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Oct/Nov 2017



Gold Coasters give so others live

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Cover: Queensland Ambulance Service and Gold Coast Health personnel participating in an emergency simulation training exercise. See story page three.



Board News

Message from the Chair – Ian Langdon



An organisation that cares as well as provides care

Gold Coast Health has steadily increased the range and complexity of locally provided health services thereby reducing the need for patients to travel to Brisbane for these services.

Gold Coast Health has transitioned from a significant regional health service into a major national supplier of advanced health care increasingly recognised for its excellence in service delivery, innovation and research.

Gold Coast Health employs more than 8900 staff, has an annual operating budget of more than \$1.3 billion and delivers healthcare to a rapidly increasing Gold Coast

population and millions of visitors each year.

Our recently released 2016–17 Annual Report documents our achievements, challenges and future plans.

A record number of patients presenting to Emergency Departments, a reduction in specialist outpatient wait times and new services contributing to quality patient care are featured in the report.

In the past year, Emergency Departments at Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital received 164,126 presentations—a 30 per cent increase from five years ago.

Gold Coast Health met and exceeded targets for clinically

recommended times in specialist outpatients while 15,902 patients received their elective surgery within recommended times.

Our performance in access and care is a source of pride for us and a credit to the staff that deliver the care and maintain the facilities in which we operate.

Looking ahead, comprehensive planning is well under way to ensure Gold Coast University Hospital, as the designated hospital for Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games in April, can continue to deliver a consistent level of quality care to the community.

In my position of Chair I have noted with pride an evolving culture that embraces diversity and inclusion not as an obligation but as a benefit to the organisation and to the community. Ongoing and exciting extensions to employment opportunities will be created for individuals with disabilities and those from disadvantaged sectors of the community.

My hope is that the community will increasingly recognise Gold Coast Health as an organisation that cares as well as one which provides care.

The 2016-17 annual report and Year in Review summary can be viewed on the Gold Coast Health web site.

Engagement strategy feedback invitation

Gold Coast Health is inviting community feedback on our new engagement strategy.

A draft 2017–19 Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy has been developed in consultation with our Consumer Advisory

group and community organisations and was further informed from stakeholder research.

The new strategy aims to help us to deliver better, safer and more targeted healthcare and enhance our connections with the community.

Gold Coast Health values the ideas and opinions of our community. You can review the draft strategy on our web site and provide feedback by completing a simple on-line questionnaire. See the “Get involved” section on our web site.

Testing time for emergency services



Gold Coast Health and the Queensland Ambulance Service took part in a joint exercise to prepare for multi-casualty incidents.

Gold Coast Health has joined with the Queensland Ambulance Service to prepare for major emergency incidents.

The 'Trauma on the Green' joint training exercise was held at the Gold Coast University Hospital to test the effectiveness of how QAS and Gold Coast Health would expect to respond to a multi-casualty incident.

QAS Assistant Commissioner John Hammond said a multi-casualty incident would typically include a major traffic crash, an explosion or a chemical spill.

"Our training exercise today mimicked a major traffic crash involving multiple vehicles and patients," Mr Hammond said.

"We had four crews responding to this mock incident and our paramedics needed to assess, triage and treat 17 patients before transporting them to the emergency department via stretchers.

"Training like this provides the opportunity to fine tune our response and our interactions with other agencies to ensure the best outcomes for our patients."

Gold Coast Health director of emergency medicine Associate Professor David Green said the exercise was a valuable way to test triage response at GCUH.

"We are the busiest emergency department in Queensland and one of the busiest in the country, so it's important to prepare for this sort of a mass casualty scenario," Dr Green said.

"While we work with colleagues from QAS every day, testing our emergency department response outside of normal operation is one way the community can have confidence in our processes should an incident occur."

Medical detectives find deadly bacteria

Painstaking medical detective work by Gold Coast Health staff has led to an international recall of contaminated ultrasound gel imported from China which infected at least 11 severely ill Australians.

Gold Coast University Hospital first detected potentially deadly bacteria, *Burkholderia cenocepacia*, in two intensive care patients in March, triggering a relentless search for the source of the outbreak.

When tests revealed four more Gold Coast ICU patients with infections caused by the bacteria, a call-out to hospitals nationwide found another five cases—at the Prince Charles Hospital in Brisbane, Redcliffe and Canberra.

DNA sequencing of the bacteria at Pathology Queensland revealed all 11 cases were connected, but more work was needed to uncover the source. Tests of saline and other medical products commonly given to the Gold Coast patients proved negative.

But after talking to a Gold Coast ICU doctor who had treated the infected patients, the outbreak was linked to a supposedly "sterile" ultrasound gel used to assist in the insertion of central lines.

All six Gold Coast patients had tested positive for the bacteria after having central lines inserted into blood vessels to allow medical staff to give fluids, medicines and nutrition.

Australia's medicines regulator, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, acted swiftly to recall the imported gel soon after the Gold Coast discovery. About 2500 packets of the gel in



Dr Sam Maloney and Professor Ramon Shaban in the Pathology Queensland laboratory at Gold Coast University Hospital.

hospitals nationwide were recalled on 12 May, about six weeks after the first Gold Coast cases were identified and within hours of the outbreak's source being discovered. All 11 Australian patients survived the infection.

Gold Coast University Hospital infection expert Ramon Shaban said the discovery had resulted in other countries, including the US, UK and Japan, recalling the contaminated product.

"We precipitated a global recall," said Ramon, a Griffith University professor of infection prevention and control.

Pathology Queensland microbiologist Sam Maloney, who's based on the Gold Coast, said blood infections caused by *Burkholderia cenocepacia* carried a death rate of up to 50 per cent.

He said he was proud of the Gold Coast team for being able to stop the outbreak at 11 documented patients Australia-wide.

"To put it in context, in most international reports of outbreaks with these environmental-type organisms the source isn't found. When it is, it usually takes several months or sometimes years."

*Based on an article by Sunday Mail journalist Janelle Miles.

Generous Gold Coasters save lives



Amanda Gilbert, Megan Jonas, Kate Dale and Bianca Topp.

Gold Coast organ and tissue donors helped save the lives of 1,448 Australian transplant recipients in 2016.

According to DonateLife data, Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) is Australia's fifth ranked tertiary hospital for organ donation rates with 20 organ donors and 116 tissue donors last year.

Tina Coco, DonateLife Queensland State Clinical Manager, said Gold Coast Health played an integral role in helping Queensland to reach record donor numbers in 2016.

"Over the years, Gold Coast has consistently had a high donation consent rate which illustrates the generosity of Gold Coast people," Ms Coco said.

"Gold Coast Health staff have embraced donation as a normal part of the end-of-life care and I believe that is reflected in the donor numbers we see from the Gold Coast year after year."

Gold Coast Health and DonateLife Queensland recently hosted a DonateLife Week seminar for staff and the community to promote the importance of organ and tissue donation and encourage registration.

Forum speakers included Gold Coast Health anaesthetic and recovery nurse Megan Jonas who received a life-saving organ transplant five years ago and trauma services nurse practitioner Kate Dale whose father was an organ donor three years ago, giving four people the most valuable gift of all.

Amanda Gilbert, Donation Specialist Nurse Coordinator from DonateLife Queensland, said Megan and Kate's deeply personal stories showed how organ and tissue donations gave many Australians a second chance at life.

"For many of those waiting for a transplant, organ and tissue donation can mean the difference between life and death," said Ms Gilbert.

In 2016, 106 Queensland organ donors saved the lives of 323 Australians, a 47 per cent increase from the previous year.

"With around 1,400 Australians waiting for a life-saving transplant, the generous act of organ and tissue donation has a far reaching effect, changing the lives of both transplant recipients and their families.

"If you've decided to become an organ and tissue donor, it's vital you join the Australian Organ Donor Register and let your family and friends know your wishes. Only 27 per cent of Queenslanders are currently registered on the Australian Organ Donor Register.

"Nine out of 10 families agree to donation when their loved one is a registered donor."

You can register to become an organ and tissue donor online in less than two minutes. To fill out the registration form, visit www.donatelife.gov.au and follow the simple prompts.



Donated organ gave Megan a second chance

Anaesthetic and recovery nurse Megan Jonas, pictured, knows first-hand the value of the Australian Organ Donor Register.

A diabetic since childhood, Megan had been on the donor waiting list for three years and was dying from kidney failure at age 34.

"I was in an induced coma and suffering seizures," Megan said. "My mum was told I wouldn't make it through the night."

An organ transplant was performed just in time and changed Megan's life dramatically – that was five years ago.

"I basically got my life back. I was able to finish my nursing degree and get this job with Gold Coast Health."

Megan is now being considered for a pancreas transplant, while continuing to work full-time. There are currently 1400 Australians awaiting transplant.

"I joined the Donor Register before I got sick, but the whole family is on board now they realise how important it is," she said.

"I respect people's right to choose to donate or not, but many don't realise how important it is until they know someone who has needed a transplant.

Hospital car parking concessions

Gold Coast Health has introduced parking concessions as part of the State Government's plan to improve access to car parking at public hospitals.

Eligible patients and primary carers will receive a \$5 parking discount at Gold Coast University Hospital and \$2 at Robina Hospital per day, bringing the daily parking rate down to a maximum of \$11.50 and \$3 respectively.

"We're pleased to be able to offer a parking concession as we know that in a hospital environment many people are experiencing difficult circumstances and parking costs can cause additional stress," said

Nigel Hoy, Senior Director of Operational and Support Services at Gold Coast Health.

"We've worked hard to establish a fair and equitable system that will allow as many eligible consumers as possible to access a parking concession."

To be eligible, Gold Coast Health patients or primary carers must:

- hold a Pensioner Concession, Seniors Health or Low Income Health Care Card
- attend hospital two or more times per week for specialist treatment
- require extended hospital admission
- be an ongoing Cancer, Haematology and Renal Dialysis treatment patient or a Newborn Intensive Care Unit carer.

A fact sheet and application forms are available online at www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au or from hospital reception desks.

Artwork helps create sacred space for birthing mums

Gold Coast Health has unveiled new artwork in one of the Gold Coast University Hospital birth suites in an effort to make its facilities more culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services Cameron Dick recently toured the birth suite and learned more about how a simple idea will make a difference for the 180 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies born at Gold Coast University Hospital each year.

“Bringing babies into the world in a safe and culturally respectful environment can have a positive impact as we work to halve the gap in mortality rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under five,” Minister Dick said.

“Transforming the birth suite is a simple way to help expectant mums feel more comfortable in a hospital environment.”

Quandamooka woman and Gold Coast mum Emily Webb was the first Aboriginal woman to use the suite when she gave birth to her fifth child, son Ned, on 8 July.

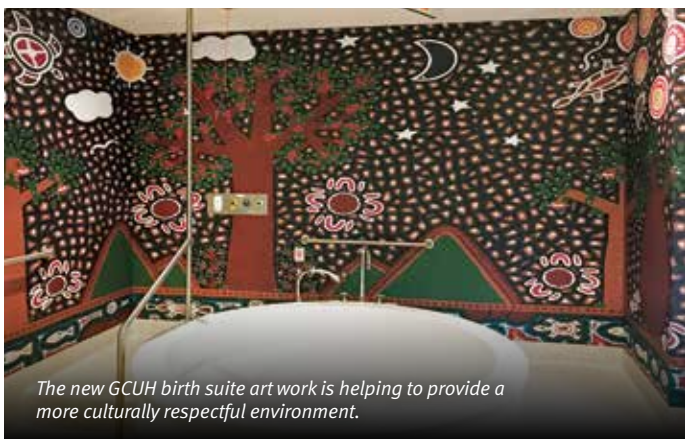
“I thought the wall art was beautiful and it made me happy and I felt really comfortable. It’s great that the hospital has an understanding of Aboriginal culture,” Ms Webb said.

Hazel Brittain, Service Director of the Women, Children’s and Newborn service area, said culturally appropriate and safe care is important for the women of the Gold Coast.

“We’re aiming to build stronger links with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and organisations to ensure that we are delivering culturally appropriate care to women at an incredibly beautiful and vulnerable time of their lives.

“We recently had an Aboriginal midwife join our growing Midwifery Group Practice and she’s playing a key role in helping educate our team on how to deliver culturally safe care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women on their pregnancy and birthing journey,” Ms Brittain said.

The painting by Gold Coast Aboriginal artist Narelle Urquhart shows community coming together to support and celebrate birth and takes in the beauty of the region’s natural surroundings including land, coast, mountains and diverse inland areas. The centrepiece Lilly Pilly tree reflects the good fruit of the human spirit from generation to generation, and the sun and moon represent eternal life.



The new GCUH birth suite art work is helping to provide a more culturally respectful environment.

Vulnerable women to receive specialised midwifery care



GCH Midwife Navigators, Diane Tamariki, Bethan Townsend and Bee Schaeche who will work with vulnerable pregnant women on the Gold Coast.

A Gold Coast Health team of experienced midwives will become the first in Queensland’s public health system to specialise in supporting expectant mothers with substance abuse and mental health issues.

Three experienced midwives will lead the Midwifery Navigator service to coordinate care between the mother, her primary carer, specialists and health professionals prior to, during birth, and for up to six weeks after birth.

The Midwife Navigators will help vulnerable pregnant women at the Gold Coast who are often not engaged with the health system.

The will co-ordinate appointments and escalate their care when necessary, which will lead to an improvement in perinatal outcomes for women, their babies and families.

Diane Tamariki, one of the three navigators, said demand is expected to be strong.

“One the first day of operation for our service, we had 40 referrals already,” Ms Tamariki said.

“The three of us are looking forward to being able to work closely with mothers, their primary carers, specialists and health professionals in an effort to improve health outcomes for these vulnerable women and their babies.”

Midwife Navigators will be involved with the care of local mums intensively through pregnancy and for up to six weeks after birth. The Midwifery Navigators will endeavour to follow up with clients at three, six and 12 months after birth.

The Midwifery Navigators will add to the Nurse Navigators program to become the total of 50 employed across the broader health service in the coming years.

The Navigator role is a joint initiative of the Office of the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer and Gold Coast Health.

24/7 kids emergency ready to support Gold Coast families

Gold Coast families have access to 24/7 emergency care with a dedicated nine-bed Children's Emergency Department now fully open at Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH).

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services Cameron Dick said the Gold Coast has seen a more than 60 per cent rise in paediatric emergency presentations since GCUH was opened in September 2013.

"Every month, the paediatric emergency specialists at GCUH are treating more than 2000 children aged under 18 and of those at least 20 cases are life threatening," Minister Dick said.

"With the growth in demand and acuity, it's great for Gold Coast families to now have a total of nine dedicated 24/7 emergency beds for children, and all of the specialist staff required to support those beds when they need them most."

Gold Coast baby Tupui Ariki Henry was born with his umbilical cord connected to his bladder and his parents Aroha Dinsdale and Richard Henry brought him back to GCUH to see paediatric emergency department specialists when his umbilical cord became infected.

"We've had incredible support from the doctors and nurses at GCUH, and it's great that they have these specialist services for children in the emergency department," she said.

"The doctors and nurses really worked with me, they listened to me as the mother. The staff were amazing — from the midwife who was on shift when I gave birth, the community midwife who visited me and Tupui days after we got home, to the surgeon who identified the cause of the problem and then the Children's Critical Care staff," Ms Dinsdale said.

An initial four 24/7 paediatric emergency beds were opened at GCUH in August 2016 and an additional five beds were opened in May 2017 to take the total to nine dedicated 24/7 paediatric emergency department beds.

The opening of these beds for critically ill Gold Coast children is a timely reminder for parents to continue to access their local GPs for non-urgent cases.



Paediatric specialists Dr Graham Jay and Dr Christa Bell with Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services Cameron Dick during a visit to the children's ED.

Cool project to benefit child health



An artist's impression of the Kool Kids Centre of Growth.

Children are set to benefit from a unique childcare and child development facility to be built in the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct (GCHKP), adjacent to the Gold Coast University Hospital.

Childcare operator and founder of 'Kool Kids' Bruce Coulson has contracted to purchase one of the prime greenfield sites within the 200 hectare health and innovation hub, and is working with Gold Coast Health, Griffith University and the GCHKP project office to make the facility an integrated, one-stop-shop to support child health, development and research.

Mr Coulson said the facility would provide much-needed childcare for families working in the precinct and 40 per cent of the places will be filled by children with special needs.

"Kool Kids Centre of Growth will be an eight-level building with a three-level child care centre and five levels of children's medical facilities. Children will be able to easily access doctors and specialists within the comfort and familiarity of their day-care centre," Mr Coulson said.

The integrated model will make it a lot easier for parents of children who require regular appointments with paediatric specialists and other health professionals, according to Dr Doug Shelton, Clinical Director, Community Child Health.

"It's very difficult for parents whose children require a lot of support and they often have to leave their jobs to keep up with the multiple appointments," Dr Shelton said.

"An innovative model like this can make it a lot easier for families and also supports collaboration between health professionals, child-health researchers at Griffith University and the childcare educators."

"It's all about integration and all of the children who attend childcare will benefit — special needs children will benefit from being part of a mainstream model that is well-established in education at the school-age level, and the other children will learn from a young age about accepting difference."

The Kool Kids Centre for Growth will be a stand-out building as its proposed design takes inspiration from the blocks in the children's game, Jenga, providing a fun and interesting facade in the precinct.

"It is full of fun and it mirrors the building blocks of life," Mr Coulson said.

"This facility is about providing a fun, nurturing and caring environment where all children can join together, no matter what their special needs."

Young cerebral palsy patient defies the odds

Thomas Wiltshire is now standing and walking thanks to specialist equipment funded by generous community donations.



Thomas was born three months prematurely.

The birth of a baby is a time of excitement and joy, but for local Gold Coast parents Kate and Stephen, the sudden and dramatic arrival of their son Thomas in October 2014 sparked an emotional and distressing journey filled with constant worry.

Born three months early suffering a bilateral brain bleed, Thomas struggled to eat and spent the first four months of his life in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Gold Coast University Hospital.

Kate and Stephen weren't sure if their precious son would live, but miraculously their tiny battler survived and after 119 days in hospital, Thomas was finally able to go home with his loving parents.

The Wiltshire family were dealt another devastating blow when, at five months of age, young Thomas was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Nobody knew if Thomas would ever stand or walk by himself, but one vital piece of physiotherapy equipment gave his family hope that Thomas would one day defy the odds.

Thanks to generous community donations, Thomas was able to borrow the specialist Leckey Totstander equipment purchased by Gold Coast Hospital Foundation to practice standing every day at home.

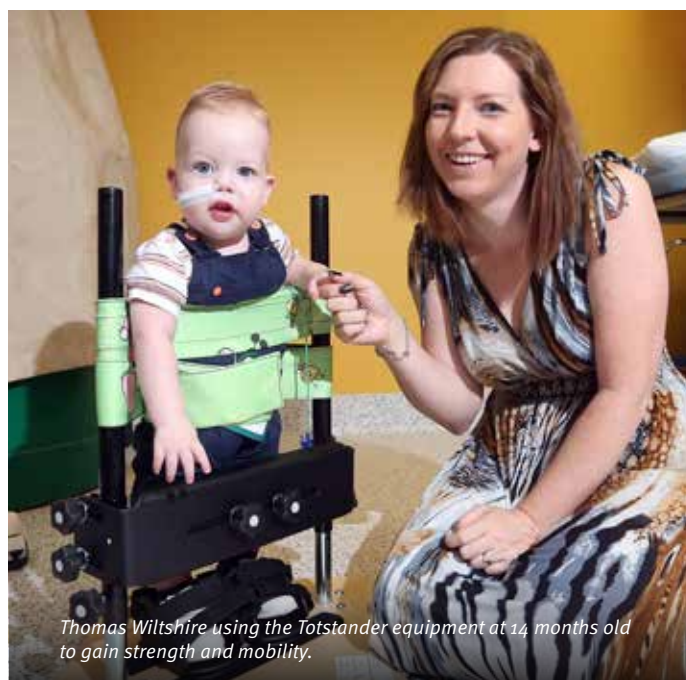
This essential equipment provided secure support that helped Thomas stand upright and strengthen his muscles.

"It was quite amazing to see the change in Thomas's confidence," Kate said. "The Totstander gave him the freedom to stand and use his hands for play and occupational therapy exercises."

Motivated by the support the Totstander gave him, Thomas persevered and was standing holding onto the family's sofa within a couple of months.

"At first we were scared Thomas would never stand alone," Kate said.

"Thomas has now reached his biggest achievement and is walking using a wheeled walking frame. It's incredible watching him charge around outside and play with other kids."



Thomas Wiltshire using the Totstander equipment at 14 months old to gain strength and mobility.

The Totstander equipment significantly benefits children like Thomas living with cerebral palsy and also helps young patients suffering broken bones or other serious medical conditions to move again.

Yet specialist medical aids like this are financially out of reach for most families. With the community's continued support, Gold Coast Hospital Foundation will be able to fund the purchase of more equipment that can be loaned to other patient's families like Thomas's when needed.

"Stephen and I are extremely grateful that Thomas could borrow the Totstander. I had to give up work, so it would have been very difficult to afford the equipment ourselves," Kate said.

"Seeing how far Thomas has come in such a short period of time brings us so much hope for Thomas's future that he will one day be able to eat, talk, walk and live a life as normal as possible."

Please donate to Gold Coast Hospital Foundation today to help other patients and their families facing unimaginable adversity due to serious illness, injury or disability. Visit gchfoundation.org.au to find out more.

Please help more local patients like Thomas overcome medical hardship.

3 easy ways to donate:

- 1 Return this donation slip to Gold Coast Hospital Foundation**
Retail Tenancy 3, Gold Coast University Hospital
1 Hospital Boulevard, Southport QLD 4215
PO Box 23, Griffith University, QLD 4222
- 2 Donate online at www.gchfoundation.org.au/donate**
- 3 Call us on (07) 5594 6986 with your donation details**

Thank you. Gifts of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

- I would like to find out how to include the Foundation in my Will.

I'd like to make a gift of

\$100 \$50 \$200 \$..... (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

Put safety first when renovating to avoid eye trauma

Doctors at Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) are warning home renovators to wear protective eyewear when using machinery to avoid major eye injuries.

The warning comes after two patients presented to GCUH in just one week with serious eye trauma following incidents involving angle grinders.

Consultant Ophthalmologist Dr Heather Russell said a serious eye injury could be life changing.

Rod Nance lost vision in his right eye after the blade of an angle grinder disintegrated, striking his face and cutting from his eyebrow down to his cheek bone.

“It went right across my eye and cut through the cornea from top to bottom,” Mr Nance, a 71-year-old retired builder, said.

“I’ve been in the building industry for 50 years and I just didn’t think.

“It’s changed my life. When I got out of hospital I went home and put the guards back on the grinder. No one uses them because you can’t see what you’re doing, but I’ve told all my mates to keep them on.”

The injury has forced Rod and his wife to put their caravan travel plans on hold, but he recently played his first game of golf since the accident.

Dr Russell performed micro surgery to save Rod’s eye, but could not save his vision.



Dr Heather Russell examines Rod Nance's eye, which was injured in a power tool accident.

“The trend of DIY renovations means hundreds of people across the Gold Coast are using power tools such as angle grinders every day, so it is no longer just the tradies who are at risk,” she said.

“In the same week Rod was injured, we also saw a young man injured when using a brush grinder. He felt something flick into his eye but thought that it had bounced off.

“A brush bristle had in fact passed straight through his cornea and into his lens, causing a cataract,” Dr Russell said.

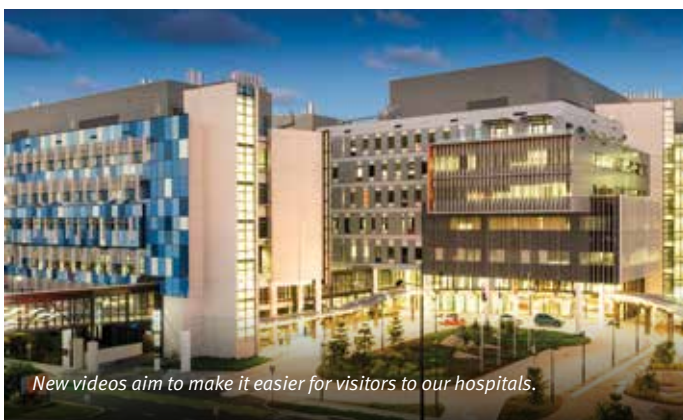
“Fortunately he has had a very good outcome once both the metal bristle and cataract were removed. As is most often the case, neither men were wearing protective eyewear at the time of their injury,” she said.

Dr Russell said she would encourage all tradies, prospective DIYers and gardeners to wear appropriate protective eyewear.

“Safety goggles provide optimal safety, more so than safety glasses which often do not provide adequate protect from objects hitting the eye from an angle.”

Making it easier for patients to find their way

Gold Coast Health is a complex service that can be daunting for patients and visitors to navigate.



New videos aim to make it easier for visitors to our hospitals.

A series of videos has now been produced to make the journey easier.

The videos were proposed by Gynaecological Oncologist Graeme Walker and Financial Accountant Stefanie Baker, who made funding submissions to Gold Coast Health’s ‘The Improvers’ initiative.

The main video provides clear information on “Finding your way” around Gold Coast University and Robina hospitals, and includes main entry points; car parks; transfer units; public transport options; ward naming conventions; finding your destination; and outpatient appointment information.

“A hospital visit can be an anxious time for a patient,” said Graeme, “so we don’t want to add to that through inadequate or incorrect information.”

Videos have also been produced specifically for colposcopy and paediatric patients to help prepare patients for procedures.

The colposcopy video includes two first-hand accounts from patients on what to expect. Paediatric videos cover a day stay, an operation and an MRI process.

The videos can be viewed on any device via the Gold Coast Health YouTube channel or website.

Published by Gold Coast Health
Communication and Engagement Unit

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