

Dr Luregn Schlapbach and CNC Sarah Brown are part of the new children's critical care unit now open at GCUH.

**Gold Coast Health**  
Building a healthier community

# healthwaves+

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2014

GOLD COAST HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SERVICE NEWS

## Children's critical care service opens

Services for critically ill children on the Gold Coast have expanded with the opening of Children's Critical Care Services at Gold Coast University Hospital on 10 February.

The unit is a first for the Gold Coast and will provide four high dependency beds for children from birth to 16-years-old.

Employing paediatric trained staff with intensive care experience; the unit is expecting to treat over 200 patients in the first year. Most of these children with their families would otherwise have needed to be transferred to Brisbane for treatment.

Children with very complex conditions and children expected to require full intensive care for life support will continue to be transferred to established tertiary hospitals in Brisbane.

Paediatric Intensive Care Specialist, Dr Luregn Schlapbach said the opening of the unit is part of expanding paediatric services at GCUH.

"The Children's Critical Care Services will provide a local service and will significantly reduce the number of families having to travel up to Brisbane during an emotional time," Dr Schlapbach.

"The unit will be able to look after children that need high dependency care locally and will be able to take patients from the neonatal intensive care that need readmission.

"We'll also be able to take local patients back from Brisbane after complex surgeries so they can recover and receive a high level of care closer to home.

"We're here to provide services in a safe manner centred around not only the child's needs, but the family's as well."

The Children's Critical Care Unit will work in close collaboration with Brisbane's tertiary paediatric hospitals.

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## Safety and Quality Showcase

Thursday 27 February 2014

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# Boardnews

## Message from the Chair – Ian Langdon



At a recent Board/Staff forum, I stressed the strategic importance for Gold Coast Health to receive ongoing growth funding. Such funding results in;

increased health services to the community reflected by reduced outpatient waiting times, a faster surgical queues process, increased capability to introduce new services; increased security and opportunities for staff.

Historically, funding has been allocated to various regions on the basis of population statistics and associated demand however the process now is more complex. Demand based on population growth is still relevant but increasingly attention is paid to the efficiency in which regions utilise their funds. There are a range of measurements that measure efficiency, this means that service targets are met and preferably exceeded whilst maintaining excellent safety and quality standards.

Gold Coast Health must earn the right to maximise growth funding. The days of assuming the loudest voice and population movement will be the sole determinants are now gone. This will require a team effort and leadership at all levels.

Efficient use of funding has another significant benefit. This government has emphasised its commitment to challenge the public sector's right to exclusive access to public funds through the application of contestability. Inefficiency in our system will see contestability lead to more outsourcing. Efficiency in the form of continuous improvement at Gold Coast Health, namely current versus past, will not only improve health services to the community but it will also reduce the pressure to outsource. There will be situations where outsourcing makes sense but such situations should not arise because of internal inefficiency.

The message is clear, to maximise benefits for the community and the staff we must put efficiency, safety and quality of service to the top of our priority list.

## Giving patients a voice

Patients will have their say on healthcare service levels in a new patient engagement project commencing in February.

The Patient Voice project aims to provide a better understanding of the patient experience, perception and satisfaction rates by surveying recently discharged patients.

The initiative is expected to provide feedback to the participating units on an ongoing basis – affirming what is working well and identifying opportunities for change or quality improvement.

Project Sponsor and Executive Director Organisation Development, Naomi Dwyer, said engaging with our patients is the cornerstone in delivering patient focussed healthcare services.

"The project will define and measure the quality of a service and help to identify the gaps between minimum, desired, and perceived service levels," Ms Dwyer said.

A group of committed nursing staff will call patients six weeks after being discharged and use information gathered to guide quality and safety practices.

Stage one of the project includes the Cardiology and Coronary Care Unit at GCUH and the Acute Medical Unit at Robina Hospital with a view to include other wards following an evaluation of the initial pilot.



*A pilot program will help improve the patient experience.*

Nurse Unit Manager for the Cardiology and Coronary Care Unit at GCUH, Fiona Naylor is committed to continually improving patient care in her ward.

"This is an opportunity for patients to help us provide an even better health service for the Gold Coast community."

The patient's views are crucial in ensuring that their needs are met and we encourage all our patients to participate in the survey," Ms Naylor said.

Complementing the existing annual patient survey, the Patient Voice project will be piloted for 12 weeks with a potential rollout across other units following evaluation.



