

# healthwaves+

JUNE/JULY 2014

GOLD COAST HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SERVICE NEWS

## Taking care of mums and bubs

**Gold Coast Health has expanded women's healthcare with the opening of a tertiary Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) Service at Gold Coast University Hospital.**

MFM provides women and their families with comprehensive management of maternal and fetal disease before, during and after pregnancy and birth.

Since opening in March, the unit has seen more than 200 women and their babies and 500 occasions of service, with more than 2,000 women expected to be seen each year when at capacity.

Jade Weir was one of the unit's first case-managed patients and didn't expect to need close access to this specialist service when she fell pregnant with her first child.

"I was referred to the unit when my baby's low heart rate was picked up at my first scan. Normally babies measure between 110 to 160 beats per minute (bpm), whereas my baby was a consistent 80 bpm for the whole pregnancy and was a concern," Ms Weir said.

"Having the unit here on the Gold Coast meant I didn't have to travel to Brisbane for monitoring throughout my pregnancy and was able to deliver my beautiful daughter Makenzie Mai safely on 4 April."

Maternal Fetal Medicine Midwife Coordinator Tionie Newth said the unit provided a tailored model of care and a team approach to treating patients.

"Our primary aim within the Maternal Fetal Medicine Unit is to provide a compassionate and family-centred response to any pregnancy related problem within our sphere of practice," Ms Newth said.

"We hope to grow the service in coming months to offer bereavement care, perinatal loss management, counselling and Pregnancy After Loss (PALS) for women who experience stillbirth."

Of all women seen by the Maternal Fetal Medicine Unit, a select group of women are identified high risk pregnancies of either maternal or fetal nature requiring close monitoring and are individually case-managed by an MFM midwife.

The unit also provides: state of the art ultrasound screening and diagnosis; invasive testing including amniocentesis, chorionic villus sampling, and fetal blood sampling; and multidisciplinary management of complex, high risk pregnancies.

For more information on the Maternal Fetal Medicine Unit, contact **5687 1149**.

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**NEW LOOK** healthwaves+  
coming soon!

We're giving our community newsletter a facelift – keep an eye out for new changes in the August-September edition.



# Boardnews

## Message from the Chair – Ian Langdon

In finalising the 2014/15 budget there are a number of standout features. The continued growth in funds for our services is obviously important but so too is the need to use such funds efficiently in order to maximise services to the public.

Another feature of the budget is the reminder that over 70 per cent of all funds are dedicated to the employment of our skilled workforce and this is rightly so as provision of health service is very much a “hands on” exercise. However, it is also a timely reminder to the Board of Gold Coast Health of the commitment in the Strategic Plan to the principle of valuing and empowering our staff.

A tangible way of demonstrating this commitment is through supporting staff to expand their skillsets through studies or research. Study and Research (SARAS) support is available to eligible employees who wish to enhance their skills. The Board encourages staff to avail themselves of the opportunities available as professional and personal development is an essential ingredient for providing world class health care.

We are fortunate to have a highly skilled workforce, comprised of doctors, nurses, allied health and administrative staff providing essential services to our local community through our many separate facilities, however, it is essential that we continue to build on this expertise.

The Gold Coast Hospital and Health Board is further strengthened through the addition of new Board member Dr Cherrell Hirst AO. Cherrell provides vast business experience and an outstanding clinical background that will bring an enhanced perspective to the Board composition. Please see her profile adjacent to this column.



Gold Coast Health's newest Board member, Cherrell Hirst

## Gold Coast Health is now autonomous

In line with the Queensland Government's commitment to transfer control of health services to local communities, Gold Coast Health Board Chair Ian Langdon has confirmed that from 1 July, the Board will take over responsibility for its entire approximate 7,000 workforce from the Director-General of Queensland Health as part of legislated changes.

Mr Langdon said there will be no change to employee terms and conditions, entitlements or rate of pay.

“Assuming responsibility for the employment of all staff is an important element in building local autonomy as in



Staff have been transferred from Queensland Health to Gold Coast Health as part of legislated changes.

