

Western Wellbeing

A NEWSLETTER FROM
 Western District Health Service

Flying the flag to close the gap

There is a crisis in Indigenous health, with the gap in life expectancy for Aboriginal communities on average 10-15 years below that of other Australians. Closing this gap has been the focus of a partnership between Western District Health Service (WDHS), local Aboriginal community members and Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation.

In recognition of the partnership, WDHS Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher, and Auntie Euphemie Day, local Aboriginal elder, celebrated with the flying of the Aboriginal Flag at WDHS on National Close the Gap Day on 21 March. The Flag will also be flown during Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week each year.

"We welcomed the opportunity to fly the Aboriginal flag for the first time at Western District Health Service as an important welcoming symbol to Aboriginal people," Mr Fletcher said.

"We are gaining a great deal from working with the Aboriginal community to better understand their needs and continue to improve services."

"Seeing the flag flying outside the hospital was an historic day for our community," Auntie Euphemie said.

"We have so much to do to close the gap in health but our partnership with the health service is strong and we are making great steps forward for our community."

WDHS has increased service access for the Aboriginal community over the last 12 months for healthy eating, foot care, men's and women's health, counselling, dental and connection with young mums. Services are available at Frances Hewett Community Centre and many are provided at the Winda-Mara Community House.

The partnership has developed over many years with monthly morning teas enabling the local Aboriginal community and WDHS staff to plan service improvements. As a result of these meetings WDHS staff at Frances Hewett Community Centre and at Allied Health have chosen to wear Aboriginal flag lapel pins as a sign of welcome.

In addition to the flag raising event, health professionals and service providers from WDHS joined together with other organisations, the local Aboriginal community and Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation to organise the first National Close the Gap event to be staged in Hamilton.



John Day, WDHS Chief Executive Jim Fletcher, Auntie Euphemie Day, WDHS Primary and Preventative Health Director Rosie Rowe and Thomas Day raise the Aboriginal flag to help close the gap in life expectancy.

The Hamilton 'Close the Gap' gathering - one of over 900 events staged around Australia in 2013, included a free BBQ, art activities and a get together to celebrate actions to help close the gap on Aboriginal health.

Auntie Euphemie said the National Close the Gap Day was an important day for everyone in the community.

"We all need to make an effort to bridge the gap - just like they say it takes a community to look after a child, it takes a community to look after all of its members," she said.

Four artworks created by women from the Winda-Mara Hamilton Wellbeing Group and destined for the walls of local health services were on display at the event. The canvases each incorporate the Close the Gap symbol of two hands coming together to represent the bridging of the gap and feature eels, signifying the local Gunditjmara people, area and culture.

The event also gave locals the opportunity to place their handprints on a large canvas, to signify the coming together of service providers, Aboriginal people and others in our community to 'Close the Gap'.

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From the CEO



Great Start to a Challenging Year

Despite the challenges and uncertainty created by the \$430,000 reduction in Commonwealth funding and the subsequent reinstatement of this funding, we have continued to implement our blueprint to enhance the delivery of healthcare to our community.

The implementation of our \$35 million Capital Redevelopment Program has continued to make great progress, as has our implementation of new National Standards to enhance the quality of care and increase the participation of consumers in their healthcare.

The support and willingness of our community to be involved in the many aspects of Western District Health Service through fundraising, volunteering and in more recent times, the recently established Consumer and Friends Network forum, is one of the great strengths of our Health Service.

Over the next 12 months we will face many challenges in terms of financial pressures and uncertainty regarding future Commonwealth funding levels, a new National Funding System, while continuing to focus on improving the coordination and integration of the way our services are provided.

I am confident that with the level of ongoing community support we are privileged to have, we will be well placed to meet the challenges ahead.

Capital Programs Make Rapid Progress

Our Capital Redevelopment Program is going ahead in great leaps and bounds with the \$27 million 'one stop health precinct' for Coleraine now entering the final stage with an expected date of completion in November/December this year. This will be in excess of four months ahead of schedule.

I have been asked many times about what is to happen with the old Coleraine Hospital building in McKebery Street, with particular concern that it would become an eye sore. I expect that within the next few months we will be calling for tenders for the demolition of the building at the end of the capital project to ensure that this does not occur.

I am also pleased to report that our \$4.1m upgrade and expansion of facilities at Hamilton Base Hospital for rehabilitation patients, people with functional decline and general medical patients has been completed. The upgrade and expansion included upgrade to six two-bed wards and new ensuites, a new daily living skills kitchen, gymnasium, gait training and outdoor area. The completion of these works is the culmination of five years' work during which time, we have developed and introduced an inpatient rehabilitation program, an inpatient program for people with functional decline, a bed based and community based transition care program, a rehabilitation in the home program, expanded continence services, enhanced chronic disease programs focusing on respiratory and heart conditions, extended community

rehabilitation centre programs and established a community falls clinic.

I am proud to say that we now have a comprehensive inpatient and community based rehabilitation service in modern and well equipped facilities to cater for the restorative care and functional decline needs of our community.

The two remaining Capital projects underway, the \$600k second stage redevelopment of the Hamilton Medical Group will be completed in June this year and the next stage of the Penshurst Campus redevelopment - the upgrade of Kolor Lodge has recently commenced and is due for completion in August 2013.

The Hamilton Medical Group redevelopment has been made possible by a \$500k Commonwealth funding grant whilst the Kolor Lodge upgrade has been made possible by a donation from Mr Sandy O'Brien and Bequest of Sheila Harrington.

National Centre Continues to Deliver

Western District Health Service National Centre for Farmer Health and its partnership with Deakin University continues to deliver outstanding results. This is despite the inept response from both State and Commonwealth Governments to the need for core funding to secure the future of the Centre to continue to support the health, wellbeing and safety of farm families and assist the productivity and efficiency of the industry.

