

Spring

2018

Hamilton Base Hospital
Grange Residential Care Service
The Birches
Frances Hewett Community Centre
National Centre for Farmer Health
Coleraine District Health Service
Merino Community Health Centre
Penhurst District Health Service



Talking Health

Green menu a first in Australia

Food Services staff at Hamilton Base Hospital have been busy modifying and taste testing hundreds of recipes, as the organisation shifts to a 'green' only cafeteria and catering policy.

The Health Service is serving only 'green' menu items in its cafeteria, as rated by the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory (VHEA) Traffic Light Guidelines.

Chief Executive, Rohan Fitzgerald says WDHS is the first hospital in the country to make the switch to a green menu and he hopes many others will soon follow.

"We've removed all fat and sugar laden 'amber' and 'red' foods, as we step up our efforts to fight obesity."

Over the last 30 years food has become highly-processed and overly high in salt, fat and sugar. Latest research tells us that over two thirds of adults in Australia are overweight, leading to an increased risk of developing type-2 diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease and stroke.

As a public healthcare provider, we feel we should be producing tasty, nutritious food, not unhealthy meal options that contribute to obesity and preventable disease," Rohan says.

Fish and chip Fridays may be a thing of the past at WDHS, but Rohan says the new menu is anything but bland.

There's plenty of scope with the green guidelines to create delicious, café style food that people enjoy eating. Our Food Services team have worked hard to deliver a menu that is not only nutritious, but tastes great and is affordable too.

On the menu are wraps, pizza, salads, pulled beef and pork and there's even cakes and muffins, but with reduced amounts of fat, sugar and salt.

"The feedback we've had so far from staff and the wider community has been overwhelmingly positive and we look forward to introducing more items soon," Rohan said.



CE, Rohan Fitzgerald and Group Manager Support Services, John Hedley say no to unhealthy options in the Hamilton Hospital cafeteria

From the CE

Spring in Hamilton is a wonderful opportunity for reflection and renewal. The warmer weather signals an increase in activity for our farming community and is an invitation to explore our superb natural environment.

Similarly WDHS came to life, renewing its commitment to creating healthier communities. The NCFH celebrated ten years of inspirational commitment to transforming the health of Australia's Farmers and we opened the Cancer and Dialysis Centre.

We set out on a journey almost three years ago, with a vision of improving our cancer and dialysis customers' overall experience. We knew our staff delivered a high standard of care and wanted a facility to match. Through the generosity of our local community, the dream of a new building has been realised, with the new Centre officially opening in November. WDHS is incredibly grateful to the many individuals, businesses and community groups for their overwhelming support of this project.

WDHS strives to be a health sector leader. In recent years we have developed a reputation for introducing groundbreaking strategies to reduce rising rates of overweight and obesity.

Walking in her shoes

The display of 332 pairs of shoes representing the number of reported incidents of family violence in our Shire, was a powerful reminder that we need to be doing more to make our communities safer for women and children.

The shoes, set up on the steps of the PAC on White Ribbon Day, symbolised the many women from all walks of life who experience violence at the hands of their partners.

White Ribbon event guest speaker, Police Inspector, Nick Finnegan says we need to accept family violence as a significant community problem.

"We had 332 reported incidents of family violence in our Shire last financial year, that's 28 a month, near enough to an incident every single day. As a comparison, last year in the Southern Grampians there were about 70 thefts from motor cars, 10 cars stolen, 50 burglaries on houses, 80 incidences of property damage.

We are continuing to demonstrate leadership by becoming the first public health service to introduce a menu that exceeds the healthy eating guidelines.

The food revolution was launched in late November and means that only great tasting, affordable, healthy food will be served in our Cafeteria. Special thanks go to the WDHS Food Services team and John Hedley for their commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of our community.

WDHS enjoys a rich diversity of staff from all corners of the globe. The Health Service's multicultural employees shape our organisational culture and support us to be more compassionate and understanding of each other. We can learn so much from listening to each other's stories. One such story is that of Mo and Rana, who commenced working at WDHS as doctors two years ago. In this edition of Talking Health you will learn about the peace and happiness they have found in Hamilton after fleeing the ISIS insurgency in Iraq.

There are many other successes to celebrate. We became one of only three health services in Victoria to introduce a Healthy Leg Club.

We implemented a cycling without age program at the Grange to get older people riding the streets again, our NDIS program continued to grow and the redevelopment of the Birches kicked off.

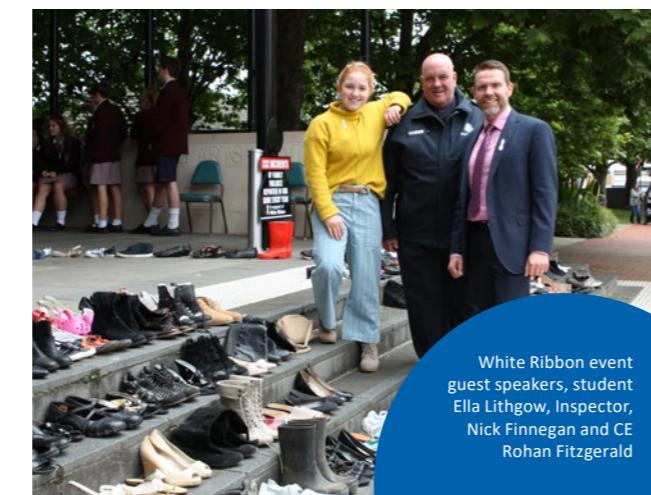
We also continue to benefit from the tremendous support of our 300 strong team of volunteers, working across all of our campuses. I would like to publicly recognise and thank them for their dedicated and committed service, which knows no bounds.

There is always more to do and 2019 will be another big year, delivering on our vision of 'creating healthier communities'.

With the festive season fast approaching I would like to wish you all a merry Christmas and safe and prosperous New Year.



Rohan Fitzgerald
Chief Executive



White Ribbon event
guest speakers, student
Ella Lithgow, Inspector,
Nick Finnegan and CE
Rohan Fitzgerald

Mo and Rana's journey to Hamilton

Iraqi refugee Dr Mohamed (Mo) Abody describes the phone call he received offering him and his wife Dr Rana Karachi the opportunity for an interview at WDHS as 'the most beautiful phone call of my life'.

"Well, the second most beautiful phone call, after the one we received telling us we had an interview at the Australian Embassy in Jordan," Mo muses.

When ISIS fighters occupied the now devastated city of Mosul in June 2014, the Iraqi military withdrew, many escaping by changing out of their army uniforms into civilian clothing.

"They were knocking on doors, shouting desperately asking for clothes so they wouldn't be killed," Mo says.

In the days following the insurgency, mosques around the city reverberated with messages ordering Christians to leave, convert to Islam, or face execution.

Mo, Rana and their 14 month old son Wael were among thousands of Christian families forced to flee their homes.

"We feared for our lives and fled to Erbil, along with many others. There were so many people on the road that a drive that would normally take an hour, took over twelve and we had to borrow fuel from strangers along the road to reach our destination.

It was chaotic and terrifying and when we reached Erbil, many of the displaced Mosul residents were forced to live, eat and sleep in the city's churches.

Some churches had over 500 people crammed into their yards, just sleeping on the ground. Even if you had been a doctor or other professional in Mosul, you were left with nothing. All we had was the cash in our pocket and our car," Mo said.

The family stayed with Rana's parents in Erbil and tried their best to survive, but with friends and colleagues disappearing and evidence of other atrocities, they didn't feel safe and travelled to Jordan.

It was in Jordan that Mo and Rana began considering a new life in Australia; somewhere far away from the troubles of the region.

"I'd been asking around about the best place for us to go and everyone said the number one place was Australia. We were told the people here were caring and would look after us.

We applied for a humanitarian visa, but this was rejected. We then applied for a Canadian visa," he said.

In what Mo and Rana now see as destiny, a series of diplomatic changes eventually lead them to Australia.

"Everything suddenly fell into place, we felt like it was a miracle – it was meant to be," Mo said.

Within five months Mo, Rana and little Wael were standing in arrivals at Melbourne Airport waiting for their refugee caseworker.

"We flew into Melbourne in the early morning and it was still dark, lights twinkling across the city. We had been through so much that I couldn't actually allow myself to believe we were in Australia until I finally saw all of the signs in English.

We were very excited, but it was also daunting because we were in a new country, with a new culture and we didn't know anyone. We were very alone, with no family or friends here to meet us," he said.

The caseworker took the young family to temporary accommodation in Geelong where Mo and Rana spent the next few months studying to pass the Medical Council examinations that would allow them to practice in Australia.

After nine months, they both passed and began looking for work, eventually finding positions in Hamilton, where they have been working and studying ever since.

Mo says one of his proudest moments was when he received his first WDHS pay cheque.

"I feel indebted to WDHS and Australia and when I see my payslip I actually feel very proud to be paying tax. This is what helped us to survive when we first arrived here and I am very happy to be in a position now to support others and contribute to this great country.

We love it here and are so appreciative. The people in Hamilton are really beautiful, we wish we could stay here all our lives.

Our only real worry now is for our families back home in Iraq, who aren't safe, but we hope someday they will be able to join us," Mo said.



Dr Rana Karachi and Dr Mohamed (Mo) Abody loving their new life in Australia

Youth festival celebrates our 'one colourful community'

Hamilton students partied to the mixes of one of Australia's best DJs and the soulful tunes of 2016 Triple J Unearthed winner, Gretta Ray, at a festival launched by the WDHS Community for Youth Board (C4YB) in November.

Hundreds of students danced to 'bounce' tracks from DJ C-Barts, ballads from Gretta Ray and live music from several up-and-coming local acts, to celebrate 'our one colourful community'.

The event was the brainchild of the C4YB and was funded by the state government's FReeZA program.

Director of Primary and Preventative Health, James 'Mac' McInnes said historically FReeZA funded the local battle of the bands competition, but young people were looking for a change.

"This year the C4YB wanted to deliver something bigger, something that would create lasting memories and be an opportunity for young people from local secondary schools to socialise together and celebrate their year."

As part of the gig, Gretta invited kids up on stage to sing her Triple J Unearthed winning song, 'Drive'.

Mac says the feedback from the students has been fantastic.

"It was a brilliant day, you could really see the joy on the kids faces. We will definitely be looking to run it again next year," Mac said.

The event, also featured arts and cultural elements, with students dressing colourfully and collaborating on a banner reflecting the event's 'one colourful community' theme.



Recent events and fundraisers



The Stock Agents Golf Day in September raised over \$20,000 for the Cancer and Dialysis Centre



Vinu Sebastian and Dialysis patient Pauline Potter with Registered Nurse, Carol Scherek, who raised \$5,500 for a Prevue Ultrasound to assist patients on dialysis



Members of the Hamilton Running Club cross the finish line together in the 21km event at the Hamilton Fun Run, which raised \$10,971 for the Cancer and Dialysis Centre

Cancer & Dialysis Centre opens

Following three years of planning and hard work, the WDHS Cancer and Dialysis Centre is officially open.

In October patients began accessing the Centre, which integrates an eight chair chemotherapy and dialysis treatment space, dedicated pharmacy, new hospital admissions and waiting areas.

Royal Melbourne Hospital Nephrologist, Professor Steven Holt says the facility is state of the art and a vital asset for regional Victorian cancer and dialysis patients.

"I heard someone say that this Centre is on a par with what we see in city hospitals, but in my opinion it exceeds many metro facilities."

Your community should be very proud of what it has achieved here, without any government assistance at all, it's really quite amazing.

This sort of thing just doesn't happen in the city," Steven said.

CE, Rohan Fitzgerald said he is incredibly grateful to the community for enthusiastically supporting the project.

"What an amazing community we live in, to have fully funded this build to the tune of \$1.9million in just three short years."

We have a list of over 500 donors and many others who attended events and bought raffle tickets to support this cause.



Charlie Watt Volunteer of the Month



March
– Valma Lambert
Merino Community Centre



April
– Noelene Clarke
Coleraine Community Transport Service



July
– Rose Howard
Hamilton Base Hospital



August
– Judith Collier
Palliative Care



May
– Coral Luke
Hospital Opportunity Shop



September
– Dianne Price
Hospital Opportunity Shop



June
– Gwen Rentsch
Penshurst and the PDHS Door Knock Appeal

Cycling without age

Aged care residents at WDHS will again feel the wind in their hair and the thrill of adventuring on a bike, thanks to the purchase of an innovative 'trishaw'.

The trishaw will give residents more opportunities to spend time outdoors, interacting in the community.



Grange residents Gladys and Alf enjoy their trishaw ride with Lifestyle and Leisure Coordinator, Carol Holmes

Grange Leisure and Lifestyle Coordinator, Carol Holmes says the Health Service is one of the first aged care providers in the region to purchase a trishaw and both staff and residents are very excited.

"We've been discussing the types of activities and opportunities the trishaw will create for months, while waiting patiently for it to be shipped from overseas."

We've had a couple of trial runs and the friendly waves we've received from the public bring many smiles.

When riding the streets, residents reminisce about life when the most common form of transport was horses and bikes.

We can pull up at an outside table at a local cafe for a coffee or ride down to the lake for a picnic lunch, without our passengers even having to leave their seats. It's a great chance for residents to get out and about more," Carol says.

Valued at \$13,000, the bike was purchased with funds from the WDHS Hospital Opportunity Shop.

"If not for the hard work and generosity of the Op Shop volunteers, we could not have purchased the trishaw," Carol said.

Of Danish design, the trishaw is powered by a small motor and pedal power. It will be operated by volunteers, providing a comfy, secure ride for up to two residents at a time.

If you are interested in becoming a 'pilot' trishaw driver, contact the WDHS Volunteer Coordinator on 5551 8457.

Donation helping diabetes sufferers lead a normal life

The Hamilton Lions Club recently donated \$350 to purchase three Flash Glucose Monitoring Sensors for the Diabetes Department.

The revolutionary technology allows people living with diabetes to test their glucose levels by running a simple scanning device over a sensor located just under the skin, effectively removing the need for traditional finger prick tests.

With the advancement in diabetes management technology the Lions Club recognised the need to provide these sensors to the wider community.

Club President, Roger Dimond says he hopes the funding will be an ongoing program.

"The sensors are reasonably expensive, but allow people living with diabetes to lead normal, active lives, particularly important for children with this condition," Roger said.

Seven year old Archie Dahl recently trialled one of the Flash Glucose sensors donated by the Lions Club.

Archie is looking forward to summer of action in the pool and on the cricket pitch, with the continuous use of a new Flash Glucose Monitoring Sensor.



WDHS Diabetes Educator John Kearney and Hamilton Lions Club President Roger Dimond with one of the lucky recipients of a sensor, Archie Dahl

New wheels for Birches residents

Aged care residents will soon have new wheels thanks to a successful Birches Auxiliary bus appeal.

In just over 12 months, Auxiliary members have raised more than \$65,000 to fund a new 11 seater bus.



The Bus will transport residents to events and activities across the region.

In September, the Dunkeld & District Community Bank chipped in with a substantial donation of \$15,000 to help the Auxiliary reach its target.

Birches Auxiliary President, Faye Gumley says she is incredibly grateful for the community support.

"The Birches is a fantastic facility providing high level care to many of our most vulnerable community members."

It is wonderful to see the Birches and its residents being so well supported.

This bus will create opportunities for many meaningful excursions and community interactions.

It has been one of our highest priorities since establishing the Auxiliary and I am so pleased that we have been able to achieve our target in such a short timeframe," Faye said.

Healthy Leg Club launch

A 'Healthy Leg Club' has been established in Hamilton to help people manage their wounds and other leg conditions.

The Club, launched in October, is supporting those experiencing, or at risk of leg ulcers and associated conditions.

WDHS District Nurse, Sarah Crowe says it is based on the award winning Lindsay Leg Club model from the UK.

"The Lindsay Leg Club started in 1995, when Ellie Lindsay, a district nurse in England, found evidence that social factors and isolation could significantly affect leg ulcer patients' response to treatment. The Club has been incredibly successful in improving healing and reducing recurrence rates and that's why we decided to be one of the first Health Service's in Victoria to introduce the model.

We want to motivate and empower individuals to take ownership of their care, alleviate their suffering and reduce the stigma attached to their condition," Sarah says.

The Leg Club is an informal support group and members are encouraged to see it as a social activity.

"Referrals aren't necessary, clients are treated in a non-clinical setting and on a drop-in basis.

We offer morning tea and guest speakers provide advice and education in all aspects of leg health," Sarah said.

The Leg Club meets at the Frances Hewitt Community Centre (FHCC) every Friday from 9am to 12pm. For further information, contact the FHCC on 5551 8450.



Staff 'show some leg' to celebrate the launch of the Hamilton Healthy Leg Club



The National Centre for Farmer Health team celebrate an impressive 10 years

Celebrating 10 years of farmer health

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH), as it continues to 'make a difference to farmers' lives' across the country.

The Centre has developed an international reputation for excellence in research and the delivery of programs to support the health and wellbeing of farmers, farm workers and their families.

Over the last decade, the NCFH has carried out over 3,340 health and lifestyle assessments, provided education to over 200 Agricultural Health and Medicine students and reached over 30,000 people through presentations, conferences and speaking engagements.

Nearly 3,000 farmers have also participated in its ground-breaking Sustainable Farm Families and AgriSafe programs.

In September the NCFH celebrated this important birthday milestone at its annual conference, held in conjunction with the Western Alliance Symposium in Hamilton.

NCFH Director, Professor Susan Brumby says she is very proud of the achievements of the Centre and its dedicated team.

"It is wonderful to take the time to look back over the last decade and see the solid foundations that we have built.

There is compelling evidence that Australians in rural and remote areas are not as healthy as those living in our cities, due to a range of factors.

The NCFH is unique in that it is the only organisation delivering multidisciplinary, integrated, transferrable, agricultural focused health and medical services and education direct to hard to reach agricultural workers across our diverse Australian landscape.

We are very grateful for the support we have received from colleagues, staff, partners, collaborators and organisations who have helped grow and make the Centre what it is today," Sue said.

Employee of the Month



April
– James MacAuslan
Exercise Physiologist



May
– Brianna Deutscher
Occupational Therapist



June
– Penny Holmes
Nurse Unit Manager
Penshurst



July
– Michelle McErvale
Ward Clerk Birches



August
– Cecilia Fitzgerald
NCFH Executive and Administrative Assistant



September
– Nyrie Adams
Associate Nurse Unit Manager Theatre

The NCFH was established as a partnership between Deakin University and WDHS in 2008 and received philanthropic funding from the Geoff and Helen Handbury Trust and the Victorian government.



Do you have a passion for improving the delivery of local healthcare?

HAVE YOUR SAY

Become a community representative & have your say in shaping our health service to meet the needs of patients, clients, residents & their families

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Community Liaison on 5551 8540
[or community.liaison@wdhs.net](mailto:community.liaison@wdhs.net)