

# healthwaves+

Your local health news | December 2018 / January 2019



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Cover: Immunisation nurse Annie Hackett provides young Jaxon with a childhood vaccination

Image: Tony Matheson, Gold Coast Health



# Board News

## Message from the Chair – Ian Langdon

### Teamwork sets tone of success for our workforce

**The health service recently spent a week focusing on giving thanks to those around us and showing appreciation of our workforce.**

We call it Thank You Week and while largely a chance to pat each other on the back for a year of great work and milestones, the initiative also reinforces why we do what we do – our patients.

Our determination to build a culture of success is making real impacts on the patients and families who come in to our hospitals or receive community-based health services.

We're seeing this through feedback on our wards, our Facebook pages, as well

as our formal channels like patient surveys and Patient Liaison Services – see page 8 for some wonderful examples.

As Chair, I know we don't get it right every time for every person. Healthcare is an environment of many challenges.

This health service Board and executive is facing those challenges.

The future is bright with many exciting plans to continue developing health services on the Gold Coast.

Our Strategic Plan 2016-2020 provides a blueprint to guide the future growth of our health service, ensuring we continue to meet the changing needs

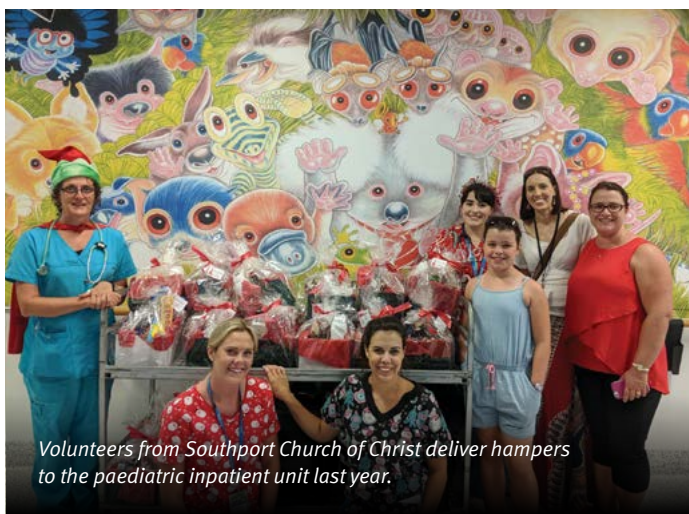
of our patients, staff and community.

It outlines our strategic priorities in support of achieving our vision to be recognised as a centre of excellence for world-class healthcare.

We have just started an annual review of the plan involving extensive consultation with the community and staff.

I invite you to be involved in this process and take the opportunity to share your views about the direction of our health service. Please email [goldcoasthealth@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:goldcoasthealth@health.qld.gov.au) to register your interest in participating in an upcoming survey.

## Good Samaritans continue festive hamper tradition



Volunteers from Southport Church of Christ deliver hampers to the paediatric inpatient unit last year.

**Good tidings are abundant in hospitals during the festive season.**

On Christmas morning, volunteers from Southport Church of Christ will again deliver hampers to patients and staff in Gold Coast University Hospital wards.

In what will be the sixth instalment of the annual tradition for Pastor Bruce Murray and his merry group of parishioners, this year a record 400 hampers will be packed and distributed.

They also make a special delivery to renal/kidney dialysis patients a few days ahead due to the service's Christmas closure period.

Pastor Murray said a strong partnership had developed between the health service and Southport Church of Christ with the hamper distribution one of several long-term initiatives.

"It is a wonderful privilege to be able to bring a measure of comfort into people's lives, many of whom are without families at Christmas," he said.

The church also supports families with loved ones in ICU and other wards, particularly those from regional areas, by providing subsidised accommodation at The Mooring, close to GCUH, and practical support such as meals and transport options.

Further 'wrap around care' assistance, which includes subsidised accommodation, is provided for some families of patients in other wards such as Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Lavender Mother-and-Baby Unit, emergency and more.



# Students follow trauma patient journey

**The Gold Coast Health P.A.R.T.Y. program is all about putting a real-life scenario squarely in front of high school students who may be about to make a poor decision with life-changing effects for them and their loved ones for years to come.**

P.A.R.T.Y. stands for Prevent Alcohol & Risk-Related Trauma in Youth and is delivered at a number of hospitals across Australia. It is sponsored by Queensland Transport and Main Roads, AAMI and supported by Gold Coast Hospital Foundation.

The 15 to 19-year-olds go through a full day program at Gold Coast University Hospital and hear directly from a past patient who has travelled that road but lived to tell the story, albeit a lot worse for wear and now must live with it for life.

The first stage is a mock simulation where a young teenager has been admitted to the Emergency Department after an accident and is unconscious and needing CPR.

The student group breaks into teams and must manage the situation with help from actual ED staff, on a mannequin that looks and reacts like a real person with major trauma.

They go through CPR, airway management and finally must tell the mother (a staff member playing the grieving mother) that there is nothing more they can do for her son and he has died.



The students' expressions quickly change from grins to concern at the hurt and pain of the mother and the frustration of the clinician who must call the death of a young person.

The second stage is where the students attend the Intensive Care Unit and speak to an actual family that has been through this scenario.

They meet a mother of a recent patient and talk about how trauma has impacted their normal way of life. They discuss the impact of poor decisions made under circumstances including drink driving, driver inexperience or fatigue.

For the third stage, they meet the patient (son of the mother they met in ICU) and hear a firsthand experience of his trauma patient journey and how his injuries have affected his life.

Over the afternoon, the students continue to follow the patient's journey through the rehabilitation phase and meet survivors with lifelong disabilities, and even a mother who has lost her daughter to trauma.



## Fast fact:

**328 students and 46 adults participated in P.A.R.T.Y. at GCUH in 2018**

*Far left: Students from Pacific Pines High School participate in the simulation in ED.*

*Left: Matt Scott from the Trauma Service leads the teenagers throughout the day.*

## We put National Health Priorities in focus

**All levels of government, health experts, clinicians and consumers have agreed to nine national health priority areas that contribute most to the burden of illness in the community.**

Throughout 2019, Gold Coast Health will focus public attention on these areas.

They are – cancer control, cardiovascular health, injury prevention and control, mental health, diabetes, asthma, arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions, obesity and dementia.

Our first focus is injury prevention and control.

Paediatric emergency physician Dr Christa Bell provides some advice on keeping your family injury-free this holiday season:

- Put small objects out of reach of young children. This can include batteries (especially toy button batteries), small magnets and dishwashing tablets.

- Supervision and vigilance are the key to stopping children getting into difficulty in swimming pools – it's still possible for children who can swim to get into trouble around water.
- Put medications and household cleaning agents out of reach in locked storage as they can be fatal if swallowed by children.
- Make sure your children understand the importance of wearing helmets on bikes, scooters and skateboards – buying a helmet is just as important as buying the bike or toy on wheels as severe head trauma changes lives.
- Remember road safety is everybody's business. On average 25 people are killed and 1235 seriously injured each year on Queensland roads as a result of crashes where driver distraction played a part.

# Immunisation campaign aims to improve rates

**Gold Coast's Public Health Unit is delivering a campaign to lift the city's childhood immunisation rates.**

The campaign, announced by Health Minister Steven Miles in July 2018, is targeting families with children aged three months to five years whose immunisations are overdue.

Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Steven Miles said he asked Queensland Health to increase immunisation in the Gold Coast Hinterland where rates are low.

"Kids in these areas are at risk of serious illnesses caused by vaccine preventable diseases," Mr Miles said.

"This program will target areas with very low rates of childhood immunisation by contacting parents and families by phone and encouraging them to visit a free health clinic or, if needed, even visiting them in their home."

Public Health physician Dr Anu Anuradha said the aim was to boost childhood immunisation rates on the Gold Coast to 95 per cent, the national target to stop the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Dr Anuradha said as part of the renewed immunisation push, parents and carers of young children identified as overdue on the

Australian Immunisation Register would receive a phone call from 13 HEALTH to discuss overdue vaccines and immunisation options.

"There may be any number of reasons why children are overdue for their immunisation. When they're speaking with parents, 13 HEALTH is finding reasons as simple as they missed a clinic or appointment because of a sick child or mum and dad are busy or weren't aware of out-of-hours clinic options.

"Parents are then invited to attend one of our free community clinics or to see their GPs for immunisation catch-ups.

"If they are unable to attend one of those, we are able to offer a one-off in-home immunisation service up to February 2019," Dr Anuradha said.

"We're making immunisation as easy as possible for families through community-based family friendly clinics.

For more information, visit [www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/immuniseqc](http://www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/immuniseqc)



*Dr Anu Anuradha with Halan King and baby Milly.*

## Upcoming immunisation clinics:

**December 12, 9am-11.30am**  
Helensvale Library  
multipurpose room

**December 13, 3pm-6.30pm**  
Robina Library auditorium

**December 19, 11am-1.30pm**  
Carrara Community Centre

**December 20, 3pm-6.30pm**  
Burleigh Library Fradgley Hall

**January 2, 9am-11.30am**  
Southport Community Centre

**January 3, 3pm-6.30pm**  
Helensvale Library

**January 9, 9am-11.30am**  
Helensvale Library

**January 10, 3pm-6.30pm**  
Robina Library

**January 16, 11am-1.30pm**  
Carrara Community Centre

**January 17, 3pm-6.30pm**  
Burleigh Library

**January 23, 9am-11.30am**  
Upper Coomera Community Centre

# Public seminar explores impacts of an electronic medical record

**Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) has hosted a wide-ranging discussion on the benefits and challenges of moving from paper-based patient information to an electronic medical record (ieMR).**

Queensland's Integrity Commissioner Dr Nikola Stepanov was joined by a heavyweight panel with expertise in law, ethics, clinical research, data security and governance to discuss implications of the move.

"The topic is of particular relevance to the Gold Coast as it prepares its public hospitals and community health services for a statewide ieMR," Dr Stepanov said.

She was joined by five other panellists to discuss the emerging impacts of the digital age on patient care. They were:



*Phil Green, Mark Burdon, Dr Adam Brand and Dr Nikola Stepanov.*

- Phil Green, Queensland Privacy Commissioner
- Andrew Brown, Queensland Health Ombudsman
- Damian Green, Chief Information Officer, Gold Coast Health
- Associate Professor Mark Burdon, QUT
- Dr Adam Brand, Clinical Director Digital Transformation, Gold Coast Health





Amanda Leitch, Sandra Lenehan, Dr Angelly Martinez and Lesley McCormick.

## Artwork commemorates organ and tissue donors

**Gold Coast University Hospital and DonateLife Queensland have unveiled an artistic tribute to organ and tissue donors and their families who make transplantation possible.**

Fourteen intricate tile mosaic domes were simultaneously dedicated in 14 hospitals across the state to remember the legacy of love and generosity of donors.

Donation Specialist Nurse Coordinator Amanda Leitch said the 1.2 metre three-dimensional dome would hang in a prominent place to encourage reflection and gratitude.

“We hope this tribute will enrich the hospital environment with its vibrancy and inspire others to consider the gift of life,” Ms Leitch said.

Lesley McCormick’s life changed suddenly and dramatically following her son Joshua’s critical head injury in a skateboarding accident.

It wasn’t a hard decision to make when the DonateLife representative approached her to discuss organ donation while Joshua was on the ventilator in ICU.

“We instantly knew. Joshua had mentioned it a few times to me (his wishes) and we’d had some conversations about organ donation,” Mrs McCormick said.

Joshua’s organs saved three lives and his tissue improved the lives of countless others.

“I’ve found it comforting to know that it’s not me just thinking of him, I’m sure the donor recipients think of him every day as well,” Mrs McCormick said.

Brisbane-based artist Jane Du Rand created the works for the state campaign, which coincided with DonateLife Thank You Day.

“The imagery represents the love inspiring donors and the circle of life it encompasses while symbols of life and regeneration are depicted using nature’s seeds and buds bringing new life, energy and immortality,” Ms Rand said.

*You can register your organ donation decision in under a minute at [www.donatelife.gov.au](http://www.donatelife.gov.au)*

## In pursuit of supporting a ‘good death’

**Associate Professor Magnolia Cardona is freshly arrived on the Gold Coast with a commitment to change the way health professionals think about end-of-life care.**

Speaking at Gold Coast Health’s annual Research Week event, the Bond University academic has a plan to reduce over-treatment of older people who are dying of natural causes.

“One of the main challenges for treating clinicians is being confident that death is near,” Professor Cardona said.

“Our international collaboration, incorporating hospitals from four countries, has validated a simple questionnaire to predict risk of death,” she said.

“The 19 questions have been tested on 3000 patients presenting to the emergency department and confirmed predictability with over 80 per cent accuracy.”

Professor Cardona said the goal was to prevent unnecessary patient suffering, false hope for families and reduce unnecessary costs to the health system.



Associate Professor Magnolia Cardona and Dr Gauri Gogna.

“The tool only takes five minutes to complete and, in the long run it will benefit hospitals which have a role in reducing non-beneficial treatments and interventions for people dying of natural causes and old age,” she said.

Meanwhile Dr Gauri Gogna used her time as a palliative care trainee at Gold Coast Health to do a comparison of expenditure on patients at the end of life in three units, including a palliative care ward. Her findings highlighted the variation and types of tests run on patients in their final days of life. The retrospective findings have inspired her to do a more detailed prospective analysis to better understand the causes behind varied treatment at this time of life.

# Group speaks up for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

## A new group of staff has volunteered to champion and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health on the Gold Coast.

About 35 champions from a diverse range of health service areas will have various roles through the program, the first of its type in Queensland.

At their first meeting, champions said they were keen to work and raise awareness around Closing the Gap and to encourage their Gold Coast Health colleagues to have high levels of cultural capability.

Senior physiotherapist Sheree Erwin, who is a Torres Strait Islander, said she wanted to champion improved patient outcomes and close the gap.

"I want to be a 'thermostat', that is, an influencer, rather than just a 'thermometer', and help our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients achieve their health and well-being goals," she said.

"I was privileged to receive a university scholarship as part of the Workforce Development Strategy many years ago, and the investment I've received from clients and staff on this journey has shaped me as a person.

"Next January, I will celebrate 20 years of service with Queensland Health.

"I couldn't feel more grateful for the opportunities I have had to serve others, often in their most vulnerable time.

The Champions Program is an initiative of our Cultural Capability Action Plan 2018-19, led by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service, and specifically the cultural practice program officer, Courtney Garrett.

Courtney, herself a Minjungbal woman from northern New South Wales, said she was thrilled with the response from staff to the program.

"We want our champions to be highly competent in applying their skills, knowledge and behaviour when dealing with our patients," she said.

"They will link to appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and programs, promote and be involved in cultural events and raise awareness around Closing the Gap.



Courtney Garrett, Sheree Erwin and Alex Christiansen.

Champions are wanting to raise awareness about identification (as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander) and explore barriers to accessing services, including Discharge Against Medical Advice and 'Did not wait'.

Champion Alex Christiansen is a member of an Emergency Department working group aiming to improve the identification rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait patients who present at our hospitals and facilities.

A registered emergency nurse, Alex said he had travelled widely across Northern Australia and worked in remote and rural communities at Cairns, Alice Springs and the Kimberleys.

"I've witnessed firsthand the poor health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and, by being a champion, I hope I can do my best to contribute to a better outcome," he said.

# Termination of pregnancy becomes legal medical procedure

## All Queensland women can now seek a termination of pregnancy without fear of committing a criminal offence following a change in legislation by the Queensland Parliament.

From 3 December 2018, the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 ('the Act') ensures terminations of pregnancy are treated as a health issue rather than a criminal issue. The Act:

- supports a woman's right to health, including reproductive health and autonomy
- provides clarity and safety for health practitioners providing terminations of pregnancy
- brings Queensland legislation in line with other Australian jurisdictions.

Women seeking a termination of pregnancy should always consult their GP in the first instance.

If you are up to 22 weeks pregnant, you may request a termination, for any reason, without disclosing your reason to the doctor.

If you are more than 22 weeks pregnant when you request a termination, two doctors must consider all circumstances relating to you and your pregnancy, your current and future physical, psychological and social circumstances, and any professional standards and guidelines that are relevant.

For more health information, referral and local services phone 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).





## Funding injection for Child Life Therapy Program

Gold Coast University Hospital paediatric patients will receive an extra helping hand through their surgical journeys thanks to a \$334,000 funding boost to expand an innovative support program.

The Greater Charitable Foundation has provided Gold Coast Hospital Foundation and the Children's Hospital Foundation Queensland with grant funding for the Child Life Therapy Program at GCUH.

The program supports young children and their families in their hospital journey by helping counteract fear and distress that is often associated with medical procedures.

It includes pre-theatre support, distraction therapy (play, arts and crafts, puzzles), tours and ward orientation, and social emotional support for parents and patients, to put children at ease and reduce family anxiety around the hospital experience.

The children's perioperative team at GCUH has piloted and established a part-time Child Life Therapy Service since 2016 with funding from Gold Coast Hospital Foundation.

With the Greater Charitable Foundation's injection, the program will be expanded to a full-time service for the next three years. There is also future potential to expand and deliver the program to other hospitals across the state.



## Queensland Theatre of Puppetry helps buy a bili blanket for kids with jaundice

For children suffering from jaundice, it can be a long time in and out of hospital to get the condition under control.

Gold Coast Hospital Foundation supporters, the Queensland Theatre of Puppetry, raised money through their wonderful school holiday plays and were able to buy a bili blanket.

The donated blanket means the Gold Coast University Hospital can allow children with jaundice and in need of light therapy to receive the much-needed treatment from the comfort of their own home.

The portable device delivers a special blue light for the treatment of hyperbilirubinemia, known as neonatal jaundice.

This equipment will provide the essential care that a child needs for months, possibly years. Having access to this equipment will allow them to return home with their family rather than stay in hospital.

Thank you to everyone that supports and enjoys the Queensland Theatre of Puppetry.

## Help families through unexpected medical emergencies this Christmas

The Gold Coast Hospital Foundation's Christmas Appeal has launched with our Christmas 'gifting trees' now in the foyers of Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital.

Please visit one of the trees and use a 'gifting tree' bon bon tag to leave your own personal message for patients and staff.

Funds raised this Christmas will help support the Foundation's emergency accommodation service, which provides more than 400

nights of accommodation to families with loved ones in critical care in Gold Coast hospitals.

Funds will also support vital research into trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) being undertaken by Dr Kristen Jones. Dr Jones' research is looking at improving the service model to explore identification of individuals at risk of PTSD and/or depression after traumatic injury.

## Help families through unexpected emergencies this Christmas.



GOLD COAST  
HOSPITAL  
FOUNDATION

During the Christmas holidays the number of children and adults needing Gold Coast Health emergency treatment **will increase from 280 to over 400 every day**. This significant rise in unexpected medical emergencies means your support to help families in need is more important than ever.

Please donate today.

 [gchfoundation.org.au](http://gchfoundation.org.au)  5594 6986



\*Donations will help fund emergency accommodation and research to improve outcomes for trauma patients.

# Stories of 2018

## Our stories

**GC2018:** Our clinical staff handled more than 440 Games-related presentations to emergency departments at GCUH and Robina Hospital. Meanwhile, the Public Health Unit played an integral role in ensuring food safety at competition venues and a whole lot more. When they weren't competing, some athletes took the opportunity to visit the sick in hospital and share their Commonwealth Games experience.



Our Goldie for a Grower fundraising campaign delivered welcome relief to farmers gripped by drought in western Queensland. The Gold Coast Health workforce raised \$15,415, enough to send two semi-trailer loads of hay to Toompine where 13 farmers received 13 round hay bales for their hungry cattle.

On-site medical and mental health services provided valuable support to Schoolies celebrating the end of high school. Fourteen doctors, nurses and mental health professionals worked every night of the one-week festival to support teenagers with any medical or mental health concerns.



A \$20 million facelift is transforming Robina Hospital into a more modern and digital-ready health facility. Refurbishments include upgrades to Wi-Fi, network cabling and power; improvements mental health units; upgrade of patient monitoring systems and more. Digitised medical records (ieMR) iEMR will be introduced across the health service in April 2019.



## Your stories

*I very much appreciate the results of the support workers when they come and clean/tidy my home. It would be an utter mess if they weren't here. I also appreciate the attitude of the people who come. They usually brighten my day through their bright and positive conversation.*

– Michael, Burleigh Waters

*GCUH – Wow! After major surgery, I found myself on ward C2East for my post op recovery. What a fantastic bunch of staff who showed me such care and kindness and could not do enough for me. Such a cheerful lot even whilst working under pressure.*

– Gwyneth

*I was admitted to GCUH having suffered a heart attack. I would like to express my gratitude and heartfelt thanks to the paramedics who initially attended to me, the theatre team led by the surgeon Dr Ravinder Batra and all the staff of the coronary care unit located on level 4 north. You were all so kind caring and professional. I am now safely at home recovering thanks to you all.*

– David, Burleigh

*My 84-year-old Dad came into Robina ED with acute pain and swelling in his joints. I can't speak highly enough of the quality of care he was given. A special thank you to Dr Amelia for her wonderful bed side manner. Thank you all for the work you do.*

– Deborah

*Physiotherapist Greg Wootton was wonderful at the recent assessment of my partner for the Balance Matters exercise group. He really knew what he was doing and was spot on with his assessment.*

– Richard, Coombabah

*Thank you from our families to the palliative care unit, Dr Jo and her team, Maureen (Nurse Unit Manager) and her beautiful team of nurses, Lois and Liz social workers, Jane the recreation lady and her volunteers, for their loving, caring, wonderful care of our precious daughter.*

*We are so grateful that our daughter was cared for at the end of her life by this great team. You guys showed nothing but compassion and empathy to us all and we are eternally grateful that Trisha's passing was peaceful and respectful.*

*Our heartfelt thanks are inadequate.*

– Leonie

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Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service

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