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Your local health news | June/July 2017



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Cover: Dr Sam Maloney and Shannen Fentiman from Pathology Queensland.

See story on page three about a Gold Coast Health initiative to reduce unnecessary pathology testing.



# Board News

## Message from the Chair – Ian Langdon

### Community input a key to better healthcare

**I believe one of the most critical building blocks for delivering improved health care is to communicate effectively with our community, the users of our services.**

When I say communicate, I mean two-way communication.

Gold Coast Health has many communication tools to inform the community about our achievements, new initiatives and improvements to our services, and to tell the stories about our many skilled, compassionate and committed employees.

More importantly, we have many ways to receive feedback from the community. We encourage patients, carers and family members to speak up and share their views and experiences to help us deliver healthcare that meets the needs of the community. This helps us to understand what is important and to identify what is working well, and what areas may need improvement.

Patients are able to provide feedback direct to the staff members providing care.



Community members at the first meeting of the new Consumer Advisory Group

You can also provide formal feedback — a compliment or a complaint — direct to our Patient Liaison Service.

We like to hear when we have done a great job and it is pleasing to receive appreciative feedback about the quality and compassionate care provided by our staff.

Another important way that we receive community input is through our Consumer Advisory Group (CAG), a group of community members who provide advice, feedback and guidance to our organisation.

We recently called for expressions of interest from the community for a new CAG and I was pleased that we received more than 50 applications from interested people. The final group of 20 consumers was selected based on their health experiences, community networks and diversity.

The CAG meets quarterly as a group and members also participate in committees and working groups on various health

topics and services that would benefit from consumer input.

I am a member of the CAG and have been impressed by the passion and energy of the group and look forward to their contributions.

Without doubt, community and consumer input to the health service is invaluable and leads to improved care.

At our first meeting recently, I said that the CAG members and all users of our services should never hesitate to put their views forward. We need you as much as you need us. Our clinicians want to hear from you as they want to deliver the best outcome we can.

You can share your valuable feedback by contacting the Gold Coast Health Patient Liaison Service on [GCPLS@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:GCPLS@health.qld.gov.au) or by calling (07) 56872048.

If you would like to learn more about how you can connect with Gold Coast Health, check out our social media platforms and visit our recently updated website: [www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au).

## Hundreds of patients home sooner

**More than 500 patients have benefited in the first year of our Geriatric Evaluation and Management in the Home (GEMITH) program.**

The program involves a team of medical, nursing and allied health professionals supporting patients in returning home sooner.

Nurse Unit Manager Hilary Peters said the patients, most over age 65 and with geriatric syndromes, were assessed by one of

GEMITH's two geriatricians while in hospital to see if they could avoid a long stay in hospital.

"For example, a patient with a broken hip may have previously required a long stay in hospital for rehabilitation until they could care for themselves at home," Hilary said.

"Now in most cases a patient can go home and receive daily visits from our multi-disciplinary team to help them back to baseline health.

"We have doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, a dietitian, a pharmacist, an allied health assistant and social worker out on the road Monday to Friday."



## Patients benefit from pathology project

**A Gold Coast Health initiative to reduce unnecessary pathology testing for patients is attracting national interest.**

Since the Choosing Wisely Pathology pilot project was implemented 15 months ago, the health service has seen a two per cent drop in the number of tests ordered despite a 10 per cent increase in patient activity.

Gold Coast Health Choosing Wisely Pathology Project Manager Therese Kelly said the health service was ordering an average of 96,000 public pathology tests a month, which has now been reduced to an average of 93,500 while caring for a growing number of patients.

The reduction in ordering unnecessary tests has been achieved through medical, nursing, and pathology representatives working together.

“We are reducing unnecessary routine and repeat tests that don’t provide any benefits to our patients,” she said.

Ms Kelly shared Gold Coast Health’s strategy and success with other health professionals at the Choosing Wisely Australia National Meeting in Melbourne recently.

“Pathology testing is a vital tool for our clinicians in diagnosing and determining the most appropriate treatment for our patients.

