

## Gold Coast Health

### Building a healthier community

Patient Vanessa Shorto with Clinical Nurse  
Consultant Sally Davison at the MAU.

# healthwaves+

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2011

GOLD COAST HEALTH SERVICE DISTRICT NEWS

## MAU already making a difference

The new Medical Assessment Unit (MAU) at Robina Hospital is already improving the patient experience since opening on 5 September.

The MAU is staffed and designed to rapidly assess, care and treat medical patients for up to 48 hours.

Despite being early days, the unit is off to a positive start with the time spent by medical patients in the Emergency Department dropping by 25 percent.

MAU patient, Vanessa Shorto, who also works in the Emergency Department, said the MAU had changed her experience as a patient for the better.

"I suffer from Addison's disease and sometimes experience serious episodes of nausea, cramps and abdominal pain – so unfortunately I've had to visit the Emergency Department as a patient a few times," said Vanessa.

"Today I had my tests, saw the medical registrar and am now recovering in a comfortable bed in the MAU within two hours. In the past it has taken five or six hours to get to this point, so I notice the difference.

"I think the MAU is the hero of the hospital at the moment."

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## PLUS!

buildinghealth+ infrastructure  
update lift-out inside

## STAFF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

### Nominate your colleagues

**Submission deadline: 14 October 2011**

More on: [qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/pc/excel\\_awards\\_2011](http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/pc/excel_awards_2011)



Queensland Government



Dr. Adrian Nowitzke

## Message from Adrian

It is pleasing to report that the opening of our MAU, featured on the front of this edition, has contributed to improved patient care on the Gold Coast. Figures to date demonstrate reduced waiting times for patients presenting to the emergency department. The MAU is just the latest in a series of ongoing initiatives to improve the patient experience.

One way of acknowledging the hard work of our colleagues and friends is through the annual Staff Excellence awards. Every year we review the awards so they reflect the changing District and provide an opportunity for recognition of those making a significant contribution to health delivery as part of our transformation program. To this end we have introduced two new awards in recognition of reducing waste and improving flow through our system. Three awards are individual and the remaining five are open to team nominations. Details are at: [qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/pc/excel\\_awards\\_2011.htm](http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/pc/excel_awards_2011.htm)

Community input is invited to help determine the future use of the Gold Coast Hospital site at Southport. The process is being managed by the Department of Local Government and Planning with more information at: [www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/local-area-planning/gold-coast-hospital-site.html](http://www.dlgp.qld.gov.au/local-area-planning/gold-coast-hospital-site.html) As mentioned in Executive Summary the District is proposing an ongoing health presence in the area but how that may look is yet to be determined. If you have input please discuss with your Executive Director. The birth centre review has concluded and a range of recommendations from the review team is available on our intranet site from the District home page. It highlights elements of a reform program that is already underway to further improving our birthing services. It can be found at: [qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/executive/priorities.htm](http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/executive/priorities.htm)

or if you don't have internet access, please contact my office on 55198305

Finally, a big thank you to all those who took part in Queensland Health week. Highlights are featured in this edition and stories that detail the great work we do everyday are now available at a new permanent addition to our website called Our Stories. Check it out [qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/pc/qhweek2011.htm](http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/pc/qhweek2011.htm)

## Community engagement adds real value to patient care

**Community engagement will play an increasingly important role in District operations moving into the Local Health and Hospital Network structure from July 2012.**

Strategies for consumer, consumer and clinical engagement will be developed for the new District Governing Council in line with national standards and accreditation.

The plans will shape an effective consumer engagement model to improve patient care and build relationships with the broader community. Patient satisfaction and patient

experience have been identified as key performance indicators under the national health reform agenda.

The District is already capitalising on the benefits of a dedicated consumer engagement strategy. Consumers are included on management committees, special projects and working groups, providing input and contributing to a collective accountability.

To find out more about working with consumers contact Community Engagement Officer Tony Matheson on 5519 7636.



Dr Kathryn Turner, Harley Gapper, Amanda Egginton and Michelle Edwards with QH Deputy Director Terry Mehan (centre)

## Statewide award for community mental health service

**The Burleigh Heads-based Early Psychosis service was a winner at the 2011 Queensland Health Healthcare Improvement Symposium and Awards.**

The award, entitled 'Consumer partnership: improving healthcare together' was presented in recognition of consumer involvement in the establishment of the service, which supports young people aged between fifteen and twenty-five who suffer psychotic illness.

A key element of the service is CORAL (Consumers, Opportunities, Recovery, Advocacy and Learning), a consumer reference group made up of young people who have experienced mental illness.

