



Community Bank branch kicks off hospital appeal

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Coleraine and District Community Bank Branch kicked off the Coleraine Hospital redevelopment fundraising campaign with an outstanding \$103,000 donation towards the installation of a solar hot water system at Western District Health Service's new Coleraine campus.

Coleraine & District Community Bank Branch Chairman, Coralie Coulson said the Coleraine community had always worked hard to maintain its health services.

"The redevelopment of Coleraine District Health Service is critical to the health of our town and the surrounding agricultural district. Without quality health care infrastructure, the retention of our medical practitioners and other health care providers would be undermined, and services would be compromised", she said.

"We have chosen to spread this commitment of over \$100,000 over three years to ensure we can continue to support other community needs during this time. Completion of the health service redevelopment is expected by December 2013, so this timeline is a perfect fit."

"By installing a solar hot water system, the health service will save more than \$4,000 every year in operating expenses, and significantly reduce its impact on the environment," she said.

Coleraine Community Bank Branch Manager, Jeanette McDonnell said "Local residents can get behind the project and show their support by visiting the Coleraine & District Community

Bank and making a donation directly to the redevelopment appeal. All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible."

Western District Health Service, CEO, Jim Fletcher said "WDHS is extremely proud and privileged to be in partnership with the Coleraine Community Bank and he thanked them for not only initiating the public appeal but also for their outstanding contribution of \$103,000 for the solar hot water system, which will generate recurrent cost savings to the Health Service for the life of the new buildings."

"The redevelopment of health facilities for Coleraine is by far the biggest project Western District Health Service has undertaken since its foundation in 1998. The redevelopment will also fulfil a commitment made by Western District Health Service when Coleraine joined us in 2005 to complete a building master plan for the future delivery of health services in Coleraine and to rigorously pursue funding for the upgrade of facilities. This has been achieved in five years, which in the scheme of government machinery and processes for capital funding is a pretty good effort."

"The redevelopment will provide the Coleraine and district Community with a one stop health precinct with state of the art facilities, medical, dental and community health clinic on the former Wannon shire site with a car park joining all hospital and aged care services located on the Mackie site. A new hospital, new aged residential care facility and other support services will be built and joined onto Mackie House which will undergo a face lift and be added onto to include accommodation for Allied Health and ADASS programs."

"This new state of the art health precinct will replace outdated buildings with rapidly failing infrastructures that no longer meet the standards or requirements of a modern day health service."

"This history making project will benefit the Coleraine and district community and the Shire of Southern Grampians, ensuring the health needs of the community are met for the remainder of this century and beyond." Mr Fletcher said.

People wishing to support the redevelopment appeal and make a donation can visit the Coleraine & District Community Bank, call the branch on 5575 2783 or the Community Liaison Office of WDHS on 5551 8540.



Coleraine & District Community Bank Branch Manager, Jeanette McDonnell, WDHS Board member, Ron Jones, WDHS CEO, Jim Fletcher and Community Bank Chair, Coralie Coulson happily discussing the donation

From the CEO

Exciting era ahead for Western District Health Service



2011 hails the beginning of an exciting era for Western District Health Service with the commencement of major capital and service development programs.

- **Coleraine Campus**

By far the biggest single project in the life of Western District Health Service to date is the building of a new precinct for all health services in Coleraine. The total cost of this project, including land purchases and the early building of three replacement Independent Living Units, will be in excess of \$26.5 million.

Final planning approval is due to be handed down by the Shire of Southern Grampians in April 2011. Six builders have been shortlisted; the tender period commenced on 14 April 2011. The tender will be awarded around 1 July 2011 with an expected commencement date of construction 26 July 2011 and completion date end of December 2013.

In the meantime, early demolition works have commenced to clear the expanded site in readiness for the building program.

- **Merino Community Health Centre**

The building of the new Community Health Centre for Merino is on the home run with an expected completion date of the end of April 2011. The new building will be commissioned during May 2011 with all health services for Merino relocated to the new centre.

Discussions have commenced with the Commonwealth Government to set a date for the official opening of the new centre in the coming months.

- **Final Stage of the Grange Redevelopment**

Excitement is also building at the Grange Residential Aged Care facility with four South West builders shortlisted. The four builders were invited to tender for the project on 15 March 2011 with tenders closing on 28 April 2011.

It is expected that construction will commence in July 2011 for completion in July/August 2012.

The Grange Fundraising appeal has reached \$1.98 million of its \$2.2million target. With approximately 18 months to go to the completion of construction, we will be pulling out all stops to raise the remaining \$220,000 and I request that all community members get behind the appeal to help us reach our target. Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible.

- **New Building Extension for Hamilton Base Hospital Rehabilitation and Assessment and Management of Elderly**

After many years of planning and lobbying for funds, we have been successful in receiving a \$3.5 million grant through the COAG (Council of Australian Governments) to rebuild and redevelop our rehabilitation and assessment and management of our elderly inpatients areas at Hamilton Base Hospital. This will include the upgrade of six double bedrooms and ensuites, the provision of a new lounge, assisted daily living kitchen, allied health therapy training area and an outdoor area. The feasibility study has been completed and we will be moving into the design and contract documentation phase with an expectation that we will go to tender in late 2011.

- **Penshurst and Hamilton Medical Group**

Two other smaller projects under way, the relocation of the residents' laundry at Penshurst, which will be completed in May 2011, and the 1st stage of the upgrade of Hamilton Medical Group, is expected to commence later in 2011.

With all these projects commencing during 2011, it will be an exciting and hectic agenda for our Health Service.

- **Coleraine Community Bank Fundraising Appeal**

The Coleraine Community Bank has launched a Community Fundraising Appeal for the Coleraine Health Service redevelopment project.

The appeal will have a target of \$200,000 with the Coleraine Community Bank contributing \$103,000 to cover the cost of installing a solar hot water system for the new building. This outstanding generous support by the Coleraine Community Bank will enable the Health Service to generate recurrent savings for the life of the new Health Service.

Donations for the Coleraine redevelopment can be made at the Coleraine Community Bank. Donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible with all funds going to the fit out of the new buildings.

- **Naming rights approved for the new Coleraine Medical, Dental and Community Health Centre**

The new Coleraine Medical, Dental and Community Health Centre to be built as part of the new health precinct for Coleraine will be named the Thomas Hodgetts Centre. Following consultation with the Executors of the Estate of Thomas Hodgetts, the Coleraine Management Committee made a recommendation to the Western District Health Service Board of Directors that the new centre be named the Thomas Hodgetts Centre in recognition of a \$1.3m bequest left by Mr. Hodgetts to the Coleraine Health Service. This recommendation was recently approved by the Western District Health Service Board.

- **National Centre for Farmer Health**

Our National Centre for Farmer Health continues to grow as a Centre for Excellence for farm families and farm worker health, wellbeing and safety. The inaugural National/International Conference, held in Hamilton, was an outstanding success with the Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health developed and adopted at the Conference. This Charter has also been adopted by the Shire of Southern Grampians, which signifies local recognition of the Centre by our Shire.

The Centre has also recently established an Agrisafe Clinic, which is another first for Australia and has recently commenced the 2nd Agricultural and Medicine Unit with a five day residential course held in Hamilton attended by 24 students from five States across Australia. We wish all these students success in completing the unit during 2011.

- **2011 Handbury Lecture**

The 2011 Handbury Lecture will be held on Tuesday 24 May 2011 in the Hamilton Base Hospital Auditorium, commencing at 7:30pm. Our guest lecturer this year is Professor Helena Teede who is an Endocrinologist and researcher, and is Director of Research at the Jean Hailes Foundation and Head of Diabetes at Southern Health. Professor Teede's topic will be "Health Lifestyles and Prevention" Reservations can be made through Marilyn Grant on 5551 8215.

- **New Surgeon on Deck**

We welcome Mr. Uvarasen Kumarswani (UK) Naidoo as our new General Surgeon for both the Glenelg Surgical Clinic and Western District Health Service.

Mr. Naidoo is a Fellow of the Australasian College of Surgeons with extensive surgical experience and skill. He is a welcome addition to our surgical team and his appointment will enhance the range of services provided to the community.

- **Board and Executive Movements**

We bid farewell to two outstanding Board Members, Mr Ron Jones and Mr Peter Irvin who are retiring at the end of June 2011. Ron has served on the Board for six years and Peter for five. We also bid farewell to Dr. John Christie, our Director of Medical Services for the past two and a half years. John, who travels from Swan Hill, has shared his time three days a week at Western District Health Service and two days at Swan Hill. He has made an outstanding contribution to Western District Health Service over this time however distance and travel has taken its toll. We are grateful for and appreciative of the work and contribution of all three to Western District Health Service.

We welcome to the Executive team Mr. Alastair Doull, the new Manager/Director of Nursing at the Penshurst campus and Dr. Alastair Wilson from New Zealand who takes up the position of Director of Medical Services.

Ms. Lisa Robertson is a welcome addition to the Board of Directors, replacing Ms Elizabeth Lawrence who resigned in July 2010. Two new Board appointments will be made by the Governor in Council, commencing July 2011 to replace our two retiring members, Ron Jones and Peter Irvin.

Handbury Lecture guest speaker to present on “Healthy Lifestyles and Prevention”

The 2011 Handbury Lecture will be held on Tuesday May 24 commencing at 7:30pm, and this year’s guest speaker is Professor Helena Teede MBBS FRACP PhD.

Professor Teede completed her medical degree in 1989, specialist training in 1997 and a PhD in 2001. As an endocrinologist and researcher, Helena now holds a Professorship in Women’s Health at Monash University, is the Head of Diabetes at Southern Health and the Director of Research at the Jean Hailes Foundation. She currently leads a growing team of multidisciplinary researchers and clinicians and her interests focus on lifestyle related diseases including obesity, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) and diabetes.

Community roles include education, health promotion and translation of medical information through her role at the Jean Hailes Foundation. She is on the National Endocrine Society Council, Diabetes Australia Victoria Board and the International PCOS Society Council.

Helena is involved in government forums on women’s health, prevention of disease, obesity and health services provision in diabetes, briefing the Australian Dept of Health and Ageing, Members of Parliament and back-bench committees. She has had input into national women’s and men’s health policy and is on the NHMRC Health Care Committee and sub-committees including the National Evidence Translation Committee.

Helena has over 105 publications together with national and international clinical and research recognition. She was awarded The Minister’s Award for Outstanding Individual Achievement 2009 - Victorian Public Healthcare Awards, together with the NHMRC Achievement Award 2008 for outstanding research work across NHMRC’s grant and fellowship scheme.

The Handbury Lecture will be held in the auditorium at the Hamilton Base Hospital Education Centre.

The Grange – an investment in the future of our loved ones

The final stage of the planned extensions and upgrade of Home 3 of the Grange Residential Care has taken another exciting large step forward with the approval of five additional beds and calls for tenders for shortlisted builders to close on 28 April 2011.

New Unit Manager of the facility, Pam Vince finds her role and the Grange “just fantastic, and to receive such great support from a public hospital with I.T, education and quality is exceptional.”

“I’m going to be very happy here. I love working with elderly people, and the staff of the Grange are unbelievable, so very caring, taking great pride in their work. They are all I.T. savvy, backed up by great systems and support and make the residents of the facility their absolute priority and focus,” she said.

“The most important word here is respect and we advocate to ensure the client’s personal history and individuality is respected. We have much to learn from them as the elders of our community through their life stories and experience.

“The Grange is about providing high quality care for the elderly of our own local community. Donations made to the current fundraising campaign for the Grange are an investment in the future of the people of Hamilton and the future of our loved ones, if we want to keep them in Hamilton.”

Eighty nine year old Grange Resident, Frank Healy responded enthusiastically about life at the Grange. “This place is unreal. The devotion to duty from all the staff, from management to the tea girl is wonderful. They are always pleasant; it is a perfect place, where nothing is too much trouble.”

“I’ve been here for several months, coming after spending two weeks in ICU. Dr. Ford helped to get me in here and I could not be happier. I’ve made friends and there is something on all the time to get involved in. We can just pick what we want to do, whether it’s going shopping or joining one of the activities like going on an outing to Barbeques at the lake or Cherrypool or visiting Nelson for a boat ride on the river. I don’t think it’s possible to improve on the care we are given here.”

Frank knew the Grange well before becoming a resident in September last year. His wife Vonda was cared for at the Grange for 12 months and he still has a copy of a letter he wrote to then Unit Manager, Peter Francis, thanking the service for the constant high level of care and attention to her needs. His closing words in the letter were, “The people of the Western District are very fortunate to have such a place for their elderly”, and as he has discovered first hand, this devotion to duty is still as strong as ever.

Gladys McIntyre, who is 101 and has received her letter from the Queen for reaching a century, is also a very happy resident of the Grange. Gladys believes that it is most important to be cared for in your own community where family can visit at any time and things and people are familiar to you.

“The Grange really is very nice and Hamilton is a lovely community. I came here from Melbourne to marry Robert Walter McIntyre when I was 27 and lived on our farm at Karabeal with our family, two daughters and a son ever since. That was in 1936. My family still live locally and it is so good for me to be cared for where my family is close by.

“I’ve made good friends here, and I did know some of the residents and staff before I came here. That’s what I mean about it being in your own community.”

“And there’s always something to do – play cards, listen to the musicians who visit, attend church services or special functions that have been arranged. I also have a radio in my room which I like to listen to and I read a lot.”

“The most important thing is that my family still live in the district and are close by. Being cared for in your own community is wonderful and the Hamilton community is such a good community.”

The Grange Redevelopment Fundraising campaign has now raised a total of \$ 1.980 million leaving another \$220,000 to be raised to reach the \$2.2 million target.

People wanting to make a donation to the Grange Redevelopment Project are invited to contact the Community Liaison Department on 5551 8540 or community.liason@wdhs.net.



Grange Residents, Gladys McIntyre and Frank Healy believe aged care in your own community is paramount to happiness and wellbeing.

New Grange Unit Manager, Pam Vince brings years of experience and expertise to the role.

Golf Day to be an annual event

The inaugural Grange Redevelopment Golf Day, held on 26 November and sponsored by ACE Radio saw 33 teams tee off in the Ambrose Stableford Competition to raise funds for the \$2.2m Grange Residential Care Service Redevelopment.

Teams came from as far away as Gippsland and Melbourne to enjoy the first class facilities at the Hamilton Golf Club, the hospitality of its members and delicious food prepared by the WDHS Ladies Auxiliary Committees. Third place event sponsors Aurecon, Melbourne project managers, said it was the best Golf Day they had ever attended. "The whole day flowed beautifully and the competitors were looked after tremendously well".

Drinks, gourmet sausages, a spit roast and steaks were all available around the course for players to enjoy; all kindly donated by Hamilton Farm Foods, Hamilton City Meats and George Street Quality Meats.



Mardi Gill, Ross Murray, Andrew Gill and Warren Hall enjoying their day at the Inaugural Grange Fundraising Golf Tournament.

The day's winners were "Gillys Golf Shop" team at the top of the ladder, the team from Moralla Golf Club, and the Taylor Motors team narrowly scraping in at third place.

Mal McAfee of Point of Care Systems, sponsor of the \$1,000 second prize, made the successful bid for a round of golf for four at The Royal Melbourne Golf Club in the auction held after play finished.

Our thanks go to the Hamilton Golf Club and all our sponsors for their support. The day was a tremendous success; one that we will make a permanent fixture on the WDHS events calendar.



Entries are being received now and starting holes will be allocated on receipt of your nomination and sponsorship



For enquiries and entry form contact:

Jeanette Ryan
5551 8284

jeanette.ryan@wdhs.net



Bequest Boosts Funding for Coleraine Health Project

The building of the new health facilities for Coleraine received a further welcomed boost when family members, Ms Annie DeVries and Ms Jenny Williams, the Executors of the Estate of Thomas Hodgetts, presented Western District Health Service Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher with a cheque for \$715,898 late last year.

Mr Fletcher said "he and the rest of the Health Service and the Coleraine community were overwhelmed with the generosity of the late Mr Thomas Hodgetts."

Mr Hodgetts was a long time resident of Coleraine and the extended family roots go a long way back into Coleraine's history. The family farm at Konongwootong was sold in 1987 and Mr and Mrs Hodgetts moved into Coleraine. They became very active in the town's community as they had been in Konogwootong. Mr Hodgetts was a member of the fire brigade at Konogwootong, a steward at the annual Coleraine Show and was involved in numerous other volunteer activities. Tom drove a grey Chevrolet Bel Air car, his pride and joy which he purchased in 1962. The treasured car took pride of place in the Coleraine Christmas parades and was sometimes used on request to drive local brides to the church on their wedding days. Everyone in the community knew Mr Hodgetts in his Chev Bel Air. Mr and Mrs Hodgetts were married for 60 years and Tom passed away in September 2008, exactly nine years to the day after Doris passed away.



Annie DeVries and Jenny Williams presenting WDHS CEO, Jim Fletcher with the donation from the bequest of Tom Hodgetts.

Mr Hodgetts left his bequest wanting to give something back to the community that had given him and his family such a good life over 93 years. He believed that leaving the gift to the Coleraine campus would ensure that all members of the community would benefit for many years to come.

The funds have been directed to the Coleraine Redevelopment Project to enable the Health Service to meet its initial funding contributions and add additional facilities to the new medical / dental / primary care building.

Standout Coleraine GP receives award



Dr Brian Coulson, recipient of the Victorian Rural Doctors' Award for his Outstanding Contribution to Rural Communities.

Coleraine GP, Dr Brian Coulson, received an award for his Outstanding Contribution to Rural Communities at a ceremony in Melbourne in November last year.

The Dorevitch and Gippsland Pathology Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards, presented by Rural Workforce Agency Victoria, recognised the Coleraine doctor and 25 other GPs and specialists from across the state.

Dr Coulson commenced work in the small Coleraine and district community of about 1,600 people in 1981 as a Visiting Medical Officer at the then Coleraine District Hospital. In those early days he also performed anaesthetics and obstetrics. After a 30 year career committed to the health and wellbeing of his community, Dr Coulson now divides his time between the Coleraine and Casterton Medical Clinics, and as a GP trainee supervisor and student mentor.

"The Awards honour the doctors' commitment and the contribution they've made to the health of their patients. We know that rural doctors sustain their communities and the Awards are a way to say thanks," said Rural Workforce Agency Victoria Chief Executive, Claire Austin.

An Awards judging panel comprising representatives from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, Australian Medical Association (Victoria), Rural Doctors Association Victoria and Rural Medical Family Network assessed the 89 nominations against the selection criteria.

Article courtesy of Rural Workforce Agency, Victoria.

Excitement is building for Merino

The small Merino community is seeing its new health building make rapid progress.

The siting of the new building was subject to an objection, which was withdrawn prior to a scheduled VCAT tribunal hearing.

Western District Health Service Chief Executive Officer, Mr Jim Fletcher said, "there has always been overwhelming community support for the Health Service decision to build a new Health Centre for Merino on the chosen site."

"This interest has continued throughout the building's progress and it remains on track to be completed by early this month" he said.



The new Merino Community Health Centre is rapidly taking shape.

In the field with Marlene Lee

Marlene works at the 41 bed Wannan Hostel for both high and low care residents. Like so many activity professionals, Marlene puts her residents first and has done some unusual and wonderful things to enhance the quality of their lives. During a recent interview with Activities 2 Go Magazine, Marlene was asked what she normally does for Halloween.



Coleraine District Health Diversional Therapist, Marlene Lee gives her all to caring for clients.

Most Halloweens, Marlene dresses up as a witch, complete with witch's hat and comes to work with her broom. Marlene has also pioneered a wonderful 'trick or treat' activity idea. One year she brought her two little grandchildren in to work for Halloween. She targeted certain residents, including one Canadian lady who had grown up with trick or treating as a child, and dropped small treats into their rooms. She and the children then knocked on the appropriate doors and sang out, 'trick or treat', at which time the resident could chat to the children and hand over the prepared treat.

On another occasion, Marlene invited a local cake decorator in to her facility. She requested a few dozen cupcakes from the kitchen and her residents then enjoyed watching the volunteer cake decorator pipe cobwebs, bats and other creepy crawly things on to the cakes. A few of the residents also had a go at decorating the cupcakes, although most were happy to just observe.

Marlene also organised a 'Spooky fashion parade' for her residents. Three staff members dressed up in sheets, scary masks and other ghoulish outfits and entertained the residents for 20 minutes or so.

Another slightly unusual activity Marlene runs is called the 'Brain Gym'. It looks a bit like a gentle exercise program however its 26 movements have specific benefits for people suffering from dementia, Parkinson's disease and general old age. Marlene has done numerous Brain Gym courses and her residents now demand it even when she goes on holidays. According to Marlene, after introducing Brain Gym to her clients, "some residents state that they felt better and were sure it was helping with their memories, and some were happier in themselves".

To learn more about Brain Gym, visit www.wholebrain.com.au or phone Claire on 5282 8542.

Council supports the Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health

Southern Grampians Shire Council announced at its February Council meeting it decided to acknowledge and support The Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health.

Hamilton is home to the WDHS National Centre for Farmer Health and Council venues played host to the Inaugural Conference "Opening the Gates" which set out to establish a Charter to improve the circumstances around farmer health.

Southern Grampians Shire is home to a large number of farmers and farm families and owes much of its history and prosperity to these people and their ancestors. The Shire has a diverse agricultural base including livestock, cropping and horticulture which provides 20.3% of overall employment.

The face of agriculture is changing in complex ways: family farming is being challenged, input costs (wages, contractor costs, rates, maintenance and repair costs are rising, land uses are changing, maintaining water security requires innovation, farmers are increasingly relying on off-farm income, business succession is problematic as the average age of the region's farmers continues to increase and fewer young people are taking up agriculture as a career.

These matters all impact on the health circumstances and prospects of farmers and farm families.

Given the extent of change in agriculture and rapidly emerging impacts of climate change, greater recognition of farmer health issues are important to this Shire.

Council planning and decision making processes are expected to benefit from the guidance provided by The Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health which includes the following five principles:

- Empower ourselves and others to consider the health impacts (individual, family, community, environment) of agricultural production and campaign to ensure that negative impacts on farmer health are recognised and not normalised as a by product of production
- Understand the cycles (seasonal and biological) of farmer health and the relationship of farmers to nature whilst delivering appropriate and quality farming health programmes to all
- Defend and celebrate profitable and sustainable rural industries in the global market recognising and valuing the key role of farmers in providing food and fibre for the world
- Broaden the identity of farm men, women and communities beyond the life is work ethos, and thus enable them to successfully meet their new challenges through opportunities, alliances and education
- Recognise that improving farmer health involves new relationships and the strengthening of old relationships across sectors and within sectors. Research, policy development and service delivery will need to be developed in place, recognising the valuable interaction in and with communities. The interdependency and synergistic drive of these relationships will move this Charter forward.

Southern Grampians Shire Council Mayor, Cr Bob Penny said, 'Council is delighted to acknowledge and support The Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health. The Charter will be integral to Council's future planning and decision making processes and will ensure various important farmer health issues can continue to be highlighted.'

"Congratulations to the WDHS National Centre for Farmer Health on the creation of this important Charter for our Shire," Cr Penny concluded.

SFF Program gets the big OK

Eight years down the track, the benefits the Sustainable Farm Families program (SFF) is providing its original participants are still having a "profound impact".

An independent report by Roberts Evaluation says SFF has "altered the way participants think about their physical and mental health and safety" and has "clearly created awareness amongst farmers of the importance of their health".

The report also says SFF workshops have been equally positively received by, and been beneficial for, both men and women, for farmers of different ages, and for farmers working in different industries.

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) senior research manager, Ken Moore says the outcome of the evaluation proved SFF was achieving "exactly what we wanted when we set out".

SFF was initiated in 2003 in response to the gap between rural and urban population health outcomes, and clinical observation of injuries and premature death amongst farming men and women.

Mr Moore said, "A lot of industry research is very specific but the big picture of the whole farm family and its wellbeing and safety seemed to get overlooked. SFF interacts with families and although the current Victorian Future Farmers' strategy program only runs until June '30 next year, I would genuinely hope it gets wider in all sectors of agriculture and across Australia."

"Hopefully we will also be able to get others involved and, if that happens, we will be able to take a more aggressive look at the growth of the project. Until then, having the WDHS National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) managing the program is a step in the right direction."

WDHS Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher says the diversity of the SFF program means there is something to take away for virtually every farming family involved in the program.

He says "The evaluation's rates "are quite extraordinary", with 97 percent indicating eight years on it has increased their knowledge of health issues and their own health."

"And, an amazing 96 percent said the program provided tools to make lifestyle changes to improve their health, wellbeing and safety in the farm family and business environment. "

NCFH Director, Sue Brumby said, "SFF has brought about substantial changes, improving farm family health outcomes relating to nutrition, physical activity/exercise, taking time out from the farm to de-stress and seeking treatment for health matters as well as positive outcomes relating to health issues, safety on the farm and some life-changing experiences."

Given the current climatic situation, people who went through the SFF course will be better equipped to manage change and be more resilient in the face of major events such as drought or flood. Participants learned they do not have to carry the load alone and in silence. They can share it with family and with outside support systems such as counsellors, advisors, bankers and accountants. All of which helps make farming families sustainable, come what may.

The evaluation saw 54 of the original 191 participating farmers interviewed and showed approximately two thirds, particularly men aged between 45 and 64 had altered their previous 'she'll be right' attitude to one of preventative action.

Full House for second Rural Health Unit



NCFH Director, Professor Sue Brumby and NCFH Lecturer, Dr Scott McCoombe with the students of this year's HMF701 Rural Health Unit.

The 'full house' sign went up on Deakin University's second agricultural health and medicine unit at the WDHS National Centre for Farmer Health.

Registrations came from Cloncurry in Queensland to Horrocks in Western Australia, representing every facet of service delivery to agricultural communities and six scholarships have been provided by the NCFH.

Deakin's unit chair, Dr Scott McCoombe, said the most important aspect of a productive agricultural industry is a healthy workforce with the unit increasing participants' understanding of the social, environmental, physical and mental health factors that result in higher rates of injury, illness and death in rural and remote communities.

"The information provided is incredibly beneficial to professionals looking to improve agricultural production and sustainability or to improve health provision, research, policy and literacy in rural and remote communities," he said.

The five-day intensive unit has been developed to appeal to multidisciplinary graduate-level students and professionals from nursing, medicine, health, agricultural science, agribusiness, social work, veterinary and environmental science backgrounds.

WDHS NCFH Director, Sue Brumby said, "At a time when rural and agricultural Australia is under siege from drought, flood and fire on an unprecedented scale, never has a course such as this been more relevant. "It aims to develop the next generation of rural and agricultural health leaders."

On completion, graduates with a relevant health degree would be eligible to become an Agrisafe clinic provider.

The five-day intensive curriculum covered a number of topics including high risk remote populations and chronic disease; rural respiratory health; climate impacts on farmer health; vision and hearing injuries; common cancers in agriculture; traumatic agricultural injury; addiction, suicide and mental illness in rural Australia.

Cutting Edge technology training for HMOs

The use of cutting edge technology to provide Western District Health Service medical staff with access to specialist support from tertiary centres was further enhanced with recent training and education provided on site by specialist staff from the Royal Eye and Ear Hospital.

Dr Carmel Crock, Director of the Emergency Department of the Royal Eye and Ear Hospital and Mr Phillip Michael, Fellow of the College of Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists, attended Hamilton Base Hospital to provide education and support to hospital medical officers on the use of slit lamp and other ophthalmic equipment, as well as diagnosis of emergency presentations.

The education and support provided by the Royal Eye and Ear Hospital was part of the partnership agreement established in 2008 in relation to providing our local medical staff with real time access to expert advice and support to assist with the treatment and care of emergency presentations. As a result, we can in most instances alleviate the need for patients and families to make the eight hour trip to Melbourne to seek a second opinion or specialist advice.

The training and education provided by the Royal Eye and Ear Hospital is now an annual event to ensure our HMOs continue to keep up to date with current best practices relating to ear, nose, throat and ophthalmology.

Graduation time for WDHS nursing students



L to R, WHDS Clinical Teacher, Leah Swainston with this year's Nursing Graduates, Amber McDonald, Jessica Lovel, Janeece Symons, Rachel Clarke, Clare Barnes, Brooke MacPherson, Kara Mitchell, Dzintra Clarke and Callie Lewis.

Three years of education and training at Victorian universities has come to an end for a group of 2010 Nursing Graduates at Western District Health Service.

The students from RMIT Hamilton, La Trobe Bendigo, Deakin Warrnambool and the University of Ballarat, both Ballarat and Horsham campuses have completed a Bachelor of Nursing and are now embarking on a 12 month Graduate Nurse Program for Registered Division One Nurses at Hamilton Base Hospital. Throughout the year they will rotate to various nursing departments at the hospital gaining exposure to the responsibilities and demands of a nursing career.

The Graduates will continue with study sessions and complete a variety of assessment projects, undertaking 80 hours of theory and spending the rest of their time in the hospital wards.

WDHS Nurse Educator, Chris McGenniken said, "we welcome the group into this important year in their journey with Hamilton Base Hospital and look forward to working alongside them. We always hope to retain some of them as longer term staff and this does happen, which is a very positive outcome for us."

"The Graduate Nursing Program is a valuable component of the health service's functions as a teaching hospital. We support both the local RMIT University campus and other universities across the state which ensures a greater choice when recruiting graduates and helps bring new ideas into the practice of nursing at our hospital. We attend university Open Days in Hamilton, Warrnambool, Bendigo, Ballarat and Melbourne to encourage as much interest as possible in our programs." She said.

Western District Health Service Chief Executive Officer Jim Fletcher said "the health service is committed to providing new graduates with a comprehensive range of experiences and supports to enable new graduates to develop their skills and knowledge, essential to their long term contribution to the provision of high quality healthcare."

"The graduate program is an important and essential component of our nursing recruitment strategy and I expect that as has been the case in the past, most will seek ongoing employment with WDHS and become valued members of our clinical team" he said.

Hospital becomes the new family for Burmese Doctors



Dr Sandy Kyaw, Dr Miriam Athayde, Dr Phyo Thandar, Dr Linn Htet Kyaw, Dr Khin Htet Htet Thu, Dr Roya Arabi, Dr Brenda Kananpathippillai

Traditional Burmese folklore considers love to be destiny, and recently in the Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, Dr Phyo Thandar and Dr Linn Htet Kyaw fulfilled their destiny by celebrating their wedding vows under the bows of the beautiful trees. Phyo and Linn met each other at university in Burma whilst studying to be doctors. They followed each other half way across the world when they moved out to Australia six months ago and were finally able to marry each other last weekend.

Having no family and not knowing many people in Australia, Phyo and Linn asked their fellow workmates from the Western District Health Service to help them celebrate their special day. Due to the ever increasing diversity of people now working for WDHS it became a wonderful multi-cultural event. Dr John Christie (Director of Medical Services) gave the bride away and the happy couple were attended by Dr Sandy Kyaw (Burma), Dr Miriam Athayde (Brazil), Dr Khin Htet Htet Thu (Burma) Dr Roya Arabi (Iran) and Brenda Kananpathippillai (Sri Lanka). Dr Roya's beautiful little girl, Paradise, was the flower girl. Many other WDHS staff members attended the wedding with their families to help Phyo and Linn not only celebrate their special day but to welcome them into our community.

A first class experience for tomorrow's specialists



WDHS Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher with staff members, from left, Tom Masters, Tom Callahan, Phyo Thandar, Roya Arahi, Gillian Skiardoon, Brenda Kanapathippillai, John Christie, Ummu Rauf, Miriam Athayde, Melissa Lee, Sandhya Mendon and Cecilia Huo.

Western District Health Service Hamilton Base Hospital (HBH) continues to enhance its role as a teaching facility supporting young doctors in fulfilling their ambitions to become future specialists.

Over the past seven years, HBH has increased its complement of young Doctors training to be Specialists from six to the current year's 16. The placements at Hamilton Base Hospital vary from 10 weeks on rotation to one year, with some continuing on to do a second year. Surgical Registrars stay for six months, senior Medical Registrars for three, a second Medical Registrar for 12 months, Hospital Medical Officers (HMOs) 10 – 12 weeks or 12 months and Anaesthetic G.P. Registrar for 12 months.

Western District Health Service Chief Executive Officer Jim Fletcher said "our Health Service continues to build on its role as a teaching facility, training young doctors, giving them an opportunity to have a broad ranging experience in a sub regional health centre, which includes the full spectrum of service delivery."

"Those who stay on for a second year take on a leadership role with those coming into the organisation, offering peer support and mentoring."

"All the Registrars and HMOs play an important role in the delivery of healthcare to our community, providing support to Medical, Surgical and Emergency Department presentations 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They receive good support from senior medical staff in their education and training and we provide a training ground for future specialists assisting to bridge the gap for Medical Specialist workforce requirements to overcome current and future projected shortages" Mr. Fletcher said.

One of the current WDHS Medical Registrars, Dr. Roya Arabi came to Australia from Iran in 2003, spending five years in Melbourne before coming to Hamilton one year ago as a HMO in 2010, and has now taken up the 12 month Medical Registrar position.

Roya came to Australia to attend Melbourne University with her husband, Ali, while he completed a PHD in Veterinary Science she completed her PHD in Immunology.

Roya grew up with her family in a large city and prior to coming to Hamilton, her only other experience in rural life was back in Iran where

she spent one year working in a rural hospital. Roya does miss her family and friends and the life of a crowded city, especially around significant holiday dates like New Year, which is held in March in Iran. The family get together and celebrate in a traditional festive way that dates back over 2,500 years.

Settling in to the Hamilton community with Ali and their four year old daughter, Pardis has been a very positive experience and Roya says she would happily make this their home and place of work if the opportunity arose. "We like the rural life, the local community is very friendly and we are made to feel welcome by everyone."

In relation to her experience at the hospital, Roya was full of praise, saying "we are very well cared for as new staff. Dr. John Christie (WDHS Director of Medical Services) and other Senior Medical Staff are completely supportive in helping us to settle in to our roles and the nurses are like family. Our accommodation and personal needs are well met and the hospital provides an excellent professional experience. We have exposure to all the rotations and the Hospital has excellent technology and equipment."

Dr. Miriam Athayde HMO, her husband, Eber Mello and their three sons came to Australia from Brazil in 2007, leaving behind a culture of violence and the shocking trauma of having their 15 year old son kidnapped. He was returned safely after a short time but the incident has had a long term impact on the family and prompted their decision to leave Brazil.

Miriam was a practising doctor in Brazil and after completing the required Australian professional development came to Hamilton Base Hospital in May 2009 as an HMO. She says her experience has been excellent and very positive. Dr. Athayde said "I've observed how resourceful the hospital is with access to every kind of technology; it is well organised and structured and very clear guidelines are available for staff to work to. The professional support from Senior Medical and other staff is very good and so is the sense of teamwork with all staff."

"I feel very confident and happy working here in a small city in a rural area and feel very lucky in my first placement as a doctor in Australia to be working in this excellent environment." she said.



‘Well for Life’ to benefit staff and residents

Twenty staff from across WDHS completed the Easy Moves for Active Ageing course on April 5th and 6th as part of the Well for Life Project. Easy Moves for Active Ageing aims to provide a safe and effective physical activity and exercise program for active ageing. At the completion of the training, it is envisaged that participants will apply their knowledge to update current exercise groups being offered in each of the facilities, leading to a ‘best practice’ and consistent approach to the delivery of such programs into the future.

Well for Life is a Government funded initiative aimed at improving Nutrition, Physical Activity and Emotional Wellbeing for Older People. Western District Health Service has been successful at obtaining further funding to implement the Well for Life program, primarily within the Grange and Coleraine Residential Care Aged Care facilities, with benefits also to the Birches, Hamilton House Day Centre, ADASS and Peshurst facilities.

The aim of the program is to set up informative talks, education and activities that will increase staff and residents’ knowledge on healthier

eating, the benefits of physical activity and generally improve participants Emotional Well-being. Other approaches to achieving the goals of the program include reviewing snacks, reviewing information provided to participants related to nutrition, and expanding staff education.

The specific aims of the Well for Life project include:

- To improve the knowledge, skills, independence and well being of aged care residents and carers through improved nutrition and physical activity opportunities
- To expand staff motivation and knowledge regarding the impact of good nutrition and physical activity on residents
- To ensure that WDHS continues to embrace the Well for Life philosophy across the whole organisation and sustain beyond project funding
- To introduce a consistent exercise program aimed at strength training to all aged care residents
- To reduce fall risks by improving balance and mobility

Peshurst Welcomes new campus manager

Alastair Doull brings much experience in Aged Care, Community Health and Acute Care to his new role as the Peshurst Manager / Director of Nursing.

Nearly 20 years of working in the health sector, most recently in positions as Manager of Community Health at Lismore and Manager of Aged Care Services at Portland District Health, which has 90 beds including Harbourside Lodge and Seaview House, will stand Alastair in very good stead for his new responsibilities.

Alastair, born and raised in Ballarat, commenced in his new role last week and his partner and two children will relocate to the district shortly to join him at their new home in Dunkeld.

Mr Doull said “The attraction to this position is that it combines the three areas of health care; acute care, community care and aged care, and that it is part of a larger health network in Western District Health Service. I know we’ll enjoy living in the local community and maybe I’ll find a little time to follow some of my interests in football, rowing and cricket. “I’m looking forward to the challenge of the new role and to us settling into the local community and getting to know people” he said

Western District Health Service Chief Executive Officer, Jim Fletcher said “Alastair is a welcome addition to our Western District Health Service Executive team and he will have the day to day management responsibility for our Peshurst campus together with responsibility for the Aged Care education portfolio across Western District Health Service.”

Mr. Doull who holds a Diploma of Nursing and Master of Business qualifications took up his post on 15 March 2011.



New Peshurst Manager / Director of Nursing, Alastair Doull will bring much experience to the role.

YouthBiz 'End of Era' makes way for revamped youth service

Western District Health Service hosted a celebration to mark the End of an Era for YouthBiz and to open a new chapter for local youth services via a new 'youth4youth' partnership.

Mr Jim Fletcher, CEO, spoke at the celebration attended by 25 people, including past staff, participants and stakeholders. Mr Fletcher highlighted "the award winning achievements over the last 10 years of YouthBiz, including the 10MMM multi-media research project with RMIT, holiday programs, leadership camps, newsletters and activities. In its hey-day, YouthBiz recorded approximately 3,000 contacts, with its effectiveness reflecting our strong community partnerships."

Mr Fletcher noted the generous support of Dr Geoff Handbury OAM, which over the years has amounted close to \$270,000.

"Our youth service is being revamped and relocated, opening a new chapter for our local young people" said Mr Fletcher. "The impetus for the change was a Youth Review conducted in consultation with young people, Southern Grampians Shire, Brophy Youth and Family Services, Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership and the Southern Grampians Youth Network. The Hamilton Structure Plan also indicated that the current YouthBiz format was not meeting the changing and diverse needs of youth in the Shire" Mr Fletcher said.

"Young people across the Shire will benefit from the revamped service, with the new 'youth4youth' service designed to meet a range of needs, with an increased diversity of activities and access from a variety of locations within Hamilton, across Southern Grampians Shire and online. While new initiatives are being launched, popular activities, such as holiday programs, FreeZa events, Purple Couch Magazine, 10MMM website, 7 Jeans programs for girls and leadership activities will continue on" he said.

Further information on 'youth4youth' is available from Briana Picken on 5551 8450, briana.picken@wdhs.net, facebook or at www.10MMM.com.au.



Western District Health Service's Rosie Rowe, Director Primary and Preventative Health, Amy Rivett, headspace Coordinator and Briana Picken, Youth Development Officer, ready to commence a new chapter for local youth services, 'youth4youth'.

The Bald and the Beautiful

Western District Health Service Carpenter, Peter Smith raised \$1,433 for Leukaemia last month by becoming "Bald and Beautiful" in this year's World's Greatest Shave.

"I've really enjoyed this after initially being quite nervous and wondering just what my bald head would look like. I'm going to need plenty of sunscreen," Peter said.

"It was something I wanted to do, making a contribution and putting something back into the community. It brought the hospital staff together; they got right behind it."

"Working in the hospital environment, you tend to see people who are not well so it gets you thinking. I've been involved with children through sport, coaching and developing skills in cricket, basketball, and football. I worked amongst kids at North Hamilton Primary School doing maintenance and helping with woodwork and camps, and my own children went there."

"I've done the Relay for Life several times and these are both good causes. When collecting donations, you hear stories from people about how their lives have been affected by leukaemia and cancer and I have had family affected by it as well. I would encourage others to get involved and, really, the whole thing is fun."

Jordon Perry of Hair La Mode had the honour of shaving Peter's head and WDHS team captain, Norm Saligari and his team mates were a great support, helping him raise more than his target of \$1,000 for the cause.



WDHS Carpenter, Peter Smith with his new look in support of Leukaemia sufferers.

Penshurst farmers return to monitor their health

Farming men and women from Penshurst Football Netball club returned on March 11 to participate in health assessments and learn more about their health and well-being.

Director of National Centre for Farmer Health Associate Professor Sue Brumby said "As a part of the Sustainable Farm Families (SFF) program, farmers have a unique opportunity to understand their own health and wellbeing risks, how to manage them and integrate them into farming life, which can be difficult given the pressures they face".

"Results from 963 farmers who participated in previous workshops revealed 73 per cent of men and 61 per cent of women were classified as overweight or obese, instantly putting them into a high risk category for cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and osteoarthritis".

"Just over one-third of participants were also identified as having high blood pressure. High-risk participants such as these were referred for follow up with appropriate health professionals" she said.

One of the facilitators for the Penshurst program Western District Health Service Registered Nurse Russell Armstrong said "There were some cases where participants had significant risk factors for diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and arthritis which were identified at the workshops, which could have otherwise gone unchecked". Farm men and women have gone away feeling more empowered about their own health and the role it plays in a successful farm".

SFF workshops cover a range of health topics including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, stress, farm safety and injury prevention, depression, anxiety, nutrition and exercise.

The program is an award winning initiative of Western District Health Service delivered in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

For more information contact the Western District Health Service on (03) 5551 8533 or visit www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au

Hamilton Digital Theatre is a first for Australia

Members of the Top of the Town committee, WDHS Board Members, Medical Staff and Theatre staff were on hand to admire the capabilities of the new ENDOALPHA Operating Room System installed by Olympus Australia in the Hamilton Base Hospital (HBH) Operating Theatres in January.

The new system provides high definition digital imagery and equipment for laparoscopic (keyhole) and endoscopic surgery to the HBH Operating Theatres.

Clinicians now use state of the art high definition digital imagery and equipment for gynaecology and urology, ear, nose and throat, general surgery, endoscopy and laparoscopic surgery, which accounts for approximately 45% of the case load of the 3,100 operations performed annually at HBH.

WDHS Deputy CEO, Pat Turnbull said, "The first stage of the project involved the upgrade of equipment to provide high definition digital images for surgeons undertaking endoscopic and laparoscopic procedures. The new image is described as "stunning" and the ability to diagnose and clearly see the operating site is immediately apparent. This will lead to improved diagnosis and surgeons being able to work with greater accuracy leading to better outcomes and faster recovery times."

A ceiling-mounted arm installed to centralise all controls for equipment provides two monitors mounted for surgeons to view, and the system enables the capture of high definition images, which can be stored to provide reports and videos in the patient's electronic record.

WDHS Surgeon, Stephen Clifforth said, "HBH is a teaching hospital and this new system's ability to stream images live within the health service or, if required, to a remote external consultant will significantly enhance our teaching and training capacity. It will also provide exciting opportunities for referral to external expert consultants for unusual or complex cases."

Mr Turnbull said, "This exciting development has only been possible via the partnership with Olympus Australia, the support of the Top of the Town Committee and sponsors who contributed in excess of \$215,000, the Hospital Opportunity Shop Auxiliary, which donated \$35,000, other community donors and the commitment of WDHS staff and medical staff to the project.

Olympus Systems Integration Consultant, Brad Mischel said "This particular model of digital theatre installation is the first of its kind in Australia and certainly establishes WDHS as a regional centre of excellence for laparoscopy and endoscopy."

"Throughout the project, we have been absolutely overwhelmed by the professionalism and "can do" attitude of all involved WDHS representatives and staff. It is also heartening to see the local community support the health service to such a high level and clearly it is the community which will benefit from the new technology."



WDHS Surgeon, Stephen Clifforth (left) with Olympus Systems Integration Consultant, Brad Mischel (right), demonstrating the benefits of the newly installed Digital Theatre System.

Hospital Doorknock Appeal funds new Theatre equipment



WDHS Div 1 Nurses, Shane Hammond and Alicia Ham demonstrate the VersaMed Ventilator with Taleb Taleb, Managing Director of Taleb Medical.

Hamilton Base Hospital has acquired a new VersaMed iVent 20L Ventilator, thanks to the funds raised through last years' Hospital Doorknock Appeal.

Western District Health Service Volunteer Co-ordinator, Jeanette Ryan said 120 volunteers throughout the region doorknocked in May last year for the appeal to raise funds for new equipment needed by the hospital's Theatre Unit.

Volunteers raised over \$41,000 the majority of which has been put towards purchasing the portable ventilator, a vital piece of equipment that has paediatric and adult applications and can be used in a number of different scenarios.

Taleb Medical is supplying the machine and Managing Director, Taleb Taleb explained that the VersaMed Ventilator assists with chronic asthma, heart failure, respiratory failure and abdominal surgery by doing the breathing for the patient and greatly reducing the pain involved in these severe cases.

Taleb Medical has also made a generous reduction to the cost of the ventilator.

The remainder of the funds raised by the Doorknock Appeal has purchased a Bien Air Drill, which will help ear, nose and throat surgeons to perform minimally invasive keyhole surgery, leading to faster recovery times for patients.

The combined cost of these two pieces of equipment is around \$50,000.

New neo-natal incubator for Hamilton Hospital

The midwifery unit at Western District Health Service has welcomed the arrival of a new neo-natal incubator. The incubator was purchased with funds raised by the Western District Health Service's Development Council and organising committee through their Arctic Blast Party held in late May 2010.

The Hamilton Base Hospital has one relatively new incubator, but the other one was quite old and required replacing. The incubators are necessary for newborns requiring special care post delivery, and come at a cost of approximately \$33,000 each.

A total of almost \$30,000 was raised through a mixture of sponsorship and ticket sales for the Arctic Blast Party, which was a huge success. Chairperson for the organising committee Jen Hutton said "We were just stunned to have the community, and particularly the local business community support us like this."



Arctic Blast Committee Member, Anna Delany and WDHS Midwife Sarah Murch with the new neo-natal incubator

Get Fit with Zumba Dance Class

Looking for something to do after school or work? Why not grab some friends and attend the Zumba Dance Class hosted by Western District Health Service Youth4Youth Program. Western District Health Service is embracing the latest Zumba craze and introducing Zumba Dance classes for young people aged 12 – 25.

Ms Briana Picken, Youth Development Officer at Western District Health Service said "Zumba is a dance fitness program with easy-to-follow dance moves. Young people are guaranteed to have a lot of fun while getting fit!"

Zumba Dance class is held every Wednesday from 4:00pm at Hamilton Gymnasium, Milton Street Hamilton at the low fee of \$2 per person.

For further details about the Zumba Dance Session, please contact Briana Picken on 5551 8549 at Western District Health Service or Hamilton Gymnasium on 0418 819 048.

Food Glorious Food

That tireless team, the Hamilton Base Hospital Ladies' Auxiliary may well have to be renamed the 'Fundraising Master Chefs' if they continue to hold amazing Bake Sales that entice crowds of WDHS staff and visitors to spend and sample some of the world's best home-baked goodies.

This happy customer took home a beautiful raspberry coconut slice, ginger biscuits, sausage rolls, and a gorgeous rich quiche, and still had enough money left over to buy some freshly stewed apricots and blood plums – for a little bit of healthy balance.

There are tables and tables of cakes, sponges, slices, biscuits, pastries, jams, sauces, chutneys, scones ... you get the picture.

Anyway, don't miss the next HBH Ladies' Auxiliary Bake Sale in the HBH R V Wines Lakeview Cafeteria on Thursday 9th June, commencing at 9:30am.

And, all funds raised by this wonderful team go towards purchasing much needed equipment for the Hamilton Base Hospital.



HBH Ladies' Auxiliary members, Pat Runciman, Roma Tully and Jean McIntosh hard at work raising funds through their famous Bake Sale Coffee mornings.

Wanted



**Volunteer Collectors
To door knock for the
Hospital Door Knock Appeal**

June 18 to June 26

A collector's kit, ID Badge, cap, water and receipt books are all supplied.

**Please contact Jeanette on 5551 8284
if you would like to help your hospital raise much
needed funds.**

Southern Grampians & Glenelg Drug & Alcohol Plan

Alcohol misuse continues to be a challenging issue facing our community. In order to reduce the harm caused by excessive alcohol use, the Southern Grampians & Glenelg Primary Care Partnership (PCP) developed the Southern Grampians & Glenelg Drug & Alcohol Action Plan 2010-2012. The Plan was launched in October 2010, following an extensive collaborative process undertaken by the PCP.

The partnership, including health and community services and local government, is auspiced by Western District Health Service and is funded by the State Government to encourage health and other agencies to work together to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

New data just released shows that in Hamilton the average rate of family violence incidents with suspected alcohol involvement over the last five years was significantly higher at 42 per 10,000 person, compared with the state average of 26. Similarly, the number of drink driving infringements was also higher at 41 per 10,000 than the state average of 22.

Member agencies across Southern Grampians and Glenelg Shires are now working together to implement the Drug and Alcohol Plan. A key success so far has been its endorsement by both the Glenelg and Southern Grampians Shires and strong support from local drug and alcohol services and community organisations.

One of the strategies of the Plan is to encourage sporting clubs to become members of the Good Sports Program (GSP). The GSP is a free program which helps sporting clubs to manage alcohol responsibly and provide a safe environment for players, members, families and supporters. Participating clubs have seen great benefits including:

- changes in members' behaviour
- an improved image in the community
- increased sponsorship
- increased membership

If you would like a copy of the plan, please visit www.sggpcp.com or call 55518471.

Employees of the Month



Employee of the Month for September 2010 -
Briana Picken - Youth Worker



Employee of the Month for October 2010 -
Jeff Slater - Rehabilitation Team Leader



Employee of the Month for November 2010 -
Debbie Overmars - Associate Nurse Unit Manager Coleraine



Employee of the Month for December 2010 -
Kaylene Diana - HR Executive Support Officer



Employee of the Month for January 2011 -
Anthony Jackson - Ward Assistant Day Centre



Employee of the Month for February 2011 -
Marilyn Grant - Executive Assistant to CEO

People in the Health Service



Colin Barrie

Colin Barrie is the new WDHS Business Services and Innovation Manager.

Having spent 17 years with the Australian Department of Defence, serving in Australia and overseas, Colin moved into working in the Aged Care sector in various roles; as a General Manager of facilities and assets, including acquisitional due diligence. With a background in engineering and a trade, Colin found the transition to the health sector quite interesting and most of all fulfilling.

Colin also has a consulting business that has been consulting to Aged care and Hospitals for nearly 10 years, looking at design, efficiencies and corporate services reviews.

Colin was part of an Aged care group that consisted of around 49 aged care facilities and retirement villages.

Colin and his family have relocated to Hamilton from Melbourne and are looking forward to a fresh approach to work-life balance in the Western District.



Gillian Jenkins

Gillian Jenkins has taken up a new challenge, moving from the role of Manager, Aged Care Services to become the Quality and Risk Manager. Gillian has many years of experience in the health sector and will be a true asset in her new role.

She is a Registered Nurse with a Master of Education (Research) and a Graduate Certificate in Business Administration.

Gillian worked in Discharge Planning for five years before becoming the WDHS Manager of Aged Care Services in 2005, and prior to that worked in the Medical and Surgical Units, the Operating Theatre and the Emergency Department at Hamilton Base Hospital.



Amy Rivett

Amy joins WDHS in the new role of headspace Coordinator. She is completing a Bachelor of Applied Social Science and has an extensive background in Case Management of highly disadvantaged people. Amy possesses a passion for working with youth to assist them in developing strong connections in the community and providing positive life outcomes, and says "I look forward to continuing to provide mental and health wellbeing support, information and services to young people and their families."



Lauren Tonkin

Lauren Tonkin is the latest addition to the Occupational Therapy team at WDHS.

Lauren graduated with a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy at Deakin University Geelong in 2010, did an eight-week placement with WDHS as part of her final year, was a locum for three weeks and was then offered a position as an OT, commencing in January this year.

"Hamilton is a nice town, quieter than the city and I work with a very friendly team that offers plenty of support. I'm enjoying working in the Medical and Surgical Units at present."