“By collating data about pathology ordering practices, our clinicians could see where patients were receiving the same test too frequently with little benefit to their care.

“With this data providing a clear picture, doctors can then have conversations about what tests are best for managing patient diagnosis and treatment,” Ms Kelly said.

The project’s clinical sponsor and Gold Coast Health haematologist Dr Jeremy Wellwood said the project was having a real impact on patient care.

“This project encourages our doctors to only choose pathology tests that will make a difference to a patient’s clinical care.

“When you’re very unwell, you don’t want to have a test if you don’t really need one. Seeing the data on pathology orders first hand has enabled our clinicians to make wiser choices,” Dr Wellwood said.

Gold Coast Health became the first hospital and health service to join the national Choosing Wisely initiative with its pilot project and is nationally recognised as a Champion Health Service for commitment to providing value-based care in pathology testing.



*Dr Jeremy Wellwood and Therese Kelly are part of the Choosing Wisely project improving pathology ordering practices.*

## How to shoo the flu



*Expecting mum Jenn Griffith from Elanora receiving the flu vaccination at Robina Library.*

**Gold Coasters are being encouraged to get immunised for the winter flu season.**

Gold Coast Health’s Public Health Unit is undertaking immunisation clinics across the coast following the release of the new four-strain vaccination.

Dr Paul Van Buynder from the Public Health Unit said early immunisation was particularly important for pregnant Gold Coast women.

“We surveyed hundreds of women who gave birth at the Gold Coast University Hospital over the last six months and found that only 71 per cent were aware that they should have a flu shot during pregnancy and of those who were aware only 51 per cent went ahead and had the immunisation,” Dr Van Buynder said.

“There’s a triple benefit of having the flu shot during pregnancy — you can protect yourself from a severe disease, protect your unborn child from complications in utero and give your baby antibodies to fight flu when it’s born.”

Gold Coast mum and Gold Coast Health employee Jenn Griffith lined up for her free immunisation at Robina Library recently.

“It’s been many years since I had my first child and I think a lot more research has been done about the importance of immunisation during pregnancy, which is why I was keen to have my flu shot today,” Ms Griffith said.

“As an expectant mum, anything I can do to support the health of my child is a top priority.”

Dr Van Buynder said pregnant women and other high-risk individuals such as the elderly and young children can access free flu immunisations through their doctor or immunisation provider.

“In the first three months of this year we’ve have had almost 300 cases of influenza confirmed on the Gold Coast and we can expect to see that rise to more than 1400 cases a month during peak flu season.

“While we don’t know exactly what this flu season will be like, I’d encourage at-risk Gold Coasters and the broader population to talk to their doctor about their flu shot,” he said.

For more information on who qualifies for a government-funded vaccination and the upcoming Gold Coast Health immunisation clinics visit the immunisation page on the Gold Coast Health web site [www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/immunisation](http://www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/immunisation)

# A drop in falls will help all

Gold Coast Health is joining an international campaign to curb the number of presentations to emergency departments that result from falls.

With falls the fourth most common reason people present to our emergency departments, a recent No Falls campaign aimed to educate older people and their families on what they can do to prevent falling, which often leads to hospitalisation and a loss of independence and confidence for older people.

Clinical Governance, Education and Research Executive Director Professor Marianne Vonau said falls and fall-related injury was a major issue for all hospitals and health services.

“In 2016, nearly one in three people who came to our emergency departments at Gold Coast University and Robina hospitals as a result of a fall was aged 65 and over.

“Of those older people, 69 per cent were admitted to hospital with many undergoing rehabilitation with allied health experts to get them back on their feet. They are then often referred to our community services to continue their rehabilitation at home,” Professor Vonau said.

Falls in older people can be attributed to trips on raised obstacles such as rugs, cords or mats; slipping on wet or highly polished surfaces; tumbles and stumbles down stairs; falling off a ladder; falling over in a shopping centre or while using public transport.

Research shows that many falls among older people can be prevented.

Professor Vonau said the older people who invested in their strength and balance abilities could notice improvements in their enjoyment of life, mood, health, confidence and independence.

The theme of the recent No Falls month was ‘Stay strong, stay safe, stay on your feet’ and Gold Coast Health is encouraging the community to take steps to stay strong. Suggestions include:



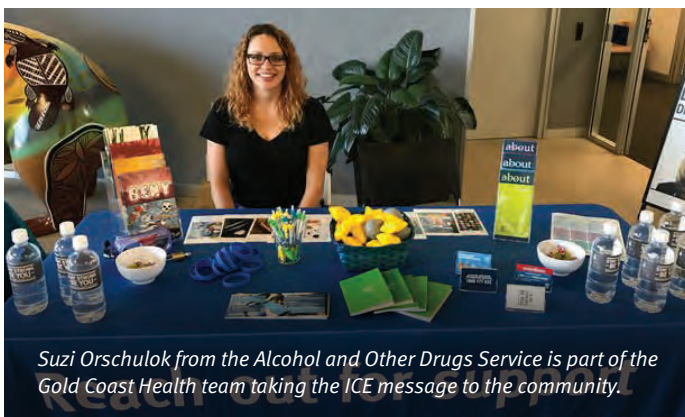
Patient John Patterson works with Assistant Director of Physiotherapy Jennifer Quail.

- adopting strength activities such as 10 leg raises and wall push ups 2-3 times per week or as directed by your physio
- improving balance with heel raises, yoga or Tai Chi
- checking your footwear is appropriate
- talking to your doctor about your medication every 12 months
- having your vision tested every two years.

Facts about falls:

- the number of people aged 65 years and older in Queensland is expected to more than triple in the next 20 to 50 years
- Queensland spends \$54 million a year on the treatment of falls in older people, which is more than twice as much as is spent on victims of road traffic crashes
- the number of hip fractures resulting from a fall in Australia is expected to double by 2026.

# Getting the ICE message to the community



Suzi Orschulok from the Alcohol and Other Drugs Service is part of the Gold Coast Health team taking the ICE message to the community.

**When it comes to treating ICE addiction, prevention is better than cure.**

Gold Coast Health’s ICE response team has been busy in the community, providing young people with vital information on the risks of alcohol and crystal methamphetamine (ICE).

Team members recently attended ‘Shout Out’ – a Youth Week community event at Upper Coomera Community Centre.

Interactive activities were used to highlight the impact of drugs and alcohol on young people’s lives. For example, fatal vision goggles simulate what it’s like to be under the influence of alcohol.

“The event was also a great opportunity to network with other organisations working in the youth field,” said Suzi Orschulok, from the Alcohol and Other Drugs Service.

A team member also attended the Karulbo Health Expo, providing a great opportunity to engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The ICE project team has been continuing to run its bi-monthly community forums on a range of drug and alcohol topics, providing information to high school students and teachers across the Gold Coast, as well as government and non-government organisations working with young people at risk of ICE addiction.

Gold Coast Health received state government funding in 2015 to develop ICE treatment options that are effective, efficient and collaborative.

If you would like to know more about the ICE project, please contact Suzi Orschulok on (07) 5687 9119.



## Our race to be ready for the Games



Commonwealth Games mascot Borobi during a recent visit to the GCUH children's ward.

With the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games less than a year away, the pace of planning for how our health service will continue to provide essential patient care during this time is well underway.

The Games competition period is 11 days from 4-15 April, with the Athletes' Village near Gold Coast University Hospital open for pre and post competition from 25 March to 18 April.

Gold Coast Health's planning is taking into account the number of staff who will be volunteering for the Games; attending events; or simply wanting to get away from the Gold Coast during this busy time (it's also Easter and school holidays).

Other considerations for planning include the impact on access and parking at Gold Coast University Hospital, with roads either closed or restricted to allow easy access of buses to ferry athletes between venues and the Athletes' Village.

Chief Operations Officer Kimberley Pierce said GCH's planning would ensure essential public healthcare services were maintained throughout this period, as well as providing designated hospital services to support the Games.