During February a further 21 health and agriculture professionals from all states of Australia, with the exception of Tasmania and the Australian Territories, commenced the 2013 Agriculture Health and Medicine Unit with the five-day residential component held in Hamilton.

The Agriculture Health and Medicine Unit, which commenced in 2010, is the only unit of its kind in Australia. At the end of 2013 when the current participants complete their course, a total of 80 health and agriculture professionals from every state in Australia will have completed this unit.

Since the inception of the course in 2010 the Southern Grampians Shire have hosted a Civic Reception for the students in the Art Gallery, which has placed both the Shire and Western District Health Service in a good light and promoted the many attributes of Hamilton.

In a further display of recognition of the valuable work of the National Centre, the Queensland Rural Medicine Education Program has contracted the Centre to deliver health assessment to farmers at four Livestock Exchanges in Queensland and to provide education to the Queensland Rural Medicine staff in the delivery of health assessments.

Consumer and Friends Network Forum

Our Consumer and Friends Network forum has been established to partner with our consumers in care plans, design, evaluation and improvement. The Network forum will enable our staff to hear and learn from consumer experience and enhance consumer participation.

The first forum, attended by 12 staff and 12 consumers/volunteers, was a great success and great introduction to enhancing the participation of consumers, volunteers and carers in making improvements to consumer experience

for everyone, every time. The first forum focused on how volunteers could contribute to providing support to consumers in our hospital wards and emergency department. The next forum will be held in June 2013.

For more information on the forums, or if you are interested in participation, contact Jeanette Ryan at our Community Liaison Department on 555 18284.

Specialist Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Services

Specialist Obstetrician and Gynaecologist services are up and running again at our Kitchener Street Clinic following the appointment of Dr Sandeep Gavankar. A monthly clinic has also commenced at the Casterton Hospital with plans to establish a clinic in Portland. For appointments in Hamilton contact the Kitchener Street Clinic on 5551 8036.

Handbury Lecture

One of Australia's leading Obesity and Diabetes experts Professor Joseph Proietto was our Annual Handbury Guest Speaker.

Professor Proietto spoke about what could be done to address the obesity and diabetes epidemic, identifying

the social, political and biomedical challenges to making inroads into reducing the epidemic. The lecture provided a great opportunity for our community to learn from both an international and national expert, more about obesity and diabetes and what can be done to address the increasing rates which is a major issue for our health system.

Boys to Men Forum

The Boys to Men Forum organised by our Men's Health Worker Stu Wilder and led by a leading practitioner Celia Lashie was a great success with around 200 attending. The attendance and feedback from the forum further highlights the need for ongoing education for Men's and Boy's health which Western District Health Service will continue to support through its Men's Health Program.

Charity House Project

The community response in the form of financial support, sponsorships and trades volunteering has been outstanding and places the project in a great position to get off to a flying start. While the delay in the release of the land title was frustrating it is now full steam ahead.



Attendees from the inaugural Consumer and Friends Service Network held at WDHS.



An invitation to be healthy

The Hamilton Botanic Gardens came alive when Western District Health Service (WDHS) dieticians hosted a free community breakfast with exercise demonstrations to celebrate Hamilton's Healthy Weight week.

Healthy Weight Week is celebrated across Australia to raise awareness about the importance of achieving and maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle.

The representatives from various WDHS departments were blessed with a beautiful Sunday morning, serving a light and healthy breakfast to an enthusiastic crowd. A range of activities hosted by community groups and fitness centres helped to get people in the mood to be active and remain fit and healthy.

There was also a variety of stands representing WDHS dieticians, physiotherapists and counsellors. Other stalls included practitioners and volunteers from local gyms, weight management and activity groups.

Recent statistics show that 42% of males and 30% of females in the Southern Grampians Shire are overweight, and 24% of males and 22% of females in the Shire are obese. Australian statistics show that 25% of children in Australia



Participants stretch out during one of the many activities on offer at the community breakfast held to celebrate Hamilton's Healthy Weight Week.

are also overweight or obese. Weight gain, particularly around the waist, can increase your risk of health problems including Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

The community breakfast was so well received that WDHS Chief Dietician Jodie Nelson hopes to turn it into an annual community event.

"It was a fun morning out with friends and family and provided the information and motivation necessary to kick start everyone's weight management journey for 2013 and beyond," Jodie said.

The Hamilton Healthy Weight Week event was supported by the Get Active Glenelg to Grampians project, GMHBA Insurance and the Dietician's Association of Australia.



WDHS Allied Health Assistant Susan Coe (left), Barry McGrath and Physiotherapist Lauren Richardson utilise the upgraded facilities.

Rehabilitation services boosted

An upgrade and expansion of facilities at Hamilton Base Hospital for rehabilitation patients, people with functional decline and medical patients was completed and commissioned last month.

The \$4.1m upgrade and expansion includes the redevelopment of six two-bed wards, new ensuites, and a daily living skills kitchen, gymnasium, gait training walkway and outdoor sitting for rehabilitation patients and those with functional decline.

The upgrade and expansion were part of the five-year plan to provide a more comprehensive inpatient and community based rehabilitation service. Western District Health Service (WDHS) can now offer a broader range of services to people requiring restorative care or assistance with functional decline arising from joint replacement, injury or illness.

WDHS CEO Mr Jim Fletcher said:

"The provision of modern facilities such as the daily living skills kitchen, a gymnasium and gait training walkway will greatly assist our staff to work with our patients to recover from joint surgery, major injury and functional decline caused by illness including stroke."

The project was funded by a \$3.5 million Council of Australian Government grant with the balance from Health Service reserves.

An official opening of the unit is being planned for mid 2013.



LK Earthmovers turn earth for the first time on the Watermark Charity House site.



Max Murray, Hugh Macdonald and Peter Smith survey plans during earthworks on day one.

The earth begins to turn

The rewards of four years planning are finally being reaped as Western District Health Service's (WDHS) Watermark Charity House project literally begins to get off the ground.

A long-held vision to create a standout Hamilton residence to auction and ultimately benefit the Health Service is now a reality as the building rises from the earth next to beautiful Lake Hamilton.

Watermark Charity House Committee Chairman Hugh Macdonald said great excitement filtered through Hamilton as the long-talked about project finally saw action on site.

"About four years ago we began discussing how this project might look and what benefit it could have for the Health Service. While details and personalities have changed over that time the vision remains the same and we now find ourselves embarking on a project that will deliver one of Hamilton's premier residences in one of its most stunning locations," he said.

Since the recent acquisition of a land title and receipt of a building permit, the support received from local tradesmen and suppliers had been tremendous.

"It's taken us a long time to get to the point of earth being turned but now the pieces are falling into place. People recognise the importance of this project, they understand what it means to be involved and we've been overawed by the positive response from everybody we speak to."

The Watermark Charity House construction management team comprises local tradesmen with many years of experience and a number of relationships that will be utilised throughout the construction period.

Max Murray, Rod Papworth, Peter Smith, Barry Raymond and Bruce Warburton will co-ordinate teams of local tradesmen, many of who are volunteering their time to help create the Watermark dream.

Mr Macdonald said having people of this stature associated with the project was helping to draw other skilled local labour into the project.

"There is no doubt that our team of co-ordinators has helped to convince others of the validity of this project and also to

assure the public that when Watermark House is completed, it will be a home of quality and construction excellence."

As the initial ground works continue some extremely generous donations of goods and services have emerged.

Generous financial contributions from Geoff Handbury, Bob Templeton, Allan Myers, Craig and Carolyn Collins and the Rotary Club of Hamilton have allowed advancement of the project.

Companies and organisations to provide initial support include Hammonds Paints, Bruhn Stone, Boundary Metals, Pasita Masta Knauf, LK Earthmovers, Steele and Tippett Building Designers, Selkirk Bricks, Brayley and Hayes, Rural Steel, Ivory Print, Baltica Blue Projects and Design, Grangeburn Comfort Inn, Lowe Consulting, Southern Grampians Shire Council, All About Fencing, Hamilton Steel, Hamilton Hire and the Wilsmore Nelson Group.

Promotional support received from Ace Radio and the Hamilton Spectator has assisted in gaining these commitments together with a Charity House display placed in the Kerr and Co window in Gray St.

As construction progresses the need for materials and skilled volunteers to assist will continue.

"This project allows contribution in a variety of fashions. This could be through the provision of time and skills, donation of building materials or vouchers for household goods or assistance with breakfast and lunch catering for tradesmen. This is a house built by the community to benefit the community so no offer of assistance will be refused," Mr Macdonald said.

"Every day in the life of this project brings new excitement and we continue to be impressed by the willingness of our community members to contribute to this very worthwhile charity initiative."

For further information or to make a contribution visit the Watermark Charity House website at www.watermarkcharityhouse.org or contact WDHS Community Liaison department on 555 18540.

Growing green thumbs and awareness



Mr Ben Kennett busily attends to the lovely fresh herbs and vegetables in the new ADASS Garden

The grant has allowed resurfacing and levelling of the courtyard and members of the groups have been actively involved in developing the garden. They have enjoyed shopping for and donating plants then planting, watering, mulching and caring for them.

The garden is steadily becoming a main focus for the groups that attend each week. They like to see the new growth and have enjoyed the fruits of their labour with the excitement of picking and eating their own produce.

Early 2013 saw the implementation of a worm farm to use green waste, which will be put back into the garden as a natural fertilizer. A rain water tank has been installed for garden use giving staff a valuable opportunity to promote alternative water saving initiatives and recycling with the support of guest speakers, and distributing handouts to the community.

All community user groups are making use of the courtyard for BBQs, outdoor games, gardening, sensory activities, sitting in the sun or as a quiet restful area.

A successful funding application to Southern Grampians Shire Council has funded the installation of a community garden for Western District Health Service's (WDHS) Planned Activity Group – ADASS and all other Frances Hewett Community Centre users.

Peter's Project pulling its weight



Jim Fletcher, visiting oncologist Professor David Ashley, cancer link nurse Jane Sharp, Peter's Project Director Vicki Jellie, Wannon MP Dan Tehan and Medical Unit Manager Julie Stevens celebrate the arrival of the Nikki Pump at WDHS.

A full cancer centre in the south-west might not be built for a while, but Hamilton patients are already benefiting from campaigners' efforts.

In February Western District Health Service (WDHS) received a pain relieving Nikki Pump, funded by Peter's Project, through interest earned from community donations.

The pump, like a high-tech drip, will allow a cancer patient to receive a number of medications, delivered constantly over a 24-hour period.

The lockable device comes in a shoulder bag, so patients can walk around and go on outings.

By ruling of the Australian Tax Office, Peter's Project must spend 80 per cent of interest earned every financial year; this year, the amount totalled \$10,300.

Following a discussion with WDHS Chief Executive, Jim Fletcher, the project committee offered to pay for the Nikki Pump.

"We're very grateful to receive the funding," Mr Fletcher said.

"It's important that WDHS supports the Peter's Project quest to establish a cancer centre in the south west to improve access to radiation oncology for our community and reduce the travel burden for patients and carers."

The Centre's construction is based on a proposal that would see \$15 million in State Government funding, \$10 million from the Federal Government and \$5 million raised by the community.

Article and photograph supplied Hamilton Spectator.

Breaking down the barriers A personal journey and experience with dementia



Acting Medical Unit Manager Leanne Deutscher, Deputy Director of Nursing Bronwyn Roberts, Faye Gumley and Sub-Acute Care Coordinator Jeff Slater following Faye's in-service education session.

