

healthwaves+

Your local health news | October/November 2018



International accolade

Top doctor to make a difference in Ethiopia p.4

Boost to bone marrow donors

Harry inspires staff to join national registry p.5

Peer support

Former patients help others after stroke p.6

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Cover: Dr Sandeep Bhuta is a recipient of the Anne G. Osborn International Outreach Professor for 2019, announced by the American Society of Neuroradiology.

Image: Tony Matheson, Gold Coast Health



Board News

Message from the Chair – Ian Langdon

Continually adjusting our sails to accommodate an extraordinary rate of growth whilst maintaining our focus on a 'patient first' culture remained a key feature of Gold Coast Health during 2017–18.

This growth in demand has come “organically” from the increasing population in our ever-expanding city but it has also come from the increase in public awareness of the excellence of care provided by our organisation. Our growth has also seen the progressive introduction of new clinical services not previously available to public patients on the Gold Coast.

It is an ongoing challenge to not only accommodate this growth but to do so with increased efficiency.

Just like any business, Gold Coast Health continually searches for efficiency improvements while maintaining the highest quality of care.

Since the establishment of Gold Coast Health as a statutory body in 2012, our aim has been to perform at close to a balanced budget; not being prepared to go into deficit but determined not to have large surpluses as every healthcare dollar is meant to be spent. The cost of running Gold Coast Health is now about \$1 million every six hours. In 2017–18, Gold Coast Health delivered a surplus which is the equivalent of about two days of our annual budget – an excellent result.

I continue to be inspired by the compassion and care

displayed by our staff. Caring for people is the start of providing care and it is very evident in how all our staff go about their business – not just those in clinical roles but all our support staff. On behalf of the Board I wish to thank Chief Executive Ron Calvert, his executive and all our employees for their outstanding service during the year.

This edition features some of the key outcomes from the Gold Coast Health Annual Report. If you'd like to read the full report, please visit www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au



Jars of kindness brighten patients' stay in hospital

The old saying “say it with flowers” is ringing true at Robina Hospital where bunches of flowers are arriving unexpectedly at patients' bedsides to brighten up their days.

More than 120 patients have received “jars of kindness” since a new Gold Coast-based registered charity, Community Blooms, started using donated flowers to bring happiness into the lives of patients who do not receive visitors or flowers.

The charity uses flowers from garden clubs, local gardeners, event organisers, funeral homes and other organisations, and arranges them in donated glass jars for delivery to the hospital to bring unexpected joy to patients.

Jayne Jennings, who co-founded the organisation with Jennifer O'Hara, said they wanted to be part of a community that ensured everyone felt cared for, particularly when they were sick or struggling.

“Acts of kindness are healing and build community,” she said.

Nurse Manager Leonie Newstead said patients were sometimes left in tears by the thoughtful gifts of flowers.

“It is truly amazing that a simple act of flower-giving can bring such beauty and joy into the lives of our patients,” she said.

Ms Jennings said Community Blooms started with Robina



Leonie Newstead and patient Ayla Altanhan.

Hospital, but hoped to create hubs with volunteers around other hospitals.

“Our vision is to reach everyone in need of kindness and connection in our communities through flowers,” she said.

People wanting to donate sufficient flowers to create at least eight small bouquets should contact the charity at info@communityblooms.org.au.



2017-2018: A growing health service

Gold Coast Health is establishing itself as a world-class provider of public healthcare services through innovation and patient-centred care. It is one of the fastest growing health services in Australia delivering a broad range of secondary and tertiary health services from three hospitals, 13 community located facilities plus two major allied health precincts at Southport and Robina. Services delivered include surgery, trauma, paediatric, general

and specialist medicine, maternity and intensive neonatal care, aged and dementia care, emergency medicine, intensive care, cardiology, mental health, outpatients, environmental health, public health services and more. Additionally there are a wide range of services delivered directly to the residences of patients including, post birth midwifery visits, home based palliative care, hospital in the home, school dental health, and many more.

