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Your local health news | August/September 2015

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Stem-cell success

Cancer patients benefit from new service p.4

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Cover Image: Dr Tara Cochrane with GCUH's first stem-cell transplant patient Jean Gadke (see page 4). The new \$1.35 million service will benefit one patient a week and limit the need for patients to travel to Brisbane or interstate for treatment.



Board News

Message from the Chair – Ian Langdon

Since 2012, the rate of growth for Gold Coast Health has been extraordinary.

Staffing levels across the health service have been increased to meet the demand. In the last financial year, 971 new employees joined Gold Coast Health making us the largest employer on the Gold Coast. Seventy per cent of our workforce is engaged in clinical roles.

The amount of care provided has grown by approximately 44 per cent compared to the previous year of which half is due to the introduction of new clinical services including; radiation oncology, children's emergency department, trauma services, nuclear medicine, clinical pharmacy, cardiac

surgery, cancer and apheresis (stem cell transplants, **see page 4**), increased neonatal intensive care services, maternal fetal medicine and children's critical care.

Hospital beds for 2015-16 will increase across the Gold Coast to 1026 with capacity to further increase over the next few years to 1,341. Gold Coast Health is positioned to maintain its growth at least into the medium term future. The transition in scale and role of the service is demonstrated by the dramatic increase in emergency department presentations resulting in the GCUH now ranked as the busiest emergency department in Queensland.

University and research partnerships have been expanded to comprise 14 joint professorial appointments and 32 joint university appointments. As well as research, we are a major teaching facility holding partnership arrangements with Griffith, Bond and Southern Cross Universities. Student placements within various hospital and community facilities for nurses, medical and allied health continue to increase.

The Board continues its commitment to support senior management in its efforts to further build Gold Coast Health into a health service of excellence in patient care, research and training.



National honour for Board member

Gold Coast Health Board member Professor Allan Cripps has been awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Prof Cripps, who is Pro Vice Chancellor (Health) at Griffith University, received the honour for his distinguished service to tertiary education as a senior administrator, and to public health as a leading immunologist, academic and researcher in the area of mucosal immunisation.

The accolade caps a stellar career that has seen him make a lifelong contribution to health, particularly in helping practitioners navigate career pathways and through his work in research and immunology.

Gold Coast Health Board Chair Ian Langdon, who has worked alongside Prof Cripps since the Board's inception in 2012, said the Queen's Birthday honour was just reward.

"Allan is incredibly deserving of this recognition and I am particularly pleased for him," Mr Langdon said.

"Having sat with him on the Gold Coast Health Board for the past three years, I can vouch for his commitment to the community. It's great to see him recognised for his contribution and dedication to his field of interest."

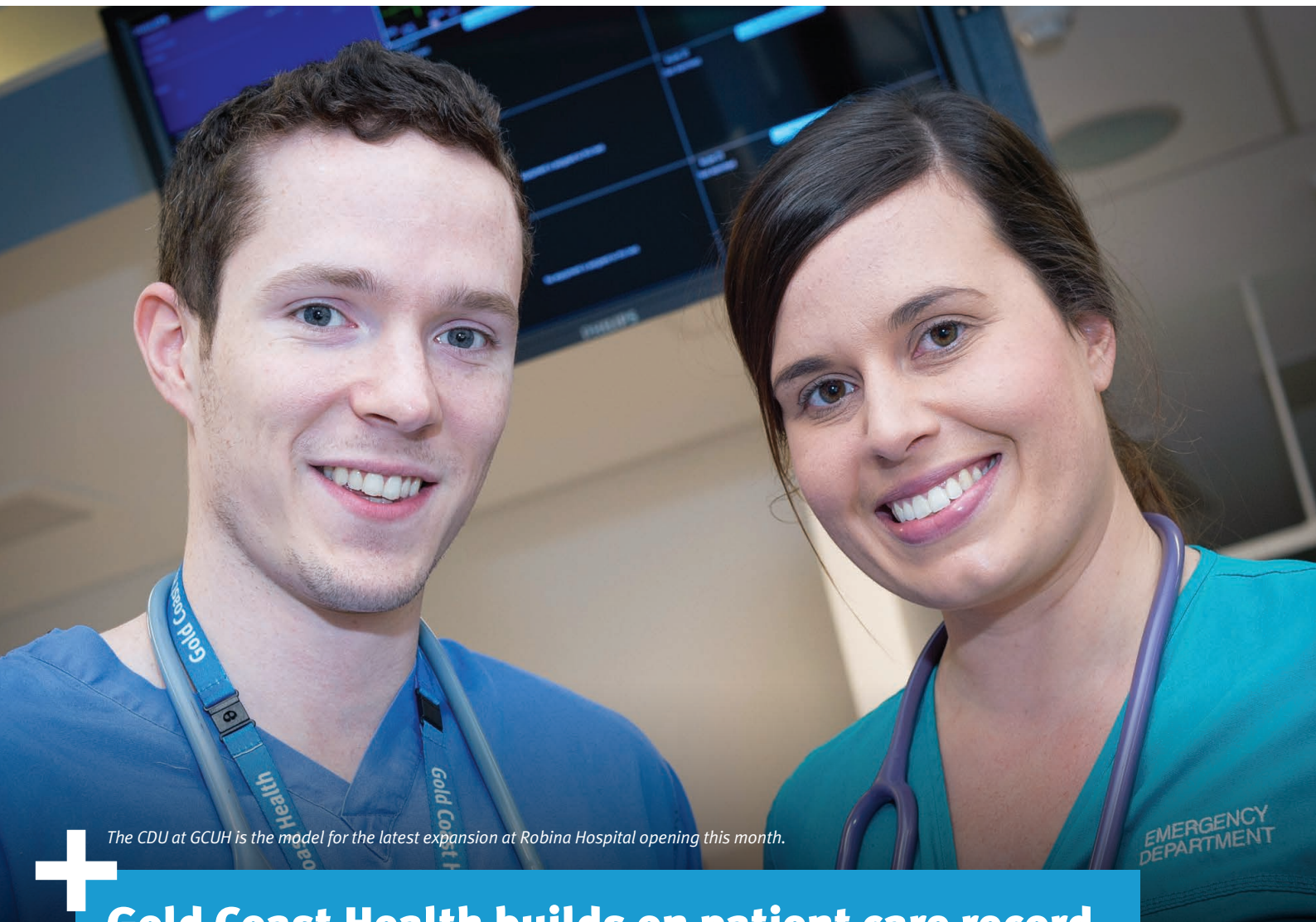
About Prof Cripps

Professor Allan Cripps has strong academic expertise in health and is the Pro Vice Chancellor of Health at Griffith University. Since 1976 Allan has held academic positions at Flinders University, the University of Newcastle, the University of Canberra and Griffith University.

Allan worked in the health sector as a hospital scientist for nearly 20 years before taking a fulltime academic position in 1994 at the University of Canberra. He joined Griffith University in 2003 to commence the rollout of the Medical Program and in 2005 was given the task of forming the University's Health Group.

Allan has an extensive research track record with nearly 300 peer reviewed publications mostly in the field of immunology. He has presented his research at numerous national and international meetings. He has received nearly \$15 million in research grants from national competitive grants and industry sources.

Allan has a BSc and BSc (Hons) from University of New England and PhD from University of Sydney. His majors were in physiology and immunology.



The CDU at GCUH is the model for the latest expansion at Robina Hospital opening this month.

Gold Coast Health builds on patient care record

The Gold Coast community will benefit from a boost in health services in 2015/16 following on from a successful 2014/15.

Chief Executive Ron Calvert said the budget will allow Gold Coast Health to continue to grow services and deliver quality care.

“The benefits for our community in having access to complex services closer to home are immense, with less and less residents having to travel to Brisbane in search of the treatment they need,” Mr Calvert said.

“We are also the Gold Coast’s largest employer with 7700 staff members and with a budget of almost \$1.2 billion; we are a massive driver for the local economy.

“I am proud of the hard work our staff put in to delivering world-class care for our patients and look forward to building on this foundation.”

In the last 12 months, the number of people waiting longer than clinically recommended for appointments to see a specialist has dropped by more than 30 per cent whilst elective surgery has increased by nearly 20 per cent.

In March, Gold Coast University Hospital underwent a review by the Royal Australian College of Surgeons in the first step to becoming an accredited Level One Trauma service. The hospital’s helipad provides direct access to operating theatres, intensive care, medical imaging and the emergency department for trauma patients.

Stem-cell transplants commenced in June with a \$400,000 investment in specialist equipment and annual funding of \$1.35 million providing complex treatments to improve clinical outcomes for suitable patients with myeloma and lymphoma contributing to a truly comprehensive public cancer service (see page 4).

This year’s record budget will contribute an additional 18 mental health clinicians in recognition of the growing demand for community-based care. The additional staff will ensure increased contact for consumers transitioning to their homes from hospital in line with contemporary mental health practice of treating people in the least restrictive environment.