Faye Gumley, a recently retired nurse educator with 55 years' experience at Western District Health Service (WDHS) had taught dementia as a subject to many students and volunteers and knew a great deal about it – or so she thought.

But no amount of teaching the subject could prepare her for the personal journey that would be hers when Jim, her husband of 53 years, developed the condition and eventually required permanent admission to The Birches, an aged care facility at WDHS with dementia-specific beds.

In a recent in-service education session at WDHS about her journey with Jim, Faye said that Jim had always been a wandering, restless spirit and had retired early from his building firm after a diagnosis of bowel cancer to pursue his travel, collecting and club interests. Faye found it easier to let him please himself and continued to love and spoil him while she remained working.

Their lives continued in this way until, in about 2004, it began to unravel as Jim started to show the very early signs of combined vascular and Alzheimer's dementia with Faye doing more and more for him without realising it.

As time passed the symptoms worsened especially with regard to the navigational skills required to drive and eventually those required to get around the house, a home Jim had built. Other obvious symptoms included struggling with the sleep and wake cycle, his ability to self-care, a loss of configuration and construction skills and a return of old insecurities regarding money and ownership.

From May through to September last year their lives spiralled out of control with episodes of delusional, psychotic and

catastrophic behaviours requiring visits to the Emergency Department and one admission to acute care. Faye found it hard not to take the behaviours personally – accepting that rational thinking could not be separated from feelings was very difficult indeed. She found it difficult also to get help.

Finally, after a few particularly bad days, it became apparent that personal safety was an issue so another admission to acute care resulted in Jim's admission to the Birches in early September – a day of terrible grief and sadness for Faye and no doubt for Jim also. The days that followed were difficult as she tried to get her head and heart around the fact that he would never come home again – that she had given him into the care of others leaving her feeling powerless.

She now spends a good deal of time with Jim in the Birches as their journey continues and is telling her story in the hope of decreasing the stigma that seems to surround the disease. She is also keen to promote the great work of the Birches and perhaps encourage the formation of an Auxiliary to raise much-needed funds.

Faye also hopes to attract many more volunteers to help the residents pass the hours, simply by sitting with them, reading to them, going for a walk in the enclosed gardens. She said it gladdened the heart to watch residents interact with staff, volunteers and those providing spiritual care and entertainment.

The Birches is a great, purpose-built facility with wonderfully dedicated staff who have specialised skills in caring for those making the journey with dementia. Anyone interested in volunteering their time in the Birches should contact the WDHS Community Liaison department on 5551 8540.



Christmas giving assists many

Western District Health Service (WDHS) Theatre Unit Manager Rachal Porter was delighted when the long-awaited cysto-videoscope finally arrived at the Hamilton Base Hospital.

The cysto-videoscope was purchased with funds donated in support of the WDHS Christmas Appeal. It was on the list of high priority surgical instruments urgently needed for the Hamilton Base Hospital Operating Theatre.

A thin, lighted camera, the cysto-videoscope carries images from the tip of the instrument to a television screen. The

instrument will assist surgeons performing cystoscopies by highlighting inner surfaces of the urinary tract and bladder, areas which do not normally show up on an x-ray. This procedure can greatly aid in the early detection and treatment of urinary conditions which may eliminate the need for more extensive surgery.

Western District Health Service Chief Executive Officer Jim Fletcher said:

"Our hospital is extraordinarily lucky to receive such outstanding support from our community."

"These fundraising campaigns enable WDHS to purchase theatre equipment needed to perform many of the operations here at the Hamilton Base Hospital.

"Without state of the art equipment such as the cysto-videoscope, patients would have to travel to Melbourne, Geelong or Ballarat to undergo straight-forward procedures. The fact that we have such state of the art equipment means we are able to offer various operations and the services of many more specialists to our patients, normally only accessible in metropolitan or larger regional hospitals.

"Hamilton is a major regional hub servicing patients from neighbouring areas simply because we have the specialists and facilities to offer these procedures which in turns assist us to attract and retain specialists.

"As we have done so often in the past we reflect on how lucky we are to enjoy the extraordinary support we receive from our community and the many donors who have supported us throughout the year, making such a difference to those in our care."

Relay for life

Inspired by her own personal journey and battle with cancer, Western District Health Service (WDHS) Ward Clerk Denise Munro from The Grange Residential Aged Care Facility, put together the biggest team ever fielded by WDHS for this year's Relay for Life.

The Grange Groovers team consisted of over 50 registered members with participants ranging in age from one year to over 80 years old. Many of the Executive and Department Heads joined the Groovers along with other WDHS medical and clinical staff and their families.

Although there is a very poignant and stirring moment in the 18-hour event, when participants remember in prayer and thought those loved ones that they have lost, the focus is very much on the positive side of being with friends and family, making new friends and sharing your experiences.

Throughout the relay participants were entertained with live music, crazy activities, dancing and dressing up games. The Grange Groovers raised over \$3,500 for cancer research. Denise and the rest of the team enjoyed the event so much that they have already started planning and organising to

hold barbeques, raffles, and other events for the 2015 Relay for Life.

As a team leader and volunteer, Denise has now been invited to the Relay for Life Summit to be held later in June. The summit, to be held in Warrnambool, will celebrate Relay for Life's fifteenth relay and aim to encourage and assist team leaders for the next relay.

"Relay For Life is an opportunity to get together with your community to celebrate cancer survivors, remember loved ones lost and fight back against cancer. It is another way we, as a health service, can show we are giving back to our community, who so often and generously support us in our own fundraising. I would urge everyone to join us again for the next Relay for life in 2015," Denise said.

Relay for Life is now run in every state and territory and raises over \$14 million each year for the cancer fight.



The successful Grange Groovers team during the first lap of the 2013 Relay for Life event in Hamilton.