"We also need to be ready to respond to a disaster or emergency related to running of the event," she said.

For information on the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games, including ticketing, visit the official website: [www.gc2018.com](http://www.gc2018.com)

## New unit to support mums and babies

**Queensland's first public mother-and-baby mental health unit has opened at Gold Coast University Hospital.**

Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Cameron Dick, who toured the new facility recently, said the new unit will enable mothers diagnosed with acute postnatal disorders to receive treatment without the added anxiety of being separated from their babies.

"Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia figures show more than one in seven new mums and up to one in 10 new dads experience postnatal depression each year," the Minister said.

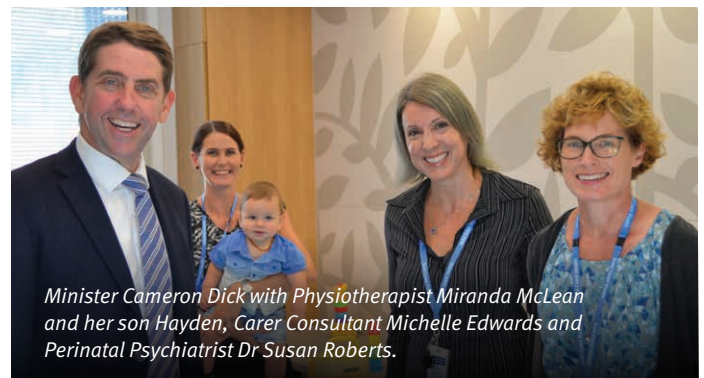
"While Queensland's public hospitals provide a range of perinatal mental health services, this is the first time mothers will be able to be admitted for treatment and support with their babies."

The new unit will ensure mothers with acute perinatal disorders can receive treatment while continuing to nurture and bond with their baby.

Mothers may be admitted following the birth of their baby with disorders such as severe depression, anxiety or a psychotic illness such as a bipolar mood disorder, schizophrenia or postpartum psychosis.

The four-bed mother-and-baby unit, called the Lavender Unit, is situated within a wing of an acute mental health ward.

Gold Coast Health Mental Health and Specialist Services Executive Director Karlyn Chettleburgh said perinatal psychiatrist Dr Susan Roberts, the lead clinician, is among the state's top specialists in this area and has been a strong advocate for services that support the health and wellbeing of both mother and baby.



Minister Cameron Dick with Physiotherapist Miranda McLean and her son Hayden, Carer Consultant Michelle Edwards and Perinatal Psychiatrist Dr Susan Roberts.

"She will be heading up a multidisciplinary team that includes experienced doctors, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists and other allied health workers.

"This team will be supported by an outreach community team that will provide pre and post admission transition and care," Ms Chettleburgh said.

Alongside the clinical services, patients will have access to members of the lived experience team – people who are able to offer peer support to mum and the extended families during their stay.

Michelle Edwards was treated for severe postnatal psychosis following the birth of her first child 24 years ago and is now using that lived experience as a carer consultant with Gold Coast Health.

"It can be a frightening and isolating experience for mothers trying to deal with their symptoms especially when needing to care for a new baby at the same time," Ms Edwards said.

"As someone who's had the experience of a postnatal disorder, I hope to have a positive impact on the mums coming through the Lavender Unit and give them hope for a brighter tomorrow."

## Coomera midwives mark first anniversary



From left, Sam Jackson with baby Summer, Alison Lind and Harper, Louise Mayes, Cassandra Frith with baby Andre and Katherine Pattie with Jake.

### Community-based Gold Coast Health midwifery service, Your Midwives Brygon Creek, has marked one year of serving Upper Coomera families.

Your Midwives Brygon Creek is a team of five midwives, including a lactation consultant, who deliver antenatal and postnatal care through clinics and home visits for families living in the postcode of 4209.

Acting Midwifery and Nursing Director Sue Rath said continuity of care was a successful model the health service aimed to replicate across the Gold Coast.

“We know the difference midwives make working with women and walking alongside women and their families. Pregnancy is a very important time, a significant life event for women.

