & patient travel bookings

Coming soon to Torres and Cape HHS
Otitis media training

Thirteen nurses and one health worker completed the two-day Otitis media training in Cooktown last year.

This year a ‘Course in Ear and Hearing Health’ will also be running with 4 core and 2 elective units. The electives are ‘Ear canal micro suctioning’ and ‘Performing tympanometry’.

For details email denise.newman@health.qld.gov.au

Mapoon’s new wheels help patients

Mapoon Primary Health Care Centre has taken ownership of a new Toyota Hiace people-mover.

Mapoon has no public transport system which makes it difficult for patients to get to Weipa for appointments.

Previously patients were transported to Weipa in a five seat Ford Ranger 4 wheel drive. The old car’s seating capacity meant that sometimes many trips had to be made each day. This can take up to 1.5 hours each way in poor conditions during the wet season.

The bus will help patients to attend clinical appointments at the Weipa Hospital or travel to the Weipa airport for appointments in Cairns. The bus is used to transport multiple patients daily between Mapoon and Weipa.

The new bus has a 10 seat capability with an enclosed caged area for safe transport of small cargo.

The new people-mover has also been converted to a 4 wheel drive as it travels approximately 140km each return trip to Mapoon on mostly unsealed roads.

This new bus will help Torres and Cape HHS to continue to provide a high level of health care to the residents of Mapoon.

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