Deb Lenaghan presenting on the introduction of the extended scope physiotherapist role in the ED.

## Board Community Forum hits the mark

Community members with an interest in health joined Board members and staff, including clinical specialists at the inaugural Board Community Forum in December.

Attendees heard presentations from Chief Executive Ron Calvert; Board Chair Ian Langdon; staff specialist Cancer and Blood Disorders Michelle Bryson; Medical Physicist Deborah Tout; Physiotherapist Deb Lenaghan, and Gold Coast Hospital Foundation CEO Kim Sutton.

Topics presented ranged from new services on offer in 2014, innovation in our workplace and the importance of fund raising to aid our health service.

The event will be held each October and include highlights from Gold Coast Health's annual report.





Changes to the Transcription Service have improved access to patient information by local GPs.

## Transcription service goes online

Access to patient information is easier, quicker and more secure since the successful pilot of an electronic clinical correspondence system.

The Robina Hospital Transcription Service now provides an electronic transcription service for all outpatient clinics instead of the previous manual process of typing, printing and posting outpatient letters.

All patient correspondence is entered directly into the Electronic Medical Record and then sent to their local GP over a secure, web-based program; saving up to \$5 per letter and up to \$200,000 per year.

Administration Coordinator, Operational Control Centre, Fiona Collyer, said changing to an electronic correspondence system improved GPs' access to timely, patient information.

"Using this system means we can send clinical letters to the district GPs within 48 hours of the patient being seen in the clinic at Robina Hospital," Ms Collyer said.

"We've received positive feedback from the district GP's saying they are very pleased to have this critical patient information so soon after their specialist appointment so they can continue to provide safe and efficient patient care."

GP Liaison officer, Dr Kate Johnston said; "The secure electronic receipt of these letters has ensured a safe and timely transfer of important clinical information and GP's are reporting great satisfaction with receiving this information electronically and having it available before the patient attends their next appointment."

Gold Coast Health sends up to 4000 outpatient letters per month and has implemented the same electronic clinical correspondence system throughout Gold Coast University Hospital.

## Improving multicultural awareness

Gold Coast Health recognises that one in every four people who seek our services is identified as a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community member.

We are lucky to have Mr Nao Hirano as a Gold Coast Health Consumer Advisory Group member. Nao was selected for the 'Cultural Achievement Award' at the City of Gold Coast 2014 Australia Day Awards.

Nao works closely with Gold Coast Health in his role as Development Officer in Multicultural Communities Council, Gold Coast to advise on multicultural needs and information support for CALD communities.

The most frequently spoken language is Japanese, followed by Mandarin, Korean, Cantonese, Italian, German and Spanish.

This places some additional culture awareness needs on our staff who treat CALD members on a daily basis.

The following months will see a dedicated strategy rolled out to give our staff the tools and knowledge to treat CALD members in a respectful and culturally aware manner. Further there are real tangible improvements to health outcomes when these considerations are factored into our healthcare delivery in reduced days of stay.

Short online training modules and in-session delivery by multicultural community representatives are planned in 2014. Your computer screensavers will highlight these opportunities in the months to come.

## Rheumatology slashing waiting lists

In the last 12 months, rheumatology patients in need of medical attention are spending less time waiting and more time on their road to recovery.

GP Liaison Officer, Dr James Collins, said that despite an increase in referrals, Rheumatology Outpatient Department has managed to reduce their patient waiting list by nearly 70 per cent since January 2013 and more than 40 per cent in the last two months alone.

The reduction comes as a result of assisting patients over the phone in a 'virtual clinic' and employing community based options.

"In a virtual clinic, the consultant calls the patient and assesses their needs. In many cases, the patient does not actually require face-to-face consultation and can be provided advice and management over the phone," Dr Collins said.

"We've also referred a number of patients to community based programs such as the Gold Coast Medicare Local Persistent Pain Program.

"These combined strategies have been working very well. In addition to easing pressure on clinical resources, we've been able to assist a higher number of patients sooner."

"We'll be looking to further trial this approach with other departments where possible in the near future."



Nao Hirano receiving his award from Mayor Tom Tate.

# Ready to shine

In the lead up to accreditation in March, Gold Coast Health is already proving that it has lifted the quality and standard of care for patients.

Since the last national accreditation in November 2011, Gold Coast Health has made improvements in the provision of care and service delivery standards including:

- A 68 per cent reduction in oral health waiting lists.
- Introduction of new services – nuclear medicine, radiation oncology and cardiac surgery.
- Establishment of a 24/7, one point of contact mental health number – 1300 MH CALL
- Expansion of palliative care services, including an increase in beds.

- New children's area in ED.
- Increase in patient satisfaction.
- Implementation of Transit Unit at Robina Hospital.

Executive Director, Organisation Development, Naomi Dwyer said Gold Coast Health is continually improving the safety and quality of care.

"As a Health Service, we are committed to lifting the quality of care which is an ongoing process," Ms Dwyer said.

"The accreditation process, which is held every two years, allows us to showcase our safety and quality achievements and really is an opportunity to shine."

The national EQUIP National Accreditation Survey will be held from 10 – 14 March 2014. Staff are encouraged to prepare

by keeping up to date with the weekly countdown bulletins at: [qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/serv/quality/nationalstandards](http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/serv/quality/nationalstandards)

The inaugural Safety and Quality Showcase will be held on Thursday 27 February 2014. For more information, see page one.



Gold Coast Health has improved safety and quality since the last accreditation two years ago.



More than 100 staff have signed up to the cycle club which is part of creating a healthier workplace.

## Creating a healthier workplace

With 65 per cent of Queenslanders now overweight or obese, Gold Coast Health is encouraging staff to keep healthy and active through a number of health and wellbeing programs.

Yoga, tai chi, a smoking cessation program and a cycling club are all new Team Health initiatives to encourage a healthier workforce.

Team Health Coordinator Mara Bennett said the programs were supporting the health of employees through prevention of chronic diseases.

"Gold Coast Health understands the benefits of encouraging staff to be active and healthy which is why we've committed to giving staff access to health and wellbeing programs," Ms Bennett said.

"The programs we're offering have been a hit with staff; particularly the cycling club which has more than 100 members."

Gold Coast Health has registered for Queensland Health's Workplaces for Wellness Initiative and is working towards becoming a recognised workplace for employee health and wellbeing.

A healthier food choices program, free health checks, health information and coaching phone service will be available throughout the year.

To find out more or to get involved, visit:

[qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/teamhealth/default.htm](http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/teamhealth/default.htm)

## Students trial new facilities

One hundred and sixty medical students from Bond and Griffith Universities trialed the new lecture room facilities for the first time at the Gold Coast University Hospital.

"In previous years we have had to run several orientation groups in different facilities at different times which did provide some challenges, so we are very excited about housing all 160 students in the one room at the one time," Gold Coast Health Service Medical Student Coordinator, Ms Christine Sly said.

"Being able to host medical students from two universities concurrently for their hospital orientation is testament to our strong partnership with our local universities for the delivery of quality medical education on the Gold Coast."

For the first time, year four and five medical students from Bond University and year three and four students from Griffith University began their clinical placements together at the new Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital in early January.

To complete their course requirements, students will rotate through a variety of clinical areas including; paediatrics, surgery, medicine, women's health, mental health and the emergency department.



160 medical students from Griffith and Bond Universities will gain hands on experience at GCUH and Robina Hospital.





Sherri-Leigh Land (centre) with staff from Heartfelt and GCUH with the donation.

## Donation gives cuddles

A generous donation of a cuddle cot to Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) is helping parents grieve after the loss of their baby.

The Emerikus Land Foundation donated GCUH's first cuddle cot after the loss of their daughter Emerikus earlier this year which has already been used by seven families.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported 2,562 registered perinatal deaths in Australia in 2011. To date, GCUH has supported 35 families through the loss of their baby this year.

Neonatal Paediatrician, Dr Pita Birch said the cot lets families spend quality time with their baby allowing them to create memories and grieve.

"Research shows that parents who spend time holding their baby, naming and creating memories through taking footprints and photos assist with the long-term grieving process," Dr Birch said.

"The cuddle cot allows the parents to do this and we are grateful to the Emerikus Land Foundation for giving this opportunity to other parents going through the same thing." Founders of the Emerikus Land Foundation, Sherri-Leigh and Ben Land said the donation came after their own experience.

"We believe that even if the cot was only used once, that was one family that has been able to spend that little bit more time with their precious angel," Mr and Mrs Land said.

Through the generosity of Emerikus Land Foundation, Heartfelt have been able to purchase a number of camera kits to donate to hospitals to assist with memory creation during this time of bereavement. Heartfelt donated a camera kit to GCUH that will be used in the labour ward and Newborn Care Unit for parents to create memories after their loss.

For more information on the Emerikus Land Foundation, visit: <https://facebook.com/emerikuslandfoundation>

For more information on Heartfelt, visit: [www.heartfelt.org.au](http://www.heartfelt.org.au)

## Flags fly at Robina again

After more than six months of no flags at Robina Hospital, the state and Australian flags are now flying with patriotic pride.

Federal Member for McPherson, Karen Andrews attended to help raise the flags alongside Board Chair Ian Langdon which were kindly donated by the state and federal members. Lights were installed to allow the flags to be a permanent fixture at the hospital.



## Patient positives

### PATIENT 1

January 2014

Many thanks to Queensland Health for giving me an opportunity to have a better quality life. Thanks to the doctors, nurses, staff and trainees for their professional and caring service.

### PATIENT 2

10 January 2014

The Transition Care Program helped me achieve my goals and I was pleased with the care provided, they included me in making decisions about my care so I was prepared for my discharge.

### PATIENT 3

6 December 2013

I take this opportunity to thank all staff for the kindness, friendliness and care given to me in my short time here. I was overly impressed with the compassion showed to me on my arrival at emergency ward and assessment room. The staff there were compassionate and very caring; always a smiling cheerful greeting.



Ninety medical interns have begun work as doctors with Gold Coast Health.

## New beginnings for interns

Ninety medical interns joined Gold Coast Health in January as they embark on their new career as doctors.

The interns recently graduated from Griffith, Bond, Queensland, James Cook, and interstate universities.

The doctors will rotate their time between GCUH and Robina Hospitals with a number undertaking placements in rural GP practices.

Senior Medical Education Officer, Michael Pahoff said it was a pleasure to welcome the 2014 interns to Gold Coast Health.

"By the end of the year, 30 of the newly graduated doctors will have worked in rural hospitals and 10 will have completed a placement at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane," Mr Pahoff.

"It is particularly pleasing to welcome one of our new interns who was born at the old Gold Coast Hospital, educated at local schools, graduated from the Medical School of a Gold Coast university and is now working as a doctor at the new Gold Coast University Hospital."





Oliver delivered Christmas cheer to Mr Graeme Colwell.

## Bonny Babes deliver Christmas cheer

Three-year-old Oliver Davenport was busy delivering Christmas hampers on behalf of his Mum, Kylie, who is part of the Bonny Babes Sisterhood. The Sisterhood organise special pamper packs for people battling cancer and deliver them to the Day Oncology Ward throughout the year.

The Sisterhood comprises women of all ages, backgrounds and personality who try to make a difference in our local and global communities.

Joanie Shaw, NUM Oncology Day said this kind of support for our patients is so important.

"Bonny Babes does a terrific job in supporting our patients and they really appreciate the effort."

## Evaluating GCUH

Staff will be able to provide feedback on the Gold Coast University Hospital (GCUH) through an evaluation process commencing in March this year.

A 'Building Performance Evaluation' process will be coordinated by the GCUH Project team, assessing the building and how it is managing operationally.

To close out the project, evaluation will focus on areas with significant differences compared to the old facility and staff will be able to assist by participating in workshops and survey opportunities.

The process will also be a mechanism to identify ongoing change management or performance improvements for the facility as staff continue to settle into life at GCUH throughout 2014.

Information about the process is available on QHEPS: [qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hpid/html/planning-bpe.htm](http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hpid/html/planning-bpe.htm)



Bruce Murray delivers a hamper to Mr Poutoa Lote in the renal day unit.

## Neighbourly partnership

Our good friends at Church of Christ, a community centred church just next door to Gold Coast University Hospital did a wonderful job again in delivering hampers to over 240 patients on Christmas day.

Bruce Murray, Pastor within the Pastoral Care and Missional Communities said he received so many heart felt comments.

"A young man was completely taken back and thanked us with real genuine warmth - he just could not believe someone one would be bothered to do that for him, especially on Christmas day," Mr Murray said.

"When we arrived at our ward the staff welcomed us and could not believe we had a gift for everyone there - including them."

## Solomon Islands comes to Robina

Robina Hospital, MAU recently hosted a nurse from Kirakira Hospital in the Solomon Islands where medical students participating in Bond University's Solomon Island project work

Kirakira Hospital nurse Roland Alahanimaie spent the day in Robina Hospital MAU where he informed staff about the limitations of care at Kirakira hospital and also learnt about nursing practice in Australia. The MAU funded, made and donated 30 nurse pouches for Roland to give the nursing staff at Kirakira.

The project sends groups of final year medical students to a hospital in Kirakira,

a community on the island of Makira, who help support the nursing staff who serve the island's population of more than 40,000 people. There is no doctor currently based at Kirakira Hospital.

Guest house owners Noel and Lois Mamau joined Roland at a charity Gala Ball for the project while on the Gold Coast.

During the project's first year, 33 students and several supervisors worked in the Kirakira hospital and immersed themselves in the community and island life.



Robina Hospital's MAU hosted guests from the Solomon Island participating in a Bond University project led by Dr James Fink.

## A welcome Christmas gift

Last Christmas, the Gold Coast Hospital Foundation, with help from our corporate partners Southport Sharks, FOXTEL and Gold Coast Cabs installed Christmas trees in the foyers of Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital.

The trees provided a great opportunity for staff, patients, and family members to write a Christmas message to loved ones and donate to the Foundation.

We received many lovely thanks and well wishes including; "All your nurses are angels"; "Your renal team are angels"; and "Thank you for looking after my dad at Christmas".

More than \$3,000 was raised this Christmas, helping us to fund all of the items on our Christmas list including; electronic scales to assess malnutrition in patients, a portable suction unit for use when transferring tracheotomy and high-dependency patients and a wheelchair for the medical imaging department.



## Improving antenatal care

Gold Coast Hospital Foundation has purchased a new online video remote interpreting service (VRI) for Antenatal Services after a six month trial at GCUH.

With the VRI, antenatal services will be able to increase booking availability resulting in better patient care for non-English speaking patients.

The VRI is a small mobile video screen with an integrated phone hook-up that can access wireless networks allowing medical staff to connect with interpreters' across Australia.

Clinical Midwife Consultant Lynne O'Brien said she is over the moon that this equipment has been funded by the Foundation.

"This equipment will speed up waiting times, lower interpreter costs and assist me and my team to provide better patient care and treatment to those members of our community who speak English as a second language."

## Funding research

Gold Coast Hospital Foundation is working in collaboration with Griffith University to ensure medical staff have access to research funding to help improve the health care we can provide to the Gold Coast Community.

We are proud to announce that together we have committed to fund the following research in 2014 with an investment from the Foundation of more than \$37,000:

- *Nontypeable Haemophilus Influenzae in lung cancer:* Aims to investigate an association between airway colonisation and risk for lung cancer. This would be an important finding as an oral vaccine for nontypeable Haemophilus influenza exists.
- *Improving safety in surgery:* Will evaluate the feasibility of a multifaceted intervention to promote use of consistent and timely communication in surgery.
- *A retrospective investigation of the histological and molecular features of the small intestines in chronic fatigue syndrome:* Aims to provide further evidence for histological and immunological alteration in gastrointestinal tract of patients with chronic fatigue syndrome.
- *Possible antiplatelet alternative for aspirin resistant diabetic patients:* Aims to compare the effect of Queen Garnet Plums with a low dose of aspirin to evaluate the feasibility of using this specially produced health food as antiplatelet therapy in diabetic and obese population resistant or non-responsive to aspirin.

Each of these research projects will benefit the health care we can provide in the future and the Foundation would like to thank the incredible doctors and medical professionals who are committed to achieving better health outcomes for us all through conducting this important research.



**DonateLife**  
**Week 2014**  
SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY – SUNDAY 2 MARCH

Have a chat with your loved ones about organ donation during DonateLife Week.

## Have the chat that saves lives

Something as simple as a chat could one day save someone's life.

This is the message DonateLife Week is hoping to get out during the annual national awareness week for organ and tissue donation from 23 February to 2 March.

Gold Coast Health's Regional Donor Coordinator, Amanda Gilbert said one organ donor can transform the lives of up to 10 people.

"Although three in four Australians have discussed the subject with family members, only 53 per cent of people know their loved ones' donation decisions," Ms Gilbert said.

"I encourage everyone who hasn't had a chat with their family to use DonateLife Week as an opportunity to help you be prepared, should you ever be asked to confirm a loved one's donation decision."

For more information on DonateLife Week or organ donation, visit: [www.donatelife.gov.au](http://www.donatelife.gov.au) or email [amanda\\_gilbert@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:amanda_gilbert@health.qld.gov.au)



## Unique perspective for first radiation patient

On 6 January, the first public cancer patient received radiation therapy services on the Gold Coast without being charged for the treatment.

A radiotherapy service established in partnership with Radiation Oncology Queensland means that patients can receive treatment for cancer on the Gold Coast and don't have to travel to Brisbane.

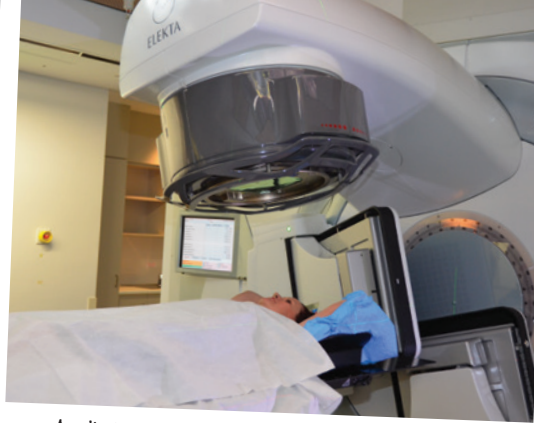
The first patient to benefit from treatment using the \$6 million linear accelerators was long-time Gold Coast cancer nurse, Debbie Farrell who began her career at Gold Coast Hospital as a graduate nurse in 1997.

A GCUH cancer nurse consultant, Debbie has been closely involved in cancer care as a practicing nurse, a fundraiser and an educator throughout her career.

Debbie is now experiencing cancer care as a patient having been diagnosed with early stage breast cancer in November 2013, following a routine mammogram.

"I consider myself very fortunate. My cancer was detected early and I underwent my surgery at Robina Hospital soon after diagnosis," Ms Farrell said.

"With the commencement of public radiation therapy, I can receive my daily treatment at GCUH and continue working.



*A radiation therapy service is now available to public patients on the Gold Coast for the first time.*

There is no longer a need for patients like me to travel to Brisbane."

ROQ CEO Mark Middleton said he was proud to be delivering state of the art radiation oncology services to the people of the Gold Coast in partnership with GCUH.

"Our service will deliver exceptional patient care, build on our acknowledged research excellence and maintain our proven track record of training key cancer specific disciplines," Mr Middleton said.

Gold Coast Health Chief Executive Ron Calvert said he was pleased to see the addition of this vital but previously missing component of public cancer services commence on schedule.

"The team at Gold Coast Health is confident about the quality of service being provided which will see up to 40 patients a day being treated when both linear accelerators are up and running.

To date around 100 patients have been consulted since ROQ commenced in September and it is expected over 800 patients will be treated in the first year.

## Nursing grads welcomed

Sixty-two nursing and midwifery graduates commenced their career at Gold Coast Health last month.

The graduates are part of 2014's overall intake of 146 nurses and midwives with 14 enrolled nurses set to join them in March.

The nursing graduates will be placed at GCUH, Robina Hospital and Carrara Health Centre and will be working in a variety of clinical settings including; acute medicine/surgery, critical care, mental health, cancer services, rehabilitation and perioperative services.

Associate Professor of Subacute and Aged Nursing, Laurie Grealish also commenced in January. Laurie has a joint position between Griffith University and Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service and will be instrumental in co-leading research and innovation in the clinical specialties of aged and subacute care.



*Sixty-two of this year's 146 graduate nurses commenced in January.*

## Changes to outpatient bookings

Patients waiting to be seen through adult outpatient departments will soon be able to choose an appointment time at their convenience.

Instead of being given a fixed appointment date and time, a letter will be sent to patients asking them to call a booking centre to make an appointment where they can advise when they would like to attend their appointment at a suitably convenient time.

GP Liaison Officer, Dr James Collins said we should see a drop in the number of patients who do not attend their appointments.

"The number of 'failures to attend' amount to several hundred appointments every month, resulting in wasted clinical resources in an already pressured environment," Dr Collins said.

"Patients who do not call to make an appointment within four weeks of the date of the letter will be notified that they have been removed from the outpatient waiting list."

The change to patient focused appointment scheduling is expected to result in a number of benefits, including:

- an increase in the number of patients seen
- reduced waiting lists
- better identification of patients in need of an appointment

Patient focused appointment scheduling will be trialled in selected outpatient areas, with a view to implement across other departments pending evaluation.

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