“And we know the partnership that we have with our women really does set them up to have a positive birth experience and continuity of care, which is what we’re really focussing on,” Ms Rath said.

Since 1 July 2016, Your Midwives Brygon Creek has completed 1500 antenatal appointments, 3950 home visits to new mums and babies and this calendar year it is on track to help 500 families.

Your Midwives Brygon Creek is located at Level 1, 1 Brygon Creek Drive, Upper Coomera. For more information visit [www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/maternity](http://www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/maternity)

## Facts for families at epilepsy forum

Gold Coast Health has hosted a special event for families of children with epilepsy to mark National Epilepsy Awareness Month.

Dr Harry Singh, a Paediatric Neurologist and Associate Professor and Clinical Lead at Bond University Gold Coast, conducted the forum at Gold Coast University Hospital.

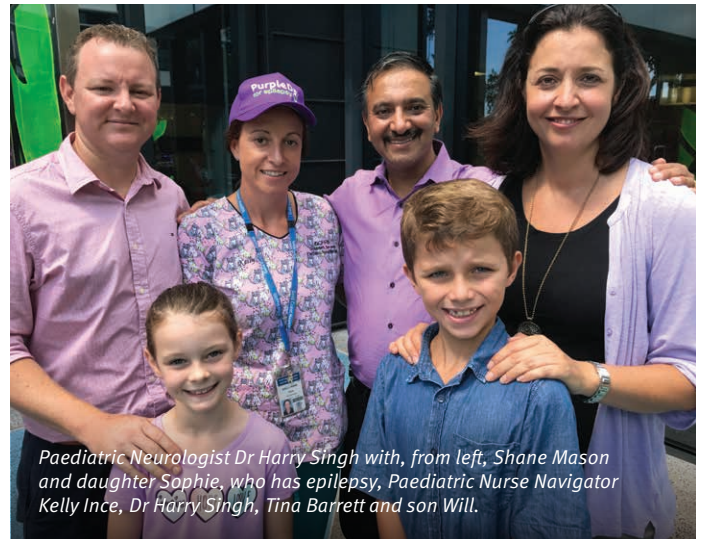
“There are many misconceptions about epilepsy which is not necessarily a lifelong disorder,” Dr Singh said.

The World Health Organisation lists epilepsy as the world’s most common serious brain disorder.

“On a local level, we know this condition affects hundreds of children and their families in our region,” he said

“People with epilepsy can face social stigma and exclusion, so it’s vital we raise public and professional awareness to help reduce this in our community.”

About 25,000 people in Australia are diagnosed with epilepsy each year.



Paediatric Neurologist Dr Harry Singh with, from left, Shane Mason and daughter Sophie, who has epilepsy, Paediatric Nurse Navigator Kelly Ince, Dr Harry Singh, Tina Barrett and son Will.

## Research program for adults who stutter

Gold Coast Health’s Speech Pathology Service is seeking participants for a research program for adults who stutter.

Participants will attend an intensive stuttering group program to be undertaken at Gold Coast University Hospital in two phases, from 21-23 June and 3-4 July.

“We are seeking adults (18 or over) who have a chronic childhood stutter and have not previously received Smooth Speech treatment, or are not maintaining stutter free speech as an adult,” said principal investigator Marie Hopper from the Speech Pathology Service at Robina Hospital.

The study will investigate the effectiveness of an intensive Smooth Speech group program delivered in a distributed model using student therapists.

The group will be run by Gold Coast Health Speech Pathologists with Professor Elizabeth Cardell from Griffith University Speech Pathology Program and Griffith University speech pathology students.

The program will offer participants:

- Pre-therapy assessment
- Three day “instatement phase” intensive Smooth Speech therapy program
- Two day “transfer phase” intensive Smooth Speech therapy program
- One-on-one and group treatment sessions each day
- One-on-one follow-up maintenance sessions post-program as required.

There is no cost for Medicare eligible patients.

For more information, please contact Marie Hopper, Speech Pathology Service, (07) 5668 6985, 0403 608 359 or email [Marie.Hopper@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Marie.Hopper@health.qld.gov.au).



## Brave Alliyah's fight for survival



Three-year-old Alliyah Broadby had to live in the ICU for 20 months but is now able to live at home with her family.

**For three-year-old Alliyah Broadby, breathing on her own has been a daily struggle that saw her put on permanent breathing support at just seven weeks of age. Thanks to the generosity of people in the community, Gold Coast Hospital Foundation helps to support patients like Alliyah by easing the distress of medical hardship on patients and their families.**

Born with a rare respiratory condition affecting the lungs and airways, little Alliyah spent the first 20 months of her life in hospital.

The brave Gold Coaster had a temporary breathing tube inserted in her mouth and was placed on a ventilator from birth. But after three attempts to remove the breathing tube, Alliyah failed to breathe on her own.

As a result, she underwent a surgical procedure called a tracheostomy where a permanent breathing tube was urgently inserted into her windpipe through the neck to help her breathe more easily.

For mum Kathryn, Alliyah's life-threatening condition meant she missed out on many special moments with her new baby.

"I never held her, never heard her cry. My first cuddle was when she was nine days old... she was covered in tubes, she'd not long been extubated and was trying to breathe through a nose snorkel for the first time and she wasn't coping at all. It was a very distressing experience," Kathryn recalls.

If the financial, physical and emotional stress of having her precious daughter in hospital under round-the-clock medical supervision wasn't hard enough, Kathryn and Alliyah's dad Mark lived in constant fear that each day could be their baby girl's last.

Alliyah was in grave danger of dying every single night when she would suddenly stop breathing as she slept.

Imagine how scared you would be if you had a child or grandchild who struggled to breathe and was fighting to survive night after night. This frightening and distressing situation was Kathryn and Mark's reality for nearly two years.

The challenges of continually being away from home and living between Brisbane and the Gold Coast had a huge impact on Alliyah's family. But in order to receive optimum care on the Gold Coast, the gorgeous little tot desperately needed access to specialist equipment.

"Being the first permanent patient in the Children's Critical Care Unit at Gold Coast University Hospital meant that Mark and I could go home at night and be with our other children. While it was hard leaving Alliyah every night, it brought some sort of normality back into our lives," Kathryn said.

After living in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for 20 months, Alliyah was finally discharged from hospital and began her journey adjusting to life at home with a tracheostomy and ventilator, under 24/7 supervision by her concerned parents and professional carers.

Thanks to the incredible care provided by Gold Coast Health doctors and staff, Alliyah reached another miraculous milestone in February 2017 when her tracheostomy was removed and she became ventilation free.

"We still have some hurdles to get over, but we are a lot more optimistic. Alliyah is one determined little girl, and seeing her smile, laugh and play without the restrictions she once had is priceless," Kathryn said.

There are many other children just like little Alliyah who must endure numerous surgical procedures and lengthy stays in hospital.

Gold Coast Hospital Foundation needs the public's support to help reduce the distress for children and adults facing medical hardship.

Please help other patients like Alliyah by giving a tax-deductible donation to Gold Coast Hospital Foundation. Visit [gchfoundation.org.au](http://gchfoundation.org.au) to learn more.

Please help other children like Alliyah receive the best medical care on the Gold Coast.

I'd like to make a gift of

\$35  \$75  \$150 \$..... (your choice)

Debited from my

Visa  Mastercard

I have enclosed a cheque payable to Gold Coast Hospital Foundation

Card No. ....

Expiry Date..... CCV No.....

Name on card .....

Signature .....



GOLD COAST  
HOSPITAL  
FOUNDATION

**Gold Coast Hospital Foundation**

Retail Tenancy 3, Gold Coast University Hospital  
1 Hospital Boulevard, Southport QLD 4215  
PO Box 23, Griffith University, QLD 4222  
(07) 5594 6986

[www.gchfoundation.org.au](http://www.gchfoundation.org.au)

## Our clinicians lead trial for trauma patients

**Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) is the lead site for a Queensland clinical trial to improve outcomes for severely injured trauma patients with critical bleeding.**

Twenty-eight patients have been recruited since the Fibrinogen Early In Severe Trauma study (FEISTY) trial was launched at GCUH in December 2016, with 12 of those being Gold Coast Health patients.