## Dr Hirst adds Health Board to resume

She's been a Queenslander of the Year, awarded a Centenary Medal and named an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO).

Now Dr Cherrell Hirst, a well-known medical, education and corporate figure, has become the seventh Gold Coast Health Board member after having her appointment approved by Her Excellency, Governor Penelope Wensley.

As well as earning a national reputation in the field of breast cancer screening and diagnosis during her 20 years as Director of the Wesley Breast Clinic, she served as QUT Chancellor for a decade until 2004.

Dr Hirst said the opportunity to be involved in the changing face of health care had been a prime motivator in her decision to join the Gold Coast Health Board.

“Gold Coast Health is at the forefront of creating a better culture of care in the health sector and I feel privileged to have the opportunity to contribute to that transformation,” she said.

“As a Board, we are keen to do whatever we can to increase and enhance services for patients and fortunately we oversee an

excess of 70 per cent of our \$1 billion plus budget relates to employee costs.

“This reflects the reality that quality health service is based on the personal services to the public by our surgeons, doctors, nurses, midwives, allied health and administrative staff.

“Over the past two years we've seen a substantial reduction of staff numbers in the Brisbane corporate office of Queensland Health and achieving prescribed employer status is a further demonstration of local decision making and autonomy being handed back to local Boards and communities.”

In keeping with legislation, the Director-General will continue to be responsible for award negotiations and conditions of employment state-wide. Activities around payroll will also continue to be managed from a state-wide perspective.

It is also anticipated that Queensland Health will transfer legal ownership of all assets to Gold Coast Health within the next 12 months with such assets already included in Gold Coast Health's balance sheet.

organisation that is combining the people, systems and technology that will allow us to do that.”

Since 2001 Dr Hirst has served as a director on a variety of corporate entities across the finance, insurance, education, arts and biotechnology sectors including Suncorp Ltd, Peplin Inc and the Avant Group.

Gold Coast Health Board Chair Ian Langdon said her appointment was a win not only for the Health Service but Gold Coasters in general.

“Cherrell's resume speaks for itself and as well as strengthening the Board's clinical presence, she will bring tremendous education insights and business acumen to the boardroom,” he said.

In recognition of her work in the fields of breast cancer and education, Dr Hirst has been awarded three honorary doctorates, a Centenary Medal (2003) and the title of Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) (1998).

Dr Andrew Weissenberger, Professor Allan Cripps and Colette McCool have also been reappointed to the Gold Coast Health Board.

## Uniting to avoid winter blues

Another winter is upon us and with it comes a plea from the city's top medical workers for Gold Coasters to better manage their health concerns this year.

Gold Coast Health, Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) and local GPs have joined forces to highlight the annual impact winter illness has on both community members and health providers.

Each year Gold Coast Health employs strategies to cope with an increase in respiratory, cardiac and paediatric presentations during winter, as well as patients who require longer hospital stays.

Respiratory admissions at Gold Coast Health services jumped more than 30 per cent between June and July in both of the past two years, while emergency department presentations climbed an average of 8.5 per cent.

Gold Coast Health Emergency Specialist Dr Christa Bell said people needed to consider

all their health care options during the busy winter period.

“People with chronic ailments are particularly vulnerable during winter so we need to ensure the right patients are seen by the right people,” she said.

“While anyone experiencing chest pain or shortness of breath should immediately report to emergency, we also have many people arrive who could have been treated by a GP.”

Primary healthcare organisation Gold Coast Medicare Local (GCML) has developed an online directory of health and community services available on the Gold Coast, which includes details of GPs and pharmacies available outside regular business hours.

“People can visit [www.healthygc.com.au](http://www.healthygc.com.au) and then search for the service they need, which includes times they are open, location, contact details and specialties,” GCML Chief Executive Matt Carrodus said.



GCUH Emergency Specialist Dr Christa Bell, GP Dr James Collins and QAS Supervisor Paul Young have come together to promote a smarter approach to winter illness.

## Five steps to a healthier winter

- 1 Consider a flu vaccination
- 2 Practise thorough hand washing
- 3 Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing
- 4 Stay home from work or school when sick
- 5 Get plenty of sleep and water

## Getting kids ready for school

Community Child Health is working with Gold Coast Medicare Local to improve Gold Coast kids' readiness for school.

