

A NEWSLETTER FROM  
Western District Health Service

Hamilton Base Hospital  
Coleraine District Health Service  
Penshurst & District Health Service  
Merino Community Health Centre  
Frances Hewett Community Centre  
National Centre for Farmer Health  
The Grange  
The Birches  
youth4youth

# Western Wellbeing

## Great day for Merino community health

Attendees at the Merino Community Health Centre Opening were told it was 'their day' as the greatly fought-for centre was officially opened on 8th August, 2011.

The fully-packed centre was opened by the Honorable Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, Catherine King.

The \$870,000 project was aided by a contribution of \$370,000 from Western District Health Service (WDHS) and the new centre is providing primary nursing, district nursing, a visiting monthly podiatry, dietetics and diabetes education services from the Glenelg Outreach Centre to the Merino community, with a GP visiting half a day each week.

Local residents packed into the centre to watch the parliamentary secretary open the centre with Glenelg Shire councillors and WDHS board members. Ms King said the centre would service the Merino community well into the future.

"It's terrific to see the Federal Government's investment in Merino really transforming the delivery of health services and that's really what the Federal Government has been trying to do with its investment in rural health services throughout the country," she said of the National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program. "These projects are transforming regional and rural communities."

Ms King said it was important to grow the service into the future. "I certainly hope the facilities attract a lot more visiting health services as well because it keeps people in their communities for longer," she said.

WDHS Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher said it was a positive outcome for the Merino community, which had worked so hard to get the health centre in the town.

"It's a great day for WDHS and the Merino community," he said. "It's been a battle but we are finally there and it means we've got a

health presence in Merino for the rest of this century and beyond to not only serve the current community but future generations.

"Community support for this project has been absolutely fantastic and the Merino community really deserves this. It's outstanding support in terms of a full house at the opening just gives you an indication of how important this health service is to this small community."

Mr Fletcher said the new health centre had boosted the morale of the community by bringing new investment into the town.

"An \$850,000 investment is a significant investment into a small town and it's got to give the town a great lift. Many, many people in the community have come up to me and said what a great thing it is for the community, what a great lift it has been to the morale of the community and how much it actually means to not only the older population but also the younger people that are living within the Merino township."



Above: Coleraine Campus Director of Nursing, Tim Pitt-Lancaster, Glenelg Shire Mayor, Bruce Cross, WDHS Chief Executive, Jim Fletcher, Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, Catherine King, and Coleraine District Health Service Chair, Ron Jones at the opening of the new Merino Community Health Centre.

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## From the CEO

### Busy Growth period for Western District Health Service



As 2011 draws to a close, the rapid and exciting growth era for WDHS will continue with the completion and commencement of many new capital developments and programs.

#### Capital Projects Completed

The new Community Health Centre for Merino commenced operations in June and was officially opened by the Honourable Catherine King, Federal Member for Ballarat and Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister for Health in August 2011. The new centre is going extremely well and is a great boost for the Merino community.

At our Penshurst campus, the provision of a new laundry and cool room have been completed.

#### Major Projects Underway

##### Coleraine Campus

After what seemed to be an eternity, the building of a new health precinct for Coleraine is finally underway with the successful builder, AW Nicolson commencing construction on 29 August 2011.

The project will be completed in two stages with:

- **Stage 1A** construction consisting of new public amenities, a Primary Care Centre, Medical and Dental Clinics, a 10 bed acute and 12 bed Nursing Home and a car park due for completion early 2013
- **Stage 1B** to commence early 2013 and due for completion early 2014 – works include an upgrade of Mackie House (24 beds), demolition of Wannan Hostel, construction of a new 15 bed wing replacement aged care facility and construction of a new support services wing

The project is currently running to schedule with demolition works, site and slab works completed.

On the fundraising side, the Coleraine redevelopment appeal has reached \$135k of its \$200k target.

##### The Grange

The extension of services and upgrade of one wing of the Grange aged residential care centre is well underway and on target for completion at the end of April 2012.

Despite inclement weather, stage 1A of the project, a new seven bed wing was completed on 4 November 2011. It is now occupied enabling eight bedrooms and ensuites in the older wing known as Home 3 to be upgraded to provide high level care.

Due for completion on 22 December 2011, this will be followed by the building of a new kitchen, upgrades to dining areas, five bedrooms and ensuites commencing on 16 January 2012.

The final works including the conversion of the current kitchen to increase the activities area and external works will be completed by the end of April 2012.

The Grange project is being funded mainly by the \$2.2m fundraising campaign, which has now reached \$2.23m. With \$77,000 to go, the end is in sight and I remain confident that we will reach this target by March 2012 with your generous support.

#### Hamilton Medical Group

AW Nicolson won the tender for the first stage of an internal refurbishment to provide additional and upgraded consulting, training and treatment facilities. Works commenced on 2 November and will be completed by late February 2012.

Subject to finalisation of the recruitment of medical specialists currently working overseas, we anticipate that two new Physicians, a part-time Paediatrician and a female GP practising obstetrics will be on board at the clinic and Hamilton Base Hospital in early 2012. At this stage we are on target to have the facilities upgraded in time for the arrival of the new additions to our medical workforce.

#### Hamilton Base Hospital

Tenders will be called for the rebuilding and redevelopment of our rehabilitation and assessment and management of our elderly inpatient area at Hamilton Base Hospital. The project will begin in early 2012 taking around eight months to complete and will include the upgrade of six double bedrooms and ensuites, provision of a new daily living skills kitchen, allied health gymnasium, gait training and outdoor areas.

This new development funded principally by a Council of Australian Government grant will be a great boost to enhancing our very successful rehabilitation and care for elderly patient programs.

#### National Centre for Farmer Health Education program moves interstate

In a great boost for the National Centre for Farmer Health and Deakin University, Queensland Rural Medical Education has engaged the Centre to deliver the Agricultural Health and Medicine Unit in Toowoomba between 15 February and 2 March 2012. This opportunity has come about as a result of some members of the Queensland Rural Medical Education completing the unit in Hamilton in early 2011.

The course will also be available for the third time in Hamilton between 27 February and 2 March 2012. Details can be obtained from the National Centre for Farmer Health.

In the meantime, we are making many representations to State Government Politicians and Departments to secure funding for the National Centre for Farmer Health beyond 30 June 2012 to continue on the very important work of the Centre in improving health, wellbeing and safety outcomes for farmers, their families and their workers to keep Victorian farmers farming and farms productive in their vital contribution to Victoria's economy and food bowl.

#### Hall of Fame for Top of the Town

The outstanding contribution of the Top of the Town Charity Ball to WDHS was formally recognised at the recent Shire of Southern Grampians Business Awards with admission to the Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame status recognises both the outstanding quality of the event as well as its contribution to the Southern Grampians Shire economy and state of the art equipment purchases for Hamilton Base Hospital.

The Ball, held in 2010, contributed \$219,000 to the purchase and installation of the Olympus digital theatre system, making HBH the first in Australia to fully implement this system. The three charity balls have raised over \$630,000 for WDHS.

#### New Board Members

Mr. Mark McGinnity and Mr. Ian Whiting have been appointed by the Governor in Council for a three year period commencing from 1 July 2011.

Mark and Ian are welcome additions to the Board and replace our retiring members Ron Jones and Peter Irvin who both gave great service to WDHS.

#### Christmas Greetings

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Executive and staff of WDHS, I extend our best wishes to all members of the community for a safe and happy festive season and thank you for your continued outstanding generous support of our Health Service.

I look forward to 2012 with confidence and enthusiasm to implement and reap the benefits of the many projects and programs on the agenda for the road ahead.

## Life Governor award



Above: WDHS Surgeon, Stephen Clifforth and wife Anne with his WDHS Life Governor Award at the AGM on 8th November, 2011.

The WDHS Life Governor Award is the highest recognition the Health Service can award to those who have given outstanding service to the organisation, thus advancing health care in our region. At the 2011 AGM on the 8th November, WDHS Board President, Mary-Ann Brown announced this year's Life Governor Award recipient to be surgeon, Mr. Stephen Clifforth.

Ms Brown said "The Life Governor Award recognises Stephen's outstanding clinical contribution to Western District Health Service, the Western District region and the State of Victoria over a period of 25 years."

"Stephen commenced work in Hamilton as a General Surgeon in 1986 and throughout his career has provided outstanding surgical skills and services to the Western District of Victoria. His major contributions to Western District Health Service have been the high quality clinical services he continues to provide to the Service; his role on many Board Sub-committees; key involvement in the recognition of Hamilton Base Hospital as a Regional Trauma Service; leadership of the Trauma Emergency Services at Western District Health Service – Hamilton Base Hospital; his supervision, training and mentoring of registrars and junior medical staff; and ongoing involvement in many new developments and changes in surgical practices at Western District Health Service over the past 25 years", she added.

"On a wider regional and State level, Stephen has provided consultancy services at Nhill and Portland; and is active in the development of general surgery at a State and local level including membership of various committees and working groups."

"Western District Health Service is proud to award Life Governorship to Mr. Stephen Clifforth in recognition of his outstanding contribution", Ms Brown concluded.

In accepting the award, Mr Clifforth said that he was "both pleased and surprised to be presented with the award".

"What a wonderful culture and team we have at Western District Health Service, where everyone is so supportive of each other. It's a wonderful community we live in that gives so much support to the hospital and the health services it provides. I am honoured to receive this award" he said.

## Hospital supports AusAid Project

Visiting Urological Surgeon, Mr Richard Grills and Men's Health Educator from Western District Health Service, Stu Willder headed to Vanuatu for a 10 day AusAid trip. Mr Grills and Stu Willder took with them obsolete hospital equipment to donate to The Port Vila Hospital.

The trip was part of the Pacific Island Project (PIP) run by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS). Each year RACS send surgical teams overseas to developing countries in the Pacific region to undertake designated surgical interventions for communities in need.

The aim of the PIP in Vanuatu is to provide a clinical service and to teach, with the long term aim of having local doctors to become self sufficient, which will enable them to establish their own endoscopic urology service. The surgical team takes most of its own instruments and teaches local hospital doctors how to use them and thus support the health needs of their local population.

The challenge has always been to provide longer term training to local doctors and to provide them with their own equipment. This year one of the surgeons from Vanuatu will spend 12 months at Geelong Hospital undertaking training in Urological management and surgical treatments.



Above: Richard Grills, Urological Surgeon and Stu Willder, Men's Health Educator with some of the obsolete items of equipment which will be donated to the Port Vila Hospital in Vanuatu.

The equipment donated by Western District Health Service included specific endoscopic surgical tools and devices, which will allow local surgeons to treat patients themselves between visits from the PIP team. This equipment has been decommissioned and replaced by leading edge modern day technology at WDHS however it will enable the treatment of many thousands in need in Vanuatu.

Mr Richard Grills, Urological Surgeon and Mr Mr Willder volunteer two weeks of their time annually for this project. This was Mr Grills' third trip to Vanuatu and Mr Willder's second. Both felt the trip was an opportunity to make a tangible difference to others. It also gives them a sense of reality and an appreciation of the great conditions and services we have here in Australia.

# New volunteer initiative takes out Minister's Award



Above: WDHS Volunteers, Jane VanHerpen, Charlie Watt and Pauline McCay, Diversional Therapist, Julianne Gould and Volunteer Coordinator, Jeanette Ryan proudly accepting their award from the Minister for Health, David Davis (centre).

Western District Health Service (WDHS) Volunteer Coordinator, Jeanette Ryan, Diversional Therapist, Julianne Gould and the volunteers who support residents at The Birches have had their efforts rewarded, receiving a 2011 Minister for Health Volunteer Award for Volunteer services in a regional health service.

The volunteer visiting program has proven to be very successful in supporting both residents and the staff of The Birches and the award is recognition of its contribution and positive outcomes.

Ms Ryan, who accepted the award from the Minister for Health, Mr David Davis on behalf of the team, said "The Birches Specialist Extended Care Service volunteers are dedicated volunteers who provide quality companionship to residents with special behavioural problems associated with dementia from Alzheimer's, Huntington's disease and other cognitive conditions. They enrich the lives of the people they visit each week and seeing their responses is heart-warming."

"Semi-retired people, the volunteers have excellent communication skills and a wonderful understanding of the needs of people with cognitive and behavioural conditions. They present at The Birches in beautiful coloured clothing, scarves and beads, which are excellent prompts for starting conversations. They bring flowers, pictures, Google information, and give small gifts for special occasions like birthdays and Christmas."

"The program has produced amazing results by providing one-on-one activities, which reflect the resident's past life and experiences, helping to reduce the feelings of isolation and loneliness, promoting self worth and building meaningful friendships. It helps residents feel calmer and happier. The program also means they are able to continue to engage in activities in the community, going on bus trips, eating out, attending concerts and enjoying fishing trips" she said.

"We are proud of all of our WDHS volunteers and the way they contribute to our health service, enhancing the care we provide. They don't seek publicity or rewards for their services but this award is a wonderful testament to the value of their work in the community."

WDHS Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher said "the health service appreciates and values the contribution of each and every one of our 300 plus volunteers who freely give of their time and themselves to improve the quality of life for our patients, residents and clients across all programs provided by WDHS."

"They make an enormous contribution to our health service and community and we are much richer for their involvement"

"I am extremely pleased to see the work and contribution of the Birches volunteer team rewarded with this prestigious award which in essence is recognition for all our volunteers" he said.

## Top of the Town Hall of Fame Award



Above: Kerry Martin, Colin Thompson, Renae Porter, Francis Pekin, Jim Fletcher, Sue Lakeman, and Marie-Jose MacDonald.



## New dentist now available for private patients



Above: New Dentist Dr. Tony Buc.

Western District Health Service is now able to provide private dental appointments on Wednesdays and Thursdays, thanks to a new visiting dentist, Dr Tony Buc.

"Dr Buc started working with us in May this year, initially to help us reduce our waiting list." Ms Rosie Rowe, Director Primary and Preventative Health, noted. "We have been concerned about the long waiting list for adult patients, as high as 33 months two years ago. Thanks to the hard work of Tony and our dental team, we have reduced waiting times for adults to 18 months which is below the state target of 23 months."

Appointments for the private dental service can be made by contacting the Western District Health Service Dental Clinic on Tel: 5551 8347.

## Palliative Care Week

Western District Health Service (WDHS) recognised the support and generosity of Peshurst Op shop volunteers, Annie Gee and Shirley Meyer with a morning tea held in the Palliative Care Office of the Hamilton Base Hospital.

Annie and Shirley give up their time for four days a week when they open the Peshurst Op Shop between 10:30 and 2:00pm every Wednesday through to Saturday. Their hard work has raised over \$4,000 in just 12 months but they were keen to make sure that the generosity of Ross Ramsey was properly recognised too. Ross, a teacher at Mount Baimbridge College, has given the ladies the use of the shop and his shed in Peshurst for the Op Shop. He saves them an estimated \$150 a week, which they would otherwise have to pay in rent and running costs.

All the money raised by the Peshurst Op Shop goes towards Palliative Care in Hamilton. Palliative Care is specialised care and support provided for people living with a terminal illness. The \$4,000 Annie and Shirley have just donated has enabled Palliative Care to purchase two new state of the art wheelchairs for their clients.

Erika Fisher, Clinical Consultant Nurse for Palliative Care at WDHS, spoke about how this little known service provides such enormous support and comfort to the local community.

Ms. Fisher said "Our goal is to improve the quality of life for patients by providing care that addresses the many needs of patients, families and caregivers. This includes treatment for pain and other symptoms as well as attending to emotional, social, cultural and spiritual needs. It is not just about nursing a terminal patient-it is about holistic support and understanding, ensuring that the person lives as best as he or she can in the time they have left."

"Palliative care aims to help our patients live as well as possible. The service offers support to families and caregivers during the patient's illness as well as in bereavement. Most people do not know about Palliative Care until they are affected personally in some way" she said.

Annie Gee said. "They assume the government or the hospital can supply everything but in reality they cannot. The Palliative Care unit like many other areas relies heavily on its volunteers and donations from the public".

Louise Emsley, who is also part of the Palliative Care unit at HBH, designs and creates beautiful blankets and cards for all occasions. Louise sells her cards at the Peshurst Op Shop as well as in other venues and around the hospital.

Ms. Meyer said "the Christmas and Birthday cards are always very popular with all proceeds from the sales directed to Palliative Care".

In recognising Palliative Care Week, WDHS extends its gratitude for the overwhelming support this service has received through volunteering, donations and fundraising.



Above: The Peshurst Op Shop ladies donate two new wheelchairs to WDHS Palliative Care. L-R Annie Gee, Erika Fisher, Louise Emsley and Shirley Meyer sitting.

## Record donation to annual appeal

The 2011 WDHS Hospital Door Knock Appeal smashed all expectations by raising a record \$53,500, exceeding the previous record by \$2,000.



Above: WDHS Unit Manager Theater, Jane Sanders, and Associate Nurse Unit Manager, Rachal Porter with the recently purchased large joint drill for orthopaedics, funded by the Hospital Doorknock Appeal.

## Charity dinner

Seventy two guests enjoyed fellowship and fun at a Charity Dinner and auction night held at Alexandra House last month. The evening was arranged by Lois and Don Collins and raised the impressive amount of \$5,500.



Above: L-R Lois Collins, Don Collins, Judy Delahunty, Hugh Delahunty, Jim Fletcher.

Proceeds from the event were donated to Western District Health Service for the purchase of furnishings and equipment for the Chemotherapy and Palliative Care Units at Hamilton Base Hospital.

Lois and Don would like to give special thanks to all who attended and made the night a success, together with all who made donations. Sponsors for the evening were:

- » Alexandra House
- » Church Hill Limousines
- » Coles Supermarket
- » Elders
- » Roy & Dianne Fox
- » Grampians Tyre Service
- » Grampian Wools (Aust) Pty Ltd
- » Glenis & Lois Herrmann
- » Kerr & Co
- » LMB Linke
- » Colin & Kylie Linke
- » Petchy's Spud Train
- » Regent Florist
- » Zenith Tiles & Lighting

## North Hamilton Ladies' Auxiliary donation for new equipment

The North Hamilton Ladies Auxiliary has donated \$3,500 to Western District Health Service to purchase a headlight for ENT surgery and an Oxford head elevating pillow for bariatric anaesthetic intubation surgery.



Above: L-R Front Mark Barker (Theatre Technician) Jane Sanders (Theatre Manager), Rick Dennert (Theatre Technician), Kathy Vorwerk, Joan Ladd, May McLean, Ethel Murray, Yvonne Reid.

The head light for ENT surgery is cable-free and provides maximum mobility and visibility of the surgical site in examination and during surgery in the operating room. It is fully adjustable and prevents head fatigue for the surgeon who performs a large number of operations and needs to visualize the smallest structures during ENT surgery. Another benefit is that the surgeon does not need to depend on an external light source as the headlight runs with long life rechargeable batteries.

The Oxford Head Elevating Pillow recreates the 'ramping' method of positioning larger patients for anaesthesia so that they function physiologically like a patient within a normal weight range. This piece of equipment is only used for patients undergoing bariatric surgery. The pillow ensures the position is ideal for the safe intubation of the patient, so that their chest will not be in the way of the anaesthetist. Because the head is lifted, the upper airway anatomy is uniquely realigned to ensure an easy intubation.

Jane Sanders, Theatre Manager said "We are very grateful to the North Hamilton Ladies Auxiliary members, who tirelessly work to raise money for the hospital by setting up tables around the community and selling raffle tickets. We can't speak highly enough of their dedication and generosity of spirit."

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## Virbac not a bit sheepish in donating

Virbac Regional Territory Managers, Mark Diprose and Rod Evans, have generously donated \$400, raised at their Hamilton Sheepvention site this year, to Western District Health Service.

Virbac raised the money by giving away meat pies they'd had specially made for Sheepvention.

The meat pies, made in Narracoorte, had the word Cydectin stamped on the top of the pastry cases, promoting Cydectin drench.

The \$400 donation was directed towards the purchase of a data projector to support WDHS' Men's and Women's community health programs. A projector is invaluable for delivering information at presentations to community and school groups across the region. The purchase of the projector will make it easier for staff to continue to deliver effective health promotion in the community as part of their focus on ensuring we all live healthier lives.



Above: Jim Fletcher shares a joke with his woolly friend whilst Virbac Territory Managers Mark Diprose and Rod Evans look over the data projector their pie money will go towards purchasing. L – R Mark Diprose Virbac, Jim Fletcher, Rod Evans Virbac.

## Community service rocks

Two Baimbridge College Year 12 students, Hayley Knight and Sharna Dempsey, have raised over \$1,200 for Western District Health Service' Childrens Ward at the Hamilton Base Hospital.



Above: Baimbridge College students, Sharna Dempsey and Hayley Knight get into the Rock of Ages spirit whilst selling their Father's Day raffle tickets.

The girls came up with an innovative way of completing their VCAL Personal Development Course. Instead of doing the normal community placements, the two students organised and held a Father's Day Raffle. The raffle prizes included tickets to see Rock of Ages, dinner for two in Melbourne at Bistrot D'Orsay and a night's accommodation in Melbourne.

The girls used their spare time to sell tickets at school, at the front reception of the Hamilton Base Hospital, and outside the Hub. "We didn't realise how big a commitment it was at the time," Hayley said, "but it was definitely worthwhile, and it's something we'd look at doing again."

When asked what they learned from the experience, Sharna said "it takes a lot of organising and lots of hours to make it successful." In the end we were very happy with the amount we raised; that made it all worthwhile."

The money raised has gone towards the purchase of a new Nellcor N-65 Handheld Pulse Oximeter, a portable device used for the continuous measuring of a baby's pulse. The two girls were able to present the cheque to WDHS Acting Nurse Unit Manager, Monica Neeson in the children's ward at the hospital. Ms Neeson reiterated how extremely grateful the Health Service is for the tremendous effort the girls put in to the raffle.

"Donations like this really make all the difference to us. We can't thank you enough for your hard work." Ms Neeson said.

WDHS Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher praised the girls for showing such initiative and thanked them for their support. "I'd like to thank the students of Baimbridge College; it's very rewarding to see young people stepping up and supporting the hospital in imaginative and creative ways. I wish the girls all the best with their Personal Development Course and in their future careers" he said.

# Our hospital - the life blood of our community

Thanks to the \$25million allocated by the State Government to the redevelopment of the Coleraine Hospital and the critical support from eager volunteers and committed locals, the Coleraine community is going from strength to strength to ensure the Coleraine Hospital will thrive for the rest of this century and beyond.

The local community has embraced the final part of the redevelopment by contributing to the \$200,000 appeal for the refit of the hospital that the government funding does not cover.

"Some people may wonder why, when we have been given so much money already, we still need to raise \$200,000 ourselves. But the majority of the community realises that whatever happens, the redevelopment is going ahead, and we don't want a first class facility being fitted out with second rate add-ons. We are going to make it the best it can be." said Coleraine's Dr Coulson.

Dr Brian Coulson, who along with his wife, Coralie, came to Coleraine over 30 years ago as a practising GP is now the leading GP in the district.



The fundraiser was kicked off with a donation of \$103,000 from the Bendigo Community Bank, another initiative driven by Coleraine and district residents. The \$103,000 will be used to purchase and install a sustainable solar hot water service to supply the entire hospital. In an era when environmentally sustainable features are considered best practice, Coleraine is ticking all the boxes.

Dr Coulson acknowledges that there have been some members of the community who are sad to see the old hospital go, feeling that they will lose the view of the hills, and perhaps a sense of heritage, but as a community it has to happen to improve and build on the services that can be provided to the community's families. "The existing hospital is in dire need of renovation, and the aged care facility of Wannon Hostel, which was once a motel is no longer appropriate as a place for our aged and frail to reside in."

In the past, the distance between the three existing campuses, the hospital, Mackie House and Wannon Court has created difficulties for not only nursing staff but patients and residents. There is a travelling distance of over two kilometres between the three areas, which means residents from the hostel have to be transported by ambulance, community car or by one of their family members up to the hospital if they need medical attention. In some cases a resident may need to make a trip two or three times a week. And it is not only the residents that need transporting. Meals are



prepared in the main hospital and then sent out to Mackie House and Wannon Court. "Once we have only one campus there will be a much better integration of services and we will be able to eliminate those inefficiencies created by distance." Dr Coulson said.

The existing hospital building has a limited future. As one Coleraine resident noted, "the hospital has been sliding down the hill now for the past 16 years." All options were initially considered and an investigation was undertaken with the new development being the best option. The alternative could have been to close the hospital altogether and try to relocate our aged care residents out of the district. That would certainly have seen the demise of the Coleraine community, as it depends so much on the local health service as a main source of employment and a huge part of the social fabric of the town.

Hospitals have to compete against each other to attract doctors, interns and other personnel, which is particularly difficult for rural areas. A new and properly fitted out hospital will be a lot more appealing than the existing one. The redevelopment of the hospital is a significant factor to being an attractor to the town.

Coleraine is based in a healthy agricultural area. It understands that to keep a small town viable, it must maintain its key services and support its local businesses.

Over the last 50 years small towns and their communities have been slipping into obscurity as they lose more and more of their shops, hotels and services. Not so the township of Coleraine.

People wanting to make a donation to the redevelopment project can do so at the Coleraine branch of the Bendigo Community Bank. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.



## Indian drumming at the Birches

Residents of The Birches enjoyed a fourth session of stimulating and comforting spiritual Indian Drumming as part of a six month trial. They enjoy the activity so much, the residents are now excited when they are informed that the session is about to take place ["Oh Goodie, I can't miss that, it's great", is typical of the positive comments made].

The sessions were held monthly until the end of October to assist in addressing the holistic wellbeing of the 14 residents who attended. To see the frail people who live with advancing dementia become alive again for three quarters of an hour is amazing.

People are observed tapping their feet and hands, heard singing happy songs, and a lot got physical exercise unbeknown to them by shaking various instruments as well playing the drums. It's lovely to see people smiling, sharing, encouraging others to join in as well as hearing the positive conversation around the room.

"One lady, who is younger than most, and lives with a rare form of dementia which affects her vision, smiled. I observed her following Rhonda around the room and I saw her initiate the sharing of an instrument with another lady. This does not happen in the general day to day activities," said Lifestyle and Leisure Coordinator Julianne Gould.

"Today, Rhonda Ward introduced some Tibetan chimes, which residents were able to run their fingers along, touch and hear the individual chime sounds again. Even the most frail were able to join in and were pleased with the results - sounds made by them - a positive achievement in their day," she said.

"The highlight came when Rhonda played the Tibetan Music Bowl individually for each person. This brought positive words of praise, enjoyment and comfort."

The program reinforces the thinking that residents living in residential care who live with dementia are not excluded; that complementary therapies do have a place if implemented correctly and can give quality time allowing the person to be alive, motivated, stimulated and gently challenged. This is what person centred care is all about and again reveals WDHS to be a leader in offering creative leisure lifestyle activities and therapies to aged care residents.



Above: Joan Harrip and Anne Coe.



Above: Normie Barker with Rhonda Ward.



Above: Brian Egan.

## Free WorkHealth checks at Coleraine Community Golf Day

Western District Health Service with support from Cottrill's Plumbing P/L Penshurst offered the Victorian State Government funded WorkHealth Checks at the Coleraine Community Golf Day in September.

The WorkHealth initiative provides a FREE 10 minute physical assessment to those who wish to participate. All information collected was confidential and participants receive a comprehensive evaluation of their health indicators including cholesterol, blood glucose, blood pressure and need for medical follow up if required.

WorkHealth checks, which were conveniently delivered at the Coleraine Golf Day, were about identifying a person's level of risk for preventable chronic disease including Type 2 Diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The Western District Health Service, WorkHealth team emphasises that WorkHealth checks do not replace a visit to the General Practitioner. However for many individuals who don't visit their General Practitioner regularly, the checks can help to identify any issues.

Health professionals give tailored advice on what can be done to reduce your risk of chronic diseases, from diet, exercise, alcohol consumption, smoking and heart health.

A very impressive 85 health checks were completed at the Coleraine Golf Day.

WDHS has completed over 3500 health checks since 2008, and would like to thank all staff involved in the WorkHealth program.



Above: Western District Health Service WorkHealth team.

## Footy week with ADASS

Our Hamilton ADASS groups enjoyed a fun filled week of football entertainment with their own 'game of footy'.

The group snacked on traditional footy treats throughout the day including pies, hot dogs and choc wedges. One of the winners of the perpetual trophy was Betty Handreck who was delighted to receive the award and shared her secret weapon of winning, which was to "back Geelong every week".

We sincerely thank all the sponsors who have supported ADASS throughout the season.

Right: Winner of the perpetual trophy Betty Hendreck.



## Community Advisory Committee

Two members of our Hamilton Community Advisory Committee have presented papers at National Conferences during the last year.

Dorothy McLaren attended and presented at the Rural and Remote Health Conference in Perth 2011, Heart of a Healthy Nation. The paper examined the process of innovation in two rural Health Services, WDHS and the Wimmera Health Care Group.

Christine Phillips presented at the Consumers Reforming Healthcare, National Conference in July 2011.

## Closing the Gap – They all need to be told



Above: Keith and Ken Saunders.

When the Federal Government talks about "Closing the gap", between Australians and the Indigenous Communities, Aboriginal Elder and Glenelg Shire Councillor Mr Ken Saunders cannot praise highly enough the efforts and dedication of the staff at the Hamilton Base Hospital. "It's happening right here", Ken said "They all need to be told".

Earlier in the year, Mr Saunders' brother Keith was admitted to hospital having suffered a stroke. For any family this is devastating news to come to grips with. A loved one goes from being a fit and active person to one who is dependent on others for many of their daily needs. This was especially so for Keith's friends and family. Keith is a well known member of the Koori Community, a strong political advocate for indigenous people throughout Australia and a well regarded cultural and spiritual member of the community.

Understandably when Keith had his stroke he did not know what was happening to him and, in the subsequent weeks, he and his family "went through hell", Ken said. "At times during Keith's ordeal, he took his frustrations out on the nursing staff of the Hamilton Base Hospital, but at every turn the staff rose to the occasion and stretched themselves to the limit of their ability."

Ken explained that there were two things that helped pull Keith through his stay in hospital. The first was the WDHS clinical staff and secondly Keith's own strong ties to his spiritual and cultural side. What amazed Ken the most though, was the clinical staff's attitude and their keenness to learn about the people they have in their care. "Thank God staff here went beyond their duty of care", Ken said. "They took it upon themselves when Keith was troubled by his spirits to listen to him and carry out his requests, to keep him calm and to keep the ghosts away."

In one instance, Ken was contacted and advised that Keith was distressed. When Ken arrived to advise the nursing staff on what to do to help Keith, in this instance spread salt along the window sill; Keith told him that it had already been done by one of the nursing staff. "They embraced and respected Keith's heritage and in every way tried to ensure his needs and requests were met and understood," Ken said.

Since his discharge from hospital Keith has been supported not only by his friends and family but by the Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, the CACPs (Community Aged Care Packages). With their help Keith is able to continue living independently.

Keith recently visited WDHS staff to say that the experience has inspired him to commit some of his future time to building new, strong and meaningful relationships between the Health Service and the Indigenous communities of the Western District.

## Penshurst laundry and cool room



The planned Penshurst capital works program was completed in June 2011 with tenders called and a contract awarded to relocate the laundry, which is now up and running.

This upgrade of the Penshurst laundry will enable the flow of contaminated personal clothing through the washing process to the clean area.

Funding was also approved for Stage 2 works, the upgrade of the cool room in the food preparation area, which has been extended and modernised. These works were completed in August 2011.

Left: Trevor Wathen, WDHS Facilities Manager and Henny Sudmeyer WDHS Maintenance Worker, outside the new Penshurst campus laundry.

## ADASS holiday program is a "hit"

It was with delight that my husband, Peter and I were invited to assist the ADASS group on their little holiday trip into South Australia. It was with awe and admiration that we could see the massive amount of dedication that the ADASS staff applied to endure that all clients enjoyed all the comforts and individual needs that each one required.

Travelling with this age group of senior citizens required so much individual attention. Handling luggage, managing walking aids, negotiating high steps into and out of the coach, finding the way in unfamiliar environments, ensuring personal safety inside and out of the coach, over different terrains, steps, road crossings, walking pathways, and strolling gardens, all had their own challenges.



Above: ADASS clients on a day out to Nelson, Mt Gambier and Penola.

## Vale Dorothy Stevenson

Dorothy was born in Hamilton on 7th March, 1940, the youngest daughter in Bill and Alma Jacobson's family of three boys and two girls.

Dorothy attended Gray Street Primary School and then Hamilton High, after which she worked at Kim's fruit shop.

Whilst at high school Dorothy met Richard Stevenson and they married on 16th September, 1961.

In 1963, their son, Shane was born followed by a daughter, Sonya in 1969, and Dorothy's life focussed on family and friends thereafter.

Dorothy joined the George Street Primary School Mother's Club. In later years, she was a member of the North Hamilton Ladies' Hospital Auxiliary and the Hamilton Croquet Club.

Dorothy and Richard enjoyed travelling and travelled extensively throughout Eastern Australia.

Dorothy had a fine sense of humour, always saw the good in people and was a very compassionate person, much loved by her extended family.

Western District Health Service staff and volunteers are saddened by Dorothy's passing and will remember her fondly.

# Relax and let me tell you all about your health journey

Western District Health Service launched its new audio visual Admissions presentation in July as an innovative way of giving clients of the health service improved access to information on being a patient at Hamilton Base Hospital.

The Admissions presentation project was undertaken by Health Information and Community Liaison staff following a review of information brochures and pamphlets given to patients prior to, or on admission.

“Such a vast array of information was difficult for people to work through so we decided that another medium was needed to convey the advice in a clear, concise and easy to comprehend manner” said WDHS Clinical Coder & Diploma of Management student, Natalie Rhook.

“We decided that an audiovisual display of the information, to be run in the Admissions and Pre-Admissions waiting rooms, would be much more helpful to patients”, she said.

WDHS Health Information Manager, Carolyn Gellert said “After consultation with hospital department heads, staff, Community Advisory Committee members, consumers and other key stakeholders, the project team sorted through all the information given to them and developed the presentation to include necessary, relevant and reassuring advice for patients coming into hospital.”

“It will provide an overall picture about the patient journey”

“At this stage the main target audience is patients who are booking in for elective surgery. The presentation runs for eight minutes and whilst the majority of patients won’t be sitting in the waiting room for the entire presentation, they will have several options to view the information. They can:

- Stay and watch the whole presentation
- Take a DVD of the presentation home to keep and watch with family
- Take a booklet of the presentation home or
- View the presentation on the WDHS website in 2012.

The presentation contains clear, meaningful images and large text for easy viewing and reading and can be delivered with teletext to patients with hearing loss. Translation is available for non English speaking clients.

The next step is to have it available on a hospital channel on all televisions throughout waiting areas and wards of the hospital.

The new admission presentation package is a great initiative to assist patients to prepare for their hospital journey through pre-admission, the hospital admission and stay, and discharge. It is concise, yet comprehensive and has the added advantage of being taken away in DVD form to watch at home in the comfort of the lounge chair.



Above: WDHS Health Information Manager, Carolyn Gellert and Clinical Coder/Diploma of Management Student, Natalie Rhook with the new Admissions presentation for patients in its various formats.

## Sheepvention raffle



Above: Claire Wade Sheepvention Raffle winner.

The WDHS raffle at this year’s Sheepvention was won by Claire Wade from Woorndoo. Local businesses donated gifts to the raffle, which ranged from beautiful scented candles, cook books, an audio visual monitoring system and garden tools to a special donation of trees from ERA Nurseries to the value of \$500.

WDHS would like to thank the following generous businesses and individuals for their donations to the Sheepvention raffle:

- » ERA Nurseries
- » LA Walker Pty Ltd
- » Permewans
- » Health on Gray
- » Jennifer Tully Cakes
- » Buckle Menswear
- » Glenelg Fine Chocolates
- » Coles Hamilton
- » Presence
- » Provincial Home
- » Living Tops N’ Tails
- » Sally Kinghorn
- » Kerry Martin
- » Leonie Sharrock

## Heart Safe competition



Above: Tracy Plunkett with the new iPad.

Coleraine District Health Service Community Health Nurse Tracy Plunkett shows off the new iPad won in a statewide competition for Heart Safe. Tracy and the Community Health Program are very proud as there were over 900 agencies entered in the competition.

The new iPad will be used for education and resident’s use.

## Youth holiday

Young people in the Southern Grampians Shire had the chance to become active, meet new friends and participate in a range of activities during the September/ October school holidays thanks to the action-packed holiday program organised by Western District Health Service.

A variety of school holiday activities were run including Go Karting & Laser Strike in Ballarat; Paintballing in Mt Gambier; Melbourne Zoo visit; 3D Movie & Ten Pin Bowling in Warrnambool; Halls Gap Zoo & J Ward in Ararat; Royal Melbourne Show and Adventure Park Geelong.

Ms Briana Picken, Youth Development Coordinator said "Western District Health Service's youth4youth Holiday Program offered a range of interesting activities for young people aged 11-18 years that are accessible and affordable. We are very thankful for the support of Dr Geoff Handbury to enable us to offer such a diversity of holiday activities."

Ms Picken notes "our holiday activities have been very popular with many having waiting lists".



## Farmer centre gets more medical help for farmers

Hamilton's National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) is breaking new ground in securing better medical services for rural and remote areas.

It has Victoria's only regional placement in the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine's (AFPHM) Specialist Training Program and is helping drive the future of rural health and wellbeing.

NCFH Director, Sue Brumby said "a key part of the Specialist Training Program is about long term sustainability of medical services by creating major shifts in government planning and public policy."

AFPHM president, Dr Leena Gupta says "it is vital for healthcare to have a process that works with the broad brush of medicine – from prevention and a multi-disciplinary approach to health service studies and the health needs of a community.

"A key part of the Specialist Training Program is our graduates getting involved in public policy and ongoing research, with an aim of helping to improve the health of the whole community – and for the long term. This is all about planning to meet changing needs, which are influenced by factors such as distance, population and demographics."

Dr Mark Newell, who brings an impressive domestic and international medical and research track record with him, is currently the only funded training position in public health medicine in Victoria and one of only a few in regional Australia. Based at NCFH in Hamilton, Dr Newell says his position is focused on targeted health promotion activities for farming families and communities. He believes this is consistent with increasing emphasis in State/Territory and Federal health programs on the importance of improving the health of people in regional and rural Australia.

"The work I am going to be able to do in Hamilton, and with NCFH, will have a strong emphasis on farmer and rural health," he says. "Particularly assessing some of the issues, which face people in rural and remote locations where there are few resources to assist, such as mental health, injury prevention and chronic diseases."

"I will be here until mid 2012 and am hoping in that time I will have benefited from the opportunity and at the same time be able to provide solutions, through policy guidance, on a bright future – not just for Hamilton and district but for all rural and farming areas.

"This scheme is all about trying to bring health professionals to the people, and with the research bases such as I have here we will be able to help accurately measure farmer conditions and needs."

"The underlying philosophy behind the scheme is to provide financial support for accredited specialist medical training in non-traditional settings, outside the larger metropolitan university teaching hospitals," Dr Newell adds.

For Dr Newell being the inaugural public health registrar at NCFH (based at WDHS, Hamilton) – is a major opportunity but also comes at a personal cost. Although the Commonwealth Department of Health provides the funding and ultimate approval of each application, each participant has to finance their own way through the course.

"I see it as a worthwhile investment in helping improve the profile of health delivery service to all Australians – I am just happy I am able to do it where I am," he says.

Further details are available from Susan Brumby, National Centre for Farmer Health on 5551 8533.



Above: National Centre for Farmer Health Dr Mark Newell.

# Happenings at the Grange

The FREEMASONS Public Charitable Foundation has made a Grant of \$5,000.00 to the Hamilton and District Aged Care Trust for the redevelopment of the Grange Residential Care Facility.

The Foundation, established under a Trust Deed by M.W.Bro. The Hon. Mr. Justice Williams in December 1988 raises funds from the general public as well as from Freemasons. Investment income funds raised by the Foundation provide support to charitable organisations operating in the State of Victoria and are not connected to a Masonic order that are approved by the Foundation and have been granted tax deductibility under the current Income Tax Assessment Act.

The District Coordinator of Lodges throughout the South Western District, Wor Bro Brian Wallwork, wants to see District Lodges make better use of the Foundation to support their favourite charities.

For the financial year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011, the Foundation distributed \$373,635 to 67 different charities throughout Victoria (an average of \$5,575 each), including child care, aged care, health and community. In conjunction with the Shrine of Remembrance, the Foundation also sponsors the annual Reginald and Laura Gregory Memorial Lecture and the Kokoda Leadership Lecture for Students, each year funding approximately 100 students from Regional Victoria to travel by bus to attend.

Earlier this year, the Foundation supported charities in Warrnambool (\$3,000) Portland (\$1,500) and Timboon (\$1,500). Applications for grants from the Foundation can be made at any time by contacting the Secretary of a District Masonic Lodge and providing information sufficient for the purpose.

The Grant to the Hamilton and District Aged Care Trust was made following a direct application to the Foundation, encouraged by District Masonic contacts. The last time such a Grant was made to the Trust was in June 1998 in the amount of \$2,000.00.



Above: L-R Members of the Hamilton Freemasons Paul Kelly and Brian Wallwork, Aged Care Trust President Jenny Gubbins, Unit Manager of the Grange Pam Vince, and CEO Jim Fletcher .



## Grange redevelopment receives a more than welcome cheque

Western District Health Service (WDHS) will benefit from a \$60,000 cheque towards the redevelopment of the Grange aged residential care facility.

Left: Members of the Hamilton and District Aged Care Trust with WDHS Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher (centre) and Grange unit manager Grange Pam Vince (far right).

## Rapid progress at the Grange

The recently completed new wing of the Grange Redevelopment.



# Employee of the month



Employee of the month - March 2011  
James Muir - Theatre



Employee of the month - April 2011  
Hazel Saligari - Aged Care



Employee of the month - May 2011  
Julie Pollock - Coleraine Campus



Employee of the month - June 2011  
Erika Fisher - Palliative Care



Employee of the month - July 2011  
Maryann Howard - Primary and Preventative Health



Employee of the month - August 2011  
Ruth Fatone - Continence Advisor

## People in the health service



### Claire Lafferty

Claire joins WDHS in the new role as Dietician.

After studying a bachelor of Food Science & Nutrition at RMIT Melbourne for 2 years, studied and completed a bachelor of Nutrition & Dietetics at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW. Claire grew up on a dairy farm in Gippsland; was a junior motor-cross champion and has visited all continents except Africa and Antarctica.



### Alastair Wilson

Alastair Wilson is the new Director of Medical Services.

Alastair was a general practitioner in Wanganui, New Zealand for 24 years during which he achieved post graduate diplomas in obstetrics, occupational health and health service management. After leaving general practice in 2003, he was appointed to a number of clinical management roles in primary care, hospitals and workplaces. In 2007, he was appointed the Corporate Medical Advisor for the Accident Compensation in NZ, including the clinical management role. He commenced at WDHS in May 2011.



### Rinu Thomas

Rinu Thomas joined WDHS in August 2011 as a social worker.

Rinu comes to us from India and she has a Masters in Social Work and three years' experience working in the disability field and with women living in rural areas.

## Annual WDHS Christmas Appeal

I would like my donation to go towards:

- Video Intubation Laryngoscope
- The Grange Redevelopment Project
- The Coleraine Redevelopment Project
- The Penshurst Project

ALL DONATIONS OVER \$2 ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE



Here is my donation for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Cheque (make cheques payable to Western District Health Service)
- Visa       Mastercard       Bankcard

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Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Donor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please forward your donation to: Community Liaison Dept.  
Western District Health Service, PO Box 283, Hamilton 3300