Deputy Director of Gold Coast Mental Health Service, Dr Kathryn Turner said the CORAL group was key to the success of the Early Psychosis service.

"Training was provided to the young people involved in CORAL to allow them to take a meaningful role in this innovative model of care."

## MAU opening (cont.)

**The Robina MAU model will act as a template for a similar service at the Gold Coast University Hospital.**

Director of General Medicine Dr Mark Forbes said he was delighted to see the MAU in full swing.

"Many people who present to emergency department do not need to be there and often wait several hours for a medical admission or consultation. It's the job of the MAU to fast-track medical patients – in

turn freeing up staff and emergency beds for arriving patients," said Dr Forbes.

"Waiting times are improving and the overall time from presentation to discharge for all Emergency Department patients has decreased.

"The opening of the MAU is the realisation of a dream that many of us at Robina Hospital have been working towards for a long time, so a big thank you goes to all the staff who helped make this happen."

# RESEARCH

## Research in sight

**Focus is turning to a research agenda for the emerging Gold Coast University Hospital. While the need for modern health infrastructure and provision of quality complex care is fundamental, it is on research that reputations are made.**

A research strategy is being developed under the leadership of professional heads Dr Brian Bell, Professor Ged Williams, and Ms Morven Gemmill. The consulting process is being led by Ms Pauline Ross and input is being sought from interested staff.

Clinical Council Chairman Dr Nick Buckmaster said overarching principles are being introduced to support the strategy.

“Research is a pillar of tertiary health care and key areas of interest need to be determined for its future,” Dr Buckmaster said.

Research is already significant for many clinical and professional staff as outlined in this feature.

Research Governance Officer, Ian Peiper and the Ethics unit support the application process and Louise D’Arrietta and the library team provide tutoring on literature searches, sourcing full text articles and using electronic reference software to staff undertaking research.

Increasingly, university partners are supporting District staff with their research endeavours as illustrated by recent research support activities. Bond has been holding ‘research clinics’ for staff and Griffith has recently sponsored a practical presentation on research techniques.

Other information sources include the Ethics Unit on 5519 8211 and to give input into the research strategy process send your ideas to [Pauline\\_Ross@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:Pauline_Ross@health.qld.gov.au)

## Emergency Department takes four pillar approach

**The research team in the Emergency Dept is focused on four key areas: healthcare service delivery, quality patient care, clinical trials and health information technology.**

Dr Gerben Keijzers and colleagues, including Young Tall Poppy Award winner Julia Crilly, have produced research papers looking at these areas.

“We are looking at waiting times and improving flow of patients through the emergency department as well as how to improve our quality of care,” Dr Keijzers said.

We are moving towards randomised trials in a number of areas and it is also becoming clear how important quality data is to support our work – both as a support and as a subject.”



Dr Gerben Keijzers, Dr Julia Crilly, Mr Ian Pieper and Prof Wendy Chaboyer at the GU Research Presentation evening.

## Medical Research team runs clinical trials

**The medical research team is a growing concern with a broad base of specialties including cardiology, diabetes, cancer, renal, respiratory, neurology and rheumatology.**

Team lead, Tammy Schmidt said there were a significant number of clinical trials underway and interest in research was increasing across the specialties.

“We specialise in managing industry trials which helps us build expertise and will enable us to fund and better manage more investigator led trials in the future,” Ms Schmidt said.

“Promoting quality research and developing a best practice model for carrying out further research are among our objectives.”

She said providing staff advice, education and resources to help progress trials as well as supporting research opportunities for staff was also important.



Filming in the pathology unit as the location of Dr Gerrard's research process.

## In the public interest

**In recent months the prestigious national science program, Catalyst has filmed in the District for not one, but two feature segments.**

Surgical consultant Dr Harald Puhalla trialled technology created by Griffith University PHD student, Chenj Ming He.

It aims to project MRIs in a 3D environment thus providing medical students with more realistic depictions of body parts – among other benefits.

Catalyst also featured Dr John Gerrard's journey of discovery around a flesh eating worm. Dr Gerrard and his team, located the previously unidentified source of infection in local patients.

After detailed investigation in the field, the cause emerged – a previously unidentified microscopic nematode.

The significance of the discovery resulted in a rare acknowledgement when it was named heterorhabditis gerrardi.



Members of the Medicine Research Unit Cynthia Luck, Catherine Rhodes, Andrew McFadzen, Tammy Schmidt, Sharon Quinlan



Director of General Medicine Dr Mark Forbes with Senior House Office Charlotte Cook in front of the MAU Electronic Patient Journey Board at Robina Hospital.

## Communication streamlined at Robina

Electronic Patient Journey Boards (EPJB) are receiving the thumbs up from staff who are trialling them in two wards at Robina Hospital. The boards are a large visual screen installed to help with patient flow.

The boards make the patient journey visible to clinicians at a glance, displaying patient details, highlighting the expected date of discharge and tracking referrals to allied health using colour coding in the form of a 'traffic light system'.

Dr Mark Forbes said the boards have improved communication.

"By reviewing the board in a multidisciplinary setting we have been able to reduce paperwork and handover times," he said.

The EPJBs are part of an evaluation trial funded by the Centre for Healthcare Improvement and carried out by the University of Southern Queensland.

## Award for artwork

Robina Hospital has been named a state winner of the Australian Business Foundation Awards (Abaf) in the 'Arts & Health Foundation Award' category for its range of artworks throughout the facility.

This Award, in conjunction with the Department of Public Art Unit recognises partnerships between healthcare organisations and businesses.

The series of artworks at Robina Hospital by three Queensland artists is the result of a partnership with the Public Art Unit, which is a commercialized business unit of Project Services, the Department of Public Works – a State Government agency that aims to deliver benchmark artworks for Queensland.

Belinda Real, Project Liaison Manager, Facilities, Planning and Development, who was instrumental in the early stages of the partnership, said research showed the physical environment of a hospital could encourage wellness and healing.



Rehabilitation patient Joseph Morrill enjoys some of the artwork at Robina Hospital with Belinda Real, Project Liaison Manager, Facilities, Planning and Development and Chris McVeigh, Director, Robina Hospital Expansion & Robina Health Precinct Projects.

"The aim was to provide an uplifting environment and create lasting artworks that would add meaningful value," said Ms Real.

"To be recognised with the award is another outstanding benefit."

Robina Hospital will now go forward to contest the national award set to be announced in Perth in October.

## Mental Health Art Exhibition

### Art Exhibition

Monday 10 - Friday 14 October 2011

'Be open, Be aware, Be understanding, Be there'

Mental Health Week 2011  
G.C.M.H. Rehabilitation Services

Robina Hospital Foyer

## Technology improving patient care

New digital radiography (DR) equipment has been installed as part of expanding services at Robina Hospital.

The new state-of-the-art digital general x-ray machine allows simultaneous access to digital images anywhere in the facility, increasing efficiency and eliminating the need for time spent waiting for films to be processed.

District Chief Executive Officer Adrian Nowitzke said Robina Hospital was home to the District's first digital general x-ray machine.

"Digitising such a time-pressured service has great advantages and assists patient care and access to our services.

"A Radiologist in the medical imaging department can talk to a clinician on a ward, and both can be looking at the same image on any computer at opposite ends of the hospital.

"The technology is also linked to PACS, a picture archiving communication system, which means that patients don't have to remember their films, and their doctors can easily recall them on their desktop at the appointment."



Robina Hospital Chief Radiographer Brad Job with the new equipment

Project Communications Officer Alana Myers was on hand to answer all the questions from the day.



## Leaving home not necessary for future health professionals

**Future faces of the health industry teamed up to visit the GCHSD stand at the Griffith University Open Day on 14 August.**

From the marquee, the District team responded to questions from aspiring future

and current students about where their health degree could take them.

With the Gold Coast University Hospital being built a stones throw from Griffith University and the brand new health block 'G40' currently under construction,

visitors to the open day were clearly excited by the future of Healthcare on the Gold Coast.

New health professionals have a bright future – and right here on the Gold Coast.

## Patient Positives

**The Transition Care program (TCP) team have been praised by a former patient in a touching letter received by the District.**

After a double knee replacement, patient Ted Fletcher has lauded the efforts of the TCP staff acknowledging their support as an “invaluable resource” to his recovery.

Mr Fletcher spoke very highly of the whole TCP but made special mention of his case manager Vicky (Roney) and clinical psychologist Erin (Earle).

“I had the most contact with these two ladies and I thank them for going the extra mile for me, at a time after my discharge from hospital, that could have been very traumatic.”

“It’s not often that one has the privilege of holding a position where one can touch someone’s life and have a long lasting effect on someone’s health.

“I will be forever grateful to the TCP and all the people that work for it.”

## Supporting children throughout their hospital journey

**Paediatric Oncology, Haematology and Palliative care patients are receiving personalised care throughout their hospital journey from Nurse Practitioner Nicolette Thornton.**

Kid’s nurse practitioner Nicolette’s position supports the patient throughout their journey from admission as an in-patient, outpatient and back into the home.

Nicolette was originally appointed as a Regional Case Manager within the Paediatric Department, but her drive and passion for the position led her to become a Nurse Practitioner in 2010.

Since then, Nicolette’s has been providing individualised care for treatment of children suffering from the debilitating effects of their disease.



Paediatric Oncology, Haematology and Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner Nicolette Thornton

By following the patient’s journey, the children in the palliative stage of their disease have access to high-level healthcare support within the comfort of their own home.

Paediatric Oncology and Haematology Service expansions are currently in the planning stage for the new University Hospital. Visit the GCUH intranet site to stay up to date.

## Rapid progress for Gold Coast’s first health precinct

**The Robina Health Precinct was visited last month by Member for Burleigh, Christine Smith who toured the construction site and also paid a visit to Child, Youth and Family Health clinics, which is currently located next door at Campus Alpha.**

The service, along with a number of other community health services including cardiac rehabilitation, healthy ageing clinics and antenatal and postnatal care will move into the new facility when it opens next year.

Dr Adrian Nowitzke said the \$36.31 million facility, located opposite Robina Hospital, would bring together a mix of existing community health services under the same roof.

“The Robina Health Precinct is the first facility of its kind on the Gold Coast and will improve access to local health services beyond what we are already seeing with the expanded hospital,” said Dr Nowitzke.



Below: Christine Smith, State Member for Burleigh and CEO Dr Adrian Nowitzke, tour the Robina Health Precinct.

## Speech Pathologists help Gold Coasters become 'literate for life'

The Speech Pathology team once again put staff's English and grammar knowledge to the test as a part of Speech Pathology Week 2011.

The theme for this year was "Literacy for Life" as almost half of Australia's working age population does not have the reading, writing or numeracy skills to effectively participate in their workplace or community.

To celebrate, speech pathologists across the GCHSD held book swaps to bring awareness to the importance of life-long literacy.



Sue Forster's (right) latest book entitled 'Do you want bullying with that?' was launched at a function at the GCH Library

## Health consumer steps up to the plate

The GCHSD Consumer Advisory Group (CAG) has welcomed cancer survivor and former Gold Coast Hospital patient Bob Lee as the latest community member to join its team.

With the support of the Director of Cancer and Blood Disorders Dr Jeremy Wellwood, Bob has joined CAG in an effort to give something back to the health district.

"The staff at Gold Coast Hospital saved my life", Bob said.

"After seeing some of the negative health publicity that occasionally surfaces, I thought it was time to bring some even-handedness to the debate by becoming a health consumer advocate for our health system on the coast."

As a former Information Systems Auditor for the GCCC, Bob is wasting no time in nominating to sit on the Health Research Ethics Committee as a consumer representative in his first week of membership.

## Study 'pays' off for Georgia

Graduating from University with a Bachelors Degree wasn't enough for ward 7A nurse Georgia Tobiano.

Upon finishing her Nursing degree with Griffith University, Georgia was approached as a suitable candidate to continue her studies and qualify for the 'Future Leaders' Honours scholarship.

Taking the plunge, Georgia was awarded the \$5000 scholarship to work towards completing her Honours, graduating in July this year with first class honours.

Georgia's thesis focused on the patient's family's perception of bedside handover.

"I had a lot of positive outcomes from my research and found the families really benefit from the bedside handover and find comfort in being informed what is happening to their loved ones."

"I think my findings will help the district as we begin to do bedside handovers in the near future."

## Wheelchair Drive

Consumer Advisory Group (CAG) member and Rotary representative Bob Robertson took to the streets launching a donation campaign to find and return missing wheelchairs and walkers.

Bob's efforts have been closely followed by both Channel 10 and the Gold Coast Sun newspaper and from the related coverage of his plight, the hospital has been inundated by donations.

One member of the community, who wishes to remain anonymous, donated over 10 brand new wheelchairs and walkers to the District.

Two electronic wheelchairs have also been found and returned as Bob leaves no stone unturned in his hunt for the missing property.



Bob handing over one of the donated wheelchairs to Matthew Taylor



The Gold Coast show came early to the Paediatrics ward as members of the committee dropped in with some goodies



Edna proudly holding her award from Seniors week

## Paediatrics' Grandma rewarded

The District's longest serving volunteer of 24 years, Edna Seferi, was recognised for her outstanding contribution to the hospital system by being awarded the Prim Hill Award for 'Gold Coast Senior of the Year'.

The Award is presented to an individual who displays service beyond expectations over a number of years during Seniors Week celebrations.

Known affectionately as 'Grandma' in the Paediatric's ward, Edna received her Certificate from the Hon. Jon Paul Langbroek MP, Shadow Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services at the Awards ceremony held at the Surfers Paradise RSL.