The Robina Hospital emergency department is receiving the largest injection of funding since the expansion in 2012 of \$4 million for the introduction of a Clinical Decision Unit (CDU) and Early Assessment and Streaming Zone (EASZ) model. It will complement the success of the existing CDU at Gold Coast University Hospital.

The emergency departments at Robina Hospital and Gold Coast University Hospital experienced growth in the number of presentations from our sickest patients. Overall presentations by patients at our emergency departments increased six per cent or more than 8000 presentations compared to the same period last year.

To view Gold Coast Health’s Strategic Plan 2013-2017, visit: www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au



Patient David McCarthy receiving stem-cell treatment at GCUH.

GCUH launches stem-cell transplant service

A grandmother-of-four has made history by becoming the first person to undergo stem-cell transplant treatment on the Gold Coast.

Grafton's Jean Gadke was the first person to benefit from Gold Coast University Hospital's (GCUH) multi-million-dollar investment in stem-cell technology that will provide complex treatments to improve clinical outcomes for suitable patients with myeloma or lymphoma.

As well as investing about \$400,000 in specialist equipment, Gold Coast Health has committed annual funding of \$1.35 million to the service to enhance existing cancer care.

Gold Coast Health head of stem cell transplant Dr Tara Cochrane said the launch of the service meant people would no longer have to spend up to a week relocating or travelling to Brisbane for treatment.

"The ability to access quality care close to their homes and families is always a relief for patients and with the incidence of cancers such as myeloma and lymphoma rising, this service is going to have a positive impact for years to come," Dr Cochrane said.

In the procedure, Ms Gadke, who was diagnosed with myeloma in December 2014, had her healthy stem cells removed from her body and reinfused after undergoing high-dose chemotherapy to restore her blood cells.

"Technology has come such a long way and it's very exciting to think I'll be the first person to benefit from a stem-cell transplant at Gold Coast University Hospital," the 68-year-old said.

"Learning I had myeloma was obviously difficult but being told I wouldn't have to travel to Sydney to access such expert care was certainly welcome news."

Gold Coast Health Clinical Director Cancer, Access and Support Services Dr Jeremy Wellwood said the launch of the stem-cell transplant service was the result of years of planning.

"As an accredited level six haematology service, GCUH is now considered one of the leading cancer treatment services in Queensland and the benefits for the Gold Coast community will be immense," Dr Wellwood said.

One of the machines used to determine the timing of stem-cell transplants is already being used to diagnose leukaemia at GCUH.

"Whereas samples previously had to be sent to Brisbane for testing and results returned the next day, dozens of patients are now able to receive their diagnosis almost immediately."

More than 3000 people on the Gold Coast are diagnosed with cancer each year.



Stem Cell Transplant CNC Nicholas McKeough with Jean Gadke, the first patient to undergo the treatment at Gold Coast University Hospital.

Community spirit alive and well



Chief Executive Ron Calvert talking with Richard from 92.5 Gold FM's at the live broadcast at GCUH.

Everyday locals are powering an injection of bonus equipment into Gold Coast Health's hospitals and due recognition to the staff who care for them.

Gold FM's annual *Give Me 5 for Kids* campaign has once again proved an outstanding success, with radio listeners reaching into their pockets to raise more than \$140,000 to be shared between Gold Coast and Tweed hospitals.

The month-long initiative climaxed with breakfast hosts Richard, Bridge and Spida broadcasting live from Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) and allowing listeners and staff to share their own emotional stories of sick children in hospital.

Among this year's beneficiaries is Robina Hospital's Emergency Department (ED), which will receive a new laryngoscopy unit worth \$50,500.

Director of Robina Hospital ED Dr Paul Bowe said the equipment would allow real-time visualisation when a patient was being intubated in an emergency.

"Adding another laryngoscopy unit to our thriving department will increase our capacity to diagnose and treat patients in a timely manner, allowing them to return to full health as soon as possible," Dr Bowe said.

The *Give Me 5 for Kids* appeal will also fund two medical baby warmers for GCUH's Newborn Care Unit (\$13,000) and three jaundice warmers for its Women's and Children's Service (\$7700).

The annual June campaign is one of many partnerships Gold Coast Health has with the broader community including the Rotary Club of Robina's Nurse of the Year People's Choice Award and radio station Hot Tomato's bid to find the Gold Coast's finest nurse.

Gold Coast Health Chief Executive Ron Calvert said the broad community support was invaluable to the service delivering quality care across its 20 health facilities.

"The generosity of not only Gold FM but the Gold Coast community enhances the care our staff can provide and ensures children and families across the city have access to the best possible medical care right here on the Coast," Mr Calvert said.

"On behalf of all our staff and young patients, I am grateful for the continuing support we receive our community."

Symposium to attract country's nurses and midwives

Gold Coast Health will roll out the welcome mat for Australia's nursing and midwifery community when it hosts a ground-breaking symposium in September.

With a conference theme of 'Nurses and Midwives working together towards tomorrow', the inaugural Gold Coast Nursing and Midwifery Symposium will feature a stellar line-up of guest speakers and compelling workshops.

Among the speakers already announced for the event are bestselling author and leading authority on improving brain function Dr Helen Popovic and Griffith University Indigenous Health and Workforce Development Professor Roianne West.

Registration for the two-day event is \$195 per person (available until mid-August), with tickets also available to attend the sunset function, a networking opportunity to be held after day one at Griffith University's UniBar.

The Symposium will be held from 4-5 September at Gold Coast University Hospital. For more, visit: www.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoasthealth/html/events/150310-nursing-symposium.asp

International conference draws high-profile backing

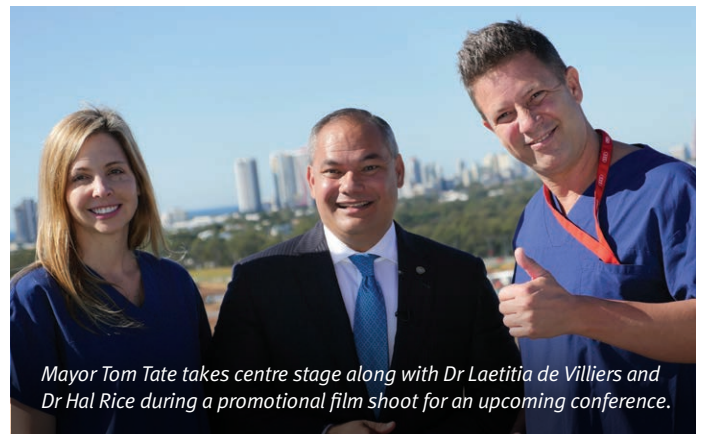
Mayor Tom Tate has joined two of Gold Coast Health's leading lights atop Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) to promote an international conference that will showcase the city and its health service to the world.

Dr Hal Rice and Dr Laetitia de Villiers were the driving forces behind the city's successful bid to host this year's World Federation of Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology (WFITN), which will be held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre in November.

The conference, which is held every two years, is expected to attract about 1000 of the world's leading specialists in the field to the city.

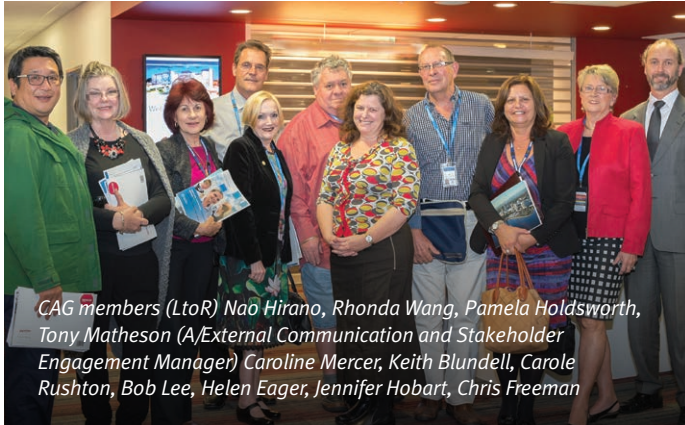
With the event organisers filming a promotional film for the conference, the Mayor kindly gave up his time to stand on the GCUH helipad and share a welcome message with delegates.

WFITN will be held from 9-13 November, visit <http://wfitn.com.au>



Mayor Tom Tate takes centre stage along with Dr Laetitia de Villiers and Dr Hal Rice during a promotional film shoot for an upcoming conference.

Community engagement moves into high gear



CAG members (LtoR) Naō Hirano, Rhonda Wang, Pamela Holdsworth, Tony Matheson (A/External Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Manager) Caroline Mercer, Keith Blundell, Carole Rushton, Bob Lee, Helen Eager, Jennifer Hobart, Chris Freeman

Gold Coast Health has recently launched a new online community consultation tool to ensure that planning and service delivery remains patient focused.

The new online tool, *Your say at Gold Coast Health*, will assist Gold Coast Health to seek local community and health consumer

input on a variety of projects and initiatives through discussion forums, Q&A, a brainstormer, surveys, story submissions, and rich multimedia content.

Some of the areas we seek community input is healthcare planning, proposed changes to how we deliver services and measuring health consumer expectations.

The introduction of *Your say at Gold Coast Health* follows a successful consumer engagement program over the past three years which has seen health consumers sitting at the same planning and assessment tables as senior staff and clinicians.

Current areas of health consumer participation include; quality and safety, nutrition, maternity, Q-Flow outpatient service and development of the strategic plan.

The Consumer Advisory Group (CAG) has been recognised by the Board as an important source of information and feedback on our health service.

Consumer insights and issues are tabled at regular CAG meetings attended by staff content specialists who give consumers specific service related presentations. Consumers provide valuable feedback to the wider group on their committee experiences and table issues for further information.

For more information on Community and Consumer Engagement at Gold Coast Health including how to get involved, visit: www.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoasthealth/getinvolved.asp

Service goes the extra mile at marathon

Gold Coast Health clinicians played a vital role in delivering world standard event safety and medical practices at this year's Gold Coast Airport Marathon.

With close to 27,000 participants taking part in the two-day event, a dedicated 'mini hospital' was erected in the recovery area complete with two coordinators, six doctors, 10 nurses, physiotherapists and six finish-line staff.

Gold Coast University Hospital's Dr Brent Richards, who has been director of the marathon's internal medical centre for more than 10 years, said the event medical centre treated thousands of runners over two days.

"Our team once again delivered quality care at this year's event," Dr Richards said.

"We've been doing it for a number of years so it is a prepared and well-oiled machine.

"There is so much work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure the safety of our participants and we will continue to innovate as we head towards the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games."



In focus with Jenny Hobart, Consumer Advisory Group member

After graduating as a Registered Nurse in 1966 I worked for a few years as a scrub nurse in various hospitals before moving with my husband and family to the Gold Coast in 1973. For the next 20 years I focused on the pleasures and demands of family and business life bringing up four energetic young sons. As they grew and became more independent I felt the strong urge to return to nursing so enrolled and completed my Post Graduate degree in Nursing at Griffith University.

Upon completion I was fortunate to be offered a position at the Gold Coast Hospital. For the next 18 years I enjoyed working there, particularly in the Medical Imaging Department assisting with interventional radiological procedures. I was forced to retire in 2013 due to health reasons and a great gap formed. I missed the involvement and challenges with my colleagues and clients so was delighted when I was offered the opportunity to join the Community Advisory Group (CAG).

I am now the community representative on three different committees and as my husband and I become more involved as consumers ourselves, I feel I am able to contribute to the goals and objectives of Gold Coast Health in a constructive way and to assist in ensuring the best services possible are provided for the people of the Gold Coast.

The Gold Coast community has been wonderful to me and my family and this gives me the opportunity to contribute something back in return.

Pictured: Jenny Hobart has been a CAG member since 2013.

Foundation keeps patient transport running

Gold Coast Hospital Foundation unveiled new buses for the Cancer Patient Transport Service last month, signifying their funding and management of the service formerly known as Monique's Bus.

The service was established by the late Ron Clarke in memory of his daughter - fittingly, Helen Clarke was the first to greet one of the new buses at Gold Coast University Hospital.

Continuing this legacy, the Foundation has taken over the service from Council and has three vehicles on the road five days per week. The service will make more than 10,000 journeys per year to help cancer patients get to and from hospital for treatment.

Foundation Chief Executive Kim Sutton said it is with immense pride they will continue this vital service which will become the Foundation's largest community activity.

"Gold Coast Hospital Foundation is substantially increasing its activities within the community, and the need for this service to have a long-term future was clear," Ms Sutton said.

"Transport assistance is vital for cancer patients who live alone, have no family or friends to assist them, or cannot travel by themselves as their exhausting treatment takes its physical and emotional toll.

"With the health and hospital needs of the Gold Coast community continuing to grow, the Foundation aims to add value to the services and care provided to local patients and their families."



Lisa Gilmer with Monique's Bus driver John Whenuarua.

Weighing in on community health



Louise Champion and one-year-old Amity with the new scales.

Local mums can more accurately monitor their baby's weight at local community Child Health clinics, thanks to five new infant scales bought by the Foundation.

Where the difference of plus or minus a few grams could mean a newborn is recovering or regressing, these new scales use precise calibrations making them more conducive to measuring minute weight changes.

As well as eliminating estimations, the scales compensate for a baby's movement, making it much more comfortable for them. The Foundation has also committed to purchasing a further five scales for home visiting nursing which saw 12,000 visits made to Gold Coast mums and bubs in 2014.

With a considerable increase in births over the last six months at Gold Coast University Hospital, the Foundation provides vital support to local hospital services and community health.

"Gold Coast Hospital Foundation adds value to the services and care provided to local patients and their families," said Kim Sutton, Foundation Chief Executive.

"By funding health projects and extra equipment just like these infant scales, the Foundation is ensuring families have access the best health care, right here on the Coast."

Patient positives

Patient 1

23 July 2015

Just a quick note to let you know what professional and friendly service I received at the Gold Coast University Hospital. I went to the emergency department for a health issue and from the triage nurse to the registrar the level of care was exceptional! What a great public health care system we have, you are all doing a great job.

Patient 2

7 July 2015

I visited my GP at 36 weeks pregnant with elevated blood pressure and was sent to GCUH for review. When I arrived the midwife admitted me and advised that the test results were not good and we should prepare ourselves for induction of labour. It wasn't an uncomplicated labour and birth and I received intensive obstetric and midwifery care in the birth suite. We want to thank all the team who saved me and my baby's life when I became so ill. My husband and I are so grateful we came to GCUH and will never forget all the people who cared for us.

Midwifery colleagues discover life-long bond

Two Gold Coast Health midwives have formed a special bond after realising one nursed the other as a baby in the old Gold Coast Hospital.

Graduate midwife Charlotte Le Merrer and long-serving Penny Wallace may be colleagues at Gold Coast University Hospital these days but it was a different story 21 years ago when the former came into the world.

Back then Penny was the midwife and Charlotte was the little one she cared for, a fact the latter stumbled upon while chatting with her mother.

“One night while talking about work and my new colleagues, I asked Mum if she could remember who her midwives were and she remembered one was called Penelope,” said Charlotte, who was a student midwife at the time.

“I thought there was no way it could be the one I knew but Mum had a photo of the midwife bathing me and sure enough it was Penny. The next time I saw her I asked how long she had been working at the hospital and showed her the photo. I think I even shed a few tears when I told her.”

Having notched up almost four decades of service with Gold Coast Health, Penny has birthed thousands of babies during her career but believes Charlotte is the only one she has ended up working alongside.

“I have been a midwife for women I birthed as babies but this is surely the first time I've worked with someone I helped bring into the world,” Ms Wallace said.

“It brings uniqueness to the relationship we share and it's exciting to watch Charlotte grow as a midwife.”

Gold Coast Health's maternity team birthed more than 4700 babies during the past year, with the number of families choosing GCUH increasing at a rate of more than 15 per cent annually.



Graduate Midwife Charlotte Le Merrer was amazed to discover colleague Penny Wallace helped deliver her 21 years ago.

Emergency nurse snares radio station accolade



Nurse Shelley Christie has received public recognition for her work in Emergency.

Meet Shelley Christie – the inaugural winner of radio station 102.9 Hot Tomato's Gold Coast Nursing Award.

“It's so exciting,” the 25-year-old said after learning her parents had secretly nominated her for the honour. “I wasn't expecting it at all.”

Shelley was recognised for her work in Gold Coast Health's Emergency Departments, winning \$250 as a monthly winner and becoming a finalist in the annual award that comes with a \$5000 prize.

After graduating from Griffith University, she quickly found a home in ED and has no plans on leaving the emergency environment any time soon.

“It is a challenging place to work; it can be really busy and sometimes sad, but it's a really rewarding job,” Ms Christie said.

“I see people on some of the worst days of their lives but there are also some amazing things we see as well - like being able to treat patients who have had a stroke or heart attack and saving their lives in the end.”

Shelley's proud parents, Mal and Vicki, were quick to nominate their daughter when they heard about the Gold Coast Nursing Awards.

“(Emergency) can be a very stressful and upsetting department but also rewarding,” they said in their nomination.

“Shelley is very intuitive and has saved patients' lives, which is very rewarding ... she is furthering her education by doing in-hospital trauma courses and also studying for her Masters in Emergency Medicine at the same time as shift working.

“We are very proud of her.”

If you know of a nurse or midwife who has made a difference in your life or a loved one's, nominate them for next month's award at <http://www.mycg.com.au/gold-coast-nursing-awards/>

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