Telehealth a winner for all

A number of new Telehealth video consulting services at Western District Health Service (WDHS) have been successful in reducing travel times and costs for clients, increasing the availability of specialists and extending staff training options.

WDHS has introduced a range of Telehealth services to improve access and training over recent months and the feedback from clients and staff has been overwhelmingly positive. Telehealth aims to remove some of the barriers to accessing medical services for Australians who have difficulty getting to specialists or live in rural and remote areas.

Oncologist Professor David Ashley, currently visits WDHS every third month for in person consultations and is available for Telehealth video link ups with clients every other month.

Professor Ashley teleconferences with up to 12 patients a day in the Telehealth Oncology Clinic at WDHS. He is able to access patient records, scans and blood test results online and discuss treatment and medication options, as well as the need for follow up scans and tests. The video conferencing technology also allows Professor Ashley to zoom in on the patient to assess other physical anomalies. If further physical examinations are required these can very quickly be assessed by a local General Practitioner.

WDHS Cancer Link Nurse Jane Sharp, who assists patients in the video consults, said:

"The Telehealth service still allows clients to have a candid, accurate, honest and informative consultation with their specialist.

"Without it, patients would have to travel long distances for appointments and some of these are just 10-minute follow ups."

Tyrone Lamb, a current client using the Oncology Telehealth Service said:

"You get the same net result from the video consultation, the information is the same, you are free to ask the questions you need to ask and your questions are answered thoroughly."

A further telehealth initiative developed in partnership with Urologist Mr Richard Grills provides urological case management and review to patients in the region.

This initiative has seen a reduction in waiting times for patient review, improved post-surgical case management and coordination of care and a reduction in the need and costs associated with transport to city-based specialists and services. The Urology Telehealth Clinic has provided direct Telehealth assessments to over 50 patients in three designated clinics since it began in October.

Clients have been pleased with the Telehealth services provided, acknowledging the ease and simplicity of the services in meeting their needs with minimal travel, cost and reduced waiting periods.

WDHS Men's Health Prostate Case Manager, Stuart Willder said:

"It is a more effective use of the specialists' time as it allows Mr Grills to see a greater number of patients. It is also less stressful for clients who don't have to worry about navigating the city to find specialist services."

Thanks to a grant from the Department of Health, for the purchase of Telehealth equipment to enhance student placements and training, departments such as Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy can now also observe students remotely while they conduct clinical sessions.

The equipment has been trialed successfully in the Speech Pathology department and will be used in other Allied Health departments when university students take up their clinical placements at WDHS.

The new technology allows the Clinical Supervisor (after obtaining client/carer consent), to observe and record sessions from another room. The students can reflect on their clinical sessions and plan the next sessions on their computer or laptop or from mobile devices such as their smartphone or iPad.

The new Telehealth equipment will also be used to conduct assessment and therapy sessions with clients in outlying towns to save them travelling to Hamilton and it can be used to conduct distance therapy sessions from specialist clinics in Melbourne.

WDHS intends to further increase the use of Telehealth across the organisation to enhance and extend services and provide greater access to specialist services for its community.



Professor David Ashley video conferencing with client Tyrone Lamb and Cancer Link Nurse Jane Sharp in an Oncology Telehealth session



Power of the pedal

Perfect weather conditions and great camaraderie helped sweep the two Western District Health Service (WDHS) cycle relay teams home in record time at this year's Murray to Moyne.

The 520-kilometre journey was not without incident though, when two team members from the Hamilton Base Bikers came off their bikes in the very first leg.

Luckily the Base Bikers had a good proportion of doctors and nurses in its ranks, and thanks to some very proficient and handy expertise from other team members, the injured rider was despatched by ambulance back to Mildura, while the rest of the team quickly regrouped and were back in Hamilton by 10:30pm.

Penshurst's team, The Rouse Rare Rumps, set a cracking pace with their team of nine riders, two of which were over 70, averaging at times a speed of up to 39 kilometres an hour. David Linke part of the support crew was participating in his twentieth Murray to Moyne.

Both teams have done an outstanding job raising nearly \$35,000 between them. Special thanks also go to Glenelg Surgical Clinic and Mary-Ann Brown and Associates who came on board as the new sponsors for the Hamilton Base Bikers.

Other business sponsors to thank are Finchets Plumbing, Hamilton Farm Supplies, Cogger Gurry, Lakeside Service Centre, Gorst Rural supplies, Western District Pastoral Company, Elders Hamilton, Kerr & Co, Hamilton Produce, Auto Pro, The Roxburgh and David Rowe Sign Design.

Partnering to improve service delivery



Melanie Williams, SGSC Home and Community Care Assessment officer, Marilyn Eastwood, shared client and Susie Stevenson, WDHS Team Leader of the Home Referral Service.

A joint Western District Health Service (WDHS) and Shire of Southern Grampians service initiative is attracting state-wide interest.

The service initiative involves the co-location of the Shire of Southern Grampians Home and Community Care (HACC) Assessment Team with the WDHS Home Referral Service and Care Coordination Teams.

The HACC Assessment Team provides home assessments for clients to determine if they are eligible to receive HACC

services from the Shire. Services include home help, personal care, meals on wheels, and home and property maintenance. The aim of the HACC program is to provide services to support and help people who live at home and in the community. The WDHS Home Referral Service aims to link clients being discharged from hospital to services which will help aid in recovery while at home.

Often clients being seen by one of these support services is also being seen by the other. The advantages of the co-location is the prevention of duplication of services to clients and after 12 months an evaluation by the Shire and WDHS staff found a 70% improvement in communication and efficiency and an 80% improvement in outcomes for clients.

The co-location initiative was implemented following a consumer forum on how home-based services could streamline assessment processes and improve continuity for clients.

The relocation of two Shire staff with WDHS Allied Health, chronic disease management and home referral staff has improved communication, efficiency and outcomes for clients.

Improvements have included the use and application of a single needs assessment tool, enhanced discharge communication, coordination of care with discussions at multidisciplinary team meetings and work towards electronic sharing of care plans.

Red, white and blue visit



Hamilton Base Hospital was visited by Bulldogs' Captain Matthew Boyd, and team members Mitch Wallis, Daniel Pearce, Christian Howard and Tom Young. The footballers spent several hours chatting with patients on dialysis, and in the Surgical and Medical wards, even holding a baby or two in Midwifery (albeit with a little trepidation). They then enjoyed a fine spread at a celebratory morning tea with clients from the ADDAS Day Centre.

At Penshurst the Bulldogs played a game of wheelchair football and were cheered along by a cheer squad of local schoolchildren who also umpired the match and operated the scoreboard. This was followed by a question and answer session with the school children, who surprised the players with their expert football and Bulldogs' team knowledge. The team was then treated to a morning tea with the residents and school children.

The feedback from staff across all of the campuses who had the pleasure of escorting players around the campuses to chat with residents, clients and patients was fantastic. They very patiently continued smiling as they were relentlessly photographed by excited fans. By the end of their visit they even had the odd Collingwood supporter nominating them as their second favourite team!

The visit of the red, white and blue team members from the Western Bulldogs Football Club in early February was a highlight for many Western District Health Service (WDHS) Aged Care Residents, patients, clients and staff.

Twenty members of the team visited nearly 300 patients and residents at the Hamilton Base Hospital, The Grange and the Coleraine and Penshurst campuses of WDHS.

Youth holiday programs



Western District Health Service (WDHS) continues to provide a dynamic program of activities in each school holiday period which is reflected in growing interest levels from the region's youth. A greater number of activities offered enabled increased participation this year, with an average of 120 participants over each holiday period since July 2012.

Since July 2012, 483 young people from across the Southern Grampians Shire have participated in the Holiday Program. The program has been so successful that some activities in particular have required young people to be placed on a waiting list.

The Holiday Program is designed to be affordable and accessible, including subsidised fees and provision of transport arrangements.

Activities have been selected to promote inclusiveness, mental and physical health and wellbeing. The range of activities included paintballing, fishing charters, ten-pin bowling, laser strike, day spas, horse riding and visits to AFL football, the Melbourne Show, Adventure Park Geelong and Luna Park.

Strong engagement with young people through the use of Facebook and Survey Monkey has enabled effective planning for the upcoming school holiday period. This has resulted in activities being well targeted to young people's interests and subsequently well attended.

On behalf of the young people, parents and guardians and community organisations who have participated in the School Holiday program during 2012-2013, WDHS thanks Dr Geoff Handbury for his generosity and support of the Western District Health Service Holiday Program. This year's Holiday Program has been a great success due to the diversity of experiences and encounters made possible for those who took part.

Agricultural health attracts national interest

More than 20 people from across the country converged on Hamilton in February for a week-long National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) course, led by researcher Jacque Cotton and head of the NCFH, Sue Brumby.

Australia's only postgraduate unit for professionals servicing farming communities attracted participants from across Australia when it was offered through the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) earlier this year.

The five-day intensive course held in February forms part of Deakin University's Agricultural Health and Medicine Unit.

Like many of the programs which have emerged from the National Centre, renowned for its innovative approach to agricultural health, this unit is unique and crosses boundaries. It has been designed with improving the health of farming families and their communities at its core, and attracts professionals who work closely with those working in agriculture – not just people from health professions.

According to Unit Chair and Director of the NCFH, Clinical Associate Professor Sue Brumby, the course was designed to appeal to multidisciplinary graduate-level students and professionals.

"Importantly students gain a greater understanding about what is required for effective health provision in Australia's agricultural industries," Ms Brumby said.



Photograph supplied Hamilton Spectator.

Students learned about the wide range of social, environmental, physical and mental factors which result in poor health outcomes, and were able to share insights and experiences from the various professions attending the course.

The course ensures students learn about agricultural medical conditions, co-morbidities in rural communities and injuries. Particular subjects included respiratory health, common cancers, traumatic injuries, mental health (including suicide and addiction) as well as the hazards associated with chemical use.

"We know that a healthy workforce is vital for a productive agricultural industry, but through the work of the NCFH, we have learnt that farming families and their communities face poorer health outcomes than their urban counterparts. Agricultural workers have a high rate of injuries including fatalities and suffer chronic diseases at high rates," Ms Brumby said.

The unit can be completed as a stand-alone course and has been accredited for professional development points through selected colleges and associations. The course is a core unit of the Graduate Certificate of Agricultural Health and Medicine.



WDHS Maternity Services Coordinator Sonia Shaw and Midwives Sara Moyle and Madeline Sutherland, give the thumbs up to the new Ultrasound equipment, with Arctic Blast Major Sponsor Tim Rayner, Arctic Blast Committee Members Libby Macgugan and Vicki Whyte (enjoying a cuddle with baby Skylar Barry) and Student Midwife Melissa Turnbull.

April saw the arrival of the long-awaited Voluson P8 Obstetric Ultrasound for the Midwifery Unit of the Hamilton Base Hospital, purchased with the \$45,000 raised from last year's Arctic Blast Ball.

The Voluson Ultrasound is a vital piece of equipment necessary in modern day midwifery and obstetric care for antenatal use and assisting in diagnosis. It will be used by both doctors on the ward and in the Midwifery clinics.

WDHS Maternity Services Coordinator Sonia Shaw was delighted with the new piece of equipment and the benefits it will give to the staff and patients.

"The whole department was very appreciative of the donation from the Arctic Blast Committee. The Midwives had a great time at the ball and recognise the enormous efforts the committee had made organising the whole event and creating the fantastic winter wonderland setting," she said.