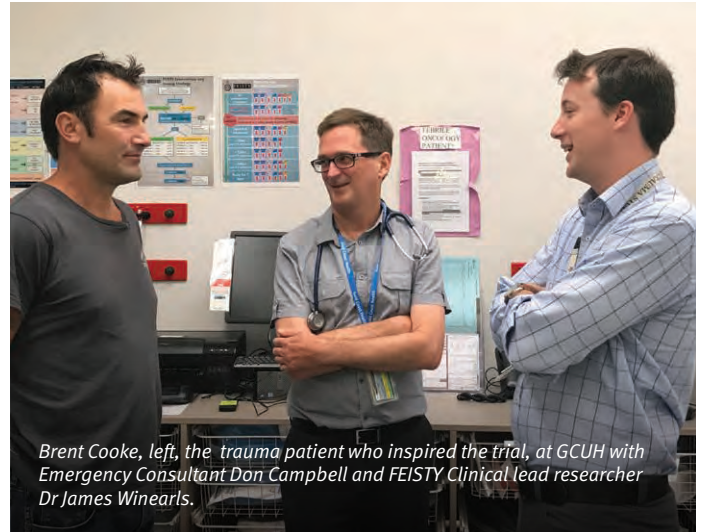
One hundred patients will participate in the research being conducted at four major trauma centres in Queensland — GCUH, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and Townsville Hospital.

The FEISTY clinical trial involves the multidisciplinary collaboration of multiple departments including Queensland Ambulance Service, ED, Trauma, Anaesthesia, ICU and Blood Bank. The research was made possible with more than \$600,000 in funding, including research grants from the Emergency Medicine Foundation, the National Blood Authority, and a Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service Grant. The trial is also being run in collaboration with the Australian Red Cross Blood Service.

Intensive Care Specialist Dr James Winearls is the Chief Investigator behind the Gold Coast investigations into the use of a concentrated blood clotting product early in the treatment of severely bleeding trauma patients.

"Fibrinogen is one of the key clotting factors that needs to be replaced in severe traumatic bleeding," Dr Winearls said.

"Currently Fibrinogen is replaced using Cryoprecipitate; a blood product obtained from healthy volunteer donors that can take a long time to administer and place significant strain on blood banks.



*Brent Cooke, left, the trauma patient who inspired the trial, at GCUH with Emergency Consultant Don Campbell and FEISTY Clinical lead researcher Dr James Winearls.*

"Essentially, this trial will seek to establish if administering fibrinogen concentrate is quicker and possibly more effective in reducing haemorrhage."

Acting Executive Director of Clinical Governance, Education and Research Professor Dr Greg Comadira said GCUH was well placed to lead the trial.

"GCUH has the busiest ED in Queensland and our trauma catchment area extends to Coffs Harbour, so there are many people in the Gold Coast and wider area that could benefit from the findings."

## BreastScreen online system success

**BreastScreen Queensland (BSQ) has launched an online booking system to provide women greater flexibility and convenience to be able to make their breastscan appointment any time.**

Queensland women can now register with the BSQ program, book and reschedule their appointments, manage their contact details, and view their correspondence (including invitations, reminders and results) via the BSQ website.

Following successful implementation of the BSQ online portal, the next phase has commenced to progress the delivery of electronic breastscan results to General Practitioners.

Where possible, electronic results will replace hardcopy letters — currently posted to GPs via an external mail house and Australia Post — which can take up to 10 days to arrive.

Benefits of this initiative will include:

- Faster delivery of results which can be received within a few hours of outcomes being determined
- Enhanced quality of care, via improved communications between GPs and the health sector
- Increased protection of patient privacy and confidentiality

For more information, visit the BreastScreen Queensland website: [www.breastscreen.qld.gov.au](http://www.breastscreen.qld.gov.au).



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Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service

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