Currently, up to one quarter of Gold Coast children are commencing school

with developmental vulnerability and have difficulty engaging in the learning environment which could affect their future academic success.

Through the gr8 Start Alliance, Gold Coast Medicare Local has embedded the use of a universal developmental screening tool in early childhood education and care services across the Gold Coast to help parents identify children who may need some help with school readiness.

Clinical Nurse Consultant for Community Child Health Belinda Gray said children picked up in this screening process are referred for a thorough developmental assessment and supported referral to early intervention services.

“Early detection of developmental concerns is vital to ensure that children are linked in with supportive services in a timely fashion,” Ms Gray said.

“How children start school has a very big influence on the rest of their schooling, so helping to ensure they are ready to engage in the learning environment will go a long way to supporting their academic success.

“I strongly encourage parents to have their children's developmental progress reviewed by Community Child Health or their local GP on a regular basis.

For further information about Community Child Health services, visit: [www.qld.gov.au/health/children/babies/clinics/index.html](http://www.qld.gov.au/health/children/babies/clinics/index.html) or contact 5519 2600.



The Community Child Health team are working with GCML to improve kids' readiness for school.

## Accreditation brings merit

Gold Coast Health has risen to the challenge of arguably its most rigorous accreditation process ever by snaring 14 “Met with Merits” during the week-long, organisation-wide survey.

The outstanding result, which also saw the health service meet all EQUIP National Standards, was revealed in the Australian Council of Healthcare Standards' draft Summary Report, with Gold Coast Health also officially notified of its four-year accreditation status.

Among many words of praise, the draft report highlighted:

**Organ and Tissue Donation:** “The current processes and indicators for organ and tissue donation have resulted in the service

being considered one of the best in the State.”

**Blood and Blood Products:** “The survey team commends the interaction with staff who universally demonstrated dedication, enthusiasm and an excellent knowledge of this standard.”

**Partnering with Consumers:** “HHS is commended on fully embracing the challenge of partnering with consumers in service planning, designing care and service evaluation.”

**Clinical Deterioration:** “Due to well established governance arrangements for the recognition and response system for deteriorating patients and evaluation processes, two actions rated as Met with Merit.”

**Corporate Systems and Safety:** “Reporting and monitoring of outcomes and progress against KPIs indicate the HHS building and infrastructure systems are working at best practice.”

Gold Coast Health Chief Executive Ron Calvert said the result was a credit to staff commitment to safe, quality care.

“As well as delivering such success against the backdrop of the move to Gold Coast University Hospital and introduction of new clinical and support services, it should be noted Gold Coast Health was only the second HHS in Queensland to be surveyed in its entirety using the new standards, including an assessment of our Integrated Mental Health Services,” he said.

## Celebrating our volunteers

Gold Coast Health has celebrated the service's 300 volunteers during National Volunteers Week.

Sixteen volunteers received recognition for their length of service including Val Newton who has been volunteering at Gold Coast Hospital for 20 years.

Val began volunteering as a Blue Lady in 1994 and continued her role with the courier service at Gold Coast Hospital until the move last year.

Val is now one of the friendly faces on the meet and greet desk at Gold Coast University Hospital.

If you are interested in volunteering at Gold Coast Health, email [GCHHS.Volunteers@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:GCHHS.Volunteers@health.qld.gov.au) or contact 5687 3903.



Val Newton has celebrated 20 years volunteering for Gold Coast Health.



Robina Hospital volunteers celebrated National Volunteers Week with morning tea.

## Mental health support one call away

Gold Coast Health's mental health hotline has seen an increase in calls after phone lines were opened in November 2013.

1300 MH CALL (1300 64 2255) is a 24-hour specialist service that offers mental health care advice, referral, crisis assistance and support for patients, families, carers, significant others, support networks and professionals.

1300 MH CALL differs from other mental health lines as all calls are answered by professional mental health clinicians including; psychiatric registrars and nurses,

social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists and Indigenous mental health workers.

General Manager, Mental Health and Integrated Care, Ms Karlyn Chettleburgh said calls have increased from 671 in November 2013 to 1,026 in March this year and is expected to rise.

"It's a good sign that we're seeing an increase in calls as we've also seen a decrease of mental health presentations in our emergency departments," Ms Chettleburgh said.

"1300 MH CALL provides the Gold Coast community with a one-stop shop to public mental health services."

Gold Coast Health has been the second Hospital and Health Service to successfully launch the number as part of a state-wide move to improve public access to mental health services.

For mental health support phone 1300 MH CALL (1300 64 2255) or for more information visit: [www.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoasthealth/html/services/mhealth.asp](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoasthealth/html/services/mhealth.asp)



Breast cancer survivor Lee Seery is a strong advocate for the free screening service. Photo courtesy of Gold Coast Bulletin.

## Breast get a checkup

Despite more women than ever before having a breast screen on the Gold Coast, the region records some of the lowest screening rates in the state.

BreastScreen Queensland Health Promotion Officer Julia Foreman confirmed that the record numbers of women being screened on the Gold Coast needs to increase.

"That is why we are offering 2,000 additional appointments to women during the month of June alone," she said.

"Almost 30,000 women have visited our free services so far this year which is 3,500 more than the same time last year.

"We have some of the lowest participation rates in Queensland for women aged 50 to 69 and the second lowest for women in the 70 to 74 age bracket."

Currently only 54.3 per cent of women aged 50 to 69 years and 51 per cent of women aged 70 to 74 years are screened by BreastScreen Queensland on the Gold Coast.

Breast cancer survivor Lee Seery is a strong advocate for the screening service after being diagnosed in July 2011 with an invasive breast cancer. She underwent surgery with one of BreastScreen Queensland's visiting breast surgeons.

"I do not understand why more women don't attend screening. I am so pleased that I had my regular checkups and follow-up treatment," Ms Seery said.

For more information and appointments contact 13 20 50 or visit: [www.health.qld.gov.au/breastscreen/](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/breastscreen/)

## Why BreastScreen?

- 1 It's free
- 2 It's quick: in and out within 30 minutes
- 3 No need for a doctor's referral
- 4 We use latest digital mammography technology
- 5 Females talking to females: one-on-one with a female health professional

## Special gift for Gold Coast newborns

Newborns will join the Gold Coast's thriving active and healthy lifestyle in no time with a little help from Gold Coast Health and the City of Gold Coast.

Parents now leave Gold Coast University Hospital with a Parent Pack as well as a new baby.

Gold Coast Health Midwifery and Nursing Director for Women's and Newborn Health Sandra Plowman said the Parent Packs would be of huge benefit for parents at risk of social isolation.

"While having a child is one of life's most joyous occasions, many mums and dads soon find themselves overwhelmed by the demands of modern-day parenting," she said.

"The fact these Parent Packs not only highlight the variety of activities and

groups available but provide key details so people can access them will make a massive difference for parents desperate to connect with other new mums and dads."

Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate said the city's enviable lifestyle, family-friendly parks, beaches and free or low-cost programs and events, all combine to make it a fantastic place for families.

"The Parent Pack is an informative resource on some of the key programs and services available for young families, all contained in a handy folder," he said.

More than 132,000 families call the Gold Coast home, including 31,081 children aged from birth to 4 years. The Parent Pack provides information on a range of services, particularly for children in this age group.



Gold Coast Health Nursing Director Sandra Plowman and Mayor Tom Tate present new parents Damien and Wendy Welch and baby Heidi Rose with a Parent Pack.

The pack contains information on child-friendly activities such as stroller groups, provided via the City's Active and Healthy Program, and our City library children's programs, including the popular Baby Rhyme Time and Read and Grow sessions. Up to 5,000 babies will be born at Gold Coast University Hospital in 2014.

For more information, visit the City of Gold Coast's Families and Children web site: [www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/community/families-children-322.html](http://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/community/families-children-322.html)

## 2014 Honour Roll

**Rotary Nurse of the Year Award** (people's choice)

Lorraine Cairns (Cancer Day Unit)

**Amy Enderlin Award** (nurses and midwives)

Assistant in nursing: Rodney Langton (Endoscopy)

Registered nurse/midwife: Karen Berry (Endoscopy – Nurse Unit Manager)

Enrolled nurse: Pippa Tull (Acute Medical Unit – Robina Hospital)

**Elizabeth Moore Award** (nurses)

Maggie Phelan (specialist nurse in Falls Prevention)

**Juanita Hynes Award** (midwives and nurses in women's, newborn and children's health)

Cathy Van den Berg (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit – Nurse Unit Manager)

**Anne Baker Award** (midwives)

Wendy Bews (Maternity Services)



Rodney Langton says "it's a huge relief to know people think you're doing a good job."

## Career change the right medicine for nursing awards winner

Only four years after rolling the dice on a career change, former construction worker Rodney Langton has been honoured for his commitment to nursing.

The Endoscopy Unit team member snared the Amy Enderlin Award (Assistant in Nursing) at Gold Coast Health's International Nurses Day celebrations, one of seven staff members to receive public praise for a job well done.

**This is his story:**

Winning this award is massive for me because coming from a different line of work to do this job was a huge learning curve.

I'd worked in construction from the time I left school but in my mid-30s I had a back injury and had to rethink what I wanted to do.

Twenty years ago I had been in hospital myself and the care I received was just unbelievable. The people who looked after me were that beautiful it almost brings a tear to your eye. In the back of my mind, I had always wanted to give back and that's partly why I'm here.

It was huge to change careers. I was in my comfort zone and cutting the cord of what came easy to me to do something completely left field was even a bit scary.

I actually started as a wardman at the old hospital. I had done my Certificate 3 in aged care but I didn't know where I wanted to go so coming in as a wardie was a good introduction to the hospital.

Over a couple of years I did time in intensive care, emergency, even CSD. Then I found endoscopy and was just like 'wow, this is awesome'.

I just love this department. Everyone who works here is really good and I cannot speak highly enough of my boss (Karen Berry, Endoscopy Nurse Unit Manager). Her encouragement has been huge. I was doing wardie work and to now be in this position, she put a lot of support and trust in me.

What does this award mean? It just reminds me of that trust thing, which is massive. It's a huge relief to know people think you're doing a good job.

## Gold Coast Health encourages Improvers

A staff innovation program has awarded more than \$250,000 for staff initiatives that will help improve patient experience across the health service.

More than 160 Gold Coast Health staff submitted their ideas for a chance to share more than \$250,000 to bring their ideas to life.

Seventeen finalists got the chance to impress the panel of Gold Coast Bulletin Editor, Catherine Webber; Gold Coast Health Board member Dr Andrew Weissenberger; Nephrologist Dr Alan Parnham; 102.9 Hot Tomato radio host Sean Flanagan; and Gold Coast Suns CEO Travis Auld.

Winners of The Improvers 2014 are:

### Category 1: One idea up to \$80,000

**Lorraine Millar and Debbie Coyles - GEMMU**  
Purchase electronic bed and chair alarms for our high fall risk patients, or consider purchase of specific beds with built in alarms.

### Category 2: Three ideas up to \$50,000

**Justin Wong – Medical Senior House Officer**  
Online/electronic ward call job list to replace paper-based ward call job list and electronic referral to replace faxed referrals.

**Katherine O’Shea – Occupational Therapy/ Rehabilitation Service**

Purchase of Saebo Arm Training Program, aiming to improving upper limb motor recovery post brain injury and stroke.

**Andrea Marshall, David Pearson and Alan Spencer - ICU**

Optimising nutrition prescription in ICU: direct measurement of energy expenditure versus predictive equations.

### Category 3: One idea up to \$20,000

**Adil Ryan Lahreche - Research Department**  
Develop a Business Plan that explores the potential and benefits of adopting the concept of Medical-Tourism within the health service.

### Category 4: Three ideas up to \$10,000

**Mara Bennett – Safety and Wellbeing**  
Electronic sign that shows weekly activities available for staff from Team Health.

**Jean Dumble – Clinical Governance Unit**  
Purchase cameras for inpatient units to document evidence of pressure injuries.

**Belinda Real and Joan Mutch – Clinical Governance Unit**  
Develop a short film for hospital patients on Falls Injury Prevention.

### Category 5: People’s Choice

**Makaela Steel – Speech Pathology**  
Implement and evaluate Cough Reflex Testing, as part of initial speech pathology swallow assessment for stroke patients.



Stroke victim Terry Fitzgerald believes the Saebo Arm Training Program will have a huge impact on his rehabilitation.

A \$50,000 prize snared in a Gold Coast Health staff innovation competition will help stroke victims such as Terry Fitzgerald to regain use of their arms.

The Occupational Therapy Rehabilitation Service successfully pitched its Saebo Arm Training Program concept at The Improvers, an event where staff battled for a share of up to \$250,000 to turn their bright ideas into reality.

## Technology hands stroke victims hope

The trial will be expanded across the entire health service which means more Gold Coasters like Mr Fitzgerald will benefit from the mechanical arms, which use dynamic and static splinting systems to allow stroke or serious brain injury patients retrain their muscles and brain, regaining lost function.

Occupational Therapy Assistant Director Katherine O’Shea said the surprise funding boost meant her team could potentially buy three kits – up to 42 arms – to be used at Gold Coast University Hospital, Robina Hospital and Carrara Health Centre, as well as in outpatients’ homes.

“Being able to provide our patients with this technology will have a huge impact on their rehabilitation,” she said.

“Instead of doing traditional therapy exercises, they will be able to immediately use their hands to perform everyday tasks,

which has been proven to advance recovery.

“Stroke is the leading cause of disability in Australia and to be the first hospital in Queensland to have access to the Saebo Arm Training Program is a real thrill.”

Mr Fitzgerald, who suffered a stroke almost two years ago, said wearing the Saebo mechanical arm for the first time had stunned him.

“Having not been able to use my right hand for so long, it was amazing to actually have the ability to do simple tasks,” he said.

“It’s not until you have a stroke that you realise how demeaning it is not being able to do simple things and I’m so grateful the judges chose to fund this program.

“It’s going to make a huge difference not only to my recovery but so many other patients as well.”

## Party time to celebrate giving

Gold Coast Hospital Foundation is planning a week-long celebration to highlight the incredible work it does funding vital health services.

Foundation Week, which runs from 14-18 July, will host a plethora of great activities that not only reward Gold Coast Health staff but bring a smile to patients who have turned to Gold Coast Health in their time of need.

An Education and Research Grants Awards Ceremony will be held on Monday 14 July, while a 20th Anniversary staff BBQ and party will unfold on Friday 18 July.

Throughout the week, the Foundation team and volunteers will also visit a number of facilities to hand out goodies to patients, with a few surprises for Gold Coast Health staff as well.

During the past 10 months alone, the Gold Coast Hospital Foundation has funded more than \$400,000 in medical equipment, research projects and staff education.

All its grants have been kindly supported by the Gold Coast community through donations and sponsorships, with highlights including:

- \$37,900 towards four collaborative research projects with Griffith Health Institute focused on studies involving lung cancer, diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome and implementing World Health Organization safety standards in surgery
- \$27,300 for three staff-led research projects looking at the impact of combined malnutrition and surgical delay on patients with hip fractures; evaluating the collaboration between the gr8 Start and C.H.I.L.D.S team to address vulnerability among local preschool children (see page 3); and the impact of weekly nursing rounds on the quality of critical care and nursing practices.
- \$300,000 of medical equipment including an automated CPR machine, Video Remote Interpreting equipment, hockey stick ultrasound probe, bladder scanner and fetal monitor.
- \$26,000 for Gold Coast Health staff education activities and nursing scholarships.

Keep up to date on all the latest Foundation news simply by liking us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/goldcoasthospitalfoundation](http://www.facebook.com/goldcoasthospitalfoundation)

## Save cash on entertainment

If you haven’t bought one before, you’ll be amazed at how many discount vouchers and offers the annual Entertainment Book provides. As well as in hard copy, this year the book can be purchased as a digital version so you can access it on your phone whenever needed.

Best of all, \$11 from every book sold through the Foundation is donated back to help fund more great health projects.

To order your copy, pop into the Foundation office in the retail precinct at Gold Coast University Hospital or email: [lisa@gchfoundation.org.au](mailto:lisa@gchfoundation.org.au)



GOLD COAST HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

## Cancer Survivors Day celebrates fifth year

More than 50 patients have joined with Cancer and Blood Disorders staff to celebrate Gold Coast Health’s fifth annual Cancer Survivors Day.

Guests enjoyed afternoon tea, live music and heard inspiring and moving stories of cancer survivorship such as Emergency Specialist Dr Christa Bell’s recent experience.

Cancer Survivors Day combines with a monthly cancer patient education series conducted by Cancer and Blood Disorders to highlight the importance of community engagement within the service.



Dr Christa Bell shared her personal story of survivorship at the fifth annual Cancer Survivors Day.

## Patient positives

### PATIENT 1

20 May 2014

I would like to congratulate Queensland Health for providing a great hospital for all. It is most noticeable when talking to the staff that they are proud. The care, professionalism and talent is second to none. Thank you Gold Coast University Hospital.

### PATIENT 2

23 April 2014

To the medical staff who attended to our beloved son thank you for your friendly smiles, acts of kindness, your kind words, the hugs that meant so much to us during our last days with our son. We thank you sincerely for the loving, caring and consideration and for making him comfortable. We just cannot find enough words to express our gratitude.

### PATIENT 3

1 April 2014

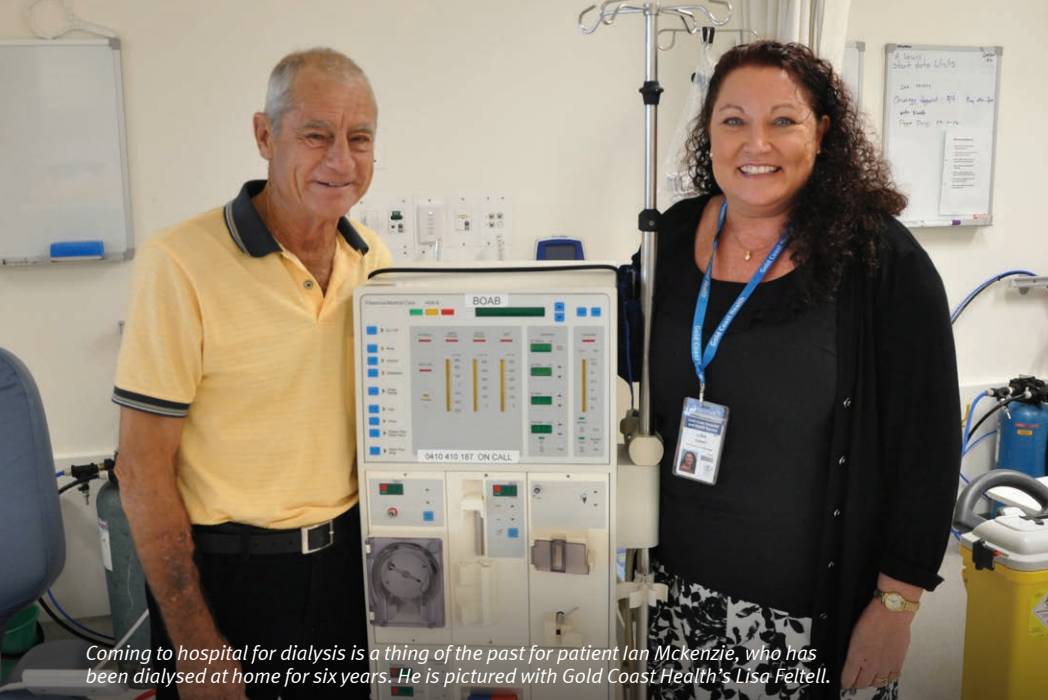
The volunteer staff have gone out of their way to take me to the correct ward and are always helpful, cheerful and chatty; nothing has been too much for them to do to help people in need of their service. It is wonderful that such a service is available to the patients and their families. These volunteers do such a wonderful job and make things as easy as possible for the family and friends of people in the hospital. Thank you all.



## Joel’s little ray of sunshine

Gold FM’s Spida Everitt and Gold Coast Suns mascot Sunny Ray pay Joel Griggs a visit as part of Give Me 5 For Kids festivities. Spida and his top-rating radio crew hosted a live broadcast at Gold Coast University Hospital to launch the fundraiser that is aiming to raise \$150,000 for Gold Coast Hospital Foundation.

To donate, visit [www.gchfoundation.org.au](http://www.gchfoundation.org.au) or phone 5594 6986.



Coming to hospital for dialysis is a thing of the past for patient Ian Mckenzie, who has been dialysed at home for six years. He is pictured with Gold Coast Health's Lisa Feltell.

## In focus with Grainne Mcdermott

I work in the Home Training Unit where patients undertake training to enable them to carry out their dialysis at home. The therapies we train patients in are Home Haemodialysis and Peritoneal Dialysis.

If only people knew that one in three Australians are at an increased risk of developing chronic kidney disease. Early detection management programs mean the deterioration in kidney function can be reduced by as much as 50 per cent and may even be reversible.

It is with great pride that I come to work each day and work in partnership with our patients that are training to be able to do home dialysis. I truly believe that there is no place like home and I feel very privileged that our patients open their lives and homes to allow us to help them.

Patients participating in our home training program range from 25 to 85 years of age and so are faced with many different challenges. Our young patients participate to enable them to work full time; our older patients learn so they can have more family engagement and our rural patients can remain in their homes and not have long distances to travel for their dialysis treatments.

Our nurses are often on the road doing home visits to ensure our patients are coping and to offer our support. It's a social unit and we love catching up with our patients and families in their homes.

We value our team and believe it's a rewarding and fun environment to work in.



Grainne Mcdermott, Nurse Unit Manager, Home Training Unit, Renal Services

## There's no place like home for dialysis

**There really is no place like home for 75 of Gold Coast Health's renal dialysis patients who have been trained to perform their dialysis at home.**

Over the past 18 months, the Home Therapies Unit at Robina Hospital have trained 39 patients to perform their dialysis at home which is not only saving up to \$30,000 per patient, but is improving patient's quality of life.

The home therapy service includes both Peritoneal Dialysis (dialysis inside the body) and Home Haemodialysis (dialysis using a machine) and allows for patients to continue with their normal day-to-day activities.

Acting Nurse Unit Manager of the Home Therapies Unit Lisa Feltell said the service was supported by a strong team of nephrologists, nurses, biomedical technicians, social workers, dietician and psychologist.

"The staff in the home therapies unit know how important maintaining a 'normal' life routine is for dialysis patients which is why we work closely with them in the training so

dialysis fits in with their lives, not the other way round," Ms Feltell said.

Ian Mckenzie has been doing home dialysis for more than six years and tries to keep positive.

"Dialysis isn't the end of your life, you've just got to make adjustments but it works," Mr Mckenzie said.

"Doing my dialysis at home means I can have pretty normal life. Three times a week I hook up to the machine at 10.30pm and sleep right through the night and then I'm up in the morning and your day's a normal day."

Gold Coast Health has approximately 120 patients attending dialysis three times per week for up to five hours at both Gold Coast University and Robina Hospitals.

One in three Australians are at an increased risk of developing chronic kidney disease, however, if chronic kidney disease is detected early and managed appropriately, then the deterioration in kidney function can be reduced by as much as 50 per cent and may even be reversible.

### Tips to avoid developing chronic kidney disease

- **Maintain a healthy body weight** – aim to be active for at least 30 minutes per day
- **Manage salt intake** – high salt diet can lead to high blood pressure
- **Monitor your kidney health** - people with high blood pressure or diabetes are recommended to visit their doctor every year for a kidney health check

**healthwaves+**  
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