Golfing for a cause

A fun filled day of golf at the Hamilton Golf Club has resulted in the purchase of much-needed equipment for acute patients of Western District Health Service (WDHS).

The annual fundraiser raised in excess of \$13,000 which was used to purchase a Dental Theatre Cart and a Maxicare Floor Line bed for the care of older patients in acute care with presentation of delirium or dementia.

The 2013 Golf Tournament fundraiser, to be held on 22 November, will again be sponsored by the Hamilton Base Hospital Opportunity Shop and will raise funds for items of equipment needed to continue providing highest level care for WDHS patients.

Teams from across the south-west and as far away as Melbourne have participated in the event since its inception in 2010.

Last year 32 teams teed off in the Ambrose Stableford Competition while volunteers ensured all were well fed and watered throughout play.

WDHS Chief Executive Jim Fletcher said the golf tournament was an important fundraising activity for the Health Service.

"Our annual golf tournament is well recognised in the community as a truly enjoyable day for all involved."

"The day allows us a great opportunity to not only raise much-needed funds for purchase of equipment but also to interact in a social setting with many of our important suppliers, sponsors and volunteers."

"We have seen the golf day grow substantially since our first event in 2010 and I am sure this year will again be a day filled with laughter and fun and all for a very good cause."



Sarge's Troops and Team Feck team members Andrew Borgmeyer, Flossie Kent, Liz Wallis, Alison Rivett and Nicole Munro looked their 'op shop' best in last year's WDHS Golf Tournament. This year's event will be held on 22 November.

Ladies Auxiliary bake sale

Members of the Hamilton Base Hospital Ladies Auxiliary, Pat Runciman, Roma Tully and Jean McIntosh prepare their spread of delicious cakes and other goodies to sell at one their regular Bake Sales and Coffee Mornings. Last year the Auxiliary raised nearly \$3,000 for hospital equipment through their bake sale efforts alone.



Arctic Blast for new equipment

WDHS Maternity Services Coordinator Sonia Shaw and Midwives Sara Moyle and Madeline Sutherland, give the thumbs up to the new Ultrasound equipment, with Arctic Blast Major Sponsor Tim Rayner, Arctic Blast Committee Members Libby Macgugan and Vicki Whyte (enjoying a cuddle with baby Skylar Barry) and Student Midwife Melissa Turnbull.

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Running for fun



Several hundred people turned out in November last year to cheer on family and friends as they crossed the finish line in the Annual Hamilton Vitality Fun Run.

In idyllic conditions the times were faster and more runners took to the track than in previous years and with several improvements, including the introduction of professional timing services and a 1.8km race for primary school children, the event was a huge success.

Mardi Gill from Vitality Health and Fitness said she was ecstatic with the turnout.

"It was great to see so many kids and mums and dads getting on board. Numbers were definitely up on last year and the lake had a real carnival atmosphere."

Andrew Bradbeer from Manse Medical was on hand with Mardi to announce the Manse Medical Youth Sports Scholarship for Inspired School Aged Athletes. The two scholarships, generously funded by Manse Medical to the value of \$250 each were presented to local school children Lachie Field and Abby Sutherland.

Funds raised at last year's event were directed to the Western District Health Service (WDHS) Grange Residential Aged Care Facility for further redevelopment works and equipment.

WDHS Chief Executive Officer Jim Fletcher who also participated in the Fun Run said:

"Since its inception, the Fun Run had contributed nearly \$20,000 to The Grange and these contributions have greatly enhanced the quality of care of both the staff and residents."

This year's event will take place on Sunday 10 November, 2013.

Employee of the Month



September – Sue Watt
Community Health Nurse – Women's Health



October – Jane Robertson
Ward Clerk – Coleraine



November – Tim Jacobs
Personal Services Assistant – Theatre



December – Dustyn Williamson
SWARH Technical Officer – Communications



January – Alison Criddle
Clinical Coder



February – Stu Willder
Community Health Nurse – Men's Health

March – Maureen Wood
Chronic Care Coordinator

Volunteering

The Charlie Watt Volunteer of the Month Award Recognising our inspirational volunteers

In recognition of the incredible dedication and commitment of its volunteers, Western District Health Service recently introduced the Charlie Watt Volunteer of the Month Award. The award is sponsored by Alexandra House and celebrates the outstanding contributions volunteers make to the Health Service and the community.

Elva Lyon – January Volunteer of the Month

Elva Lyon is one of WDHS' longest serving volunteers. Elva has been volunteering predominantly on the hospital comfort's trolley and as a door knocker for the Hospital Door Knock Appeal for over 40 years. She loves her hospital and thoroughly enjoys volunteering. She never seeks accolades and quietly goes about her volunteering duties, stopping off for a chat with hospital clients and spreading cheer around the wards. Elva was also made a Life Governor of the hospital in 2011 to acknowledge her loyalty and dedication to WDHS.

Marlene Steers – February Volunteer of the Month

Marlene Steers has been a volunteer at Coleraine Hospital for an amazing 28 years and is currently the Coleraine Community Transport Co-ordinator. This program assists clients disadvantaged in accessing transport, by providing volunteers to drive them to their appointments and services. Without Community Transport, many of these people would not be able to attend appointments or access services essential to their health care and wellbeing. Marlene has been co-ordinating this vital service at Coleraine for over five years.

Joan Lewis – March Volunteer of the Month

Joan Lewis volunteers two mornings a week at the Hamilton House Day Centre, picking up clients to attend activities. At The Grange she helps with special functions, events, happy hour and escorting residents to medical appointments. She spends countless hours selling raffle tickets to raise funds for The Grange and often provides assistance with hospital fundraising events. Joan has been a WDHS volunteer for over seven years and is an integral member of our volunteer team.