Since Gold Coast Health was established as a statutory body in 2012:

Number of Emergency Department presentations across two hospitals:



Then:

125,744

Now:

171,165

Number of births:

Then:

3787

Now:

5165



Number of staff:

Then:

5442

Now:

9522



2017-2018 by the numbers:



9522

staff (7889 Full-time equivalent)



10.9%

from a non-English speaking background



981

new employees in 2017-18

Youngest employee:

18, male



Oldest employee:

83, male

71% in clinical roles



Women fill

56%

of executive management roles





Dr Sandeep Bhuta

Gold Coast doctor the first Australian to win international award

Gold Coast Health's Dr Sandeep Bhuta has become the first Australian to receive an International Outreach Professor award to advance the speciality of neuroradiology.

Dr Bhuta, a neuroradiologist who has worked for the health service for more than a decade, was recently announced as a recipient of the American Society of Neuroradiology (ASNR) Anne G. Osborn International Outreach Professor for 2019.

In taking up the outreach award, Dr Bhuta will travel to Ethiopia to build an understanding of neuroradiology among the country's doctors and radiologists.

"Developing countries like Ethiopia really benefit from didactic hands-on teaching by professors and facilitates exchange of knowledge and techniques in high-end subspecialties like neuroradiology.

"It's so satisfying to teach in outreach hospitals, because the clinicians truly appreciate the wealth of knowledge that they are receiving, they really soak it up and it does make a difference for their patient care."

Dr Bhuta – who holds a conjoint position as an Associate Professor at Griffith University, School of Medicine and Menzies Health Institute – has found his true passion in neuroradiology where he can work as part of a multi-disciplinary team to treat patients with complex health conditions.

"I was always passionate about the brain – so I thought about doing neurology or neurosurgery. But neuroradiology as a speciality is very dynamic, innovative and rewarding.

"You do make a lot of difference to a patient's outcome."

Gold Coast Health's Executive Director of Clinical Governance Dr Jeremy Wellwood said Dr Bhuta had helped establish critical services for the community such as acute stroke care and head and neck cancer service.

"We are striving to deliver world-class care here on the Gold Coast and when our clinicians are recognised internationally like this, we know we're heading in the right direction," Dr Wellwood said.

In early 2019, Dr Bhuta will travel to Ethiopia where he'll teach and work with clinicians in the capital Addis Ababa for up to five weeks.

Team approach to tackling persistent pain

An interdisciplinary approach to managing persistent pain has been a long-running success story in easing the suffering of our patients.

The Gold Coast Health Interdisciplinary Persistent Pain Centre at Campus Alpha, opposite Robina Health Precinct, was established in 2011, bringing together a wide variety of clinical experts working together to address the impact that pain has on people's lives.

Anyone who has experienced long-term pain knows the toll it can take on their physical and mental wellbeing, according to pain specialist Dr Ian Thong.

"The Pain Centre focuses on providing the patient with the support to learn the skills to actively self-manage their pain, with the aim of improving quality of life and participation in the community," Dr Thong said.

"Persistent pain is debilitating and affects more than one in five people.

"With help, however, patients can find a way through the pain to live their best lives."

The Gold Coast Health team of pain specialists are medical practitioners who are among only 463 in Australia to have completed extra training with the Faculty of Pain Medicine at the Australian New Zealand College of Anaesthetists.

"Persistent pain is complex and we rarely focus on one solution," Dr Thong said.

"As pain specialists, we consider the person's psychology, environment and social situation as important as the condition or conditions causing the pain.

"When we treat the whole person, provide education and challenge unhelpful beliefs and behaviours, the best outcomes are seen – especially when the patient receives personal care from a multidisciplinary team."

#team100 scores above and beyond for bone marrow day

More than 170 Gold Coast Health staff and community signed up to the national bone marrow registry as part of an International Bone Marrow Day initiative at GCUH in September.

Our staff were inspired by Harry Hunter, an 11-year-old boy receiving treatment for Philadelphia +ve Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia. Harry is the son of Gold Coast University Hospital nurse Tash Hunter and Senior Sergeant Paul Hunter from Broadbeach police station.

Pediatric Emergency Staff Specialist Dr Christa Bell said #team100 aimed to recruit potential stem cell donors to the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry and raise awareness of the importance of marrow donation.

"We set aside clinical space within the health service where we took a simple blood test from people meeting the eligibility criteria.

Bone marrow is the soft tissue found inside bones. If bone marrow is damaged or destroyed by disease or blood disorders, a stem cell transplant from a matching donor is the only possible treatment for many of these people to save their lives.

Young Harry's leukaemia was diagnosed 18 months ago. He has responded well to intense chemotherapy treatment which has wreaked havoc on his resilient body. He is now in remission and is looking forward to being able to walk again.

"I don't think any of us have seen or met such a courageous young man," Dr Bell said.

"If the leukaemia returned Harry would need a bone marrow transplant and despite searching, the world bone marrow donor bank, Harry does not yet have a matched donor," Dr Bell said.

Dr Bell said in Australia 350 people with a serious illness have a stem cell transplant from an unrelated donor each year.



Petrina Matijevic, Dr Christa Bell, Harry Hunter, Tash Hunter and Emily Hayman.

"We want all people who need a bone marrow transplant to be able to find their match.

"We're encouraging all eligible people between 18-45 to join the registry, this is particularly important for people of mixed race or ethnic minorities as there are less available donors," Dr Bell said.

Harry's mother Tash said the #team100 event is about raising awareness for the Bone Marrow Registry and having both Queensland Health and the Queensland Police Service helping reach a target of 100 people to be tested and added to the registry.

"If our story helps others, particularly if it means out of these 100 people we get a donor for somebody whether they're in Sydney or in Ukraine, then we've won," she said.

The initiative originally aimed to reach 100 new bone marrow donors, however in true spirit of the Police, Queensland Health and the Gold Coast community, the event successfully registered more than 160 new bone marrow donors.

For more information, visit Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry at www.abmdr.org.au.

Passion is in Debbie's blood

Cancer Nurse Consultant Debbie Farrell knew she wanted to work with Oncology patients in her Graduate year.

Twenty years after embarking on her career, Debbie continues to build on her valued clinical skills and experience as she supports Gold Coast Health head and neck cancer patients.

Based in the Cancer and Blood Disorders Service, Ms Farrell she feels lucky to be able to help people.

"I've been in this hospital for 20 years. I've nursed since I was 21 but I became a Registered Nurse at Griffith University and one of my last rotations was the old 9A ward which was an Oncology/Haematology ward. I remember feeling the day I walked in this is the right place for me," she said.



"I really felt my niche was in cancer and I just keep feeling that, you know, it is the best place to do the best I can and I am rewarded every day with our patient care and the interactions I have with them and the staff.

"I have been very fortunate. I've taken opportunities and been given opportunities to act in different roles and I've certainly studied as a lot of nurses do now. I work with a fabulous team in care coordination. We all help each other and learn from each other and the patients – it's amazing what they teach you."

Ms Farrell said head and neck cancer patients went through about seven weeks of intensive radiation and chemotherapy.

"Of course, this affects the areas of taste, and swallow and patients are often very debilitated from the toxicity and symptoms of the treatment," she said.

"These patients are usually in recovery for a couple of months. I see them patients each week as they travel through the health service and we look after them with the medical and radiation oncology teams and allied health. Together we get them through.

"We are so specialised now as nurses. I think every nurse will look after a cancer patient in their career whether it's maternity, the emergency department or other wards."

Lived experience helps patients regain their communication skills

A former stroke patient's lived experience of language impairment is inspiring and motivating patients to regain communication skills lost following stroke.

Syd Spry was the first volunteer to join a speech pathology service peer support project to help patients with aphasia, a language impairment that can result from injury after stroke, trauma or surgery.

Senior speech pathologist Annabelle Vaughan designed the program based on a successful project to support laryngectomy patients with communication or swallowing difficulties.

"Aphasia patients frequently feel isolated because of difficulty talking, understanding, reading and/or writing after suffering a brain injury often through a stroke," Ms Vaughan said.

"With our new lived experience program, they will have an opportunity to communicate with someone who has been through the experience, who can provide hope and motivation for them to work hard at improving.

"Often patients find it very frustrating to have so much difficulty explaining how they feel and what they want or need."



Volunteer Syd Spry, left, and inpatient Warwick Sinclair.

Ms Vaughan said Syd already had three sessions with inpatient Warwick Sinclair, also recovering from a stroke, who found it very beneficial.

"Syd shared his journey of recovery from a stroke eight years ago and encouraged Warwick, while also forming a great friendship."

Two more volunteers are currently training to join the Aphasia Visitor Support Project which provides a service to both inpatients and outpatients.

My Health Record set to deliver safer, more efficient care

Gold Coast Health hospitals started sharing pathology and diagnostic imaging results to the Federal Government's My Health Record system.

This comes as Australian consumers have another three months to decide whether to opt out of the online health record system, which has existed since 2012.

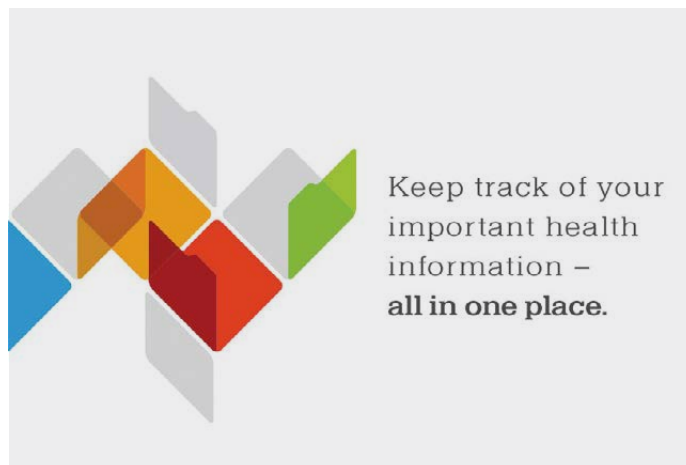
In early August, the Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt announced that the original legislation underpinning the My Health Record (MHR) would be strengthened in response to concerns over privacy. He also announced that consumers would have an additional month to decide whether to opt in or out of the record, with the deadline moved to 15 November 2018.

Here at Gold Coast Health, there are some enormous benefits to our medical staff being able to access important information contained in a person's MHR, including medical imaging and pathology results.

Associate Professor Nick Buckmaster, a general medicine specialist and the acting Clinical Director of Diagnostic, Emergency and Medical Services at Gold Coast Health, says the MHR will help our clinicians make safer decisions about a person's care, particularly in an emergency.

"When we treat a patient, we need to understand what their previous medical history has been, what their current problems may be as a result of any medications they may be taking or any recent tests they may have had," Dr Buckmaster said.

"That often means that our staff have to spend a huge amount of time chasing information. Particularly in an emergency, that means we must take decisions on management and care which sometimes, when we get further information, we find was not the best decision.



"Having this information accessible through the My Health Record means we will be able to make better decisions more quickly, more efficiently and more safely."

There's been plenty of discussion in the community and media recently about the pros and cons of the MHR.

"Unfortunately, there's a lot of misinformation around My Health Record," Dr Buckmaster said.

"There are very strong legislative protections around the information that's able to be put into the My Health Record and now these protections will be even stronger – and the patients have direct oversight over who is seeing that information and they have the ability to control what is visible in the My Health Record as well."

BBQ gifts precious family time with palliative care patients

Having the opportunity to share a meal with their friends and family means so much for patients in the palliative unit at Robina Hospital.

Thanks to generous community donations, a brand new high-tech BBQ setting has been purchased and installed in the garden courtyard to help families during an emotional time in their lives.

When visiting the unit to hand over the equipment and see it in use, the Gold Coast Hospital Foundation team heard about how the BBQ area helps to expand the portfolio of activities offered by the palliative recreation team for patients in their care – such as family gatherings, weddings and birthdays.

Incredible stories of strength and courage are created in the Palliative Care Unit, not to mention positive memories, during a loved one's last days.

The courtyard provides a place where families can prepare, cook



James Carson of Gold Coast Hospital Foundation with Jane McNamara, the palliative care unit's recreation officer.

and share a meal together in an area that provides comfort and care.

With no other cooking facilities in this area, it has provided patients and their families along with the staff the opportunity to use their creative flair to cook everything from scones and brownies through to sausages and roasts.

This equipment was generously funded by the Raptis family, Rotary Club of Robina and James Carson. We thank them for their wonderful support.

Workforce goes above and beyond in giving program

A quick and easy way Gold Coast Health staff can support the Foundation is through the Above & Beyond Workplace Giving Program.

To join this program staff, complete the Payroll Deduction form, choosing to give a \$2 or more donation from each pay. Donations are tax deductible. It is that easy – less than a cup of coffee each week.

During the month of July, we worked with the health service's human resources and communications teams to promote this program to staff.

Everyone who signed up for the program went into the draw to win two night's accommodation in a superior room with breakfast

at The Star Gold Coast. We are delighted to announce this wonderful prize was won by Casey Veenbaas.

The workplace giving program provides a reliable and stable income stream that allows the Foundation to plan to allocate funding to the clinical areas of most need.

We currently have 150 incredibly generous Gold Coast Health staff members going above and beyond by contributing through this program.

Just imagine, if every staff member were to donate \$2 each pay, we would raise nearly half a million per year. That's enough to run the Foundation's cancer patient transport and emergency accommodation services and to fund cutting-edge health research.

Enjoy Melbourne Cup Day on Tuesday the 6th of November at one of these venues and help the Gold Coast Hospital Foundation to reduce medical hardship for your community.



Palazzo Versace

Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre

Sharks Event Centre

University partnership helping to shape careers

Gold Coast Health's partnership with Griffith University Business School is providing important learning opportunities for students and the public health service.

Thirty business student interns have worked across the service in non-clinical areas since 2015.

Six students, including five under-graduates and one post-graduate, began internships in July across Digital Engagement, Governance, Risk and Commercial Services, Finance and Business Services and Workforce Strategy and Engagement.

Gold Coast Health Board chair Ian Langdon said both Griffith and Gold Coast Health benefited from extending the partnership beyond the obvious health and clinical careers into business, science and engineering.

"In prompting the start of the program in 2014 based on my previous experience as the inaugural Dean of Business at Griffith University, Gold Coast, I understood not only the potential skill set in the student body, but also appreciated the enthusiasm and new insights such students would bring to our health service," he said.

"I have personally supervised some interns and attended most of the presentations of other interns to their supervisors and examiners.

"It is obvious that the students have not only enjoyed their experience but have gained invaluable insights into complex working environments."



Ian Langdon with Alyce Clothier, Rachael Cleary, Benita Richmond and Rachel Ramoifuila.

Delivering on an inclusive and diverse workplace



Natalie Hall of Epic Assist and the six trainees.

Six people with disabilities have new employment opportunities as part of the health service's commitment to an inclusive and diverse workplace.

Three men and three women have started work as laundry facility officers and water quality and auditing officers.

Gold Coast Health Chair Ian Langdon and Operational Support Services Senior Director Nigel Hoy said it was an initiative they hoped other Gold Coast employers would follow.

"Our focus has been on ability, not disability," Mr Hoy said.

"It has been a team-focused approach with our partner agency EPIC Assist and without the team embracing this opportunity, it would have been just another idea.

"Many months of work has delivered a real positive for the Gold Coast and creating a path that others hopefully will follow."

Mr Langdon agreed, saying that as the largest employer on the Gold Coast it was important the health service led by example.

"Gold Coast Health is demonstrating it has a culture that cares as well as providing care," he said.

"It's important for our service to not only provide the opportunity for employment, but also to ensure the right person is put into the right position.

"We can encourage other employers to adopt similar policies.

Gold Coast Health has committed to building a richly diverse and inclusive workplace for all employees through a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2017-2022) and Action Plan (2017-2018).