Leo Foster and BJ Pain at the awards night

## BJ cooking up a storm

The GCHSD was once again represented strongly at the 2011 annual Institute of Hospitality in Health Care Excellence Awards.

In total the District received four nominations, with Carrara Health Centre and Chef BJ Pain taking out the Food Service award.

The Excellence Awards are open to all QLD healthcare facilities Operational staff – food, linen, security etc.

Congratulations also to Debbie Hayes and Leo Foster from Environmental Services and Lyn Blackie and from GCH Southport Food Services for their nominations.

## Chaplains going the extra mile

The GCHSD Chaplaincy Department are continuing to find new ways to emotionally and spiritually support patients, patient's families and staff.



The Robina Hospital Chaplaincy team

Taking advantage of technology at Robina Hospital, the Robina Chaplaincy Department are now beaming live to patient's televisions sets via Channel 32 and is enabling patients to take part who are unable to attend services in person.

The initiative has been up and running since Easter and was organised through project



John and Susan during their ceremony

team member Kim Willemse and implemented by the Robina Hospital Redevelopment Team.

The Gold Coast Hospital chaplains in consultation with Renal Services granted patient John's wish by hosting a service for him and long lost love from 37 years ago, Susan.

John suffered from end-stage renal disease, and knowing that his time on Earth was limited, decided to get married at the Southport Chapel before completing his renal treatment.

At John's request, some of the treatment team were able to attend the ceremony while the Clown Doctors added a bit of colour to the proceedings.

## Public information screens now available at Gold Coast and Robina Hospital

Both the Robina Emergency Department waiting room and Gold Coast Hospital foyer are beaming out health community messages through two new LCD televisions.

As part of a new communications trial managed by the Public Affairs team, the LCD screens are displaying public health topics promoting safety, patient rights and responsibilities, privacy, current health topics and local services.

The information screens add to the range of public communications which include the district website and Healthwaves newsletter.

Bookings can be made via the Public Affairs intranet page at [qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/pa/screensaver.htm](http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoast/pa/screensaver.htm)

Right: One of the screensavers currently being displayed on the new LCD TV's



Members of the 501st brought a smile to Hospital patients during their latest visit.

## Tony says it with tools

Former patient Tony Pritchard has thanked staff at the Gold Coast Hospital for the care he received by presenting Emergency Department staff with an unusual donation – a complete toolkit from tools supplier Snap On Tools.

The qualified stone mason decided to make the donation after a fishing gang-hook became lodged in his arm while out surfing, requiring Emergency Department staff to use tools to remove the hook.

Emergency Department Consultant Dr Leo Maneros said while specialist medical equipment was usually used in the Department, occasionally standard tools such as pliers were useful for removing foreign bodies such as fishing hooks.

"The tools will be engraved to show they belong to the Emergency Department and kept in the Director's office for safekeeping," said Dr Maneros.

"We are very grateful for this kind donation."



(L-R) Emergency Department Consultant Dr Leo Maneros with Tony Pritchard and Snap on Tools representative

# QLD HEALTHWEEK



Ruth Browning accepting her certificate from CEO Dr Adrian Nowitzke

## Long time coming for long serving staff

Seats were few and far between as staff packed into the Gold Coast Hospital Education Centre to recognise their long serving peers.

This year over 70 staff members were eligible for 30, 35 and 40 years of service recognition this year.

Nurse Ruth Browning received the loudest applause on the day as being our longest serving recipient.

Ruth started work in the district back in 1964, only leaving for a short stint at Byron, returning in 1970 which has included 35 years service in the Theatre Division.

Ruth's proudest moment was in 1982 watching David Stabler (Orthopaedic Surgeon) sew a detached hand back on and remaining involved in the patient's care and recovery.

## Full bellies

Staff again proved they cannot resist a good sausage as they turned out in droves to attend the Queensland Health week BBQ's.

The District Executives also made sure everyone started work on a full stomach visiting units armed with baskets full of egg and bacon rolls and toasted sandwiches.

The community centres were also not left out as Bakers Delight Runaway Bay and Southport Park donated 160 scones for the 'Take A Break' community clinic morning tea.

*Below: Staff enjoying the BBQ lunch and breakfast*



## Sharing 'our stories'

Capturing the essence of what Queensland Health week is all about, the 'Our Stories' webpage was launched to highlight staff and division achievements.

The 'Our Stories' design will remain a feature of the new upcoming revamp of the QHEPS home page and all staff are encouraged to review the new content.

The Queensland Health Week stories are still available to view by following the hot spot link from the homepage.

**healthwaves+**  
GOLD COAST HEALTH SERVICE DISTRICT NEWS

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Have you got a story to share?

Submissions for the next edition are required by **18 November 2011**.

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