Volunteering at WDHS

WDHS currently has over 300 volunteers, supporting the organisation across a number of campuses and in many different roles. Volunteers drive patients to appointments with medical specialists, as part of our Community Transport Program, visit residents in the Aged Care facilities, serve customers in the Hospital Opportunity Shop and help to run fundraising and health promotion events. Volunteers range in age from 15 to 95 and not only help WDHS provide better services to the community, but enrich the lives of its patients and clients.



WDHS Volunteers of the Month
(L-R) Elva Lyon, Marlene Steers and Joan Lewis.

If you would like to become a Western District Health Service volunteer, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Jeanette Ryan on 5551 8284.

Call for Volunteer Door Knockers

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

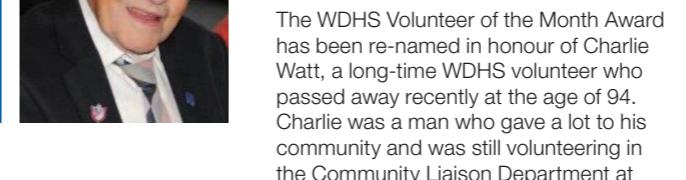
Would you be willing to spend a few hours collecting for our Annual Hospital Door Knock Appeal?

June 15 – 23 2013

- The Door Knock Appeal raises funds for vital hospital equipment purchases;
- Volunteer door knockers are required not only in Hamilton, but in the surrounding rural communities and areas; and
- Volunteers can request the areas or streets they would like to door knock in.

If you have a few hours to spare on these dates and would be willing to help please call Jeanette Ryan in Community Liaison on 5551 8284 or visit the Community Liaison Office.

Award celebrates the life of a very special volunteer



WDHS right up until his death in February.

Charlie was WDHS' oldest volunteer. For nearly 15 years he assisted in various areas across the health service, working in the aged care facilities at The Birches and The Grange, where he delighted the residents with his jokes and kept them abreast of all the local news. He played cards with the residents, helped with the cooking and enthusiastically joined in the church services.

In recent years, every Friday morning Charlie would also take the bus to the hospital to help out in the Community Liaison Department, assisting 'the girls' with their administration tasks, putting volunteer packs together and helping sort media articles. 'Sir Charles in Charge' was the catchcry often heard on a Friday morning by the girls in the office, who he referred to as his 'Angels'.

Charlie was renowned for his positive attitude to ageing, never seeing it as a barrier when it came to assisting others. In fact Charlie was

sometimes quite a bit older than the people he was caring for. He was a valued team member and extremely knowledgeable and up to date with current affairs.

Charlie's volunteering began at Caritas Christi Hospice in Kew, where he volunteered for eight years before he moved to Hamilton to be near his brother Bill, when his beloved wife Nell passed away.

Initially not knowing many people in Hamilton, Charlie found that through volunteering he was able to make many lifelong friends. Charlie's network grew and he was an integral part of the award winning volunteer programs at WDHS. In 2011, The Year of the Volunteer, he was part of The Birches Special Extended Care Service Volunteers team, which won the Minister of Health's Volunteer Award. In 2012 he was again on the winning team for the Minister for Health's Volunteer Award as part of The Grange Residential Care Service volunteer team. He also travelled to Government House where he received a Certificate of Recognition and Appreciation at the Victorian Senior of the Year Ceremony. In January this year, the Southern Grampians Shire Council recognised Charlie for his contributions to our community when he was the recipient of an Australia Day Award.

Charlie Watt was a true gentleman and a sweet and caring person - an inspiration to us all. He touched the lives of many people at WDHS and will be sadly missed.

New Staff



Lachy Patterson

Lachy Patterson has been appointed the new Community Liaison Manager at WDHS. Lachy holds a Bachelor of Communication (HNRs Public Relations) and has a background in corporate affairs and communication, journalism and media management. In recent years he was the Media Manager for the Australian Cricket Team both here and abroad, managing the corporate affairs, communication, media management and publications for Cricket Australia.



Kate Nunn

Originally from Tyrendarra, Kate left school in 2009 and went on to study nursing in Geelong. Wanting to stay close to home Kate came to Hamilton as a first-year Graduate Nurse. Kate loves the fact that through nursing she is able to work with and help a broad range of people.



Matt Gebert

Matt is a First Year Apprentice Electrician who has been working at WDHS since December 2012. After completing a range of work experience placements as a student at Monivae, Matt chose to take on an Apprenticeship with WDHS and has enjoyed the range of projects he has been involved with across the campuses.



Peyton Ellwood

Peyton is a First Year Apprentice Plumber at WDHS. After completing Year 12 at Monivae he decided to take up a WDHS Plumbing Apprenticeship.



Richard Casey

Richard Casey has been appointed the Facilities Coordinator with Penshurst District Health Service. Richard has 20 years of experience in the rural sector, primarily managing sheep and beef properties. He has enjoyed his brief time at PDHS and enjoys the varying role and welcoming nature of the staff in Penshurst and Hamilton.

Annual WDHS DOOR KNOCK APPEAL

15 – 23
June 2013

This year's appeal will raise funds for:

- 6 single intravenous pumps to ensure the safe delivery of fluids and medication, including management of pain for patients with the added ability to deliver very small volumes of fluid @\$6,200 per unit (\$37,200)
- 3 double channel intravenous pumps that allow safe delivery of more than one type of fluid and medication at the same time @\$7,400 per unit (\$22,200)
- The pumps are used across all acute areas of the hospital

First Name _____ Surname _____ Title _____

Address _____ Postcode _____

Donation Amount (\$) _____

Please charge to my Visa Mastercard

Card No. ccv

Expiry Date _____

Name on card _____

Signed _____

- Or I enclose my cheque / money order
Please make cheques payable to **Western District Health Service**

Please forward your donation to:

Community Liaison Department
PO Box 283
Hamilton 3300

ALL DONATIONS OVER \$2 ARE FULLY TAX DEDUCTIBLE - THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT