

A NEWSLETTER FROM  
Western District Health Service

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

# Western Wellbeing



ISSUE 24 AUTUMN 2010

## Open Up... for Hospital Sunday

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Photo: Dr Peter Tung and his wife Lynette - knocking on a door near you this Hospital Sunday

The 2010 Western District Health Service Annual Hospital Sunday Door Knock Appeal is just around the corner.

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> and Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May will see in excess of 100 volunteers knocking on doors throughout the community to raise money for the purchase of two pieces of equipment; an Oxylog Portable Ventilator for the Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Department, and a Bien Air Drill for ear, nose and throat surgery.

This will be the fifth year that Hamilton Medical Group's Dr Peter Tung and his wife Lynette have signed up to knock on doors for the hospital's annual appeal. "Many people don't realise just how lucky we are to have a hospital of this quality in a regional area – it's one of the reasons I took up the position here," said Dr Tung.

"Lynette and I volunteer for Hospital Sunday because we believe strongly in doing what we can to help the hospital to continue to provide the high level of care that the community has come to expect."

The combined value of the two new pieces of equipment is \$50,000, so if one of our volunteers knocks on your door, please help them, to help us meet our target.



Photo: Palliative Care Nurse, Erika Fisher and Instrument Technician, Granville Fisher both from South Africa, Physiotherapist, Tatum Pretorius from South Africa, Physiotherapist, John Lalor from Ireland and Physiotherapist, Ruchi Agrawal from India, showing off their foods from home.

## Celebrating Cultural Diversity at WDHS

Staff at Western District Health Service celebrated this year's Cultural Diversity Week by inviting staff to bring along a dish that represented their culture for an "international afternoon tea".

In early 2008, Western District Health Service introduced changes to its recruitment strategy due to increasing difficulty in attracting experienced and qualified staff into the region. WDHS Human Resources Manager, Hilary King said "Since introducing the changes, we have successfully recruited a number of physiotherapists, a podiatrist, a midwife, several experienced nurses and two doctors from overseas. Many of these staff are now seeking permanent residency and intend settling in the district on a long term basis."

"Our recruitment strategy is simple, we only recruit the best, from wherever they come, Australia or overseas," she said.

## From the CEO

### The Momentum Continues



The 2009 year finished off on a high note with the opening of the \$600K Stage 1 Redevelopment of our Penshurst Campus by our Local Member Mr Hugh Delahunty. There were in excess of 85 people in attendance which was a great indication of community support and interest in the project.

In early 2010 the Department of Health signed off on the revised business plan and service profile for the Coleraine Redevelopment in readiness for consideration in 2010 Capital Budget to be handed down on 4 May 2010. This course of action was instigated following a Deputation with the Minister for Health Daniel Andrews in October 2009, and provides us with the best possible chance of final success with this much needed and required development. To ensure our readiness for a successful outcome we have completed the purchase of a residence in Pilleau Street to maximise the layout and design of the new facility.

With the securement of a \$500,000 Commonwealth Grant to be supplemented by several hundred thousand dollars from WDHS reserves, the first step towards building a new Community Health Centre for Merino was achieved with the Shire of Glenelg granting a planning permit to demolish the severely dilapidated RSL and Scout's buildings on the site for the new Centre purchased in February 2007.

A Community Meeting held in the Merino Hall gave overwhelming support for the demolition and removal of these buildings and the construction of the new Centre as outlined to the meeting.

A community petition with in excess of 80 signatures supporting the demolition and new Centre was presented to the Shire of Glenelg Planning Committee.

Despite the Shire's Planning approval and overwhelming community support, one known objection has been lodged with VCAT. The new Centre will service the needs of the Merino community for the next 50 years and this opportunity is a once in a lifetime opportunity to obtain a new Centre. In view of this and the clear message from the community to allow WDHS to get on and build the new Centre I urge the objector to put the long term benefit of the entire Merino community before individual issues and agendas.

### National Centre for Farmer Health Flying High

Our National Centre for Farmer Health has been flying along following the launch of the Centre by the Victorian Premier in July 2009. In a national first, 22 health and agricultural professionals commenced the Inaugural Agriculture and Medicine Post Graduate Study Unit in Hamilton on 22 February 2010. Students from across the nation were treated to a civic reception held by the Southern Grampians Shire to celebrate this leading national development and to thank our locally skilled professionals involved in presenting lectures to the students.

In other developments the service delivery element of the NCFH, the Sustainable Farm Families program continues to grow with the Queensland Government contacting the Centre to deliver four programs over the next 15 months.

Plans are also well advanced for the National Conference to be held in the Hamilton PAC on 12 and 13 October 2010. Within the next two months it is expected that the Information Centre and Agri Safe programs will be up and running to ensure the National Centre continues its quest towards becoming a "Centre of Excellence".

### Grange Redevelopment Making Great Progress

The final stage of the Grange Redevelopment Fundraising Campaign is making very good progress with \$1.9m raised to date, and well on the way to meeting the \$2.2m fundraising target.

Negotiations have also concluded with the Victorian Department of Health to transfer the five new bed licences required for the redevelopment from another part of the State to WDHS later this calendar year. Our plans to commence the redevelopment in late 2010 early 2011 are on track at this point. I seek your assistance to raise the final \$300,000 to turn this final stage redevelopment plan into a reality.

### Virtual Services Programs Continue to Lead the State

WDHS's reputation as a leader in the use of video conferencing technology for Virtual Servicing continues to gather momentum with the signing of a new partnership agreement with the Eye and Ear Hospital launched by the Minister for Health Daniel Andrews. The use of Virtual Servicing for the Southwest Sub Regional Wound Management Consultancy Program, the commencement of Virtual Chronic Disease Program to Coleraine and Balmoral, and the receipt of a Commendation Award from the Commonwealth Minister of Aged Care Excellence Awards for our highly successful Virtual Visiting Program into our aged care facilities is evidence that WDHS continues to lead the way in the innovative use of technology to improve access to services..

### New Cancer Link to Improve Co-ordination of Care

WDHS has attracted funding from the Barwon South West Regional Integrated Cancer Service to appoint a two day per week Cancer Link Nurse to improve the co-ordination of care during the Cancer treatment journey for patients. Ms Jane Sharp will take up this important position on 7 April 2010 and we look forward to improving the cancer journey for patients.

### FReeZA Funding for Youth

Our YouthBiz program has received a welcome boost with recent advice that the highly successful FReeZA events will be funded for a further two years to facilitate alcohol free events for our young people.



## Our Community...

### Rotary Club Supports Grange Redevelopment

The Grange Redevelopment Fundraising Campaign continues to attract community support as it slowly edges closer to its target. Western District Health Service needs to raise a total of \$2.2m for the redevelopment project, and still needs to secure another \$300,000 to reach that target.

Late last year, the North Hamilton Rotary Club invited Western District Health Service CEO, Jim Fletcher and Grange Unit Manager, Peter Francis to deliver a presentation at their regular Wednesday evening meeting. Branch President, Mr Lloyd Hocking took the opportunity to present Mr Fletcher with a donation cheque for \$10,000 towards the Grange Redevelopment. "The Grange is an important and respected service in our community and we are pleased to be able to make this donation to support it", said Mr Hocking.

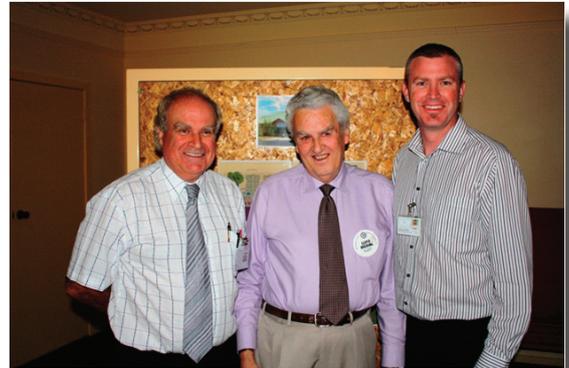


Photo: Western District Health Service Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher (left), Grange Unit Manager, Peter Francis (right) and North Hamilton Rotary Club President, Lloyd Hocking following the Club's presentation of a \$10,000 donation to the Grange Redevelopment.

### Coleraine District Health Service

### Homes for the Aged Auxiliary Raise Funds for Televisions

Each year the Homes for the Aged Auxiliary continue with their remarkable fundraising efforts. Although it is a group small in numbers their enthusiasm and tireless fundraising efforts are exceptional. Recently two flat-screen televisions were purchased for both wings of Wannon Hostel (Mackie and Wannon) as a result of funds raised by the Auxiliary.



Photo: Homes for the Aged Auxiliary Members Hilary Hutchins and Liz Gunningham pictured with one of the televisions purchase for the Wannon Hostel

The Manager/Director of Nursing – Mr Tim Pitt-Lancaster said that "residents at the Hostel, staff and visitors have benefited both functionally and aesthetically from the many items that have been purchased through the continual efforts of the Auxiliary. Funds raised go toward the acquisition of equipment and furnishings which we would not be able to otherwise acquire. We are indeed fortunate to have such a wonderful group of ladies who work so tirelessly for the support of our Hostel – we are eternally grateful and appreciative of their continued hard work and commitment".

Mr Pitt-Lancaster said that "the residents are enjoying viewing their shows on the new televisions which are much clearer for them to watch".

Mr Pitt-Lancaster added that "the Homes for the Aged Auxiliary is a very small group of dedicated ladies who work tirelessly to provide items for the Hostels and if there was anyone that had some spare time and was interested in assisting the Auxiliary to please contact the Coleraine District Health Service Admin Office on 5553 2000 for information. The Homes for the Aged Auxiliary would welcome any new members with open arms."

### Aged Care Trust brings Medicins San Frontieres to WDHS

The Hamilton and District Aged Care Trust recently hosted a highly successful presentation by Medicins Sans Froniteres worker and former Hamilton man, Will Robertson and his wife Veronique de Clerck.

Over 100 people packed the WDHS Education Centre in late February to hear a highly inspirational and moving story of the work they have done amongst the world's poorest people.



Photo: Will Robertson with wife Veronique de Clerck.

## Ice machine brings party atmosphere to WDHS

Hospitals are not normally the place for a party, but there was a decidedly festive atmosphere when Western District Health Service Hamilton Base Hospital Medical unit took delivery of a new ice making machine for the Chemotherapy and Palliative Care units late last month.

Medical Unit Manager Leanne Deutscher said: "A lot of our patients suffer with mouth ulcers, especially when undergoing chemotherapy, so they were thrilled with the ice making machine – it really was like a party in here when the machine first arrived!"

The ice making machine, along with a sofa bed and two Alaris syringe drivers for use by Palliative care clients for pain control were the result of a very successful Charity Card Night organised by the Cancer Support Group.

By day, the sofa bed is a very stylish leather chair, but at night, it folds out into a very comfortable bed, allowing family members to stay with their loved ones in the Palliative Care Unit. The syringe drivers allow patients to receive 24 hour pain relief and are portable so can be used in hospital or in the home.

Western District Health Service Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher said "The support of the Cancer Support Group in organising this successful fundraiser and Dr Geoff Handbury who made a very sizeable contribution on the night, is greatly appreciated by Western District Health Service. We are reliant on the generous support of our community to allow for equipment replacement and upgrading of our facilities."

"Every bit helps to make life just a little more comfortable for our patients and their families," he said.



Photo: Displaying new Alaris syringe drivers from back: Cancer Support Group members Don and Lois Collins, with Jim Fletcher WDHS (CEO), Leanne Deutscher (Unit Manager Medical) and (front) Dr. Geoff Handbury.

## Hamilton Lions Club helps revive the senses

Hamilton Lions' Club has donated \$3,975 towards a sensory and aroma therapy room being developed by Western District Health Service for residents of The Birches.

The room will be multi-functional and purposely designed, using light and sound elements, scents and music to initiate sensations. These have both relaxing and activating effects on the different perception areas of a person. The specific design directs and arranges stimuli, creating interest, bringing back memories and guiding relationships. It induces wellbeing in a calm and secure atmosphere.



Photo: WDHS Chief Executive Officer Jim Fletcher and Diversional Therapist, Julianne Gould showing the room to be transformed to the Hamilton Lions' Club's Geoff Dunn and Peter Tew.

## Staff chip in for the Grange

With the wonderful support of our community, we are now just \$300,000 short of our \$2.8m target for the Grange Redevelopment.

What many people don't realise is that staff members themselves are contributing to this incredibly important project and have so far pledged just over \$10,000.

Staff members are able to have part of the pay deducted over a number of years if they wish and some are even electing to forgo leave entitlements as a way of making a contribution.

Western District Health Service CEO Jim Fletcher said: "WDHS would not function as well as it does without our fantastic staff, and we are overwhelmed that they would choose to also provide financial support with this vital new piece of infrastructure."

He encouraged all community groups, friendship groups, families, employers and employees, service club and social club members to band together and become 'Group Donors'. "As with our staff, donations can be structured over a period of time to fit every budget" said Mr Fletcher.

If you would like to make a donation please contact the WDHS Community Liaison Department on (03) 555 18540 or email: [Community.Liaison@wdhs.net](mailto:Community.Liaison@wdhs.net)

## Has it Really Been 50 Years?

Fifty years passes like the blink of an eye, or so it seems sometimes. For a group of women who completed their nursing training at the Hamilton Base Hospital 50 years ago, the memories came flooding back and the decades faded away making the graduation of 1960 feel like yesterday. Western District Health Service hosted a 50 year reunion for the group in March. The day commenced with a service in the hospital chapel, followed by a morning tea and presentation of museum items by Doctor Elizabeth Arthur, resident archivist



Photo: Hamilton Base Hospital's 'Class of 1960'

## James Dean Pharmacy Donate Private Midwifery Patient Gift Packs



James Dean Pharmacy is very generously donating gift baskets to our private midwifery patients at Western District Health Service. WDHS CEO Jim Fletcher said that the hospital provided the same exemplary level of care to both public and private mums, so the gift baskets were just one small way we were able to say thank you to women for electing to use their private health insurance. Simone Van Herpen, Manager of James Dean Pharmacy said "James Dean Pharmacy are delighted to be involved in supporting Western District Health Service by providing gifts packs for new private patient mums".

Photo: L-R: Pauline Kearns (Maternity Services Program Coordinator), Sarah Murch (Model Midwifery Care Midwife), Suzanne Pilling (Midwifery Student), Madeline Sutherland (Midwifery Student), Veronica Layson (Model Midwifery Care Midwife), Simone Van Herpen (Manager, James Dean Pharmacy), Anthea Struck (Dispensary Assistant, James Dean Pharmacy)

## Murray to Moyne

France might have the Tour de France, and Adelaide has the Tour Down Under, but we have the Murray to Moyne. At the end of March, two Western District Health Service teams continued a 20 year tradition by riding over 500 km in just 24 hours – all the way from Mildura to Port Fairy

The cheekily named Rouse Rare Rumps are a dedicated team of 8-10 riders and five support crew from the Peshurst Campus of WDHS. The more sedately named Hamilton Base Bikers team is made up of staff and friends from Western District Health Service Hamilton Base Hospital and Iluka Resources, with 12 riders and four support crew. They joined around 1650 riders in completing the annual Murray to Moyne event.

The money raised by both teams will be used to help support and benefit the community members of Hamilton, Peshurst, and surrounding districts who utilise the local Health Service. Peshurst Director of Nursing Damien Malone said: "The spirit of the Rouse Rare Rumps has been uplifting to all. They have been absolutely tireless in the way they have fundraised, trained and then completed the relay. Many of the fantastic opportunities for residents and users of the service would not have been possible without the team and the community's outstanding support of the team."

Western District Health Service Chief Executive officer Jim Fletcher said "It is morale boosting for the community and the health service to know that we have staff who are so dedicated to the work our health

service does that they are prepared to go above and beyond the call of duty. Not only is it an incredible physical challenge, but the work they do to raise sponsorship for the event is just incredible and we are extremely proud of both teams." The Murray to Moyne Charity Bike Ride began in 1987, when a few cycling enthusiasts raised \$10,000 in total. Last year 1435 riders representing 150 organisations raised over \$1.25 million for Hospitals and Health related organisations in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.



Photo: WDHS's Craig McAllister has just completed his tenth Murray to Moyne

# Around the Health Service

## Technology Brings Wound Management to Communities

Western District Health Service is leading the way with a new and exciting initiative to improve the management and treatment of chronic wounds as part of the Victorian Wound Management Program.

This involves funding for a Clinical Nurse Consultant to service South West clients who are receiving Home and Community Care (HACC) services and residents living in public sector Nursing Homes.

The program is lead by Ms. Lesley Stewart, Clinical Nurse Consultant at Western District Health Service who will provide wound management consulting services to 12 residential and 12 District Nursing Services across the South West Region.

Ms. Stewart said "the key role of the Wound Management Consultancy Program included:

- Provision of wound management education for staff
- Consultation and development of management plans for chronic and complex wounds for HACC community clients and public high care aged care facilities
- Identification of and assistance to staff in overcoming barriers that influence the provision of "best practice" wound management
- Development of evidence based generic wound management protocols and guidelines"

"Referrals are received from Medical Officers, Allied Health staff, Community Nursing and Aged Care Facilities for chronic wounds that have existed for three months or more" she said.

The Wound Management position is a half time position working five days per fortnight and with such a large geographical and 24 services involved, one of the challenges is to overcome the tyranny of distance to provide "face to face consultations" and education.

Ms. Stewart said "given the part time nature of the role, it is not

possible to visit all health services at each request. Timboon for example is 150 kms, one way and Dartmoor is 100kms in the opposite direction and as we know, being behind the wheel of a car for hours on end is not a productive use of a Clinician's time".

"Western District Health Service has a reputation for its leadership and innovation in using technology through video conferencing to improve access to specialist services so it was ideal for the Wound Management Program to use this initiative to conduct meetings, education and consultations without anyone having to leave the comfort and convenience of their own town."

"This is particularly important for the client with the wound. The financial and physical implications of travel to specialist care for many elderly can be particularly concerning. A recent client was not able to travel but was able to be taken to a consulting room in her own home town where video linking allowed me to conduct an assessment of the wound and discuss management plans with both the client and the staff responsible for her ongoing wound care" she said.

Ms. Stewart said "Regular education sessions and meetings with staff in the region can also be conducted using a "live meeting" program purchased by Western District Health Service".

"I can sit in my office and conduct sessions and meetings with staff in all the region's services. Staff in other facilities can view presentations and participate in interactive sessions; neither I nor they need to leave our workplaces."

"In short, the reality of conducting consultancy to clients in Timboon, Dartmoor, Portland and Casterton, within one day is a reality."

"Similarly, education to 100 staff in facilities across the region, in one "live meeting" presentation is also a reality. The first of these education sessions is to be delivered in February" she said.

"In the past, a regional wound management special interest group worked to expose staff to current practices, educational opportunities and to encourage networking between regional facilities. Unfortunately this folded because staff could not afford the time to travel to the meetings. We are now able to re establish this very important networking opportunity using the video conferencing and "live meeting" programs. Staff can participate in the meetings without having to leave their workplaces" Ms. Stewart said.

"We are fortunate in this region, to have such progressive IT processes and equipment enabling us to smoothly implement this form of service delivery and it is pleasing to be able to introduce the concept to regional Wound Management Programs across the state. State wide meetings will soon be held between Clinical Nurse Consultants state wide using "live meetings" and video consultancy, and education provision is also being explored" she said.

A baseline point prevalence audit conducted across Victoria recorded 1903 chronic wounds suffered by people using HACC services in the community and 861 by residents of public sector high care facilities.

Anyone seeking further information on the Wound Management Program can contact Ms. Stewart at Western District Health Service.



Photo: Lesley Stewart demonstrates WDHS' new state of the art wound management program

## Congratulations from the Mayor at a Civic Reception

Southern Grampians Shire Council walked the walk by throwing its support behind the Inaugural Agricultural Health and Medicine Course week held at Western District Health Service.

The course, born out of a partnership between the National Centre for Farmer Health and Deakin University was held for the first time from 22 to 26 February and aims to develop the next generation of rural and agricultural health leaders and agri-professionals.

Associate Clinical Professor and Director of the National Centre for Farmer Health, Sue Brumby of Western District Health Service said, "Southern Grampians Shire Council was very supportive of this initiative, not only providing advice and tourist information to visiting students but also hosting a civic reception to welcome them to the Shire".

The civic reception was held in the Hamilton Art Gallery where students from Qld, SA, NSW, Vic and ACT were welcomed by the SGSC Mayor, Mr Marcus Rentsch, members of the executive and councillors. Participants from professions including health, health promotions, agriculture, commerce and veterinary science listened to presentations on a range of topics covering agricultural chemicals, zoonoses, rural obesity and diabetes, remote emergency medicine and mental health.

Students and lecturers had the opportunity to meet invited guests, including NCFH key supporter, Dr Geoff Handbury and WDHS Board and executive members.

The Mayor, Marcus Rentsch congratulated WDHS and Geoff Handbury on the establishment of the National Centre, saying "since its establishment in 2008, the NCFH had held a symposium in 2009, established four additional service elements, professional training and education, Applied Research and Development, and IT Hub and Agrisafe in addition to continuing service provision through the Sustainable Farm Families Program. It has received funding through beyondblue, ARC and RIRDC for additional research projects, is

developing a new farmer health website (scheduled to go live shortly), developing a framework for Agrisafe, which will provide health and safety services directly to farming people".

Western District Health Services Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher said "The Civic Reception was a great way of the Shire welcoming Agricultural Health and Medicine Unit students from many parts of Australia and showing its support for the National Centre for Farmer Health".

He told the audience that the course was seen by WDHS as just a beginning with plans to further develop Post Graduate study through the NCFH.

"It is our goal to establish the National Centre for Farmer Health as a Centre of Excellence", he said.



Photo caption: WDHS Mens' Health Educator, Stuart Wilder, CEO, Jim Fletcher, NCFH Director, Ass Professor, Sue Brumby, Dr Geoff Handbury, NCFH Lecturer, Dr Scott McCoombe and Mayor, Marcus Rentsch at the Civic Reception.

## Improving frontline management skills



Chris McGennisken, Jane Sanders (absent), Jodie Nelson, Liska Greyling, Natalie Rhook, Phuong Huynh, Robbie Cook, Stuart Wilder, Susan Watt, Yvette Schmal (absent)

During 2009, ten staff members undertook studies towards a Diploma of Management. Staff members came from both clinical and non-clinical backgrounds and worked in Departments across the Health Service. The purpose of the studies was to develop management skills for staff and increase their capacity to operate effectively as frontline managers. The course enabled participants to apply the skills learnt in the workplace. The students completed subjects addressing workplace safety, managing work priorities and own professional development, continuous improvement, budgets and financial planning and managing people as well as elective units. Delivery was through online learning, workbooks, face to face workshops and finished with a marketplace and presentation. The senior management team at Western District Health Service is looking at a proposal to offer support to more staff to facilitate further opportunities for management training and continue the high quality management of the service well into the future.

## CanTeen Dishing out Help for Families Living with Cancer

CanTeen is Australia's key support network for young people living with cancer, and they hosted a camp in our region in mid April.

Western District Health Service Community Liaison staff met with Canteen representatives this week to offer the service's assistance in promoting the program across the region. CanTeen information kits are now available from the Hamilton Base Hospital.

One of the common misconceptions about CanTeen is that it is only for children with a cancer diagnosis. CanTeen was set up to support young people all the way from 12 to 25, who are either living with cancer themselves, or who have a family member with cancer. Some members have already lost a family member to cancer when they join the organisation.

Lizzie Slaherty's mother was diagnosed with cancer four years ago when she was just 13 years old. One day during a hospital visit for chemotherapy, her mother found a brochure about CanTeen and passed it on to her daughters.

Lizzie looks back at this moment now and sees it as a turning point in her life.

"CanTeen is definitely one of the best things in my life" she said.

"I have friends at school, but I can't talk to any of them the way I can with my friends in CanTeen. And I can talk to anyone in CanTeen."

Lizzie has been involved in several organisational sub-committees and sees herself being involved in CanTeen for many years to come.

Bec Walker started off working in CanTeen's administration team four years ago, but was quickly recognised for her skill and passion and was offered the job of Recreation Officer, designing programs for CanTeen's camps.

"My involvement with CanTeen has taught me so much about life and myself" she said, "I couldn't imagine working anywhere else."

The camps, and transport to and from the camps are all fully funded. Participants on camp can enjoy outdoor activities, water sports, informal information and counselling and an opportunity to build friendships with people in similar circumstances.

The two young women stress that the camps are not for everyone, but that vital support resources were also available on the website for those were not inclined to be part of group activities.

Interested young people and their families can call Community Liaison Manager, Kerry Martin on 5551 8231 or CanTeen Recreation Officer, Bec Walker on 08 8161 7488 or can register their interest on the website at [www.canteen.org.au](http://www.canteen.org.au)



Photo: WDHS' Kerry Martin and Pat Turnbull with Canteen Rec Officer Bec Walker and participant Liz Slaherty

## WDHS awarded for IT excellence

Western District Health Service continues to be recognised for its commitment to quality health care, this time receiving a Highly Commended Award in the category of Innovation in Information Technology in Aged Care.

The 2009 Minister's Awards for Excellence in Aged Care recognise best practice and innovation in residential and community aged care.

Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot said: "We have first class aged care facilities in Australia. The innovation and dedication of aged care providers and their employees to continually seek new and creative ways to provide even better care is commended".

"Nurses, personal carers and allied health workers are the backbone of Australia's aged and community care system. It is important that their efforts are recognised and applauded." Minister Elliot said.

Established in 2008, Western District Health Service's Virtual Visiting program connects aged care residents with distant family and friends.

WDHS Chief Executive Officer Jim Fletcher said: "the project has proved extremely successful in the two years since it was first piloted."

"Not only does Virtual Visiting reduce our residents' sense of social isolation, it's also proven a big hit with families. Particularly the tech-savvy younger generation who now have a unique way of facilitating their relationship with a much loved grandparent at any time they want," said Mr Fletcher.

The WDHS Virtual Visiting program has now expanded to cover 18 aged care facilities. Residents and their families only need access to a computer, internet connection, webcam, speakers, microphone, and registration with Skype (internet 'telephone' service) to participate.

Anyone interested in virtual visiting should contact Project Coordinator Katherine Cooper on 5551 8030.

## Community Services Activities

### Youthbiz

YouthBiz has moved into 2010 with some exciting new programs for young people. A \$10,000 grant from the Coca-Cola Foundation will establish the PlantATree environmental program, \$5,000 from National Youth Week will provide a regional-wide leadership and community development summit for young people, and a \$5,000 Positive Body Image grant from DPCD has supported the Move It physical activity program which started off 2010 with a Boxing Skills session.

### Active Script

PATIENTS at the Hamilton Medical Clinic have been encouraged to be more physically active. Local doctors assess patients' levels of activity and refer those with reduced recommended levels of activity to support person Cathy Armstrong, Community Health Nurse with the Western District Health Service Community Services and Allied Health Division. She offers support, information and motivation toward becoming more active, over the phone.

WDHS Community Health Nurse, Cathy Armstrong said 'Support is at the end of the phone.' 'It all starts with taking a first step, one step at a time, patience, perseverance, having fun and maybe meeting new people.' 'Once people start, they find it really easy to keep going.'

The 'Active Script' brochure is available at your doctor's surgery so ask your doctor how you can become involved.



Photo: Cathy Armstrong, Rosie Rowe, and Dr Dale Ford

### Transport

Problems with transport have become a big political issue in Melbourne; fortunately we do not have any problems with our town bus at the moment. In fact the Hamilton town bus has increased its patronage by over 50% since the introduction of the low floor bus in May last year. Also scooting around town are the Southern Grampians Shire community bus and Hamilton taxis providing access to WDHS services.

Transport Connections has been able to trial several new services in the region. The Peshurst to Hamilton bus service is now in its third year of operation and more recent ones are Portland to Mount Gambier via Nelson and Hamilton to Mount Gambier via Casterton. This last service is currently being reviewed and we hope that it will be extended to connect with bus services from Adelaide.

Keeping transport information up to date and getting it out into the community is an ongoing challenge, Mel and Becky are always available to talk to groups about options and travel subsidies. We are happy to discuss individual transport issues and offer solutions. Call us for further information on 5551 8461.

### Indigenous Youth Dental Health

The Community Services and Allied Health Division has just been awarded a grant from Dental Health Services Victoria to research an education and assessment process for the improvement of oral health care to Indigenous Youth in Western Victoria. The research team will be led by Stuart Willder, Joanne Nelson, and Tracey Plunket with guidance from Professor Mike Morgan from the Dental Health School of the University of Melbourne. This research will look at strategies to improve dental health in the Indigenous youth population and a model of care to transfer across Australia.

The community health division has been continuing its support in the delivery of the Sustainable Farm Families programs across Australia and the State Governments Work Health programs throughout the Western District. Staff continue to service the needs of community groups, individuals and organisations through health education, assessments and program delivery.

Community groups and individuals are encouraged to access the many services available through the division to support health awareness, prevention and promotion. Included in the services are men's and women's health, quit programs, active script, community transport, ADDAS support, physical activity programs and youth services.

### Physical Activity

Keeping life physical is important for everyone, no matter what your age. You may not be able to run a marathon or lift 100kgs any more, but a gentle exercise regime will help your muscles stay strong, give you greater flexibility and help you cope a lot better with day to day living.

The myth that fitness is for the young is gradually becoming just a myth, thanks to Western District Health Service (WDHS). A range of classes geared to the needs of older adults, is offered at Frances Hewett Community Centre. These classes are popular, well attended and led by qualified and experienced instructors. Classes not only keep you feeling and looking younger, but can play a vital part in reducing the risk of chronic disease.

The Heart Take Part class (Monday 9.15 to 10.45am) is a gentle introduction to exercise; Start Staying Strong (Monday 6 to 7pm and Wednesday 10 to 11am) uses light weights for those who wish to increase their general strength; and Bones, Better, Best (Thursday 10 to 11am) is a class which helps maintain and build on strength needed for every day tasks."

## Go for your life activities

### Get back on your bike!

Bring along a bike and learn about choosing a bike, understanding and getting the most out of gears and basic skill development. For more information please contact Briana Picken on 55518549

### Physical Activity for people aged 12-25

Physical activities for young people aged 12 – 25 in the Southern Grampians Shire. For more information please contact Leanne Watt or Rhys Saunders on (03) 5571 2233

## Healthy Heart Week

WDHS, Hamilton Walkers & Branxholme/ Wallacedale Community School will be Celebrating Heart Week with a community walk in Branxholme on Monday the 3rd of May. For more information please contact Briana Picken on (03) 5551 8549

WorkHealth checks are convenient, easy and confidential health assessments conducted in your workplace. Each check takes 15 minutes & participants receive immediate feedback & advice. For more information please contact Briana Picken or Belinda McCoombe on (03) 5551 8549 or visit: [www.workhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.workhealth.vic.gov.au)

## Social Work

When someone is admitted to hospital, the psychological, emotional and social issues arising from this admission may have a significant impact on your life and those on your family, friends and carers.

Social workers can intervene on many levels to provide assistance in managing the implications of illness. We work as part of the multi-disciplinary teams involved in patient care, and liaise with other professionals and departments as required to optimise outcomes for patients.

The Social Work Department at WDHS is a free and confidential service which provides information, support and counselling to individuals and significant others experiencing stress or life crisis, in particular, the emotional and practical issues that may arise due to hospital admission.

Did you know: The Victorian patient transport assistance scheme (VPTAS) subsidises the travel and accommodation costs incurred by

rural Victorians and an approved escort, who have no option but to travel a long distance to receive approved medical specialist services.

Details about the subsidy levels and eligibility criteria are in the VPTAS guidelines. Follow the links from the website <[www.health.vic.gov/ruralhealth](http://www.health.vic.gov/ruralhealth)> or contact your Department of Health regional office, Barwon-South Western Region (5226 4540).

For further information about the Social Work services you can contact Kate or Sonya or leave a message on telephone number 5551 8361.

Other Useful Contact:

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service 1800 015 188

Griefline (03) 9596 7799

Lifeline 131114

Suicide Helpline 1300 651 251

Mensline Australia 1300 789 987

Kids Help Line 1800 551 800

## New CT Assists Stroke Management and Reduces Travel

The installation of a 16 slice CAT scan by Bendigo Radiology has assisted Western District Health Service in enhancing the management of stroke patients.

As a result Western District Health Service has introduced a new medication procedure which relies heavily on early identification of the signs of a stroke with diagnosis confirmed by CT scan and prompt administration of the medication.

The medication is a thrombolytic that dissolves a blood clot and is used when a patient is diagnosed as having a stroke, caused by a clot on the brain.

Research indicates that this applies in about 10% of stroke cases as not all stroke cases are caused by a bleed in the brain and therefore not suitable for use of thrombolytic medication.

For those small numbers of stroke victims that can be treated by thrombolytics the outcomes are generally positive with early identification by CT scan.

With the introduction of thrombolytics at Hamilton Base Hospital patients in the Hamilton region who were previously taken directly by Ambulance Victoria under their protocols to Warrnambool will now be brought to Hamilton Base Hospital for diagnosis and treatment.

This will avoid delays and travel for family and relatives.

When a clot has formed in the brain, blood is not getting to some parts of the brain, causing what is known as an 'ischaemic stroke'. By giving the patient a thrombolytic, the clot is dissolved and the blood supply to the brain is restored. Hence, the brain is not damaged by a lack of blood supply.

The success of thrombolytic medication relies heavily on early identification of the signs of a stroke, diagnosis confirmed by CT scan and prompt administration of the medication.

Not all strokes are caused by a clot. Some strokes are caused by a bleed in the brain and therefore cannot be managed by the use of thrombolytics.

## Employees of the month

proudly sponsored by Darriwill Farm



November  
Marg Crone  
Cafeteria Supervisor



December  
Leanne Deutscher  
Manager, Medical Unit



January  
Lesley Povey  
Hotel Services Officer



February  
Joy Darroch  
Personal Care Attendant

## People in the Health Service



### Wendy James

Wendy took up the role as Quality and Risk Manager with Western District Health Service in late February. She originally trained as a Registered Nurse at Hamilton Base Hospital an undisclosed number of years ago! Since then, she has undertaken studies in Midwifery, Nursing, and a Masters in Business Administration, and has worked in a variety of health care organisations. Her most recent position has been the Quality Manager at Wimmera Health Care Group, where she has worked for the past five years.



### Veena Mishra

Veena has recently joined Western District Health Service as Manager of Business Support & Innovation. Veena has a background in business process redesign and has worked in the public sector in New Zealand and most recently in the health sector in South Africa. She is passionate about creating a better health system and the move to Hamilton was to realise a dream of working in a hospital environment. She enjoys the outdoors and is a yoga fanatic.



### Richard Lunz

Richard has joined the National Centre for Farmer Health as the AgriSafe Manager. Richard is an Occupational and Environmental Medicine Practitioner with a background in Primary Care, Rural and Emergency Medicine, and interests in Public Health and Aviation/Travel Medicine. He has worked in various settings across Australia and Asia and has been previously involved with part time teaching and tutoring in the Department of Epidemiology & Preventive Medicine at Monash University. He will continue with his academic interests and lecturing at the Deakin University in Geelong.



### Naomi Turner

Naomi is the most recent addition to the Community Liaison team while Melonie Fitzpatrick enjoys a 12-month maternity leave. Naomi is a communications specialist and moved to Hamilton four years ago from a position at the Royal Children's Hospital. She has worked in a variety of different sectors and has most recently held positions with the Department of Primary Industries and the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority.